

Frome Valley CE First School; Milborne St Andrew First School; Piddle Valley CE First School;

Puddletown CE First School; St Mary’s CE Middle School.

Dear Parents/Carers

In April of this year your child’s school, in conjunction with four other schools in the St Mary’s mini-pyramid, joined together to form the Greenwood Tree Academy Trust (GTAT). The government has been encouraging schools to form Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) for a number of years and it is quite likely that most schools in England will have converted to academies within the life of this current parliament. We hope that many of you will have already heard about GTAT but we are very aware that we have not actively publicised the organisation until this newsletter. However, the staff and governors of the five member schools will be aware of GTAT and of the general role that it plays within their schools.

GTAT is a Multi-Academy Trust. It has a Board of Directors comprised of eleven Directors (three of whom are Headteachers of GTAT schools), four Members and a Senior Leadership Team of a part-time Executive Headteacher and a full-time Business Manager. Each of the five schools retain their own Local Governing Bodies and these, together with the Headteacher of each school, continue to manage most of the day-to-day running of their own schools. GTAT also has three committees, Finance, Human Resources and Standards. These committees meet on at least two occasions each term to formulate policy, analyse pupil performance data, monitor overall school performance, manage finances, etc.

We are very grateful to St Mary’s Middle School for the use of an area of their school which functions as a central administrative area and a meeting room. It is situated in one of the old changing rooms in the basement part of the school and has become known as ‘The GTAT Hub’.

GTAT has formulated its own development plan. This plan contains action plans for six key areas of development and the progress of these is evaluated at various stages during the school year. It also contains a vision statement; see below.

*Our vision is to create a family of outstanding schools with clear purpose, direction and objectives. The development of high quality teaching and learning is at the forefront of our thinking and of our actions. Our vision is to develop schools where children enjoy and are engaged in a rich and relevant curriculum tailored to their individual needs, which empowers them to achieve their full potential. GTAT is committed to creating and fostering a culture of high aspiration amongst all pupils, regardless of their social, economic or cultural background. As an integral part of The Dorchester Area School Partnership (DASP), GTAT is also committed to the development of attitudes and approaches that produce a lifelong learning ethos and which provides opportunities for excellent progress to be made by all learners.*

Put simply, GTAT is here to provide support, guidance and challenge to each of the five schools to enable them to provide the optimum learning environment for every one of the children in their care.

I have been serving as the Interim Executive Headteacher of GTAT on a part-time basis since June in order to help the Trust during the initial ‘set-up’ period. Prior to this appointment, I have been the Headteacher of five schools in Poole and Dorset over a period of twenty-two years. I also work as a School Evaluation Partner (SEP) for eight Dorset schools and will continue in this role with two of the GTAT schools in January. Paul Chadwick has now been appointed to the role of Executive Headteacher and will take up the post on a permanent basis from January. Paul is currently the Headteacher of Dorchester Middle School and has vast Headship experience. As an active member of DASP for many years, he obviously knows the local area very well. I have been working closely with him during the past few weeks to ensure that there is a smooth transition. Tracey Hill is the Trust Business Manager and can be contacted, if required, on the St Mary’s Middle School phone number (extension 5) or by e-mail at: ***tbm@greenwoodtree.academy***

I have made a promise to the schools that I would keep this introductory newsletter to one page. However, the intention is that there will now be communication with you on at least one occasion each term. In the meantime, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in GTAT for their support; it has been a genuine pleasure to work with such a committed and talented team of staff, governors and directors and, on the occasions that I meet them, such polite, courteous, enthusiastic and hard working children. I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Yours faithfully

Geoff Pike

GTAT Executive Headteacher