

24 May 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

A New Strategic Partnership for Test Valley School

The Governors of Test Valley School have been researching how best the school can be supported and strengthened for the next 10 years and beyond. I would like to update you on where this work has got to and share some exciting news.

To enable a school of our size to offer the best experience to young people and to serve our community most effectively, we have explored a number of options for a strategic partnership – either through federating with another Hampshire maintained school or by joining a local Multi Academy Trust (MAT). We wish to preserve the many things that are unique about Test Valley School whilst delivering more stable leadership, a clear direction and access to resources which are hard for a smaller school to achieve on its own. I am delighted to announce that the Board of Governors has decisively recommended that we open negotiations to join the **HISP Multi Academy Trust (MAT)** and that we undertake a structured consultation process with parents and stakeholders.

HISP is a local MAT that has its roots in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Southampton and Portsmouth. It has been a Multi Academy Trust with 3 schools (Thornden Secondary School in Chandlers Ford, Tanners Brook and Portswood Primary Schools in Southampton) since July 2020. Test Valley School is currently a Local Authority School but would become an Academy as part of the process of joining the MAT and, in doing so, would be ahead of the curve. The Department for Education has recently announced their intention that all schools will have a plan to become part of a MAT by 2030.

The Trust has a clear vision and future ambition: it can ensure more stable leadership for our school and it has the infrastructure in place that enables it to sharply focus on a high quality education experience for all pupils. Our research has identified a number of other benefits to being part of a MAT and HISP have an exciting vision for Test Valley School as a hub for Teacher Training & Development as well as a centre of excellence for Maths and Science which would directly support our teachers and students. The Governors feel it is important that we consult with you and wider stakeholders and also undertake thorough due diligence with both HISP and Hampshire Local Authority.

The consultation process will run until 21 June 2022; this will provide a mechanism for raising questions or concerns and will provide answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and details of meetings to your views. If you would like to find out more about HISP in the meantime, you can see much more at [HISP Multi Academy Trust - Home \(hispmat.org\)](http://hispmat.org) .

The Governors are resolved to ensure that Test Valley School continues to deliver the best education experience we can for our young people. We would welcome your input and thoughts on how we can ensure can flourish within the Trust whilst keeping its unique and respected characteristics. We also wish to provide plenty of opportunity for you to get answers to questions you may have.

HEADTEACHER • MR A PAGE

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Consultation will include:

1. Frequently Asked Questions

We have prepared a list of the most commonly asked questions and are providing these with initial answers together with this letter.

2. Questions/Observations Post Box

If you would like to raise any questions or concerns or make any suggestions for how to make our school the best it can be, please send these in to info@testvalley.hants.sch.uk. Your engagement is a critical part of the process and we will group questions into themes as they come in and provide regular answers and updates.

3. Parents and Stakeholder Meetings

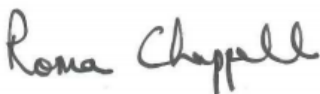
We intend to hold two open meetings for stakeholders to learn more about HISP, meet key leaders and discuss the things you would like to see from the partnership. It is hoped to hold the first of these on June 7th starting at 6.30pm: confirmation of this and further details will be published on Test Valley School website in due course.

In parallel with the consultation process, Test Valley School, HISP and the Local Authority will be undertaking Due Diligence to ensure the school's interests are protected through the transfer to the Trust. This will be managed by a small working group, meaning that the Senior Leadership Team and Governors can remain focused on delivering the best education experience we can for our young people.

It is our hope that an application to join the Trust will be made to the Regional Schools Commissioner (Department for Education) for approval at their meeting at the end of July. Although the legal transfer process may take a further 4-6 months to complete, it is envisaged that a permanent Head Teacher and management structure will be in place for the start of the new year in September.

I hope this is helpful. We look forward to discussing this with you over the coming weeks and to embarking together on the next exciting phase in pursuit of excellence at Test Valley School.

Many thanks for your support.



Roma Chappell
Chair of Governors

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