

11th February 2011

Dear Parents, Colleagues and Friends of the Woodlands School,

Consultation: Possible Conversion to Academy Status

Many people will be aware that some schools have been given the opportunity by the coalition government to convert to academy status.

An academy is a state school, funded directly by the Department for Education, not the local authority. This initiative should not be confused with the phase one academy status given to schools at risk of failing. An academy is run by a board of trustees overseeing a governing body. Academies are rightly expected to work with other local schools. Further information is available at www.education.gov.uk/academies.

The governors of The Woodlands School are giving very serious consideration to becoming an academy for the following reasons:

- The ability to directly control our budget;
- The potential of commercial sponsorship to improve our infrastructure, after the disappointment of Building Schools for the Future;
- It puts The Woodlands School at the forefront of educational reform and working with other schools within a “federation”.
- It would be better for our school to be seen as an academy rather than not.

Stakeholders are already well represented on the governing body, but the governors are keen to hear the views of the wider community and you are hereby invited to give your opinion by responding to this letter. You may either write to us at the school’s address or email us via the website at www.woodlands.coventry.sch.uk. The website contains further information for stakeholders and some consultation proposals. If you would like to register an opinion via email, please use the ‘contact us’ section of the website and include the subject heading ‘Academy Status’. Either way, if you wish to make your views known, please do so by Friday 11th March 2011 (although we can take later submitted views into consideration up until the governors meeting on 17th March 2011). In addition, you are invited to meet with the school’s senior leadership team and governors on Thursday 17th February 2011, in Cresswell House at 6:00 pm, in order to debate the issues.

Before responding, please bear the following in mind:

- Staff and governors are strongly committed to continuing to provide outstanding education as a comprehensive school serving Coventry. As an academy, we would be committed to maintaining our current admissions policy. This means that the catchment area and entry criteria would remain the same. In other words, the younger brothers of children currently attending the school would continue to enjoy the same entitlement to a Woodlands School education. The school would not become selective. The ethos of our school as an excellent inclusive comprehensive will remain.
- We believe that the significant opportunity provided by becoming an academy could allow us to make even faster progress towards our goal of becoming an outstanding school. This would benefit not only those students currently in the school, but also future generations of students at The Woodlands School.
- We have a history of working collaboratively with other schools and our community in several different partnerships. We intend to build on those partnerships and we would hope to continue our positive working relationships with Coventry Schools and the Local Authority.

Thank you in anticipation of your continued support.

Yours faithfully,

N. CHARLTON
Headteacher