



## Walsh Memorial C of E (VC) Infant School and Walsh C of E (VC) Junior School

### Consultation:

## Walsh Memorial C of E (VC) Infant School and Walsh C of E (VC) Junior School on becoming academy schools and joining The Good Shepherd Trust

**This concerns all parents, carers and staff at both schools, the local community, parish, diocese, local authority and all those connected with the schools.**

Since 2010 schools have been able to convert and become academies. There are now over 10,000 schools in England that are either standalone academies, or in a multi academy trust (MAT). In March this year, a government White Paper proposed “a fully trust led system”, and an imminent schools Bill will expect all schools to be, or have plans to be, in a MAT by 2030.

The governing bodies of both of our schools have considered joining a trust in the past and firmly believe that now is the right time to be consulting you about joining a trust of our choice, with a view to changing the status of our schools at some point next year.

Having considered various MATs in our region, both governing bodies, which are now operating together, have chosen to join The Good Shepherd Trust (GST), which is a MAT with 15 primary schools and one secondary school. We believe that the ethos and Christian values of the trust are in line with our schools and that the school improvement offer in GST will greatly benefit our schools.

There will be a consultation period of four weeks. Please take time to read the frequently asked questions below and take a look at the trust’s website ([goodshepherdtrust.org.uk](http://goodshepherdtrust.org.uk)). We are holding meetings on **Monday 17<sup>th</sup> October at 2pm at the Infant School and repeated at 6.30pm at the Junior School.**

Your comments and feedback will be considered by the governing bodies and any questions you have will be answered in further communications. Please send your comments to: **[joiningGST@walsh-memorial.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:joiningGST@walsh-memorial.surrey.sch.uk)** This email address is being used for both schools as it is a joint consultation.

Employees of both schools are fully involved in this consultation process and have separate meetings about employment and contracts as part of the formal process.

**Yvonne McLeod**  
**Chair of Governors**

## **Academy conversion FAQs**

### **What is an academy?**

An academy is essentially an independent school which is funded by the state. It is independent of the local authority and receives its funding direct from central government.

We are proposing to become an academy as part of The Good Shepherd Trust (GST). This means that we will be part of an academy group comprising

- Ashley primary
- Christ's College, secondary
- Farnborough Grange, infant
- Ottershaw Christ Church infant and junior
- Potter's Gate, primary
- Queen Eleanor's, junior
- St Andrew's, infant
- St John's, primary
- St Mark's and All Saints, primary
- St Mary's, primary
- St Paul's primary
- Surrey Hills All Saints, primary
- The Holme, primary
- The Weald, primary
- Waverley Abbey, junior

Both Scott Broadwood (infant) and Valley End (infant) are joining GST this term.

### **Why have our governors chosen GST?**

The governing bodies looked at the five trusts in the Diocese and other local trusts and decided that The Good Shepherd Trust was the best MAT to request joining for the following reasons:

- It is faith led
- It has a developed school improvement offer
- It has established Human Resources, financial, buildings and estates services to offer schools.

The most important aspect is that there will be support for staff to enable even better teaching and learning which will ensure our children have the best educational opportunities.

### **Why do our schools need to join a MAT?**

The governing bodies have considered joining a trust for some time as all schools need external support and validation. Due to cuts in government funding, Surrey County Council has not been able to support maintained schools as it did in the past. Following the publication of the recent White Paper, the government is asking that all schools join a good MAT by 2030. It is important that the school accesses training, networks and opportunities to learn from other schools, which can be provided by The Good Shepherd Trust. The governors also wanted to be part of a faith led trust to maintain and enhance the Christian character of the school. The trustee directors at The Good Shepherd Trust are all appointed by the Guildford Diocesan Board of Education.

### **What will be the benefits of joining a MAT?**

The school staff will have more opportunities to develop their skills and learn from the schools in the trust. The Good Shepherd Trust delivers school improvement with Regional Directors of Education who regularly visit schools and work with them to further support staff to deliver high quality teaching and learning. Education changes all the time and it is good to ensure that our school is using the latest ideas to provide engaging and exciting lessons and a safe and stimulating environment. Being part of this MAT will mean we can interact with other schools to gather the best ideas and adapt them for our children.

The Good Shepherd Trust also has support services for the schools in the trust, for example, human resources, buildings and estates. The finance team also supports all schools. These replace the services that the school currently accesses from the Local Authority.

### **Will the school receive more funding?**

The school will receive some more funding as the local authority funding currently retained to provide some services will be included in the budget. While most of that funding will be given to the MAT to provide all of the services needed, because the school will no longer pay for services such as human resources, buildings and estates, health and safety, etc, there will be some more funding available to spend on the school. The funding will as always, depend on the number of children on roll at school.

### **Who makes the final decision?**

The final decision is made by the Regional Directors, part of the Department for Education.

### **Will the school change its name?**

This is something where we would value your input.

### **Will the uniform be different?**

The school uniform will remain the same, although some changes may be phased in over time (such as if we change the school names). You will not be expected to buy any new uniform.

### **Will term times change?**

Although schools in MATs can change term times, there are no plans for us to change term times as we are mindful of siblings attending other local schools.

### **How will children be affected?**

As there will be more support from the Trust and more opportunities for staff to see and share good practice, the children will benefit from even better teaching and learning.

### **Do MAT schools follow the national curriculum?**

MAT schools do not have to follow the national curriculum and have the opportunity to adapt the curriculum for the needs of the children and community. Schools within The Good Shepherd Trust do follow the national curriculum as a minimum.

### **How will staff be affected?**

Staff will have more opportunities to see other schools in action and further increase their knowledge and skills. Staff will also be able to share the good practice in school. Our staff will still be employed at the school.

### **Will staff leave?**

Joining a MAT does not mean that staff will be leaving. Staff pay, conditions and pension will remain the same. Joining a MAT gives staff more opportunities for continuous professional development and career development within the same organisation.

### **How will parents be affected?**

There will be no difference for parents who will still be able to speak with leaders and class teachers when they have any concerns. Before and after school clubs will still be available.

### **How will admissions be affected?**

The Good Shepherd Trust is its own admissions authority as are all academy trusts. Applications will still be made online via Surrey County Council. The number admitted to school in reception class and Y3 each year will remain 60 and 64 respectively.

### **Does joining GST affect relationships with other schools in the area?**

Our schools will continue to work with other schools in the area as this is the community we serve. There will still be communication about transfer to junior schools.

### **What does governance look like at GST?**

There is a board of trustee directors accountable to the Trust's members. The Trust is accountable to the Secretary of State for Education to whom it reports. The board work to ensure that all schools in the MAT are able to perform to a high standard and that they receive the support and challenge they require to improve. The Trust delegates powers to local committees through a Scheme of Delegation.

The current governing bodies will dissolve on joining the Trust and be replaced by a local committee, which will be appointed by the trustee directors of the board. The governors in place prior to conversion normally stay on the local committee until the end of their current term of office. The trustee directors will appoint the chair of the local committee.

### **How will the Christian distinctiveness of the school be affected?**

The Good Shepherd Trust seeks to enhance the Christian distinctiveness in every school supported by the central team, Board of trustee directors and members. Children in our school will continue to say prayers and take part in Christian assemblies. Our local vicar will still be leading some of those assemblies and will continue to be part of school life. Our children will still visit St Peter's church and follow the golden rules. The GST's mission is to encourage flourishing and transformation through love, living Christian values, serving others and for everyone to experience the richness of life in its fullness.

### **What will happen to the PTA?**

Our PTAs will continue to raise much needed funds for the school to provide our children with experiences and resources which cannot always be supplied through the school's budget. The PTA's work and donations are much valued and will continue to be so. Funds raised by our PTAs will continue to be for our schools only.

### **When will we join GST?**

We are hoping to join in the summer of 2023, but the legal processes may take some time. We will let you know about the progress of joining The Good Shepherd Trust.

### **Have your say**

We really want to hear what parents, staff and the community think about the proposed conversion to an academy. Consultation events are planned below:

**Monday 17<sup>th</sup> October at 2.00pm in the Infant School Hall**

**Monday 17<sup>th</sup> October at 6.30pm in the Junior School Hall**

Your comments will help us work out if our decision is indeed the best way to move forward. The final date for comments is 20<sup>th</sup> October. Please send any comments to:

**[joiningGST@walsh-memorial.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:joiningGST@walsh-memorial.surrey.sch.uk)**