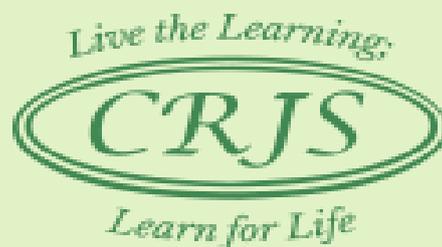


Governor Newsletter

October 2016

Edition 3



Dear Parents and Carers,

In our first newsletter of the new school year, as promised we are focusing on the important strategic issue of **academies**.

As governors, we have asked ourselves the question: could academisation support the achievement of our school vision to become an outstanding school?

We have done our homework and we do believe that **the long term interests of CRJS are best served by becoming an academy**. There are 2 options available to us for consideration: to join an existing Multi-Academy Trust [MAT]; to create a new MAT with like-minded schools.

We've said to you that our top priority is to ensure a successful school year for your children under the leadership of Sue Knight and her team. Converting to an academy under either option is complicated, important, but not urgent and therefore we're not rushing this.

There is a lot of work to do, including collaborating and exploring options with other schools and at the appropriate time we will arrange an evening event to inform you of progress and to listen to you. No final decision can be made without consulting you.

If you have any concerns on this or other matters, please contact me via the school office, or on clerk@crowleyridge-jun.surrey.sch.uk.

We would like to welcome our new parents and mainly for your benefit, please see the governing team on the right hand side; we look forward to meeting you. With kind regards,

David Oakley, Acting Chair of Governors

Governors

Brian Ford
Chair [leave of absence]
Co-Opted Governor



David Oakley
Acting Chair
Co-Opted Governor



Mirjana Fowle
Vice-Chair
Chair Children & Learning
Parent Governor



Lara Cawthra
Parent Governor



Lisa Culligan
Staff Governor



Samantha Doyle
Co-Opted Governor



Tim Fitzgerald
Co-Opted Governor



Sue Knight
Acting Head
Teacher



Tom McElligott
Chair Resources
Co-Opted Governor



Norman Russell
Local Auth.
Governor



Jean Weatherley
Co-Opted Governor



What are academies?

Our school is currently a **Local Authority Maintained School**. This means we receive funding from Surrey County Council; our staff are employed by SCC, from whom we also receive support in a number of areas including school improvement.

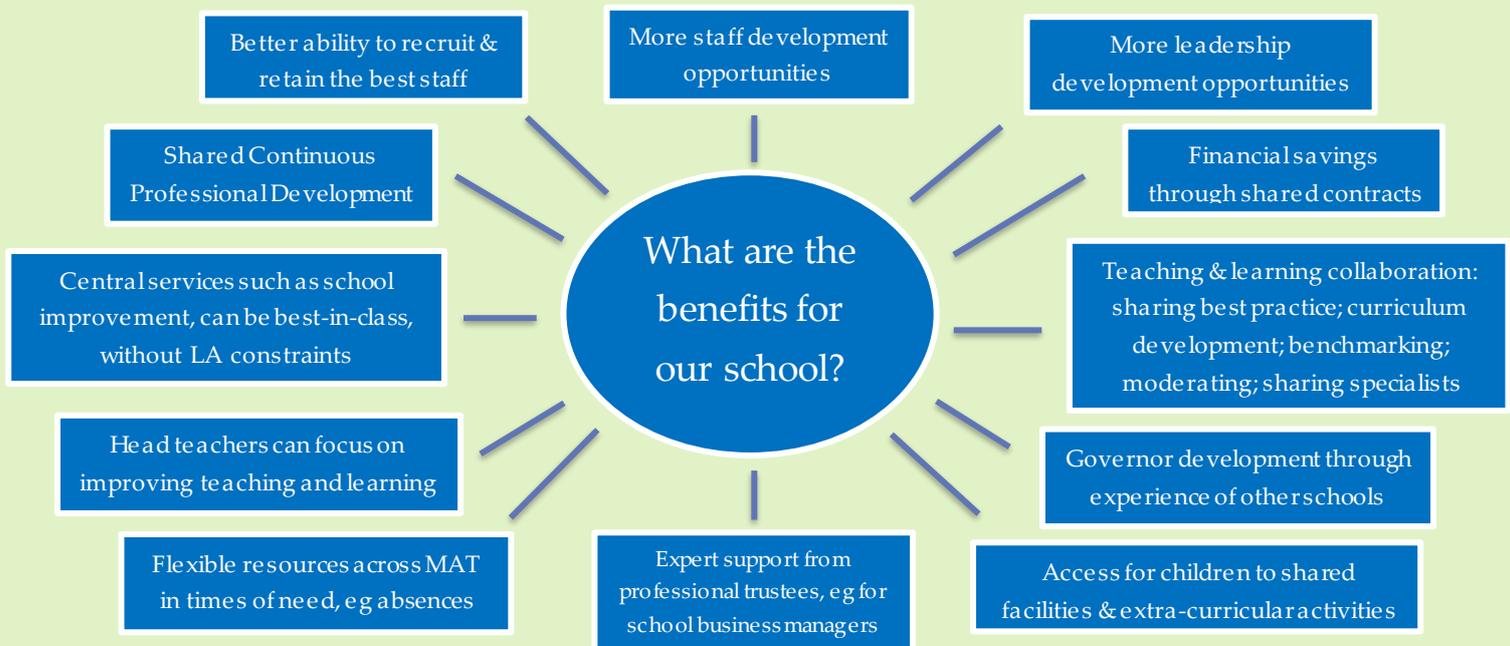
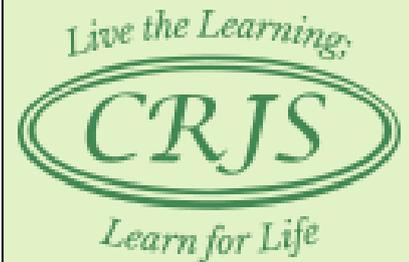
In the future, Government wants maintained schools to become **academies**, no longer under the control of a local authority. Government expects the schools [now academies] to create or join a **Multi-Academy Trust [MAT]**, effectively a group of academies under the control of a not-for-profit trust, a legal entity not unlike a charity. MATs can be comprised of primary or secondary schools or a combination of both.

Most trusts will have a board of between 7 and 11 **trustees**, an appropriately skilled team who would be accountable to Government for the performance of the academies. The MAT then delegates management authority down to the individual academies within the MAT and whilst this might vary across MATs, it is common for academies to retain a full **Governing Body** with much the same responsibilities as currently, but accountable now to the trust rather than to the Local Authority.

Several schools have already become academies in our area:

Schools in Surrey have been progressive and several that you will recognize have become academies in the last 2 or 3 years:

Connaught Primary in Bagshot and **Ravenscote** Junior in Camberley have both become single academies and both have ambitions to expand to MATs; **Cordwalles** Junior in Camberley and **Hammond** Junior in Lightwater have joined the GLF Trust, a MAT of 17 and growing; **The Grove** Primary in Frimley is part of the Kite Academy Trust, a local MAT of 5 academies. So we are not the first to consider this and not alone of the remaining LA schools in considering academisation.



What are our key concerns and how might we manage the risk?

A poorly set up or structured MAT would negate the benefits:

- We would undertake very careful due diligence and consult experts to manage this risk.

Our school could lose our identity and uniqueness:

- Any MAT agreement we enter must ensure we retain our own school ethos and values.

Set up could distract our Senior Leadership Team and governors away from the important short term needs of the school:

- We will operate to a timetable that ensures conversion is possible without losing short term focus on our children's education.

Academisation is not a guaranteed route to school improvement:

- We need to make the right choices to maximize likelihood of success. We must ensure that our specific needs as a school can be met by the MAT that we would either create or join.

Future legislation might change everything:

- We can't determine or predict future changes to legislation; we can only try to understand the current landscape. Whilst Government has backed down on legislation for blanket introduction of academies, the determination is clear and momentum is high. Regardless, we clearly see the benefits and have the confidence to move forward, also in the knowledge that this view is shared by many other local schools.

What are the key factors that we will consider when deciding on the academy options?

- Collaboration is key and best achieved with relative proximity, so the MAT should be **local**.
- **Like-minded** schools with similar high ambition and commonality of vision and ethos.
- We require a **primary school** focus for the MAT rather than secondary, certainly in the short to medium term.
- There must be a clear **long term strategy** for the MAT, not just a focus on creating it.
- Key **central support services** will be required to replace those received from the local authority, such as school improvement.