



Update on the proposed merger between The Four Stones MAT and Shropshire Gateway Educational Trust

Dear Parents/Carers,

We write with an update on the proposed merger and to share with you some of the outcomes of processes completed over recent weeks.

We are pleased to inform you that, following the June Advisory Board meeting, we have now received formal approval from the Department of Education to proceed with the merger. This means that the Department for Education will now support the two Trusts to work together to make the necessary arrangements to merge by the target date of 1st November 2025.

The outcome of the stakeholder consultation can be found on our Trust websites.

As two relatively small Trusts, we believe that uniting our schools into one Trust will ensure a high-quality focus on learning and experiences for children and young people in our care, whilst also increasing efficiency and the ability to drive high quality and sustained change within schools. As an organisation of 7 schools with more than 4300 pupils we believe we can increase collaboration, share best practice and better provide opportunities to children and young people, staff and communities than if we remain as two separate organisations.

There are expert staff and excellent leaders in both Trusts. Merging the current school improvement and central teams will support us in delivering an overall improved offer within the Trust. A highly effective School Improvement Team with experienced primary, secondary, SEND, safeguarding, subject and personal development specialists, will ensure our provision is the best it can be. It will create further resource to ensure a sharp focus on meeting the needs of disadvantaged children and young people, those with additional needs and special talents, and will ensure inspirational learning for all.

As efficiencies emerge, we will be able to attract and retain high quality staff as well as drive improvement where needed. By having 7 schools, the new Trust will be able to access annual buildings' funding (known as school condition allocations - SCA) to allow for better strategic planning in estates management. In addition, the consolidation of trust reserves across 7 schools supports resilience to the financial pressures education currently faces. We are living in a time of significant educational reform with OFSTED consultations, curriculum reviews, SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) reforms and a Schools Bill. A larger Trust is better able to cope with change and uncertainty both in the context of the education landscape and financially. Every school in the Trust will be stronger by being part of our family of schools.

We thank you for your continued support in this process and will continue to share information as we progress on this journey.

Mark Pollard

Mark Pollard
(CEO, The Four Stones MAT)

Katie Jones

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(CEO, Shropshire Gateway Educational Trust)