

18th July 2008

Dear Colleague,

I write following the consultation regarding the proposal to change the school's designation from a community school to a foundation school. At the Governing Body meeting on Wednesday 25th June the Governors agreed to progress to the next stage in the process which is the formal consultation period which lasts for 4 weeks. This will begin on 1st September 2008. It is anticipated that following this formal consultation the change to our designation would happen on 1st January 2009.

As part of the informal consultation letters from the Head Teacher and the Chair of Governors were sent to

- ◆ Staff at The Sanders Draper School;
- ◆ Parents and carers;
- ◆ The Local Authority;
- ◆ The Governing Body, teachers and staff of other local schools (primary and secondary);
- ◆ The Learning and Skills Council; and
- ◆ The Right Honourable James Brokenshire.

In addition, foundation status was discussed at the School Council meetings (Thursday 15th May, Friday 23rd May and Wednesday 18th June 2008).

As a foundation school we would receive the same level of funding as we do currently. This is because our funding is based on the number of students on roll, the number of students receiving free school meals and the number of students with particular educational needs (such as the HIU and special needs students). Therefore, as a foundation school, our budget would remain the same.

The Local Authority is not allowed to discriminate against foundation schools in favour of community schools. This means that we would have the same access to Havering services as we currently enjoy. Becoming a foundation school would enable us to look at opportunities to widen the services that we use and look for alternative providers if it benefits the students and staff at the school.

The change to foundation status would change three key aspects of the strategic management of the school: the ownership of the land and buildings, the employment of staffing and the admission arrangements for students.

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The Governors of a foundation school are more directly responsible for the school's land and buildings. However, the school remains in the ultimate control of the Local Authority. The Governors could not decide to sell land or change the core focus away from teaching and learning secondary school students.

The Governors of a foundation school would be responsible for making the arrangements for the admission of students. We are proposing to still use Havering Pupil Services to manage this process on our behalf in the future – in the way that other local foundation schools do.

Clearly the main issue for staff is the potential changes to the employers that would result from becoming a foundation school. Teaching staff are protected by the national Pay and Conditions agreements for all teachers and staff designated as unqualified teachers (such as our Communicators). Support staff are protected by the Transfer of Undertakings agreements called TUPE. This means that all staff currently employed at the school would not suffer changes to their pay and conditions.

At the staff meetings on Thursday 22nd May, Thursday 12th June and Monday 16th June, a number of issues were raised about the proposed changes.

In summary these issues were:

- ◆ Wages - and the impact of Single Status;
- ◆ Pension rights and keeping within the local government pension scheme;
- ◆ Would the school continue using Human Resources and Payroll;
- ◆ What are the protections for Redeployment and Continuous Service and Holiday pay?
- ◆ Governing Body profile around the school if the Governors are to be the direct employers of staff.
- ◆ Pension rights for teaching staff who are close to retirement age;
- ◆ What are the protections for the school as a foundation school if the Local Authority decided to close The Sanders Draper School?

The impact of Single Status – we will implement Single Status following the advice and recommendations of the London Borough of Havering.

Pension rights – like other local foundation schools are plans are to stay within the existing pension schemes for support staff.

Human Resources and Payroll – we will review our Service Level Agreements with Havering as part of the change to foundation status. At this stage, I can see no reason not to continue to use the Human Resources and Payroll services of Havering as they both offer an excellent service.

Appendix 4

Redeployment and continuous service and holiday pay – the advice that I have been given is that if the Local Authority decided to close the school (following the proper consultation processes) they would be expected to utilise the redeployment agreements with the relevant professional associations and union groups. I am still trying to get a definitive answer on the issue of continuous service and holiday pay. I will inform staff as soon as I receive a response.

Governing Body profile – I discussed the issue of staff concerns about the Governors profile with the Chair and two Vice Chairs. At the recent strawberry team Paul reiterated the Governors support for the work that all staff do on behalf of the school. Governors are involved at subject level – through the link Governor arrangements and I know there are regular meetings for the majority of Heads of Department with their linked Governor who writes a subject report for Governors on behalf of the Department each year. This year there have been some vacancies on the Governing Body but I am pleased to report that we have just appointed 4 new Parent Governors this term.

Staff have 4 representatives on the Governing Body – the Head Teacher and currently two teachers and one member of the support staff. An election will be held in September to replace Amy Taylor, to join Julie Hewston and Loraine Woolford.

Pension rights for teaching staff – Teaching staff pensions will not be affected by the change to foundation status because of the national agreements.

Possible future school closure – there are no guarantees that I can offer about future review of secondary provision. The Local Authority can decide to close a foundation school following proper consultation and justification. The only thing we can do is make ourselves so successful and so popular with students and parents that it would be unthinkable.

This week the Director of Social Care and Learning (the new title for the Director of Education in Havering) wrote a response to the consultation letter about our proposal. The letter outlines general support for the change to foundation school for The Sanders Draper School.

Finally, can I repeat my offer to any member of staff who wishes to raise their concerns with me on a personal level. I am happy to meet with staff (with your union representative if you wish) to be able to offer the appropriate reassurances and to restate my belief that this course of action is in the best interests of The Sanders Draper School as we strive to meet the demands of providing the best quality education in the twenty first century.

Yours,

Tess Blight
Head Teacher