5th October 2018

Dear Parent or person with parental responsibility

I have received a few emails and questions about the school’s potential academy conversion, and I thought it would be a good time to cover the most frequently asked questions about becoming an academy.

**What is an academy?**

An academy is essentially a school which is funded directly by the state. It is independent of the local authority and receives its funding from central government. In our case, we will seek to become a converter academy and our preferred option is to become part of the Bay Learning Trust.

**What is a converter academy?**

When a school has a good or outstanding Ofsted report, the school is able to make the positive choice to convert to an academy. The Department for Education prefer schools taking this route to join an existing multi academy trust. We are in the strong position to be able to be a converter academy as a consequence of our Good Ofsted report in May 2017 and our recent good results.

**What is the Bay Learning Trust?**

The Bay Learning Trust is a small, geographically local multi-academy trust. The other two academies in the Trust are Carnforth High School and Ripley St Thomas Church of England Academy. In due course the trust will also be sponsoring Morecambe Community High School as a new academy. We believe that by joining a local trust, and working collaboratively with an outstanding academy, we will be able to ensure the best education and outcomes for Lancaster children.

**What will this mean for my child or young person?**

We are already striving to ensure that our school is the very best it can be and have made a number of changes over the last two years. Whilst we will continue to move forwards to improve our school, there will be no further large changes, and our school will continue to be an inclusive, non-selective community school. Joining an excellent and high performing multi academy trust will enable our teachers and students to access more resources; will ensure better training for teachers; widen and encourage sharing of expertise; ensure high quality reciprocal development for teachers and support staff; open up more opportunities and broaden experiences for young people whilst maintaining the cultural ethos of our school.

**Will our uniform change?**

We have made several changes to our uniform over recent years, including sourcing significantly cheaper blazers and items of PE kit. We encourage our students to wear our uniform with pride. We do not expect to make any further changes to our uniform.

**Will our school day change?**

No, we are confident that the changes we made to the school day throughout 2016 and 2017 have maximised opportunities for effective learning and we are not planning any further changes.

**Will funding for SEND provision change?**

Despite significant changes and reductions to SEND funding over the last few years which have been applied centrally to both local authority maintained schools and academies, we have worked hard to maintain a good quality provision to students with special educational needs. Inclusion is rooted in our school ethos and we will continue to strive to ensure that all students have access to the highest quality of provision that we can provide.

**Will the leadership of the school change?**

No, there are no changes expected. The school has strong leaders and we will continue to develop our staff to ensure that we offer the highest quality teaching across all our subject areas.

**Will the school be changing its curriculum?**

We have made a number of curriculum improvements over the last two years to ensure our students have access to a broad and balanced range of subjects. We now commence GCSE teaching in year 9 in the majority of subjects and for the immediate future students will continue to choose their options subjects during year 9. We will continue to develop our curriculum so that our students are able to make positive choices which allow them to progress well beyond school to post 16 education or high-quality apprenticeships.

**Ripley is a Church of England school; will the admissions policy of CLHS change?**

No, Central Lancaster High School will remain a non-faith school which serves the whole community of Lancaster.

**When will the school become an academy?**

The conversion process is rather like the process of buying and selling a house. There has to be a full land survey and a series of legal processes. Some conversions take up to a year, or more. Your child or young person will be unaffected by this part of the process, it will go on quietly in the background, while school staff focus on improving the quality of education at Central Lancaster High School.

I am aware that this is not an exhaustive list of likely questions. Please do feel free to write to me individually should there be other queries you wish to discuss.

Yours sincerely



Nicola Hall

Headteacher