

**Does this mean the two schools are merging? Will you change the class structures? How does this impact admissions? How will you ensure each school keeps its individual identity?**

The two schools will remain legally separate, with separate league tables and separate Ofsted and SIAMS inspections.

There are no plans to change class structures unless future pupil numbers change dramatically. Admissions will continue to function as currently, with each school maintaining the current admissions criteria and parents/carers able to list the two schools separately on the admissions forms.

In order to ensure a managed workload for staff and to maximise the benefits, there will be a single governing body and a single Chair of Governors across both schools from 1 September 2020.

All those involved in leading the school, will be looking to ensure that both schools continue to improve and flourish and that both schools will maintain their separate ethos and strong community links. Each school will continue to have its own values and vision, as well as maintaining and strengthening long-term partnerships with its local church, Parish Council and other community organisations. School names and uniform will not change.

**What benefits are you expecting from the change?**

It will offer greater sustainability to both relatively small schools. The two schools have always worked together in many ways, including sharing school trips and events and, more recently, in sharing provision for keyworker children at Swaffham Prior. We expect to be able to do more such shared activities in the future, and to benefit from sharing equipment and resources across both schools. The office staff have also worked in parallel and this will enable them to work together more effectively.

We are confident that staff will benefit from being part of a larger staff team and having counterparts in terms of year groups with whom they can collaborate and continue to improve the provision and outcomes for pupils. In primary schools, there are multiple subject leader roles as well as additional areas of responsibility such as Pupil Premium which often mean teachers in small schools are unable to focus on one specialist area. The advantage of close collaboration is that expertise in specific subjects can be developed and shared.

**Will the curriculum change?**

The new Ofsted Framework, and associated guidance means all schools are currently reviewing their curriculum. This is an area in which the two schools were already working closely together, with common materials that are then modified to meet the needs of each school and each class.

**Will Mrs Bartley have sufficient time to meet the needs of each school? How will this impact other staffing?**

This is something that Mrs Bartley will be working through with Mr Buddle (HT Swaffham Bulbeck) over the rest of this term. Within both schools there is ample leadership experience to reinforce strong leadership teams in both schools. The aim is to make this arrangement successful and bring

benefits in terms of increased capacity for both. Other DEMAT village schools have seen strong benefits of moving to a shared headship model, and we will learn from their experience of how to make it work.

### **Where will Mrs Bartley be based?**

She will share her time equally between the two sites – exact timetables will be arranged and shared before September. She will remain available to talk to parents as both Headteachers are now.

### **Who will I contact when Mrs Bartley is at the other school?**

If needed you can contact her wherever she is based that day. Meetings will still be booked through the relevant school offices. Some of the previous headteacher responsibilities will be assigned to members of staff that are based in each school and we will notify parents of the final arrangements at the start of the autumn term.

### **What experience does Mrs Bartley bring that will enable her to effectively lead both schools?**

Mrs Bartley has worked in the education sector for over 20 years both internationally and in the UK. She has a range of leadership experience from large inner-city schools to small rural schools that she can bring to the role. This is a new role for her, but we will be able to access the experience of other DEMAT heads who have similarly moved from being head in one school to being head across more than one school.

Mrs Bartley has had an excellent impact at Swaffham Prior, with the school regularly receiving praise from both DEMAT and the Local Authority. It is now regularly offered to other schools as an example of good practice. Prior to her role at Swaffham Prior, Mrs Bartley was responsible for Teaching and Learning at St Andrew's Soham. A school with almost 500 pupils and a teaching staff of over 20.

She has also worked closely with Mr Buddle over the past year as we have worked to develop our new school curriculum, and more recently has been running the combined Key Worker provision for both Swaffham Prior & Swaffham Bulbeck.

### **Could the benefits be achieved, while maintaining two Headteachers?**

While some of the benefits could be achieved, on balance the decision has been made that this is the best long-term leadership model that will bring both short term benefits and long-term sustainability. It is a model that has worked well at a number of other DEMAT schools of similar size and will bring added sustainability to both schools.

### **How was the decision made?**

As described in the main letter, Mr Buddle has decided to move on to a new opportunity located closer to his home so that he can spend more time with his young family. Since both schools are now

academies, the authority to select and appoint a headteacher and chair of governors lies with DEMAT. DEMAT has had good success with moving to shared headship models in other pairs of schools of a similar size to ours.

We intend that the details of the new structure will be a consultative process involving staff and governors throughout this summer term, so that everyone has the opportunity to express any concerns and to contribute their ideas for maximising the benefits.

If you would like to have a more detailed discussion about the changes, please contact the Chair of Governors ([chair@swaffhamprior.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:chair@swaffhamprior.cambs.sch.uk)) or come along to one of our parent zoom sessions.

### **Who will be Chair of Governors? Who will the governors be?**

DEMAT has initiated a process to select a Chair of Governors across the two schools, and define the structure and selection process for the new joint governing body. The intent is to make sure that both schools will be fairly represented – for example there will be at least one parent/carer governor from each school and at least one staff governor from each school, as well as other community governors (who may also be parents/carers). The new Governing Body will be in place from September. There will be a need to ensure the membership of the new governing body fairly represents both school communities and is made up of governors with the right skill set. This is to ensure high quality governance and support both schools and the Executive Headteacher moving forward in the best way possible.