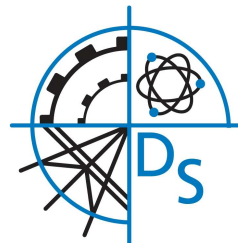


Denefield School

Working together for success

Long Lane, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 6XY
www.denefield.org.uk Tel: 0118 9413458 Fax: 0118 9452847
Headteacher: Mr G Whiteford



19 September 2011

Dear Parent/Carer

Denefield School – consultation on academy conversion

The Academies Act 2010 enables schools to convert to academy status, subject to the approval of the Secretary of State for Education. The decision on whether to convert rests with the governing body of Denefield School. At the most recent full meeting of the governing body, the decision was made to formally initiate the conversion process.

Academies are schools that are funded directly by government, rather than through the local council. They have greater autonomy than other schools, including greater freedom to set their own curriculum. In addition to the current budget of a school, academies receive additional funding and are able to use this to further meet the needs of their students. **Nearly 40% of secondary schools in England are either academies or have applied to become an academy; we don't want to be left behind.**

As a foundation school of long standing, Denefield School is already semi-independent from the local authority. It is, therefore, a relatively small step to take on academy status. The resulting extra freedom will enable us to continue being innovative with our curriculum and to protect our financial stability, particularly with regard to Sixth Form funding. As an academy, **Denefield School will be considerably better off.** Because we are already so well set up, the vast majority of the additional funding academy status will bring can be used to help us recruit the very best teachers and further improve resources for teaching and learning.

Governors have decided to investigate converting to academy status independently, rather than joining a chain with other schools, in order to retain full control over our own budgetary resources and how we deploy them for the benefit of our young people; **the prime focus is to provide the highest possible quality of education for our students and to continue to raise academic standards.** Governors do, however, acknowledge the future need to develop a very high level of collaboration and partnership working with other local schools, as required by the DfE in assessing suitability for academy conversion.

An application has recently been submitted to the DfE; this will enable further preparatory work to be undertaken in anticipation of conversion. At this point, the school is not bound to convert and is in a position to withdraw from the process at any point until the binding agreement over funding is entered into with the DfE.

The governors are committed to engaging with all of the school's stakeholders and therefore wish to consult widely regarding the proposed conversion which would take place on 1 January 2012 at the earliest. The consultation period with staff, parents, students and other stakeholders opens today and will close on Friday 4 November at 5.00pm. You will be able to respond via a dedicated e-mail address: academyconsultation@denefield.org.uk, or in writing to the Clerk to the Governors, c/o Denefield School. The outcomes of the consultation process will help inform the governors' decision as to whether or not to proceed with the conversion to academy status.



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The key dates in the consultation period are listed below:

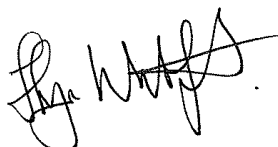
Wednesday 14 September 2011	Governing body resolution to convert
Thursday 15 September	Application sent to DfE
Monday 19 September	Consultation period begins
Weeks beginning 3 & 10 October	Information to students via assemblies and School Council
Tuesday 11 October	Parents' Forum
Friday 4 November	Consultation period ends
Wednesday 16 November	Governors' extraordinary meeting: feedback on consultation & decision
Sunday 1 January 2012	Conversion to academy status

You will find attached a brief Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document relating to academy conversion: this will appear on the Denefield School website and will continue to be added to during the consultation period. We urge you to engage in the consultation process and hope that the information on the website will address the significant questions that may arise.

To address any further concerns or questions that parents/carers may have, we will be holding a **Parents' Forum on Tuesday 11 October at 7.00pm**, focussing on this single issue. Should you wish to attend, please notify the school by e-mail at the dedicated consultation address above or telephone the school reception. This will enable us to make suitable arrangements for the meeting and ensure everyone is comfortably seated.

We look forward to receiving your responses to the consultation and meeting you on the 11 October.

Yours sincerely



Glyn Whiteford
Headteacher



Lorraine Doyle
Chair of governors