

1 July 2020

**Dear Parents/Carers**

**Transfer of SAT schools to SAST on 1 July 2020**

During this academic year, we have been working very closely with the trustees, headteachers and chairs of the school governing bodies of the Southern Academy Trust on its future and the proposal that their schools join SAST. The Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education and the Regional Schools' Commissioner have supported this. More recently, we have completed all the formal consultation processes with staff.

I am delighted to confirm that the Department of Education has now confirmed the transfer of the Southern Academy Trust to the Sherborne Area Schools' Trust on 1 July 2020. Shaftesbury School (including its state boarding school), Shaftesbury CE Primary School, Motcombe CE Primary School and St Andrew's CE Primary School in Fontmell Magna, have joined our multi-academy trust with whom they already have a close working relationship. The Southern Academy Trust organisation will be dissolved as the schools have transferred to SAST.

The schools will now be officially part of our trust of 17 schools serving North and West Dorset and South Somerset, including 4 secondary schools, 13 primary schools and 3 nursery settings, providing education from 0-19 years old. Coming together provides an exciting opportunity to create a stronger and more sustainable local trust, which will enable us to provide excellent education to all students. There are already shared values with a history of partnership working, which we want to preserve and enhance. SAST strongly believes in partnership and collaboration, the pursuit of excellence, promoting holistic lifelong learning and recognising equality and distinctiveness. These align closely to the Church of England vision for education around community, wisdom, hope and dignity.

The key vision continues to be to sustain and develop all the schools in the trust. This gives the scale and quality of back office services with combined staff teams for HR, finance, estates, compliance, IT and governance support, providing capacity and expertise. There will be over 5000 children across all the schools with over 500 education professionals – quite a team. This makes up 10% of Dorset schools. There are no plans for any other schools to join us at this stage but the door remains open for others in our area. Every school in the trust is an equal partner and we celebrate each school's unique and individual character. Each school has its own headteacher, leaders and local governing body.

I would like to pay tribute to the commitment and dedication of the SAT trustees past and present to the Shaftesbury schools and community. The chair of trustees, Chris Brickell, has worked for 20 years as a governor and trustee and we have committed to preserve and enhance the legacy passed on to us.

Yours sincerely



Steve Hillier  
CEO