

Letter to all Parents/Carers

1st February 2011

Dear Parents/Carers,

Many of you will know that following the General Election in May 2010 the Government Education Minister wrote directly to Outstanding schools such as Claremont High School inviting them to apply to become a Converter Academy.

Those of you who are regular visitors to the school's website will have already seen that the Governing Body of Claremont High School made a decision to respond to this invitation by making first an expression of interest and then a formal application for Claremont to move through the formal stages of the conversion process. At this point in time we await the notification from the Department for Education that the school can, if it chooses to, take steps necessary to achieve conversion, and we felt that we should write to you to explain what conversion means, why we have made this decision and to solicit your views on the school's conversion. This letter is an important part of our on-going consultation.

Since September 2010 the school's Governors and the leadership team have been exploring the possibility that Claremont High School should become a Converter Academy.

One of the factors that we have considered is that Converter Academies are not the same as the old style academies that already exist in Brent and across the country. This is not a status that is being forced upon us and there will be no external sponsor determining the direction of the school or the strategies needed to bring about transformations. Indeed, Claremont will strengthen its position as an educational leader in the local and wider community using the skills, knowledge and experience that we have to support other schools as they work to meet their own challenges.

Throughout Claremont's history as a Comprehensive school we have responded to local and national opportunities to bring about changes that have enhanced the school's provision for all learners and, in many situations, led the way for other schools to follow.

We have chosen to pursue the Converter Academy route because we believe that there are both short and long-term benefits to our school community. We have summarised these benefits on the school website (Welcome and follow Academy) but our informed view is that in the current national and local political climate there is much to be gained from the school's conversion to Academy status. In many ways this is a reasonable 'next step' for Claremont where we have been able to demonstrate strategic financial management, value for money and outstanding learner achievement first as a Grant Maintained school and for the past 12 years as a Foundation school.

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The Governing Body is committed to making the decision to achieve Converter Academy status only if this is in the best interests of Claremont High School. Following full consultation, support from experienced legal advisors and a clear understanding of the financial and operational issues the Governors believe that conversion could happen from the 1st April 2011.

There is still much work to do before this important decision is made and it is important that you are all aware of the following facts as you consider your responses to our request for comments and opinions:

1. The school's name will not change.
2. There will be no changes to the published admissions criteria ensuring that Claremont remains a school in and for its local community.
3. There will be no change to our links with our feeder primary schools except in so far as we are able to use our new status to strengthen and broaden these over time.
4. Claremont will remain within the Brent family of schools working with, supporting and learning from other schools and the Local Authority.
5. Claremont will continue to develop and make use of its multi-specialist status and its position as a high performing specialist school to benefit its learners and to draw on local and national creativity.
6. Claremont will continue to strive to retain its position as an outstanding Comprehensive school.

We would very much like to hear your views on this potential next stage in the development of Claremont High School. It is only right and proper that we should listen to your views on what should happen in your school. Views and comments can be sent directly to the school via e-mail on admin@claremont-high.org.uk or in writing to Mr. F.T. Molloy, Headteacher at Claremont. Please aim to do this by the 9th March 2011 so that Governors are able to take on board what you tell us.

We will also be offering a series of Governor/Leadership Team face-to-face meetings over the next few weeks which we hope you will attend.

In addition, we will be sharing our thinking with all pupils in school via the College Assemblies and Tutorial classes and we hope that you will discuss the proposal as a family.

We have always approached parents and carers with the belief that it is our partnership that enables Claremont pupils to do so well in all of their endeavours. The year ahead will be challenging not only because the financial picture is so hazy but also because we are committed to raising standards of achievement across the whole school even further. Whilst the resources diminish and the call is to deliver even more with less, we know that everyone of us in the Claremont family will continue to work hard to achieve the very best for all of our children and the wider community. This is the same belief with which Governors will reach their decision on the question of conversion to Academy status over the coming weeks.

Yours sincerely,



Z. Arif
Chair of Governors



F.T. Molloy
Headteacher