



WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL
LANCASTRIAN INFANT SCHOOL
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15 June 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

PROPOSAL TO CONVERT TO ACADEMY STATUS

We hope that you are well and are continuing to cope in the challenging circumstances of current times. We would like to update you about our plans to explore conversion and to invite you to take part in a consultation. Lancastrian is a community school with a family feel and we think that it is vitally important that everyone has their say, the opportunity to ask questions and is involved in this consultation. We ask you to take a bit of time to read this letter and **please** respond to the consultation.

We wrote to you on 20 April to tell you that Governors have decided to explore conversion to academy status by joining the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust (DCAT) and entering into a closer partnership with Central Church of England Academy, our neighbour and where many of our children move on to. That letter committed to a full consultation before we make any final decisions, to explain the proposal in more detail and give you opportunities to ask questions of us and of DCAT colleagues. Unfortunately, face-to-face meetings are still not possible, but we do want to move forward with this proposal. This letter, therefore, sets out more detail about the proposal and describes ways in which you can find out more about it, ask questions and provide your comments. A response form is available at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/LancDCAT> to provide you with an opportunity to give us your views and your questions.

The Governors see conversion to academy status within DCAT, working more closely with Central Church of England Academy, as a positive way forward for the school and hope that you will agree. There are also details of Zoom meetings and presentations where you will have the chance to hear more about it and to ask questions. We will also publish this information, recordings of the Zoom meeting(s) and regularly updated FAQs on the school website.

As we set out in our earlier letter, if we move forward with this, we see real benefit in a closer relationship with Central CE Academy. This could mean a shared name for both schools, with one being the Infant site and one being the Junior site. All of this will be the subject of consultation at a future date. We also said that if we proceed with the conversion, in the academic year 2021-22 we intend to consult on becoming a Church of England school whilst maintaining the strengths of Lancastrian including our passion for serving our community and having a very open admissions policy. You will have a full opportunity to engage in that consultation at that time.

As a small school the attraction of joining DCAT is that they have a team of staff who can provide more than we can currently afford. The quality is high and this has been validated as we



have spoken to other Headteachers and governors within the Trust including those at The March. Another attraction is that our staff will have a range of opportunities for professional development and to work with colleagues in other Trust schools to develop their practice, sharing the good practice that exists in ours and other schools in the Trust.

There are other benefits and positive changes, however, if we proceed you and your children are unlikely to see any change in your day to day experience of our school. Leaders, teachers and support staff and governors will remain; times of the school day, term dates and the school's admission policy will stay the same. On conversion to academy status all staff remain in post and have their terms and conditions protected and all children in, or due to join the school, remain fully part of the school as they are now.

There will be a meeting held over **Zoom on 23 June at 5pm** when leaders from DCAT will present on the work of the Trust. The focus of the meeting will be on answering your questions. In order to keep numbers manageable, please register using this link and we will send you an invite: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/LancZoom>. The meeting will be recorded and published on the school website and if there is demand we will arrange further Zoom meetings so that more parents can ask questions and hear the answers. All the meetings will be recorded and published.

If you have any questions or comments about this proposal please respond on-line at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/LancDCAT>. If you have any individual issues you would like to discuss please leave your name and phone number and someone will call you back. The survey will close on **17 July**.

Yours sincerely

David Brixey
Chair of Governors

Zoe Gordon
Headteacher