



# Godalming Confederation of Schools

## Newsletter

December 2007

**First Newsletter for all staff working in schools and other pupil settings**

**Message from the Confederation Director**

**December 2007**



*Dear Colleagues*

*I am very happy to be writing to you in what is the first of what I hope will be a series of short newsletters for everyone working in Godalming schools. I want to tell you about the Godalming Confederation\* and the opportunities it can offer to children, their families and to staff, and to invite you to work with us right from the beginning.*

*Do please take a look below at what this is all about and let me know what you think; particularly if you have ideas and thoughts about areas where we need to work together now to do more for our children and their families. I also want to learn how this confederation can best work with you to help you succeed as you wish to do.*

*I am contactable through Loseley Fields Primary School, my email addresses, or on my mobile. Please see details below*

*With very best wishes and seasonal greetings*

**Sue Dasey**

**Director, Godalming Confederation of Schools**

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*PS Do you like our logo? This was designed by Sophie Crust, a Year 4 pupil at St Edmund's Primary School. Well done Sophie!*

### **The Godalming Confederation of Schools**

#### **Who are we and why are we here?**

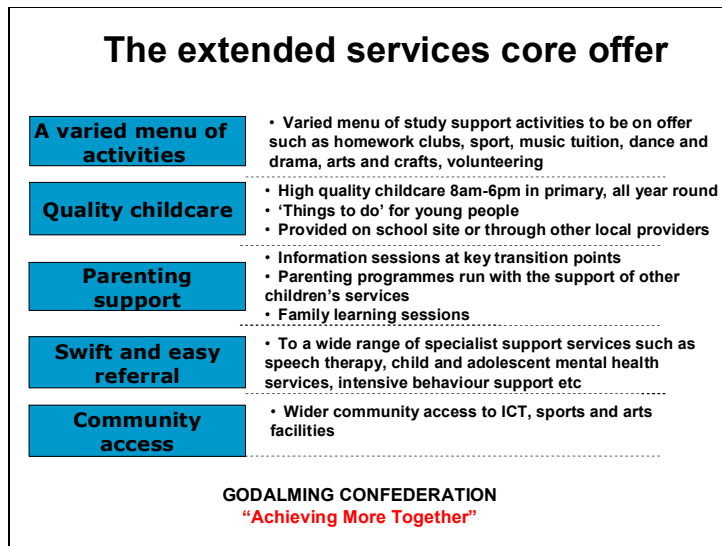
1. The confederation comprises 16 schools\* in and around Godalming, working together and with other partners to raise standards by delivering the Government's extended

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\* The participating schools are: Broadwater Secondary, Busbridge Junior, Busbridge Infant, The Chandler Junior, Godalming Junior, Farncombe Infant, Loseley Fields Primary, Milford School, Moss Lane School, Rodborough Secondary, St Edmund's Primary, St James Primary Elstead, St Mark's Primary, St Mary's Infant Shackleford, The Wharf Nursery School, Witley Infant

services “core offer” (see below). Our confederation is one of 24 in Surrey and schools range from the Wharf Nursery School to Broadwater and Rodborough Secondary Schools. The newly opened Loseley Fields Children’s Centre is also part of our Confederation.

2. Schools will be working together and with a broad range of partners to offer access to, or deliver, a wide range of services, activities, clubs and amenities to children and their parents to help ensure that children can enjoy and do their best at school. It means supporting parents and carers where needed, but it also means that staff can enjoy some of the other benefits of collaboration, including more training and development opportunities.



### What are we planning to do?

3. The 16 headteachers have worked up an initial action plan which identifies the following areas as key starting points:

- Working on particular areas and projects in school to raise attainment and thereby improve all children’s enjoyment and well being. These will include:
  - Children’s transition between phases and schools. This means working with parents and families as well as at developing and maintaining the very best in and between-school practice for all children.
  - Developing more swift and easy access to child and mental health services (CAMHs) and working with all children’s services colleagues, including educational psychologists, education welfare officers and social workers to remove barriers to learning outside the classroom.
  - Reviewing attendance, behaviour and inclusion across confederation schools
- Further developing leadership skills and access to CPD opportunities for all staff across confederation schools
- Reviewing all remaining core offer extended services areas following the results of consultation with parents, carers, schools, children’s services, private, public

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and voluntary sector colleagues and pupils. Immediately after Christmas, we will start by consulting parents and carers by questionnaire.

### **What have we done so far?**

5. We have done our initial audit of the services currently provided for children by schools and others and at some of the groups of children and families at whom we should be targeting our initial work. We met with the CAMHs and locality teams in November and December for example and we have planned some future work. The literacy coordinators at all 16 schools have met and are working on a cross-phase writing project to address any issues of levelling and at the same time give pupils an opportunity to showcase their work as they progress through school. Some pre-school transition work is also being planned. We have started discussions on attendance, behaviour and inclusion issues. Discussions have also taken place at some staff and governing body meetings.

6. We have begun to look at leadership and CPD across the confederation and hope to be setting up some combined training courses for TAs and others. Emotional literacy is one of these areas. We have also reviewed schools' new responsibilities for community cohesion. We hope also to get added value through setting up combined courses on issues such as first aid and fire training.

### **What is going to happen next?**

7. Communication is very important in all of this work. We are developing a confederation website which will carry news of confederation activities, provide linkages between all 16 schools and the children's centre and there will be a closed area for teaching professionals to share issues. Questionnaires will be sent out in the New Year to parents and carers first, to see what services they want and are prepared to pay for. Because many parents don't have access to a computer and might not want to come into school to complete the questionnaire, we will be meeting some selected groups in various face to face meetings. We will be sending you questionnaires too to seek your views and comments and I hope that you will invite me to some of your staff meetings or I can invite groups of you to talk about specific issues. SENCOs, Home-school Workers, school secretaries and bursars are near the top of my list at the moment.

8. As well as developing further the areas above, we will be "launching" the extended services confederation on the morning of Monday 14 January at Loseley Fields Primary School and Children's Centre. We are very pleased to say that Baroness Estelle Morris, former Secretary of State for Education and Skills, will be our key note speaker. Your Headteacher will be arranging who will represent your school in order to take back any key messages. Part of the work that morning will be to look at our draft action plan with schools, children's services and representatives of the community.

9. So please don't forget, your comments matter! What do you think? How can you become involved?

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