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Dear Parents / Carers

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of WCAT, I am pleased to be able to let you know that, following detailed consideration, the Regional Schools Commissioner for Lancashire and West Yorkshire, Vicky Beer, has provisionally identified the preferred new trust for Bell Lane Academy. The Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) has followed a careful, considered process to identify preferred new trusts for each of the WCAT schools. The next stage is to discuss this with parents, teachers and staff, governors, unions and other groups with an interest, so that the RSC and her team can hear your views before final decisions are taken.

The preferred trust for Bell Lane Academy is Outwood Grange Academies Trust. In determining this preferred trust, the RSC has carefully considered the best possible partnership for the school. Taking into account the expertise and experience of the preferred new trust, the RSC believes that the preferred trust has the capacity to support and facilitate the academy to build its capacity, and to become self-improving within a strong, stable, supportive and challenging environment.

A new partnership with a trust that has a good school improvement plan is a great opportunity for Bell Lane Academy. I fully expect Bell Lane Academy's strengths to be built upon, and areas for development rapidly addressed, using the skills and expertise of all school staff. Our parents and communities deserve the very best education for their children and our staff deserve to be provided with the conditions to deliver the highest standard of exciting and innovative teaching in order to improve student outcomes.

Your headteachers and Chairs of Local Governing Bodies have begun their dialogue with the preferred trust today, and there will shortly be opportunities for staff and parents to meet representatives from the preferred trusts. Service Level Agreements are now in place between WCAT and the preferred new trusts to provide immediate support. WCAT does, of course, remain legally responsible for its academies until they are formally transferred. The Service Level Agreement gives Outwood Grange Academies Trust the responsibility for delivering effective school improvement. This will enable Bell Lane Academy to immediately benefit from support from an outstanding trust, something that I recognise that WCAT can sadly no longer provide.

Once final decisions are taken by the RSC, taking account of the views of schools and local communities, we will set out detailed timescales for the transfer to take place.

I regret that WCAT was unable to develop the capacity to deliver the necessary school improvement infrastructure to support the majority of its academies to improve. All WCAT academies have strengths and we are committed to working with the RSC to make sure all the schools affected can look forward to a new partnership that is focused on school improvement and getting the best outcome for students, parents and teachers. There are many examples of best practice across the group of WCAT schools and the staff that work in the academies are fully committed to their work, highly able and have the students' best interests at heart.

There is now an opportunity for interested groups to share views on the provisional plans with the RSC before 7 November by contacting [academies.rebrokerage@education.gov.uk](mailto:academies.rebrokerage@education.gov.uk). Final decisions about the new trusts will only be taken once all of this information has been considered, in light of local discussions which are starting now.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Pickering', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

**Chris Pickering**  
Interim CEO