

Academy Information Evening for parents: **Tuesday 28th January 2025**

Questions raised:

1. What changed to allow the school to consider The Prospect Trust (TPT)?

The Department for Education (DfE) model articles of association stipulate the charitable purpose, governance structure and procedures for each trust. They reflect best practice and trust boards are encouraged to adopt them and stay up to date with any changes. In September 2023, the DfE published new model articles for church trusts which allowed St Mark's School to consider The Prospect Trust.

2. It has been shared that recruiting leadership is very challenging – what advantages are there of being in the trust to help with this?

The responsibility for recruitment moves from the Governing Body to TPT. The Trust is well thought of as an employer and as a result attracts high quality applications. Recruitment and retention within the trust is strong. Many small schools are financially unable to recruit a Headteacher and having an Executive Head covering a few schools, like we currently have at St Mark's, is now a common model.

3. What will happen to the current staff and their contracts?

There is a process called TUPE and all staff contracts will TUPE over to TPT. Under TUPE, employment terms and conditions are transferred and continuity of employment is maintained.

4. We seem to be a good small school, with good results...so why change?

Being part of a bigger organisation has many benefits and staff have already been working collaboratively with staff from Frimley CE Junior School on areas such as curriculum development. The St Mark's values align closely with those of Frimley and TPT and we can learn and develop from each other. Financially, there is more scope and opportunity when you are working with bigger numbers. As explained previously, it is not financially viable for many small schools to secure their own full time Headteacher – as has been the case at St Mark's for several years now.

5. How will the St Mark's children and families benefit?

There will be secure leadership, more opportunities for children and families (ie to attend sports events at Frimley like we've already started doing), opportunities to share resources from the 6th Form College and visit there and take part in cross Trust events like concerts etc. It supports us with preparing children for life beyond St Mark's.

6. What do the staff at St Mark's think about it?

Mrs Smith spoke about staff's initial reservations about the leadership model that started in September 2024. It was unclear how communication would work between the 3 different leaders. It has become very clear that due to the close working relationships of Mrs Wright, Mrs Jones and Mrs Williams it has worked very successfully. Staff are very positive about the opportunities that being part of TPT could bring to St Mark's. Staff have already had the opportunity of working collaboratively with members of the team at Frimley. Three staff from St Mark's have joined other staff from Frimley C of E Juniors, Tomlinscote and the 6th Form College on a Leadership Training program.