

Valley Primary School



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Dear Parents,

As you may be aware, Valley is an Academy school, meaning that it is independent of the local authority and is instead self-governing according to an agreement with the Department of Education. Whilst this arrangement has worked well for the school, it has also been important for Valley to maintain strong links and partnerships with other schools - to support and challenge each other to improve and to achieve more for all of the children in each school. This remains the case for us and for schools across the country and you may have seen some coverage in the press of how individual Academies are now linking together as Multi Academy Trusts.

The main drivers for conversion to a MAT include allowing individual schools to focus on teaching and learning, providing a stronger support network for improvement and gaining economies of scale. MATs will thus provide a protection for the likely significant spending cuts predicted over the next few years.

Locally, Valley has partnered with other schools via membership of the ALC, an alliance of nine Bromley schools, since 2014. The ALC is not a MAT but in April 2017 six of the nine schools in the ALC will leave to join Nexus, a MAT started by Farnborough Primary School. These developments mean that continuing membership of the ALC will not be a suitable arrangement to support Valley's engagement with other schools in future. The value of such partnership and the anticipated reductions in government funding mean that Valley remaining as a standalone Academy is not a realistic option either.

Over the last few months, Valley Governors have been reviewing the position of Valley and how best to secure its identity, ethos, financial viability and the quality of teaching and learning for the long term. Governors have been looking at the options for MATs in the local area, with a view to joining a MAT as it forms so Valley can influence its governance, policies and strategic direction. Although structurally similar, the ways of working and the degree of autonomy each school has can vary from MAT to MAT. We have met with several MATs and evaluated their fit with Valley's ethos and our wish to retain control of our destiny. We are also keen for a partnership where the quality of teaching and learning and its future development is dynamic and outward-looking.

Governors met last week to discuss the options. After careful consideration, Governors agreed unanimously to take Valley into a MAT and have selected CSAT as our preferred option. CSAT is a MAT based in Orpington with Crofton Infants and Crofton Juniors as member schools, with a plan to expand. We consider that CSAT's philosophy is very closely aligned to Valley's. It has very good results and has a very energetic dynamic teaching and learning environment.



CARE – LEARN
AIM HIGH – BE HONEST
WORK TOGETHER – ENJOY WHAT WE DO
LOOK AFTER WHAT WE HAVE – IMPROVE ON PREVIOUS BEST

Valley Primary School Academy Trust (Company No 7695505)

CSAT's governance model also fits our ambition to retain a high degree of autonomy. It is our aim to join the MAT in September 2017.

From a day to day perspective, there will be little change to the way Valley will operate when it joins the MAT. Mr Jackson and his team will remain, staff will retain the same pay and conditions, and the school will retain its existing identity and character. There will be no disruption to the school during the transition process.

The next stage is a due diligence process, whereby each party reviews the other's financial and education performance, its assets and liabilities and so on.

We will keep you informed of developments, with the first opportunity being a Parent Forum on Thursday March 16th at 7pm in the Main Hall.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at this meeting.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mr Mitchell'.

Mr Mitchell
Chair of Governors