

From: Parent
To: David Hermitt <head@congleton.cheshire.sch.uk>
Date: 02/01/2011 02:27 PM
Subject: Academy Status Proposal

Mr Hermitt

I have read the Consultation on Proposal to Change to Academy Status letter which was sent out recently and have a few questions which I would like to ask

1 .Funding How will the school be able to get more funding from the Government as an Academy when at the moment there are cuts being made across a whole range of health, education and social services in the country?

2 Specialist Schools Status. Will this move mean that CHS will lose its specialist engineering status and the extra funding which comes with this? Is this what is meant by greater flexibility over the curriculum, will pupils no longer be required to take a design technology subject at GCSE?

3 .Could you please give some details as to how the school will be able to put more focus on teaching and learning.What will being an Academy school allow you to do that is not done already as a Foundation school? Surely the focus has always been on teaching and learning.

4. How will consistent standards be maintained across all schools e.g. in relation to admission procedures, admittance of pupils with special needs, maintenance of statements of special needs etc Will the Academy school be given additional government funding to buy in specialist services? Could this lead to selection in the long run?

5 .Is there any choice about becoming an Academy school or is this a government directive? The consultation period seems short and will be over on the 17th Jan before the meeting with parents on the 19th Jan.

thank you

with best wishes

Parent

From: "David Hermitt" <head@conleton.cheshire.sch.uk>
To: Parent
Date: 04/01/2011 12:22 PM
Subject: Re: Academy Status Proposal

Dear Parent

Thank you for writing to me about the academy proposals.

We have been considering this change since last summer when the new government announced their intention that all schools would become academies. You can find further detailed answers to many of the questions that you have asked in the attached consultation document which is available on the school website.

In answer to your specific questions:

1. Funding:

The way that schools are funded is undergoing a major change. Michael Gove insists that he wants headteachers to have as much funding as possible available at their disposal to improve educational standards. The Government has identified that schools are not funded fairly and are beginning to respond to views that schools such as ours should have received a greater amount of funding in the past. The government has protected the educational funding in total and claim that there will be a real terms increase. However, the allocation of the funding has been changed to make it more fair. As a result, some schools will see a reduction in funding while others will get an increase. The total funding in effect will remain the same to enable the government to fulfill its claim.

Our funding is currently top-sliced by Cheshire East Local Authority by 10% to provide central services and to meet Local Authority priorities. If we become an Academy, we estimate that after essential costs have been met we would have an increase in funding of around £400,000. We believe that this increased funding could make a big difference to what we could achieve as a school and we also think that it would enable the school to plan for the falling numbers of students predicted in the future. In return, the school would have to carry out some of the work currently done by the Local Authority.

2. Specialist Schools: The specific funding for our Engineering specialism officially ends in March 2011. Since this funding is no longer "ring-fenced" the school could spend it on any priorities that the school decides. We value the Engineering ethos and all the work that has been done so far to establish our specialism and so we intend to continue with this work as much as possible. The curriculum restrictions that were placed upon us, such as all students studying a technology subject, will be removed. I am currently in discussions with senior staff about how best to use the additional curriculum freedoms created by this for this September. There are other curriculum changes proposed in the recent white paper "The Importance of Teaching". These changes will happen regardless of whether we become an Academy.

3. Teaching and Learning: The school has three priorities: Teaching, Learning and Leadership. These priorities inform everything that we do. Unfortunately, we have not been funded as generously as other schools nationally and so we have had to make difficult choices in the past about how to allocate resources. With this potential increased funding and flexibility we will target more funds at these priorities.

4. Consistent Standards etc: The school is still required to admit students of all abilities and it does not imply selection in the future. The school must continue to accept students with special Educational needs. The full consultation document provides more details and the services that we would need to provide as an Academy or buy-back from the Local Authorities at a competitive price.

5. Is there any choice? The government is clear that it expects all schools to become Academies. Several local high performing schools have already made the change and their students are gaining the benefits. We believe that we should go through the process of applying so that the Governors can make an informed choice of whether to become an academy now or wait till a later date.

I hope that my responses provide you with enough details. If you require more, please look at the detailed proposal attached.

Kind Regards

David Hermitt