



18 June 2024

Dear Parents, Carers and Staff of Weare Academy Church of England First School and Wedmore First School Academy

RE. Reform to the local layer of Governance

I write to inform you of the proposed reform to the functioning of the local layer of Governance at Weare Academy Church of England First School and Wedmore First School Academy.

In March 2024, the Department for Education separated out governance guidance for Academy Trusts from maintained schools. There were long standing arguments that muddling the propositions of governance was not a neutral act and has caused significant challenges for trusts and their academies. The release of this guidance favourably signals that trust governance is a fundamentally different proposition to governing a maintained school.

As you may also be aware, the current Local Governing Body which spans across both schools, have themselves voted to split and form two bodies, to better provide more dedicated support to each school respectively.

In reflection of the changes referenced above and Local Governing Bodies recommendation to split and form two boards, the Trust Board have agreed to move to a new structure and introduce Wessex Partnership Boards. In layman's terms, what this means is that Governors will become 'Partners', and Local Governing Bodies will become 'Partnership Boards'. One Partnership Board will be formed for Weare, and one formed for Wedmore. These new roles are designed to instigate closer contact and working relationships between the schools, the Trust Central Team and the Executive Leadership Team.

The Partnership Boards will operate within a framework called the 'Terms of Reference' which have been agreed at Trust Board Level.

The focus for Partners continues to be the quality of education for learners in their school communities. This aligns with the importance of the Department for Education's Trust Governance Guidance which supports with the 'governance and leadership' strand of the Trust Quality Descriptions, the Academy Trust Handbook and the Academy Governance Code.

Whilst the Trust Board have agreed to and instigated this change, they have done so with a neutral stance and reserve the right to review and/or change structures in the future to reflect the needs of the school and the Trust.

I hope you are enthused by this reform and recognise the positive impact that it is intended to have upon both school communities. By working in closer proximity, we create the ability to better monitor and support our schools and continue to live out the Trust vision of providing a world class education for our learners.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all, for your dedication in helping our school strive for greatness. I look forward to our continued work, as we move forward with this new structure.

Yours sincerely,

GAVIN BALL
Chief Executive