



SILVER BIRCH
ACADEMY TRUST

End of term update from the board of Silver Birch Academy Trust

We know that the last few weeks have seen a lot of activity across the trust, and we have been communicating as much as possible the steps that the restructured board of trustees has taken to address the issues raised by the ESFA and concerns voiced by parents/carers.

It is the board's intention to be as open and transparent as possible and to address as many of the questions raised as we can while protecting the rights of all those involved. We are committed to maintaining the flow of information throughout the summer holiday. Any updates will be posted on the websites of each of the schools as well as the trust's website.

Before term ends, we would like to re-cap on the decisions taken so far.

Finding out what has gone wrong

We are determined to find out what has gone wrong and respond appropriately. We have launched a comprehensive independent investigation which will be carried out by KPMG, a major audit firm. Its findings will be shared in full, with the Department for Education.

The investigation will examine:

- The trust's management and its financial conduct
- The decisions, actions and events that led the trust to its current position

The investigation will be phased but, due to the complexities of the issues being reviewed, it is unlikely to conclude before September this year. The board cannot pre-empt the final report of the investigation but will act on findings as or when relevant.

Decision to ask for schools to be rebrokered

The board has reviewed what actions need to be taken in the best interest of staff and children and, given the current situation, it believes that moving the schools to one or more trusts is the best decision. The board has asked the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) to rebroker all four schools to one or more trusts. Once a trust has requested rebrokerage, the next steps, including identification of one or more new trusts, is decided by the RSC with the best interests of the children being paramount. The RSC will identify trusts that have a proven track record and

capacity to support the schools and may take the view that it is in the best interests of the pupils that more than one trust is involved.

The board will continue to lead the work across the trust to take the right steps to create the most stable and productive environment possible.

The trust which requested the rebrokering cannot influence either the process or the choice of trust to which the school(s) is/are transferred. Clearly, all parties work as quickly as possible to minimise any disruption to the school(s) involved.

Our responsibilities to staff

In the case of schools moving from one trust to another, a TUPE process for staff will need to be followed. The schools will continue to function as normal and the identified trust/s will consult with staff so that the transition is as seamless as possible.

In the interim, the board of trustees has been alerted to the fact that a previously agreed and appropriate pay award for teachers and support staff has not been actioned. The board has made arrangements for this award to be implemented in full – including back pay.

We appreciate this is not an easy time for parents/carers and staff, but we are confident that the steps being taken now will build on the schools' strengths and address their weaknesses. This will place them on a much surer footing for the start of next term and a clear course towards improvement.

ENDS

