

31 January 2008

Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: The change of status of Chauncy School to a Foundation School

The governing body of Chauncy School is considering a change of status to become a Foundation School. This is in line with the Government's plans for a reformed system of strong, autonomous schools and a modernised role for local authorities. The decision to change status rests entirely with the governing body. However, we are required, but also wish, to consider the views of all interested parties.

Chauncy School is currently a Hertfordshire Local Authority Community School. There are three key differences between being a Foundation School and a Community School. In a Foundation School the governing body has formal ownership of the assets (land and buildings), the governing body is the employer of the staff and the governing body is the admission authority for the school.

The recent excellent Investors In People Report on Chauncy School reflected the pride the governing body can take in its excellent relationship with all members of staff. The employment rights of all staff will be protected, as a Foundation School, by Education Regulations which have been in force since May 2007. Employment rights will transfer to the new employer under terms and conditions of service that are no less favourable than those currently in place. Pension rights and continuity of service record will be preserved.

Chauncy School and its governing body are committed to exercising the increased autonomy which Foundation Status brings, within the framework of fair funding and fair admissions. Foundation Status is intended to promote innovation and flair by giving school leaders more freedom to decide how best to meet the needs of their students, parents and community. Foundation Schools also have the flexibility to maximise the use of their assets. A vital part of the government's stated vision is to create a more diverse school system offering excellence and choice, where each school has a strong individual ethos and sense of mission and acts as a centre of excellence or specialist provision. We believe Foundation Status will help us achieve this vision.

As the admission authority for the school we will be committed to serving our community and will be pleased to act in accordance with the government's new Code of Practice for admissions. If we become a Foundation School we will consult on our proposed admission policy. We will remain an inclusive, non selective school.

We believe we have the experience and expertise to use the autonomies of Foundation Status to continue the development of the school and raise standards. We will develop our individual strengths in response to the needs of the local community.

We believe Chauncy School is held in high regard by parents and the local community. Our student numbers have grown from 421 to 883 in the last ten years and student achievement in public exams has more than doubled in that period. There is a shared

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vision on promoting student achievement which permeates the school and unites the staff and governors in pursuit of continuous improvement. That Ofsted were able to say that young people do better at Chauncy than at similar schools (2004) defines our mission and we see Foundation Status as enabling us to build upon our strengths. We see Foundation Status as a platform from which to develop the school and focus on the best ways to raise standards for all our students. By becoming a Foundation School we will be able to network with other schools across the country and learn from each other as we develop strategies for improvement.

Chauncy School would continue to take a leading part in delivering the “Every Child Matters” agenda and the Extended Schools vision.

Some important things would not change if we become a Foundation School:

The governing body would have parent and staff governors elected by their peers. Any governor in a category existing in the existing Community School would have the right to complete their term in the new Foundation School. This would give continuity of governance. In making decisions on the composition of the governing body the governors are determined to give parents maximum representation.

We would be funded according to the Hertfordshire scheme in the same way as all other schools in Hertfordshire.

We would still be an important part of the local community of schools and would have the opportunity through the Admissions Forum and Schools’ Forum to contribute to local decisions.

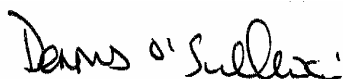
We will consult on our admission policy. We will continue to admit SEN children naming Chauncy School as the preferred school. We are proud of our designation as a school for students with physical and neurological impairment and we intend to continue and improve upon this provision. We would give priority to children in the care of the Local Authority and wish to give priority to siblings of students on roll at the time of application.

This letter is part of our informal consultation. The next step will be a meeting of the governing body on March 11th to consider responses to this letter and make a decision about continuing the process. The consultation process ends on March 7th. We welcome any comments you may wish to make in writing, or by e-mail, to the school by March 7th. If you would like to find out more about what it means to be a Foundation School the governors will be holding a “surgery” on 7th February between 4 and 6 pm. Please let us know if you are proposing to attend.

We will inform you of the progress of the consultation.

This information is published on the school website. Letters which have been sent to other schools also have copies for the Chair of Governors and the Chair of their Parents’ Association. Headteachers may also, if they wish, inform parents and staff at the school of the contents of this letter and direct them to our website.

Yours faithfully



Dennis O’Sullivan
Headteacher



Bob Watson
Chair of Governors