

## **Proposal for Chiltern Hills Academy to join the Oxford Diocesan Bucks Schools Trust (ODBST)**

**The Governing Body of Chiltern Hills Academy is proposing to transfer from a Single Academy Trust (SAT) to the Multi Academy Trust (MAT), the Oxford Diocesan Bucks Schools Trust ODBST.**

### **Background**

Today, Chiltern Hills Academy is a Single Academy Trust (SAT), whereas the majority of Academy schools are now part of a Multi Academy Trust. The Department for Education has outlined their expectation that more SATs will transfer into MATs in the next few years and as a result, during the last 5 months the CHA Governing Body has been considering whether it would be better for Chiltern Hills Academy to remain as a SAT or to join a MAT.

As such Governors along with Mr Dobbs and members of the Senior Leadership Team have spoken to a number of MATs which has resulted in the decision to carry out a more detailed evaluation of the Oxford Diocesan Bucks Schools Trust (ODBST). This evaluation, known as a due diligence process, will enable the Governing Body of CHA to understand the benefits of joining ODBST for the Chiltern Hills community in both the short and longer term as well as allowing ODBST to explore more details about Chiltern Hills Academy.

This Due Diligence process will be taking place during May and once concluded will inform a decision as to whether CHA should move forward with joining the ODBST.

### **ODBST**

The ODBST is one of the MATs of the Oxford Diocese and therefore aligned with our Church of England status. It currently has 13 schools in the Buckinghamshire area, so is well established in our wider community, and has an understanding of the community we serve in an around Chesham. The Chief Executive Officer, Sulina Piesse, has been providing support to Mr Dobbs and the leadership team over the last year alongside other members of the ODBST team so they are well known to the staff at CHA and also understand the values and aspirations of Chiltern Hills Academy really well.

### **Key considerations**

In considering the options open to our school, the leadership and governors have kept the following considerations at the forefront of our thinking:

1. How can we do our utmost to ensure that Chiltern Hills Academy continues to thrive?
2. What is in the best interests of the students and staff in our school, both now and in the future?
3. How can we best preserve the school's distinctive Christian ethos and continue to adhere to our vision?
4. How can we retain a significant role in running our school at a local level?

5. How can we make sure that joining a MAT will provide benefits to Chiltern Hills students, staff and the community we serve, over and above that already provided by being a SAT?

### **What does joining a MAT mean in practice?**

While joining a MAT could be a significant change for Chiltern Hills, a key criterion in our evaluation is that the MAT should allow the school to continue to have its own vision and values and be able to provide the appropriate education services for our local community.

As such we shall be seeking to ensure that any proposed MAT will enable Chiltern Hills Academy to retain its own identity and values and make decisions relevant to the aspirations and needs of our students. However, we are also looking for a MAT that will provide long-term security, stronger collaboration with other schools and support for staff and governors to enable us to focus on delivering the best possible outcomes for the students at Chiltern Hills Academy.

### **How can you find out more?**

There are some Frequently Asked Questions and information about the ODBST available on our school website and the ODBST's own website can be accessed here: <https://www.odbst.org.uk/>

We are holding a parents' meeting for you to have the opportunity to ask us any questions about our proposal. ODBST will be present at the meeting so you can talk to them directly. This meeting will be **on Tuesday 7th May at 6pm**, in the Main Hall.

If you have any further questions, please email them to: [office@chacademy.co.uk](mailto:office@chacademy.co.uk)

### **Next Steps**

Once the due diligence process has been completed and we have met with staff and parents this half term, a final decision will be made as to whether we wish to join the ODBST, explore other MAT opportunities or stay as a SAT. The final decision, should we decide to join the ODBST, will rest with the Regional Director in the Department for Education. The outcome will be shared with parents and carers in due course.

We hope that you can attend the proposed meeting and support us in our decision making as we shape the exciting next step in the future of Chiltern Hills Academy.

Principal:

Tim Dobbs

Chair of Governors:

Andrew Brown

Acting Principal:

Tim Dobbs BA (Hons), NPQH

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