



Department
for Education

Office of the Regional Schools Commissioner for
North West London and South Central
34 Clarendon Road
Watford
WD17 1JJ

Email: RSC.SCNWLON@education.gov.uk

Jennifer Oukherfalla
Parent

By email: jennifer.oukherfalla@me.com

14 April 2022

Dear Mrs Oukherfalla,

Thank you for your emails dated 23 March and 2 April regarding your concerns about changes at Holland Park School (HPS).

As you are already aware, on 2 November 2021, the Education and Skills Funding Agency issued a 'Notice to Improve' in respect of HPS which highlighted concerns relating to the governance and oversight of financial management by the Board, prior to the arrival of the new Chair and other trustees in September 2021. A copy of the Notice can be found [here](#). One of the conditions of the Notice was that the trust should consider starting the process for moving the school into a multi academy trust (MAT).

It is important to note that joining a MAT is not reserved for failing schools, it is something all schools are encouraged to consider and there are clear benefits whatever stage a school is at on its school improvement journey. These include facilitating better collaboration, directing resources to where they are needed most, and enabling our best leaders to support a greater number of schools. In this case, given the serious concerns identified, the Department has asked the trust board to explore whether the school's longer term interests would be best served by joining a MAT which could offer robust and established systems of governance and oversight.

The HPS Trust Board are leading the process for deciding whether and which MAT would be best for the school to join given the challenges it has faced. Trustees have set out a number of criteria against which they have considered proposals. Those criteria underline the board's firm intention to protect the school's unique character and place in London's education landscape as well as ensuring the school remains a key player within the family of schools in the Royal Borough. The criteria also make clear that parents and carers must continue to be highly involved as part of the school's community and, of course, the MAT must have the capacity to improve even further on the high standards that are such an important feature of HPS.

I note your comments about parent governor representation on the HPS Trust Board. You will be aware that the process is underway to appoint new parent governors. If you have continuing concerns, I would suggest that you raise them directly with the Board.

You will be also aware that the HPS Trust Board has resolved to enter into a due diligence process with United Learning Academy Trust and a period of stakeholder engagement is underway. When it is in a position to do so, the board will submit a formal proposal to me, which I will consider with advice from my Advisory Board.

Stakeholder engagement is an important part of the process in advance of the Advisory Board discussion and my expectation is that there will be significant engagement so that parents and staff can contribute their views in advance of a formal proposal being submitted by the board.

This is obviously a worrying time for parents and students in the school. My colleagues in the department are working with the Board to offer every support in addressing the challenges that the school faces during this period of uncertainty.

Thank you for your interest in supporting Holland Park School.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "K. Dethridge". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dame Kate Dethridge
Regional Schools Commissioner, North West London and South Central