

## **The Armthorpe School - Academy Consultation**

Following an options appraisal process, The Armthorpe School Governing Body has passed a unanimous resolution to enter into formal consultation regarding conversion to Academy status with Ossett Academy and Sixth Form College, Wakefield, as sponsor.

The information which follows is intended to provide an overview of the factors which have informed this decision, together with details of the consultation process.

### **Why consider Academy Status?**

- There has been a period of rapid conversion of Doncaster's secondary schools to academy status. This is significantly diminishing the Local Authority's future capacity to support the very small number that remain under its control.
- Funding which is currently held by the Local Authority would come directly from central government to the school, allowing us to match expenditure far more closely to the school's particular priorities, and to achieve best value arrangements.
- We would have greater freedom to determine the nature and content of the school curriculum. This would be a significant advantage, enabling us to remodel what students learn, and their experience of learning, in order to achieve improved outcomes.

### **What would conversion to Academy status mean?**

- The school would have greater freedom to determine matters such as the timing and length of the school day and school terms, though there is no intention to make changes in these areas in the foreseeable future.
- The governing body would become the employer of all staff who will be protected by Transfer of Undertakings and Protection of Employment (TUPE) legislation. This would entail a change of contract, but roles, salaries and pensions would not be affected. Governors will make a commitment to comply with prevailing pay and conditions.
- The governing body would hold the school's land and assets.
- The school would become responsible for the services currently provided by the Local Authority, though it would still be possible to buy back those that still existed and represented best value.
- The school's current catchment area, as well as admissions policy, would not be affected.

**How would this affect the school's values and ethos, as well as its commitment to serving the interests of its students?**

In considering the question of conversion to Academy status, the Governing Body has confirmed its unwavering commitment to the following points, which collectively represent the vision for the school :

- the school's values : Ambition, Respect, Responsibility, Pride;
- an inclusive ethos which is underpinned by a commitment to comprehensive education, parity of esteem and equality of opportunity for all students;
- a relentless focus upon learning and achievement in order to drive up standards and provide access to high quality outcomes for all students;
- the provision of a caring and supportive environment for all students in which they feel safe, valued and supported;
- a commitment to students' academic, social and personal growth, enabling them to thrive and grow as learners and emerge as responsible citizens and members of the wider community;
- a commitment to partnership and collaborative working with a range of other partners and providers, including the Local Authority, to enhance provision and opportunities for students.

#### **Why partnership with Ossett Academy and Sixth Form College?**

- Ossett Academy is an outstanding school, led by a National Leader in Education, which has a successful track record in supporting and collaborating with other schools.
- During the last eighteen months, The Armthorpe School has benefited from a developing relationship with Ossett Academy, including exchange visits from staff and direct support for our students.
- Ossett Academy is committed to the same comprehensive ideals as The Armthorpe School, including continuous improvement in standards, the development of wider opportunities for all students, and an emphasis upon a caring and inclusive learning environment in which all students have opportunities to thrive.
- A formal partnership with Ossett Academy would cement the existing relationship between our schools; we would further develop collaboration to support one another. This partnership would not entail one school imposing its policies and practices upon another. In this respect, it is deliberately distinct and different from the academy chain concept in which a degree of autonomy in running the school is ceded to an external sponsor, possibly from a business background.
- The longer term aim is to establish a group partnership, which could include a maximum of six schools working together and supporting one another to improve provision and outcomes for students.

- None of this would affect the school's independence in areas such as leadership, staffing and finance, neither would it compromise our commitment to existing relationships with other schools and providers, or the Local Authority.

## **Consultation**

The Governing Body is fully committed to an inclusive consultation process which enables all stakeholders to make enquiries, receive further information and contribute their views. This can be done by :

- accessing the Academy Questions and Answers option on the school's website,
- writing to The Chair of Governors at the school,
- email to : [academyconsultation@armthorpe.doncaster.sch.uk](mailto:academyconsultation@armthorpe.doncaster.sch.uk).

## **Consultation Stages**

<b>w.c. July 4<sup>th</sup></b>	Written notification to staff of governors' decision to consult on conversion to Academy status.
<b>w.c. July 11<sup>th</sup></b>	Stakeholder notification - formal consultation period begins. Initial staff consultation meeting.
<b>w.c. July 18<sup>th</sup></b>	Parent Forum consultation meeting.
<b>TBA September</b>	Public meeting for parents / stakeholders.
<b>TBA September</b>	Second staff consultation meeting.
<b>TBA September</b>	Professional Association consultation.
<b>w.c. September 12<sup>th</sup></b>	Student assemblies / consultation
<b>September 30<sup>th</sup></b>	End of consultation period.
<b>October 5<sup>th</sup></b>	Full Governing Body meeting.
<b>October 10<sup>th</sup></b>	Publication of consultation outcome.