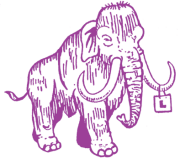


# The Federation of Goodnestone and Nonington Church of England Primary Schools



Headteacher: Mrs Victoria Solly  
Chair of Governors: Dr Brian Jacobs



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Monday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Dear Parents, Carers and Stakeholders,

As you know, Goodnestone and Nonington are two very small Church of England Primary Schools, that is part of their attraction. It means that the approach can be more personalised than is found in many schools. It also enables them to support pupils who might find other schools very difficult. The strong church ethos, vision and values is central to each school and supports both pupils and staff to flourish.

Being small schools also carries significant challenges. The Federation was formed a number of years ago to reduce these for each of the schools, particularly to support Goodnestone at the time.

We are writing to inform you that after careful consideration, the Governing Board of The Goodnestone and Nonington CofE Federation have decided that we intend to join with the Aspire Federation (Kingswood, Leeds and Broomfield CofE, Platts Heath and Ulcombe CofE Primary Schools) to form a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). In this intended model, our Federation will form the core of one spoke of the Trust whilst their four schools will form another spoke. This model will bring with it more support for our two schools in the form of interchange of knowledge and skills for staff between several schools. It gives the schools independence from Kent County Council, though we are likely to still buy in some services from The Education People. Vicky Solly will remain the Executive Headteacher of our schools. The MAT will be led by Emma Hickling, currently Executive Headteacher for the four schools in the Aspire Federation. She will become, in due course the CEO of the Aspire MAT.

The Diocese of Canterbury has been encouraging the formation of a MAT that will specifically aim to provide support for small rural Church of England schools and the formal proposal for such a MAT is currently being drawn together to submit to the Department for Education; they have to approve this before our application could be considered. Its aim is to ensure that a strong Christian ethos is maintained and that these schools are in a solid financial network that will have the strengths of a larger body without becoming remote and impersonal in their approach. As a Governing Body we are enthused with the specific concept that is being proposed and have given it our support in principle at this stage.

The reason behind the formation of a new Trust is the need, we believe, to establish one exclusively for the support and development of small rural Primary Schools. Aspire, like Goodnestone and Nonington, is passionate about the protection of the individual nature of small Schools and believes that the way the two Federations currently work is a strong model which can be grown and replicated. The Trust will remain

inclusive with Christian vision. It will continue to champion the work of small Schools and the progress of the pupils within them. The schools will remain largely unchanged with no changes to curriculum, provision for SEND, staffing, school vision, uniform or traditions.

Our staff are already engaging with the Senior Leadership Team of the Aspire Federation and sharing good practice and professional development.

Before proceeding with any conversion, there will be a Formal Consultation in which we invite you to share your views and ask any questions you may have. We will hold open meetings to ensure everyone has ample opportunity to explore and question us becoming a Trust.

The consultation will run from 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023 – 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and comments and questions should be addressed to:

Mrs Victoria Solly, Headteacher: [headteacher@goodnestone.kent.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@goodnestone.kent.sch.uk) [headteacher@nonington.kent.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@nonington.kent.sch.uk)

or

Dr Brian Jacobs, Chair of Governors: [bjacobs@nonington.kent.sch.uk](mailto:bjacobs@nonington.kent.sch.uk)

There will be a meeting held towards the end of the consultation, should there be a significant number of comments/questions returned.

We would like to invite you to read through our answers to FAQs about this consultation, which you can also find on the school websites [www.goodnestoneprimary.co.uk](http://www.goodnestoneprimary.co.uk) and [www.noningtonprimary.co.uk](http://www.noningtonprimary.co.uk). We will be looking to regularly update this area of the school website with any further questions that have been asked, and their answers.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any comments, queries or questions you may have as your views matter to us. We aim to give everyone the opportunity to fully understand what and why we are looking to become the Aspire Multi Academy Trust.

This is an exciting opportunity to shape our future and bring about positive change in the way we run our Schools, develop our character and values, and continue to drive the best possible outcomes for all our pupils.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Kindest regards

Dr Brian Jacobs

(Chair of Governors)

Mrs Vicky Solly

(Headteacher)