



The Vineyard School
Friars Stile Road, Richmond, Surrey TW10 6NE

Dear Families,

Academisation Consultation – Proposed Formal Conversion to Bourne Education Trust

As shared in our recent newsletters, The Vineyard School became an associate member of Bourne Education Trust (BET) on 1st January 2026. This milestone followed a full term of mutual due diligence, during which both organisations explored how we work, lead, and support our communities. It became clear that BET is the right fit for us, with strong alignment to our vision and values, and a shared commitment to excellence, inclusion and providing the very best opportunities for our pupils and staff.

Our vision is that every child develops a lifelong love of learning and leaves The Vineyard as a curious, motivated learner who strives to achieve their personal best. Our values—caring, courageous and curious—are at the heart of everything we do, guiding our decisions, relationships and the culture of our school. We believe that joining BET will help us further realise this vision and embed our values in all aspects of school life, ensuring our pupils continue to flourish in a supportive and ambitious environment where they are happy and feel safe.

Building on this partnership, the school's leadership and governing body now propose formally joining BET as an academy under the Academies Act 2010. We believe this step will help us further strengthen our ability to deliver our vision and values for every child. As the next stage in this process, we are launching a period of consultation with parents, carers, and our wider community. We are seeking your views on two key proposals:

- Converting to academy status and formally joining BET, with effect from 1st December 2026
- Moving to BET's term dates from 1st September 2027

BET was established in 2011 and is now responsible for 16,500 pupils and over 2,300 staff across 26 academies and 9 associate schools in Hampshire, London and Surrey. The Trust is organised into clusters to support strong collaboration, and every school retains its own Head and Local Governing Committee. All schools, regardless of size or phase, have an equal voice, are represented in Trust decision-making, and key decisions about school culture and day-to-day running remain local. The Trust is led by a core team comprising Alex Russell, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Penny Alford, Deputy CEO, and a team of Directors.

How to take part in the consultation

We invite you to join us to find out more about how this will impact The Vineyard, to share your views and ask questions at our consultation meetings:

- Thursday 12th February, 7pm: Online - [Google Meets](#)
- Friday 13th February, 9am: In person at The Vineyard School

Telephone: 020 8948 0195
info@vineyard.richmond.sch.uk



Representatives from both BET and The Vineyard will be available to answer your questions during these meetings.

Frequently asked questions about the proposed conversion are attached to this email as a separate document, linked [here](#) and are also available as a paper copy on request from the school office.

Thank you for taking the time to share your views. If you feel you already have sufficient information, please go ahead and complete the [consultation form](#). If you still have questions, we suggest waiting until after the consultation meeting(s) where we hope to address them, and then completing the form afterwards. You may also email your views to consultation@bourne.education. The consultation will run from **6th February to 13th March 2026**.

If you have any further questions or would like to discuss the proposals, please contact Frances directly at headteacher@vineyard.richmond.sch.uk

Yours sincerely,

Frances Bracegirdle, Headteacher, and Antony Cook, Chair of Governors