Dear Parents,

We are writing to inform you that the Governors at Dormansland are currently exploring a number of options for our school with regards to the national government’s academy agenda.

The government is promoting the conversion of all locally maintained schools into academies. This is a cross-party agreement, which means that academisation will still be an expectation for all schools in time, no matter which party is in power. That said, there are currently no given deadlines and it is to our advantage that we have time to explore a range of possibilities, at our own pace.

This term, the Governors at Dormansland have set up a working party to look in greater detail at the various options available to us at this stage. In essence, these options are to join an already established charitable Academy Trust or to form a collaborative partnership with other schools, either in a federation or part of a Multi Academy Trust. We strongly believe that Dormansland has much to offer other schools and should take the initiative in exploring all options available to us.

We want to reassure all parents that our primary objectives in searching for an academy partnership for Dormansland, at the appropriate time, are the retention of both complete autonomy for our school leadership and the school’s identity at the heart of our local village community. A decision will only be reached when we are satisfied that it will support and enhance our school provision for every child and that it provides a sustainable school model for the future and all those children and families yet to attend.

We are mindful of the fact that, while Surrey have deemed us now to be a ‘good’ school, in the public domain we still retain the ‘requires improvement’ assessment of the November 2013 Ofsted inspection report, a label we are confident that we will lose in favour of ‘good’ at our next inspection. However, until this visit happens, we are vulnerable in the academy process, as we would currently require a sponsor school to help us to become an academy and would run the risk of losing both our autonomy and our choice of academy options.

We are fully aware that ‘becoming an academy’ is regarded as an emotive issue, fuelled by the often unhelpful, national media coverage of schools forced into academy status, horror stories of failing academy chains and other, more local, negative media stories. However, while we are not yet in any position to reach a conclusion about the future of Dormansland within the wider academy arena, we would be foolish not to equip ourselves with our own well-balanced and
properly researched information about the advantages and potential issues that becoming an academy might pose.

The Governors will continue to keep you updated with our research process over the coming months and we will, of course, let you know as soon as we are in a position to bring an idea to you for full consultation as key stakeholders in our school community.

In the meantime, if you have any further questions or feel that this initial information has not been well enough explained, please do not hesitate to contact either David (chairofgovs@dormansland.surrey.sch.uk) or myself (head@dormansland.surrey.sch.uk) directly, and we will be more than happy to help.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Stokes
Head Teacher

David Orringe
Chair of the Governing Body