

28 January 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

### **Consultation on a Proposal for Milford School to Join LEO Multi-Academy Trust**

As Governors, we seek to ensure that Milford School continues to provide a happy, nurturing and high-quality education for every child, both now and in the years ahead. With this firmly in mind, we are writing to share information about a proposal we are currently exploring and, most importantly, to invite your views.

As you are aware following our previous letter the Governing Body has been carefully considering whether joining a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) could help strengthen and secure Milford's future. In November 2025, the Governing Body agreed to begin the formal process of applying to join **LEO Multi-Academy Trust (LEO)** and, in January 2026, an application was submitted to the Department for Education (DfE).

This is the start of a process, not a final decision. The process will take several months, and only if approval is received from the DfE will the Governing Body and LEO then decide whether to proceed. No change will happen without careful consideration at every stage. The Governing Body hopes to make a final decision in the second half of 2026, with the aim of joining LEO Academy Trust in September 2026 for the start of the 2026–27 school year. However, this is a complex process, so these dates may change.

### **Consultation**

We are now entering a formal consultation period and are keen to hear from parents, carers, staff and other members of our school community. The consultation will run from **today and will end on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2026** and all feedback received during this time will be carefully considered by the Governing Body before any final decision is made.

Your thoughts, questions and views are very important to us and we will be providing opportunities for you to hear directly from Governors and representatives of the LEO leadership team, and to ask any questions you may have:

- **Via email:** by submitting questions to the Governors and LEO in our dedicated email box: **matconsultation@milford.surrey.sch.uk**
- **In person:** at the school at **7.00pm on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026**
- **Online:** on **Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February at 11am**. Please use this [link](#) to register and you will receive an invitation that you can use to access the meeting.

### **What this consultation covers**

This consultation document explains:

- What a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) is
- Why the Governors believe joining a MAT is right for Milford
- Why LEO has been identified as a strong potential partner

## **What is a Multi-Academy Trust?**

A MAT is a charitable organisation that oversees a group of schools. It takes on many responsibilities that would otherwise sit with the local authority, particularly in areas such as supporting the quality of education, finance, HR, IT, estates and catering. This allows schools to focus more of their time and energy on teaching, learning and supporting children and their families.

There are over 1,300 MATs in England, supporting nearly 11,000 schools. MATs can vary widely in size, stages of education, and geographical coverage. Some MATs are very localised and others include schools from a much wider area.

Additionally, the operating ethos of MATs can vary significantly – some have a more centralised approach, proscribing in detail such things as curriculum, policies and uniform. Other MATs give their member schools greater discretion in such matters with the MAT focussing on those areas where centralised expertise and economies of scale will most benefit the schools.

## **Why are we considering joining a MAT?**

Support provided by local authorities has significantly reduced over recent years, making it increasingly challenging for small schools like Milford to access specialist support quickly and effectively - particularly in areas such as SEND and inclusion.

Joining the right MAT can:

- Provide timely access to high-quality educational and specialist support
- Reduce the administrative burden on school leaders
- Provide proactive and cost-effective support services
- Create opportunities for collaboration with other schools
- Offer enhanced professional development opportunities for staff

Milford has made strong progress in recent years under the leadership of Sara Cox, and the Governors believe that joining the *right* MAT could help the school build on this momentum and continue to thrive. Looking ahead, a revised national curriculum is expected by 2027, and an Ofsted inspection is due in early 2028. Being part of a supportive MAT could help Milford prepare confidently for these future developments.

We recognise that joining a MAT is a significant step and that the Governors would be entrusting the school's future to the MAT. That is why choosing the right partner is absolutely critical.

## **Why LEO?**

Governors have carefully explored a number of MAT options, always placing Milford's children, values, ethos and community at the heart of discussions. In November 2025, we agreed to begin the formal application process with LEO. The choice of MAT is often influenced by geographical location and relationships with other schools. However, there is no MAT that is centred on the Godalming area and the school to which most Milford children move on to, The Chandler C of E Junior School, is not currently a member of a MAT.

LEO was formed in 2015 and now serves over 5,000 pupils across 12 primary schools in Surrey and the London Borough of Sutton, with a strong focus on primary, early years and inclusive education.

Governors believe LEO is a strong potential partner for Milford because:

- Its philosophy of “*every child counts*” closely aligns with Milford’s values
- It works collaboratively with schools and does not impose unnecessary change
- Day-to-day school life, including uniform and identity, would largely remain the same
- It has strong expertise in SEND, early years and inclusion
- It offers dedicated EYFS support, wellbeing provision and digital learning opportunities
- There is a strong emphasis on flourishing communities
- It is large enough to offer meaningful support, but small enough for Milford’s voice to be heard
- Both the school and LEO agree that Milford’s location presents no significant practical challenges

Further information about LEO can be found on its website - <https://www.leoacademytrust.co.uk/>

### **How can you take part?**

We welcome and encourage all parents and carers to engage in the consultation by:

- Attending one of the consultation meetings, either in person or online
- Sharing your views in writing by emailing: **matconsultation@milford.surrey.sch.uk**

All feedback received during the consultation period will be carefully considered by the Governing Body before any decision is made.

Thank you for taking the time to engage with this important process. We look forward to hearing from you.

With kind regards,

Darragh Jones  
Chair of Governors

Sara Cox  
Headteacher