

27 November 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Initially, we would like to thank you for your continued support during these challenging times. This is certainly a year like no other. The work of schools and Trusts continues during these unprecedented times, and the purpose of this letter is to let you know of a significant development for the NEMAT schools.

During recent months, NEMAT has been in regular communication with the Regional Schools Commissioner regarding the future direction of the Trust. Following numerous discussions, it has been decided the best option to strengthen NEMAT, support rapid school improvement and to share good practice from our existing schools is to merge with another local Multi-Academy Trust.

Following conversations with a number of different Multi-Academy Trusts, to identify those with similar vision, values and ethos to NEMAT, the Trust Board have selected their preferred choice as the Bridge Academy Trust (BAT). BAT is made up of 2 secondary schools, 3 primary schools, 1 junior school and 2 infant schools. These are Moulsham High School, Ongar Academy, Chipping Ongar Primary, High Ongar Primary, Mildmay Junior, Mildmay Infant & Nursery, Oaklands Infant and Ongar Primary.

Following a period of due diligence by both Trusts, NEMAT Trustees made a resolution to join Bridge Academy Trust and this week Bridge Academy Trust Trustees also made a resolution for NEMAT to join Bridge Academy Trust.

The next steps are that this resolution is put before the Regional Commissioners Headteacher's Board in December and, if approved, the wheels are put in motion to proceed with the merger. The proposed date of the merger is 1 April 2021, but this is in the hands of the Regional School Commissioner's (DFE) office and the legal teams and the date may be later in the Summer Term. The Headteacher Board Agenda will be published next week and further details explaining how you can make representations to RSC will be circulated.

*Why have the trustees made this resolution and what are the benefits for NEMAT & BAT?*

- It will allow for greater collaboration at both infant, primary and secondary phases. The increase in the sharing of resources, best practice and common solutions can only benefit our staff and then, ultimately, the children.
- It will add capacity to support all the schools to implement school improvement plans.
- There will be more professional development opportunities for our staff to develop their knowledge and experience, possible job opportunities and progression. These opportunities mean we can support and retain our high-quality staff whilst providing new opportunities for others, thus enhancing the offer our children receive.
- The increase in MAT size will mean that we can procure more efficiencies for our schools, putting more resources back into school improvement. This would mean not only maintaining what we currently offer our schools, but potentially enhancing the support available.
- It will fulfil our agreed growth strategy and is geographically local for our collaboration and community vision
- It fulfils our commitment to enhancing the wider provision for children, staff and communities as an outward-facing Multi Academy Trust.

It has been agreed that NEMAT will be dissolved and all schools will become part of the Bridge Academy Trust. Mark Farmer will continue to be the Chief Executive Officer of Bridge Academy



Trust and Rob James (current NEMAT CEO) will be Deputy CEO. BAT trustees will remain the governing authority and several existing NEMAT trustees will join the Board. Local Governing Bodies at each school will be retained but be renamed Local Governing Committees.

If you would like to ask any questions about this merger, please send them to: [mergerquestions@nematrust.com](mailto:mergerquestions@nematrust.com). We will collate the emails and produce a FAQs document for circulation.

The Headteacher Board Agenda will be published next week and will contain an email address if you wish to make representations. You can provide views or comments on the transfer from the publication of the agenda until five working days before the Headteacher Board meeting. Details will be available using this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/east-of-england-and-north-east-london-headteacher-board>

This merger between NEMAT and BAT provides us with the opportunity to improve the education provision of all the schools in both Trusts.

We will update you with further information about the consultation process and decision of the Headteacher Board as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully



Rob James  
Chief Executive Officer  
NEMAT



David Gask  
Chair of Trustees  
NEMAT