



Orchard  
Academy Trust

Dear Parents/Carers/Stakeholders

## **Consultation on a proposal for a trust merger between Coppice Primary Partnership and Orchard Academy Trust**

Further to the consultation we carried out on the proposal to merge Coppice Primary Partnership and Orchard Academy Trust we are now in a position to share the outcome.

Across the five schools there were eleven electronic responses, no-one attended the in-person sessions; nine from parents, one from a member of staff and one from a parent of a child who will be joining one of our schools. Responses by school were: Allington 3, Barming 3, Loose 3, Coxheath 1 and St Katherine's 1.

Thank you to those who responded to the consultation, the outcome of which was largely supportive of the creation of a more resilient and sustainable trust. Many understood that more opportunities for building greater collaboration and sharing resources would be created.

There was a concern that central overheads in the trust would divert money away from the schools. However, the reality is that the Local Authority previously deducted monies from school budgets and the proposed central overheads are lower, allowing schools to keep a greater proportion of their funding.

We would take this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to retain local governing bodies (LGBs) at each school. Both CPP and OAT fundamentally believe that LGB involvement in and oversight of your school's performance is key, not only to the success of your school but also the wider Trust.

The Trustees of both Coppice Primary Partnership and Orchard Academy Trust have considered the consultation alongside the findings of the due diligence reviews that have been carried out. They have agreed that the merger offers exciting opportunities for the future and that closer collaboration should lead to a formal application being made to the Regional Schools Commissioner in November 2022 for formal approval of the merger.

We will continue to keep you informed and will provide regular updates as we progress the plans over the next year.

Yours sincerely,

Nigel Smetham  
Chair of Trustees  
Orchard Academy Trust

Carol Hardy  
Chair of Trustees  
Coppice Primary Partnership