



20 January 2009

Dear Parent

Re: The change of status of Challney High School for Boys and Community College to a Foundation school

The governing body of Challney High School for Boys and Community College is considering a change of status to become a Foundation school in line with the Government's plans for a reformed system of strong, autonomous schools and a modernised role for local authorities. The decision to change status resides entirely with the governing body. However, we are committed to considering the views of all interested parties and we explain below how you may make your views known.

There are three key differences between a Foundation school and a Community school. In a Foundation school the governing body has formal ownership of the assets (land and buildings); the governing body is the direct employer of the school's staff and is the admission authority. In addition the governing body has the power to publish statutory proposals for other changes to the school.

Our school and governing body are committed to exercising the increased autonomy which foundation status brings, within the framework of fair funding and fair admissions. Foundation status is intended to promote innovation and educational entrepreneurship by giving school leaders more freedom to decide how best to meet the needs of their pupils, parents and wider communities and Foundation schools have the flexibility to maximise the use of their assets. A vital part of the Government's vision is to create a more diverse school system offering excellence and choice, where each school has a strong ethos and sense of mission and acts as a centre of excellence or specialist provision. We believe Foundation status will help us to achieve this vision.

As the admission authority we are committed to serving the local community and we would have to 'act in accordance with' the new Code of Practice for admissions. If we decide to become a Foundation school we will consult on our proposed admission policy

within the timescales in the Code. Admissions into the school in September 2009 will be under the same criteria as are operating now.

Our relationship and collaborative working with our partner primary schools and other partnerships will continue in the same way as now.

We believe that we have the experience and expertise to use the additional autonomies of Foundation status to continue the development of the school and raise standards. It is very clear that the Government sees greater autonomy for schools as the next stage in the development of the education service and wants schools to be more proactive in developing their individual strengths in response to the needs of the local community.

Our most recent Ofsted report stated that "this is an outstanding school" but we are not complacent and continue to strive to improve further. We see Foundation status as being a key component in our future development as it will enable the school to continue to raise standards through closer partnership with the local community and services for young people. By becoming a Foundation school we will be able to share experiences with other schools across the country and learn from each other as we develop strategies and processes for improvement.

There is an expectation from government that schools will take a lead in delivering the Every Child Matters agenda, the vision of Extended Schools and the Children's Plan. The additional freedoms open to us as a Foundation school and our commitment to co-operation with other agencies will we believe, be an important component in our school's development of these initiatives.

Some important things would not change if we were to become a foundation school:

- The governing body would still have elected parent and staff governors. Any governor in a category existing in the Foundation school governing body would have the right to complete their term of office on the Foundation school GB if they so wished. This would give us continuity of governors.
- We would be funded according to the agreed LA scheme in the same way as all other schools in the LA
- We would still be an important part of the local community of schools and would have the opportunity through the Admission Forum and Schools' Forum to contribute to local decisions
- We would not become a selective school and would continue to accept SEN children as we do now. We have explained that we would consult about any future admissions policy.

This letter is part of our informal consultation. The next step will be a meeting of the governing body on Thursday 19 March 2009 to consider any responses to this letter and make a decision about continuing with the process. The consultation process ends on Tuesday 3 March 2009 and all responses must be received by that date.

We welcome any comments you might wish to make in writing or by email using the address at the top of this letter. If you would like to find out more about what it means to become a foundation school the governors will be available to discuss this on Tuesday 10 February between the times of 5.00 pm and 6.30 pm when any views you might want to make in person will be welcome. It would assist our organisation of this if you could inform the school by phone or email if you are proposing to attend so that we can give you an appointment time.

We will tell you about the formal process when we have considered the responses to this letter and made the decision about whether to continue.

Yours sincerely

Dame Yasmin Bevan
Executive Principal

David Wilkinson
Chairman of Governors