



Marden Primary School to Join Leigh Academies Trust

In February 2020, the Governing Body of Marden Primary School (MPS) initiated a period of consultation and due diligence with a view to becoming an academy joining Leigh Academies Trust (LAT). Stakeholder consultation involved parents, carers, staff, the Parish Council (on behalf of the wider community) and Marden Pre-School. The Governing Body found no opposition from any stakeholder groups connected with the school and support for the proposals was voiced by staff, parents and governors.

The Governing Body of MPS is fully satisfied from its own due diligence that joining the Trust will: offer greater support and capacity for sustained school improvement; lead to an overall improvement in the fabric and condition of the school buildings (over time) and will result in greater opportunities for pupils (both curricular and extra-curricular). Close formal collaboration with other LAT schools, especially Paddock Wood and Horsmonden Primary Academies and Mascalls Academy, will provide further opportunities for staff and pupils.

At the beginning of April, the Governing Body of MPS approved the working group's recommendation that the school should convert to academy status and join Leigh Academies Trust. An application to become an academy was subsequently submitted to the Department for Education (DfE). Later in April, LAT's board of directors approved the resolution that MPS should join LAT. MPS and LAT are now working with the DfE and Kent County Council towards an academisation date of 1st September 2020. However, delays due to Covid-19 are possible and so LAT is exploring ways of supporting MPS until the process is complete.

Simon Beamish, Chief Executive of Leigh Academies Trust, said:

"After a thorough search for a strong strategic partner, we are delighted that Marden has chosen LAT. Marden Primary Academy will become LAT's 28th open academy with one more secondary free school in the pipeline to open in 2021. The most compelling aspect of this partnership is the very close relationship Marden will now have with three other LAT academies: Mascalls; Paddock Wood and Horsmonden. They will work together to achieve LAT's ambition in the local area for truly joined-up education for young people and families. Together they will achieve the Trust's ambition to shape lives and transform communities".

Tracy Thomas, Headteacher of Marden Primary School, added:

"I am pleased that the Governing Body has approved the school's progression to become an academy and join the Leigh Academies Trust. During the period of due diligence, I have visited LAT primary and secondary schools and been involved in meetings with LAT Principals and Trust Directors. I have seen first-hand how committed LAT is to securing the best education for children and I am convinced that this is the right step for Marden."

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S Beamish".

Simon Beamish
Chief Executive
Leigh Academies Trust

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "T Thomas".

Tracy Thomas
Headteacher
Marden Primary School