



Icknield Community College

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Dear Parent/Carer

Over the past few months, you will have heard much in the media about schools considering converting to Academy status.

For clarification, as a "Good" school, as graded by Ofsted in July 2011, we are in the fortunate position where we can decide whether we wish to remain as a Local Authority maintained school, or convert to become an Academy, accountable directly to the Department of Education.

Since our Ofsted inspection, the Governing Body has set up a School Status Working Party which has been evaluating carefully the benefits and pitfalls of conversion. We are writing to update you with our current position for your information.

Our vision is to be graded "Outstanding" at our next Ofsted inspection which is likely to take place in three to five years time. Long term, we must ensure that our school's status provides us with the right support to achieve this.

The freedoms that are accorded with Academy status may, in time, be attractive to Icknield Community College. These freedoms would include, for example, the option not to follow the National Curriculum and tailor our own curriculum for the benefit of our own students. As an Academy, we would, potentially, benefit financially through choosing how we spend the proportion of our budget which is currently held back by Oxfordshire County Council to pay for their central services.

Yet whilst Academy status may well be the way forward for Icknield Community College, the conversion process is a time-consuming one. We believe that, over the next 12 months, we must focus our work on securing further progress against the priorities set out in our School Development Plan which will enable us to achieve an "Outstanding" Ofsted grade. This must take precedence over any work on the conversion process in the short term.

Our Working Party will continue to explore actively the range of options which would be available to us as a converter Academy: converting alone; converting as part of a wider group of schools which share our values; or, as part of an Academy chain of schools. We need to be absolutely sure that we have investigated and considered the full range of options available to us to enable us to pursue the route which will be in our best interests for the future.

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Conversion to Academy status is not our only option. The Working Party will also explore whether Foundation status, whereby the school gains fuller control of its own financial decision making, might either be an appropriate alternative or stepping stone to Academy status. If you are interested in finding out more about different types of schools, please follow the link below:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools>

The School Status Working Party will continue to meet, consider options, and, as time makes this available, review evidence of the impact of conversion from early converters, and will report its findings to the Full Governing Body.

Were Icknield Community College to pursue Academy Status in time, a full consultation process would take place which would involve all stakeholders.

We hope this helps to clarify our current position.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you wish to discuss this matter further.



Mr R Cockrem
Chair of Governors



Mr M Hunter
Headteacher