

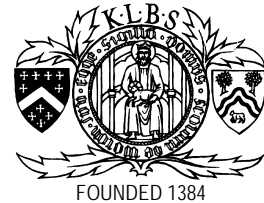
KATHARINE LADY BERKELEY'S SCHOOL

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To parents/carers of all pupils and students

11 March 2011

Dear Parent/Carer

Consultation concerning Academy Status

As you may be aware, changes are taking place in the education system following the election of the new Government last year. One change is that it is now possible for schools to move to Academy Status. This would mean that the school would remain a state school but that it would no longer be maintained by the Local Authority. In Gloucestershire, well over half of the secondary schools are either making or have made the transition to Academy Status.

The Governing Body are considering the implications of this change of status very carefully. As a part of this process, we are keen to seek the views of parents and carers.

It is only possible to outline the implications of changing to Academy Status in this letter. We will be holding an information evening for parents at 7:00pm on Wednesday 23 March in the Drama Hall at which we will give further details about this proposal and provide an opportunity for parents to ask questions. Parents can also make comments about this proposal by post or email to aharris@klbschool.org.uk. The closing date for the consultation is Wednesday 30 March 2011.

If the school becomes an academy, the main changes would be:

- The local authority (Gloucestershire) would no longer provide certain services to the school. Instead, we would receive the funding for these services and be able to buy them from Gloucestershire or other providers to match the needs of our pupils.

Gloucestershire would continue to provide some services, for example: home to school transport; SEN statementing, assessment and monitoring; the coordination of school admissions.

- The school would have greater curricular freedom as it would no longer have to deliver the National Curriculum. While this is unlikely to affect the range of subjects delivered, it may mean that we can avoid being constrained by overly prescriptive programmes of study. Academies are still required, by law, to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum and they are accountable for their performance in tests which reflect the National Curriculum.

The imperative of helping the pupils to gain the best possible GCSE, A level and other results will, of course, continue.

- There would be significant financial benefits.

For 2011/12, the funding received as an academy to purchase the services which we currently receive from Gloucestershire would be significantly greater in value than the total cost of the services which the school would have to 'buy back'. This additional funding would be very helpful, even if this advantage only lasts for one or two years.



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There is also a long term benefit in changing to Academy Status which arises from the school's current status as a Voluntary Aided school. Unlike most state funded schools, we have to pay 20% VAT on most building work and ICT related expenditure. In addition, for much of this expenditure, a further 10% contribution is required from the Governors or the main school budget. As an academy, we would be able to reclaim VAT, as can most other schools, and the 10% contribution would not be required. This would release substantial funding to spend on other areas such as staffing or learning resources.

- We currently work in various ways with the secondary schools in the Stroud District Partnership, across Gloucestershire and with our partner primary schools. This would continue. In addition, we would enter into a more formal partnership with one or more other schools in order to share expertise, to achieve more efficient procurement and to develop shared professional development.

There are some other administrative and legal implications of moving to Academy Status, but the above highlight the main changes which would directly affect pupils and students.

The vast majority of the operation of the school would not be affected by the move to Academy Status. Whether the school is an academy or not, there will inevitably be changes over time, however, we do not envisage that the following would change as a consequence of becoming an academy:

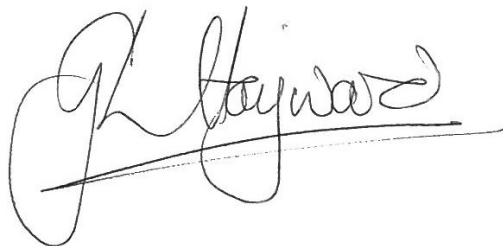
- The name of the school;
- The admissions arrangements;
- The start and finish times of the school day;
- Work with other schools and Gloucestershire LA in supporting vulnerable pupils;
- Term and holiday dates. These would continue to be based on Gloucestershire's dates, recognising that many of our pupils have younger siblings in local primary schools.

In addition to parents, we will also consult with:

- the teaching and non-teaching staff;
- the recognised trade unions which have members in this school;
- pupils and students who will receive information about Academy status in assemblies during the week beginning 14 March. This will be followed by discussion at a School Council meeting on 24 March.
- Local primary and neighbouring secondary schools;
- Gloucestershire County Council;
- Katharine Lady Berkeley's Foundation.

If the decision is taken to move to Academy Status, we would aim for the change to be in place by 1 September 2011. We look forward to hearing your views and/or meeting you at the parents' consultation event on the 23rd March.

Yours sincerely



Gillian Hayward
Chair of Governors



Andrew Harris
Headteacher



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