



Ditchling (St Margaret's) CE Primary and Nursery School

Lewes Road, Ditchling, East Sussex BN6 8TU

Headteacher: Mrs. S Thompson

Learning together. Building success.

Monday 11th October 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Ditchling (St Margaret's) Church of England Primary and Nursery School is a good school and as a good school we are always striving to be even better. The Governing Board and Senior Leadership Team are always looking for opportunities to enhance and enrich our children's learning, be this through direct opportunities, such as experiences or facilities or by continuing to provide excellent opportunities for our teaching and support staff to enhance their knowledge and expertise.

We recognise that as a small rural school, we are able to offer relevant, appropriate, and significant benefits and opportunities to our children and the wider school community. However, there are also challenges such as ensuring a growing breadth of subject expertise and the obvious financial pressures that come with being a small school. For these reasons and against a backdrop of the government announcement in May 2021 that they wish every school to become part of a strong Multi Academy Trust, the Governing Board of the school have been looking, for several years, at our various options. After significant research and due diligence with the support of the Diocese and Department of Education the opportunity has arisen to join the newly formed Hurst Education Trust (HET). The Trust is established in partnership with the Diocese of Chichester. It is a diocesan academy trust, established jointly by the Diocese of Chichester and Hurst College. We want to share this proposal with you and what it will mean for our school.

Our proposal is for our school to convert to an academy within the Hurst Education Trust. We have identified that joining this Trust will significantly benefit the children and staff at our school. The Trust's strong team of professionals can work in partnership with our school to enable us to provide greater opportunities and experiences for our children and staff. The partnership will provide further resources to enable the school leadership to move the school even further forward, securing even better outcomes for our children without losing our unique identity and what makes us special.

There are currently 3 local rural church primary schools (including Ditchling St Margaret's) in discussions about joining HET, and we believe that by becoming a founding partner of this Trust will be in a strong position to ensure the very best outcomes for our children and the wider school community.

Telephone: 01273 844130

Fax: 01273 842673

Email: office@ditchling-ce-prim.e-sussex.sch.uk





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What does this mean?

It is unlikely that as a member of staff or as a parent or carer, you or your children will notice any difference. All of the following will remain the same:

- The school name
- The school uniform
- The school vision and values
- The school's Christian ethos
- The school curriculum
- The school governance (including representation from staff, parents, the Church, and the local community as we do now)
- The school's links to the community
- The school's Admissions policy and process
- The staff's contract, pay, terms and conditions of employment

What will change:

- Financial savings and economies of scale will ensure that we can redirect greater funding back into the classroom for the direct benefit of our children.
- Staff will receive outstanding CDP (Continued Professional Development) opportunities by working more closely with colleagues in the Trust together with those at the College.
- Build close, supportive, working relationships with other rural church schools in the local area regardless of their county.
- Access to facilities at Hurst College.

The school leadership see this as a very positive step forward for the school to not only protect but also to enhance our future, we hope you agree.

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Timelines and next steps:

We would like to invite all members of the school community to find out more and ask questions. You are invited to attend a consultation meeting at school on **Monday 18th October at 6pm** where you will be able to ask questions. If you would prefer to submit questions in advance, or if you are unable to attend the consultation meeting, please use the following link <https://tinyurl.com/42vysum8> or the QR code below.

If you have a question that you would prefer not to submit online or ask publicly, please email chair@ditchling-ce-prim.e-sussex.sch.uk

In order for us to have an indication of numbers, please register your intended attendance using the following link <https://tinyurl.com/fyec2vau> or by using the QR code below.

All questions and answers submitted will be shared with the whole school community via the FAQs which will be published on the School website.

Yours faithfully,

Vicky Harries & Nigel Porter
Co-chair of Governors Ditchling St Margaret's

To register for the consultation meeting:



To submit a question or comment:



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