

# INFORMATION ON ACADEMY STATUS

Court Fields Community School is scheduled to become a Sponsored Academy WEF 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014. Background Information is detailed below:

## What is an Academy?

An Academy is essentially an independent school which is funded by the state. It is independent of the Local Authority and receives its funding direct from central government.

## What are the benefits of being an Academy?

- **academies are independent of Local Authority control** – this means that academies have more freedom about how they conduct themselves
- **academies receive their funding direct from central government** – this means that academies control more of their funding because none is retained by the Local Authority for the provision of central services
- **academies have more freedom over the curriculum taught** – this means that academies do not need to teach parts of the National Curriculum which they do not consider is appropriate for their pupils
- **academies can set their own pay and condition of service of their staff** – academies have the freedom to alter the pay and conditions of their staff (subject to normal employment law protections for staff) and so can provide staff with better pay and conditions than previously
- **academies have more freedom to undertake innovative projects** – academies are companies and so have more freedom to undertake innovative projects, such as setting up and utilising trading subsidiaries

## Are there any disadvantages to becoming an academy?

As an academy we will be directly liable for matters such as insurance, employment liabilities, pensions, health and safety, and, property maintenance. However, as mentioned above, academies receive more funding from central government to help them meet these additional costs.

As a community school, Court Fields admissions arrangements are set by the Local Authority, and the Local Authority also decides which students should be offered places at the school. As an academy, we will be in a position to put in place our own admission arrangements, and decide which students should be offered places in accordance with those arrangements. The academy will still be bound by the national admissions code, and Admissions Appeals Code.

The current admission arrangements will remain in place for the time being. If the academy wanted to change its admission arrangements, consultation would be required.

**Will staff leave?**

When the school converts to an academy, all staff currently employed by the Local Authority will automatically transfer to the new academy on their current pay and conditions. Although the academy will have more freedom to amend those pay and conditions in the future, the Governing Body does not intend to take such a step in the foreseeable future and in any event, any change to pay and conditions would need to be consulted upon with staff representatives.

**Will Court Fields change?**

We do not intend to change Court Fields except in ways which we think will improve the school. For students, it is unlikely that they will see much, if any, change in their day to day school lives. Academies do have the power to vary their curriculums and vary the length of the school day, however, we do not intend to take any such steps at this stage and would engage with parents/carers, staff and students if we ever did intend to make such changes in the future

**Can I find out more?**

If you have any specific questions, please telephone the school and ask to speak to Ms R Bennett, Head of School.

There is also more information about academies on the DfE website:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/academies>