

Bredgar Church of England Primary School (Aided)

"This is a good school. Behaviour and safety are outstanding, reflecting pupils' excellent attitudes to school and learning" – Ofsted 2012

Bexon Lane,
Bredgar,
Sittingbourne,
Kent. ME9 8HB

Executive Head Teacher:
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A Kent Partnership School

9th January 2017

Dear Parents/Carers and members of the local community

PROPOSAL TO CONVERT TO ACADEMY STATUS

I am writing to describe our proposal for our school to become part of a Multi Academy Trust composed of the schools currently working together in the Unitas collaboration. We would be grateful for your views. More information about what this means for our school and for your children is attached to this letter.

We are choosing to make this proposal as a positive way forward for our school which will enable us to continue to improve the opportunities we provide for your children. Making this change now means that we can choose how we want our school to develop.

Governors believe academy status within our Multi Academy Trust is the best way to support the school in continuing to develop and improve and will bring benefits to teaching and learning and thus to your child's achievement. But you and your children will see little visible difference when we become a Multi Academy Trust. We will still be called Bredgar CEP. The school uniform will not change and we will not change term dates or the school's admissions policies. All children and members of staff will continue to be part of the school as they are now. We hope you will continue to give the Governors and the staff your support.

We are holding a meeting in Minterne Junior School (Minterne Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent.) on Tuesday 10 January 2017 at 7pm where we will say a little more about what this proposal means for our school. All parents, carers and members of the local community are welcome to come along to find out more and to ask questions.

If you have any questions or comments about this proposal you can either email us at school.secretary@bredgar.kent.sch.uk or complete the response form attached or respond online at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/UniColl Please do let us know what you think about whether our school should become an Academy.

If you have any comments please send them by 10 February 2017. We will inform parents of the feedback in the school newsletter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Miranda Rees".

Miranda Rees

Chair of Governors, Bredgar CEP



THE UNITAS COLLABORATION



We will create and maintain a shared culture which requires everyone whatever their role, staff or pupil, to take responsibility for their work and be accountable for what they achieve. We will be driven by a desire to make a positive impact on the lives of all children. This shared culture will respect, uphold and complement each school's distinctive ethos and character.

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

The UNITAS collaboration of schools is a unique partnership of two small Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary Schools, a three form entry Community Infant School and a three form entry Community Junior school. Minterne Community Junior School and The Oaks infant School share a specialist unit resource for children with speech and language difficulties. All four schools are based in the Swale district.

OUR KEY PRINCIPLES

- An unwavering belief that all children can succeed.
- An unswerving commitment in making every child's well-being of paramount importance and a dedication to develop the whole child.
- High standards in all aspects of school life must be continually expected if high standards are to be maintained.
- Effective leadership and teaching are the keys to raising standards.
- Capacity and sustainability is created via effective succession planning.
- Best value and synergy is ensured by exploiting opportunities made available through economies of scale and increased efficiency.
- The most effective professional development for staff is learned from expert practitioners.
- Continued excellence is heightened through embracing change and maintaining the ethos and integrity of each individual school.
- A outward facing vision, will seek to exploit opportunities to improve our practice, whilst providing support to our local communities.
- Future success is built on today's achievement.

Through our guiding vision and principles we want to see the whole child flourish, exploring, developing and using all their talents. To fulfil our key principles, all of our schools are supported in a variety of ways including school to school support, from our Local Authority School Improvement Advisor, from education partners within the Canterbury Diocese, a fully established coaching and appraisal system and courses leading to nationally recognised qualifications.

Our schools are the centre of their communities, serving local children and their families. We work with all schools within Unitas to share and create best practice, supported by our close links with other local schools.

We want to build a Multi Academy Trust that complements and extends existing partnerships but provides a more strategically 'planned' approach to future sustainability. We are conscious, particularly for small schools, of the financial challenges into the future. We will build capacity, for staff and governors, through opportunities to share expertise, specialisms, training and workloads.

It is important for there to be an opportunity for both Church and Community Schools to work together equally. No school's individual identity and ethos will be changed in any way and Church and Community schools can continue to work together positively as they always have done. The Diocese of Canterbury is a core partner in the Multi Academy Trust so that Church schools can be part of the Multi Academy Trust. The Diocese will have a role in the governance of the Multi Academy Trust, mainly by appointing three of its five members, which are similar to shareholders. The members appoint the Trustees- and these are people with the skills and experience to support the development and growth of the Multi Academy Trust.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is an Academy?

Academies are state maintained schools free to all children. They are run separately from the local authority, and have an agreement with the Government which provides funding directly to the Academy Trust. They follow the same rules as all other state-funded schools over admissions, pupils with Special Educational Needs and exclusions. They are inspected by Ofsted.

What is a Multi Academy Trust?

A Multi Academy Trust is a company established to be responsible for a number of Academies. Each Academy remains a separate school, with its own Local Governing Body, but the governors are responsible to a board of directors established for the Trust as a whole. This model is becoming more common, particularly as more primary schools seek academy status and the Government has encouraged primary schools to choose this route.

Who will be the members of the local governing body?

Each Academies' local governing body will continue to maintain its current structure and will include two elected parents and one elected member of staff as well as the head teacher.

So why make the change?

The Unitas Collaboration already works successfully providing a good education for all of our pupils. Academy status gives us some more freedom to make decisions about how we can best continue to move the school forwards and how best we can use the funding we receive to improve opportunities for our pupils. Working within Multi Academy Trust we will be able to develop new relationships with other schools in the Trust to further develop good practice.

How can I find out more?

More information on Academy status and on multi academy trusts is available on the Department for Education website www.education.gov.uk.

As a reminder, we are holding a meeting in Minterne Junior school (Minterne Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent.) on Tuesday 10th January 2017 at 7pm where we will say a little more about what this proposal means for our school. All parents, carers and members of the local community are welcome to come along to find out more and to ask questions.

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The Unitas Collaboration

Thank you for your interest in the proposal for Bredgar CEP, Borden CEP, The Oaks Infant and Minterne Community Junior Schools to convert to academy status and form a Church Multi Academy Trust. Having considered the information available please say whether you agree that the school should move forward in this way.

Yes No Not Sure

Please add any comments or questions here.

Please say which school you are associated with:

Bredgar	<input type="checkbox"/>	Borden	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minterne	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Oaks	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide your postcode and tick the box that best describes your connection to the school. Postcode

Name (optional)

Parent/carer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Staff member	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wider community	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please return this form in hard copy to the Office at your child's school by 10 February or you can respond on line at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/UniColl>

