



Headteacher: Mrs S Lewis



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Dear Friends

The governing bodies of St Mary's and Downs Way Schools have some exciting news!

As you may know we have over the last 2 ½ years been working in partnership under the shared leadership of Sarah Lewis our Headteacher. Over recent months we have been reflecting on the effectiveness of our joint working arrangements and have come to the point now where both schools have a clear and shared vision for the future of primary education for north Oxted, which we would like to share with you.

We can see that the improvements in both schools have been achieved by working together; in particular:

- Clear common ground has emerged – with each school remaining deeply committed to serving the locality, and ensuring high quality provision into the future
- The Ofsted grade of each of the schools has risen – with the strength of leadership being instrumental
- Staff development and opportunities have increased – supporting us with retention and recruitment
- There has been improved understanding of transition between the key stages which has benefited all children

Our aim is therefore not to lose these benefits but secure a structure for the school which can sustain the quality of teaching and learning and the experiences we can offer our children. Any changes we make also need to secure a way of working which is cost effective and sustainable in these changing times.

When considering change we explored what it is that we want to keep and we agreed that we want to protect:

- The ethos of the schools – centred on the children - and how we work together as a community to get the best for them.
- Close working relationships with all local schools – wanting to keep all schools strong.
- The balance between community and faith places in terms of admissions and this includes retaining a Christian junior provision as a choice for parents.
- The opportunity for all children to attend a local school when pupil numbers in our area are rising – pressure on places will hit junior provision in September 2018.

Keeping all of these points in mind both Governing bodies have considered a range of options and concluded that the best way forward for both schools is to formally amalgamate. In taking this step we are clear that we need to ensure that this does not impact detrimentally on other schools and therefore as part of this proposal plan are emerging to expand by one form of entry at junior level. This additional capacity will allow all children in 'Downs Way' to move into the juniors as well as increase the number of places available to other children in the locality wishing to access a church school at year 3.

We want to have the chance to explain this to you further, answer your questions and gather your views. Attached to this letter is a consultation document which outlines our proposal a Church of England Primary School, with



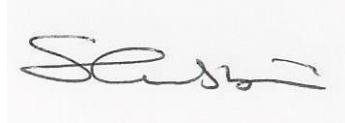
provision from age 4-11. This school will have 2 classes per year group in the infants and 4 classes per year group in the juniors. The aim is for this change to take place from September 2018.

Please take the time to read the attached document and feel free to join us at the consultation meetings we have arranged on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2.30pm at *Downs Way* and 7.30 at *St Mary's*. Any responses will be collated by Surrey County Council for a decision later in the school.

Yours faithfully,



Catharina Stibe Hickson  
Chair of Governors  
St Mary's School



Susan Gibbin  
Chair of Governors  
Downs Way School