

July 2010

Dear Parent / Carer

The Ravenscroft School – Consultation on Proposal to convert to Academy status

As an outstanding school The Ravenscroft was recently invited to apply to convert to become an Academy under proposed new legislation. Governors took a vote on June 30th and unanimously agreed to move forward with that application with an aspiration to open as an Academy on September 1st, 2010. The governors want to consult with a range of stakeholders about this.

The decision to convert to Academy status was taken because of our desire to further raise standards and to see these high standards sustained. We believe that becoming an Academy will have a significant positive impact on the School and all those who are associated with it. As a consequence of converting to Academy status, the school will become independent of the Local Authority, with funds that are currently retained by the LA passing directly to the school, giving us greater control to support our plans for improvement. There are indications that these funds may be around £400,000 and with uncertain times looming in terms of budget the additional flexibility these funds would bring would be a huge benefit to the school.

An Academy Trust:

Under these proposals, The Ravenscroft School would cease to exist as a legal entity. In its place, a new legal entity, an Academy Trust, will be established. The Academy Trust will hold ownership of the school land and assets and will employ its entire staff. The existing rights and contracts of teachers will be fully protected and the school will continue to recognise the same unions.

The Academy Trust would be a company limited by guarantee. The company members (who would be some of the current governors) will form the Academy Trust and will appoint School Governors who will have a strategic oversight of the day-to-day running of the school. There will be both staff and parental representation on the Governing body in the same way as there is at present. The school will still be led by the Head, Mr Ferrie, together with the existing staff.

Under the proposals, the newly independent school will have additional curriculum flexibility within the scope of a broad and balanced curriculum and this will allow us to be more innovative in our curriculum offer to students.

Further information can be found at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/academies>

Benefits to the school:

- Funding currently retained centrally will pass directly to the school
- Greater curriculum flexibility
- The opportunity to be at the forefront of national educational policy and therefore to influence and shape what that will look like
- The flexibility to work in cooperation with the LA and other schools when it is in the interests of our students (we remain firmly committed to that principle)
- The school will become its own admission authority

What will change?

When students return to school in September they will notice very little that is different in that they will be taught by the same staff in the same buildings etc. There are currently no plans to make any drastic immediate changes to curriculum structure. Over time, we will seek to use the flexibility and freedoms we will possess to further enhance the opportunities and experiences we offer students.

Responses:

We understand that parents / carers may have questions, concerns or views about the move to Academy status and we would welcome your input. You may contact the school in writing by July 23; please mark the envelope Academy Consultation and send to Mr P Ferrie at The Ravenscroft School, Barnet Lane, N20 8AZ. Alternatively e mail: academy@ravenscroft.barnet.sch.uk . We will respond to you but please allow a number of days for a reply to be given. A final decision to proceed will only be taken in August.

In these uncertain times for the public sector we believe we are in a strong position to face the challenges that lie ahead. Becoming one of the first outstanding Academy trust schools, alongside several others within Barnet, will enable us to help The Ravenscroft move forward to the next stage in its development.

Yours faithfully

Paul Ferrie
Headteacher

Andy Hardy
Chair of Governors

Cc: local schools, ward councillors, Director of Children's Service

