

Dear Parent / Carer,

Worden Sports College – Consultation on Academy Status

I would be grateful if you would make the time to read this letter about a national initiative which could have a major impact on the future of our school. Over the past few months the governors have been exploring the potential benefits to the school of converting to an academy. To help them come to an informed decision the governors are very keen to seek the views of parents and other significant stakeholders. It is for this reason that we are writing to you now to invite you to give your comments either in writing, by letter or email.

Included below are further details about the government's academy programme and what converting to an academy would mean for Worden.

What is an academy?

- Essentially an academy is a state funded independent school which means academies are outside the control of their local authority and receive their funding directly from the government.
- Only schools that are performing well can apply for Academy Status
- Education is still provided free to students.
- As an Academy we would still have a group of elected parent governors as well as representatives from the local community, teaching and non-teaching staff along with one Local Authority representative.
- Governors would continue to be responsible for the strategic planning and direction of the school and are committed to retaining our outstanding ethos and character.

What are the advantages of becoming an academy?

- If Worden does become an academy then in the first instance students and parents are unlikely to see any significant changes to the way the school is run and managed. It will be essentially the same school with the name Worden incorporated into it and the same size and the same ethos.
- Our mission statement will be the same, namely to build on our outstanding results and become an outstanding school that is the premier choice for all children in Leyland. In time though we expect there could be some important changes. Because of the greater freedom academies have in how to use their money academies can spend the additional funding they receive on their own priorities and any savings made can be used to develop new initiatives which we will use to provide a tailored education for the needs of all our youngsters.
- Academies have more freedom over what is taught in lessons so they do not have to teach parts of the National Curriculum which they do not consider appropriate for all their students. We are very proud of what we teach and I believe strongly that these freedoms will enable us to improve our standards even further.
- An academy has the advantage of having more control over its own destiny.

What are the disadvantages of becoming an academy?

- Academies are directly liable for matters such as insurance, employment, pensions, health and safety and the maintenance and improvement of the school site. This will involve an increased workload for the school. The cost of managing these additional responsibilities, however, is covered by the additional funding academies receive. Also since academies are outside the control of their local authority this means that they do not have the support of a local authority network. With local authorities being cut-back and with more-and-more schools converting to academy status, however, the benefits of remaining within the local

authority network are increasingly questionable. There may well be other possible disadvantages but, rest assured, the governors will not decide to convert until all these have been thoroughly investigated and we are sure it is the correct path for us.

How soon could Worden become an academy?

- Although the governors have already commenced the lengthy application process they have chosen not to make a final decision until they have thoroughly explored all the information available and consulted with parents, students, staff and the local community. They have also approached a firm of solicitors to advise on and handle all the legal issues involved. A provisional timetable for conversion has been drawn up with a possible date for conversion next April. There is, however, a lot to do before then.

How can I find out more?

- There is more information on the Department for Education's website www.education.gov.uk/academies. If you have any questions that you are unable to find out an answer to then please contact the school and we will do our best to find out for you.

How can I express my point of view?

- The closing date for representations is Friday 16th December 2011, academy@worden.lancs.sch.uk by email or by post to Ms C Harrison care of Worden Sports College.

Finally, we would like to reassure you that the governors are committed to consulting fully before coming to a final decision and that if a decision is made for Worden to convert to becoming an academy it will only be if the governors are fully satisfied that it is for the long-term benefit of all the present and future students of the school.

Thank you for making the time to read this letter and for your continued support of the school. We very much look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Ms C Harrison
Chair of Governors

Mr C Catherall
Headteacher

Representations can be made in writing (Feedback form provide overleaf for your use) or by emailing the school at:

E-mail: academy@worden.lancs.sch.uk

Phone: 01772 421021 Fax: 01772 456757

www.wordensportscollege.co.uk

Headteacher: Mr C Catherall B.Sc., NPQH

Worden Sports College

Proposed Academy Conversion Feedback Form

(Parent)

The Governors would value any comments/questions from you, regarding the proposal to become a new Academy.

If you would like to use this form please complete and return to the school (Main reception) no later than Friday 6th January 2012.

1. Please provide your contact details. This will enable us to respond to a specific query.

2. In the box below please write your comment or question.

3. Any additional comments you want to make.