

Introduction to Academy Status Claremont High School

December 2010

(Note: Where the term Academy is used in this publication it is intended that this means the new style 'Converter Academy'. **A Converter Academy** is a new style of academy which the Government has created initially to enable all Outstanding schools to take greater control of their own management and governance. These should not be confused with Phase 1 Academies which were established to support schools in difficulty that needed to be restarted or taken over so that they could be led and managed out of these difficulties. The Government White Paper on Education (2010) has set out the conditions under which the vast majority of English schools could convert to academy status.)

We have appended a list of schools in England who recently converted to Academy Status. The schools are profiled in a separate document in this area of the school's web site. We hope that you find this useful.

Following the General Election in May 2010, the government invited outstanding schools such as Claremont High School to apply for **Converter Academy status**. In the Summer term full governors meeting on xxxxxxxx a decision was made to further explore the wider and specific issues of Converter Academy Status and the Headteacher and Leadership team were asked to come back to the Autumn term meeting with their findings. The Headteacher and Deputy Head attended the Academies Conference on xxxxxxxx and used this as an opportunity to gather information and direct experience on academies in general and on the specific issues concerning Converter Academies. In the period up to the autumn Governors' meeting there was a great deal of information in the public domain concerning the Government's academy programme and various opposing views. These were also used to inform the feedback to the full Governing body.

In effect this means that since September the school's leadership team and the governing body have been considering whether the school should go through the formal process of conversion into an academy. Governors took the option at a meeting on October 20th 2010 to 'proceed towards conversion' and made the **commitment to consult more widely** with staff, pupils, parents and representatives within our local community to inform any final decision. [The actions that have been taken since that meeting are outlined in the Timeline document which you can access in this area of the school's website.](#)

Our recent Ofsted report concluded that the 'senior leadership team works very effectively with middle leaders and staff to achieve an inclusive, harmonious

community, drive up the quality of provision and improve outcomes. All staff who completed the inspection questionnaire indicated they were proud to work at the school, shared its sense of purpose and were involved in what it is trying to achieve'. We believe that this is a terrific foundation on which to make the most of the **significant advantages** to be gained for our pupils and the wider school community by the school becoming a Converter Academy.

In the current educational, economic and social climate, it will provide the school with the stability and freedom to:

- Create the momentum from which we will apply to become a Training School 'one of the highest accolades that a modern school can have' so that we can build on the excellent teacher training programmes that we have successfully developed at Claremont;
- Build on our current strengths as an 'outstanding', high performing comprehensive school, preserving the legacy of our specialisms in Performing Arts, Mathematics and Computing and Applied Learning so that we are able to decide the agenda through which these will continue to add to our strengths as a multi specialist school and so that we can reaffirm our aims as a school fit for the 21st century.;
- Enable us to further strengthen the strategic financial management and planning that we will need to secure the continued success of the school in a locally and nationally shifting economic landscape;
- Ensure that we are able to make strategic decisions concerning the deployment of resources so that we can continue to employ teaching and support staff of the highest quality who continue to thrive in the best possible terms and conditions of employment;
- Focus on meeting the needs of all learners in our local and wider community across all key stages and with our partner primary and secondary schools ;
- Enable us to make informed and strategic decisions about how and where the resources that are intended for our learners are deployed so that they meet their needs and have the greatest impact now and in the future;
- Ensure that we remain in contact with what our local secondary schools see as the future of local educational provision and with whom we already have highly successful partnerships;
- To take full advantage of new and emerging educational agenda via the highly effective partnerships that we have within the family of schools, with the fast changing local authority, in the London and national arena;

- Share information and take advantage of the 'new' freedoms within the curriculum, school leadership and governance so that we can take the best advantage of what the white paper has to offer;
- To be forefront in understanding and developing the new style of freedoms and accountabilities that are enshrined in the White Paper so that we are best placed to influence what these will be and how they will impact on schools in the short and long term;
- To continue to lead from the front as befits an outstanding school committed to system wide leadership, development, change and influence.

Furthermore, we are deeply committed to ensuring we can meet the needs of all of our learners by personalising our provision, building their learning power and providing high levels of support and guidance. Academy status will bring us greater autonomy and we will work closely with pupils, parents, staff, governors and other agencies to allocate resources judiciously to help us achieve our challenging objectives.

Throughout Claremont High School's history as a comprehensive school we have embraced change and this is reflected in our school aims 'to enable our pupils to achieve their full potential' and it is our wish to ensure that together we can 'enable our school to achieve its full potential'. We have never done this simply by waiting for things to happen to us after others have benefited from opportunities to grow and develop. We wish to be pro-active within the emerging educational landscape and to make an informed decision about the future for our learners and of our school.

In many respects the move to Converter Academy status is an appropriate next step for us regarding strategic financial management and it builds on the outstanding value for money we have consistently delivered, formerly as a Grant Maintained School and for many years now as a Foundation School.

Whilst the legislation establishes that the decision to progress towards Converter Academy status rests entirely with the governing body we are committed to considering the views of all parties. This is because we know that the decision is a matter of great concern to all of you and because we are determined to make the decision that is right for all who have made Claremont High School the outstanding school that it is. We have no wish to jeopardise this but we also know that we cannot allow our strategy for the future success and wellbeing of the school to be unevenly swayed by the fear of change alone.

Once you have read this introductory statement please look at the other documents that have been provided in this area of the school's website and if you have any questions, comments or views that you wish to be considered by us then please email them to us at admin@claremont-high.co.uk We will then ensure these are circulated and where we are able to respond we will.

Our planned next steps are outlined in the Timeline which you can access through this section of the website. We have also appended to this introduction the most frequently asked questions about Academy status and there are responses to these in the additional pages in this area of the school's website.

Please read the other pages in this area of the website to help you to understand more about Academy status, and you may also wish to **look at the Department for Education's website www.education.gov.uk/academies**.

Thank you for your interest in the school, support and understanding.

Zac Arif Chairman of Governors

Terry Molloy Heateacher

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Frequently Asked Questions

General

[What is an Academy?](#)

[Why does Claremont High School feel the Academy route is the right one?](#)

[What would be different if the School became an Academy?](#)

[What wouldn't change if the school became an Academy?](#)

[Who is responsible for the performance of the Academy?](#)

[Will the school still work with Gloucestershire local authority and local schools who aren't Academies?](#)

[Will the school need an outside organisation sponsoring the Academy?](#)

[Will there be any significant change in direction as a result of becoming an Academy?](#)

[Does becoming an Academy change the way in which exclusions are dealt with?](#)

[Will the school still be subject to Ofsted inspection as an Academy?](#)

[If you become an Academy can you change your mind at a later date?](#)

Finance

[Will the school receive more or less funding?](#)

[Will school funds be used to pay the costs of the work involved in converting?](#)

[Does becoming an Academy mean I will have to pay \(or pay more\) for home to school transport?](#)

[I've heard that Academies are "Independent" schools. Does this mean you will be charging fees?](#)

Consultation

[How can I support the school in becoming an Academy?](#)

[I am a parent/member of staff and don't want the school to become an Academy. What do I do?](#)

[How can I communicate my views about the school converting?](#)

[Will there be an opportunity to meet with Governors to discuss any questions or concerns I may have?](#)

[As a member of staff can I speak to a Governor about the proposed conversion?](#)

[Will the school be talking to trade union representatives about this proposed change?](#)

Admissions

[Will admissions procedures or catchment areas change as an Academy?](#)

[Do you intend to introduce academic selection?](#)

[Can a child with a Statement of Special Educational Needs nominate an Academy as their school of choice?](#)

Staff

[Will there be any changes to staff pay and conditions if the school becomes an Academy?](#)

[Will my terms and conditions remain unchanged forever?](#)

[Will pension arrangements change?](#)

You will find the responses to these questions in the document titled Frequently Asked Questions about Academy Status in this area of the school's web site.

But, if this is your initial burning question:

How can I communicate my views about the school converting?

Then you can write to:

Mr F T Molloy, Headteacher, Claremont High School, Claremont Avenue, Kenton Harrow HA3 OUH

Or email

admin@claremont-high.co.uk

and we will do our very best to answer all of your questions.

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