

# LEYBOURNE SS PETER & PAUL C E PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Dear Parents/Carers

## PROPOSAL TO CONVERT TO ACADEMY STATUS WITHIN THE TENAX SCHOOLS TRUST

The Governing Body have been considering for some time whether the school should convert to academy status. The purpose of this letter is to consult you formally about a proposal for our school to become an Academy within a larger organisation set up by Bennett Memorial Diocesan School called the Tenax Schools Trust. The Governing Body, and the Senior Leadership of the school, believe that this change will enable us to continue to improve the opportunities we provide for your children and support the school in its future development.

Some more information about Academies and about the Tenax Schools Trust is attached to this letter. Academy status will change some things behind the scenes but otherwise you and your children will see very little difference when we make this change. We do not intend to change the school name or the uniform and we will not change term dates or the school's admissions policy as a result of a change to academy status (although the admissions policy is obviously reviewed on a regular basis).

The advantages of working as part of the Tenax Schools Trust are that we can continue as a school serving our community but also be able to play a full part as both a contributor and a receiver of support and challenge from colleagues within the Trust. A fundamental reason for our wish to join the Tenax Schools Trust is that the ethos of the Trust is closely aligned to our own, and our identified core Christian values of love, trust, compassion and respect. We will be joining a group with shared values to ourselves.

We hope that you will continue to give the Governors and the staff your support in driving our school forwards. We are holding a meeting at school on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> June at 7.30pm when there will be the opportunity to come and hear more about this proposal and to ask questions. The meeting will be chaired by the Governing Body and will be attended by both Mrs Holditch and Mr Ian Bauckham (Executive Headteacher of Bennett Memorial School and CEO of the Tenax Schools Trust).

If you are unable to attend and have a question that you would like answered, or if you have any comments that you would like to make about the school becoming an Academy within the Tenax Schools Trust, please send them by email to [Clerk.Governors@leybourne.kent.sch.uk](mailto:Clerk.Governors@leybourne.kent.sch.uk) or in an envelope marked "Academy Conversion" to the Chair of Governors by Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June. Questions submitted in this way will then be included in the questions raised at the meeting. All questions raised, and the answers to them, will be published on our website to ensure that everyone has access to the full range of information.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Sue Forsey  
Vice -Chair of Governors

Mrs Tina Holditch  
Headteacher

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## **PROPOSAL FOR LEYBOURNE SS PETER AND PAUL CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL TO CONVERT TO ACADEMY STATUS WITHIN THE TENAX SCHOOLS TRUST: FURTHER INFORMATION**

### **What is an Academy?**

Academies are publicly funded independent schools that are not managed by a local authority. Once converted, academies are run by an academy trust, which is a charitable company limited by guarantee. Academies are therefore state maintained schools available free to all children. They have to follow the same rules as all other state-funded schools over admissions, pupils with Special Educational Needs and exclusions. They are still inspected by Ofsted.

### **Who are the Tenax Schools Trust?**

The Tenax Schools Trust is a Church of England 'multi academy Trust' (MAT) which exists to provide outstanding education in secondary and primary schools. Our values and approach derive from our Church of England ethos: we believe in the value and potential of every student, and we emphasise the importance of education in values and character alongside traditional academic learning. We embrace a positive and optimistic 'open mindset' approach to learning, which insists that all students can make exceptional progress with the right teaching, high expectations and opportunities for practice and reinforcement. We aim to provide rich additional opportunities for all beyond the taught curriculum which build character and develop young people's spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. In our Church of England schools we place particular emphasis on teaching young people about Christian values, beliefs and traditions, and we model Christian values in the way we work with young people.

The name 'Tenax' is the Latin word for 'tenacious' or 'steadfast'. We chose it because we are steadfast in our belief in the value of Church of England education, and the consequent commitment to high achievement and personal growth for all young people.

### **What opportunities does joining the Tenax Schools Trust bring?**

Tenax Schools Trust aims to offer schools wide opportunities for mutual support and partnership, in particular through the practical sharing of leadership, educational expertise, resources and joint professional development. The Trust supports its local governing bodies in their important role of working with the headteacher of each school to ensure high standards are maintained in each school for the benefit of our students. It provides high quality professional development for governors and open and frequent communication with the Trust board, which carries ultimate responsibility for the performance of the Trust as a whole.

Tenax Schools Trust operates across West Kent and East Sussex close to the Kent border. It has a close working relationship with both the Diocese of Rochester and the Diocese of Chichester, both of whom support the work of the Trust. Likewise, it collaborates with the local authorities of Kent and East Sussex in providing excellent educational opportunities for local children and young people.

Bennett Memorial Diocesan School, one of the founder schools in the Trust, is joint lead of the local teaching school alliance and is a designated teaching school. All schools joining the Trust can share that designation so that the Trust can offer opportunities for all schools to participate in training and shaping the next generation of teachers.

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### **Why join the Tenax School Trust?**

Belonging to an area-wide Trust offers greater opportunities for influence than single schools can normally achieve: the Trust working together aims to be greater than the sum of its constituent schools. We see the growth of the Tenax Schools Trust as an opportunity for schools, leaders and governors to step forward as co-shapers of the school led and self-improving system in our area. Each school in the Trust will have parity of esteem with other partners, and be part of a Trust which respects the traditions and identities of schools whilst being committed to mutual support in pursuit of high standards for all children and good professional development and promotion opportunities for all staff.

### **How will belonging to the Trust affect the quality of education for children in our school?**

We believe a group of schools working closely together in partnership and agreeing to pool resources as well as support each other professionally can achieve much more for its children than schools working either alone, or in looser partnerships which do not involve as much sharing of resources or expertise. The aim of the Trust at all times is to improve the experience of children and young people in classrooms.

### **Will children attending a primary school in the Tenax Schools Trust have priority for admission to Bennett?**

No. Schools within the Trust will retain their existing admissions policies. This applies both to Bennett and to primary schools, who will generally continue to operate open admissions to serve their local communities. Bennett will continue to operate its approach, as a Church of England secondary school, to admissions.

### **Will this have any other impact on our school?**

Governors believe this will have a very positive impact and we are confident the relationship and benefits will develop over time. We will not make any major changes. There will be no change to the school name, the uniform, the admissions arrangements or to the times of the school day or terms. All children will continue to be part of the school.

Tenax Schools Trust is committed to maintaining the distinctiveness of each school, and, providing that a high standard of student outcomes is achieved, along with positive inspection grades, is relaxed about individual schools approaching areas such as the curriculum in differing ways.

### **So why make the change?**

Academy status gives us some additional flexibility in deciding how best to meet the needs of your children. We will benefit from close collaboration educationally with other schools in the Trust which can lead to real benefits in terms of teaching, learning and student progress; and means that governors have a source of support for the decisions they have to make. As finances get more and more challenging, there are opportunities to be had in sharing some resources and making savings which will enable more money to be spent directly on students and teachers, rather than on back office or administrative needs.

The Government has made clear that it believes all schools should convert to Academy status and we want to manage how that happens for our school.

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**When will these changes take place?**

We want to know firstly what parents and the local community think about this proposal. We are also applying to the Diocese and to the Department for Education to secure their approval for us to move forward in this way. There is then some legal and other work to be done to give effect to the change, which the Trust will support us with and which the Government funds. If all goes well we anticipate conversion during the Autumn term 2016.

**How can I find out more?**

We are holding a meeting in school on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> June at 7.30pm when there will be the opportunity to hear more about the proposal and about the Tenax Schools Trust and to ask questions. You can also email the Chair of Governors via [clerk.governors@leybourne.kent.sch.uk](mailto:clerk.governors@leybourne.kent.sch.uk) with any questions you would like to have raised at the meeting.

**Any comments?**

If you have any comments on the proposal for our school to become an Academy within the Tenax Schools Trust please send them by email to [clerk.governors@leybourne.kent.sch.uk](mailto:clerk.governors@leybourne.kent.sch.uk) or in an envelope marked "Academy Conversion" to the Chair of Governors by Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June.