

Monday 18 January 2010

Dear Parent,

I hope you had a good Christmas and New Year. I write to consult with you regarding our proposal to change Crawshaw School's status from a comprehensive to a Trust School.

Trust Schools were introduced by the Government in 2006. Schools can now opt to take on a new status by combining the strengths of staff, Governors and external partners to raise standards while responding to the needs of the local community. As you know, we already collaborate effectively with two other schools as a Post 16 Confederation. This collaboration means that we can offer our students greater choice and has resulted in our Post 16 results being graded as outstanding. It is clear that working with partners in a sustained way makes a real difference to young people's education. Partners committed to long term collaboration can bring new energy, expertise, skills, knowledge, networks and enthusiasm to help drive up standards further. The creation of robust legal structures as a Trust ensures sustainability that does not depend on a single individual or good intentions.

The specific aims of the Trust will be to:

- a. To offer enhanced learning opportunities for students, staff and the local community.
- b. To raise aspirations and so raise standards.
- c. To improve the life chances of our students.
- d. To better meet the social regeneration needs of the local community

We have identified three partners who wish to work with us and if we convert to trust status, these partners will become trustees. The partners are Barnardo's, Liverpool John Moores University and Leeds United FC. Our specialism is Humanities, and working with Barnardo's which has an international reputation for excellence, will help us to support students more effectively. In the first instance we will develop an understanding of the needs of young carers, focus on mentoring, support those who are vulnerable in the community and promote active citizenship through volunteering. Liverpool John Moores University intends to support the school by sharing subject specialisms with teachers, raising students' aspirations, offering training for staff and the local community. Leeds United can offer us a range of educational services and programmes for children at all levels. In their words "We are all looking forward to being part of a Trust that helps young people to develop to the best of their potential." Again, irrespective of football team preferences(!) Leeds United will create curriculum pathways, celebrate student achievements and further raise aspirations.

What does this mean for us?

- A greater range of flexible curriculum options.
- More meaningful acknowledgement of success.

- Support for students in removing barriers to learning.
- Development of independent learning for all year groups.
- Joint bidding that will allow Crawshaw School to further develop facilities for all students.

What does this mean for parents?

- The school will continue to be bound by the School Admissions Code, like all other schools. Although there will be some flexibility, we will have fair admissions.
- Trust schools have additional flexibilities to manage their assets and employ staff directly.
- Like any other maintained school, we will teach the National Curriculum, be inspected by Ofsted and receive the same amount of funding.

Your views on whether we should convert to trust status are important to us so please let us know what you think of our proposal. You can:

- Write to me
- Email me (admin@crawshawschool.org.uk – FAO Headteacher)
- Come to the information session to ask questions, learn more and raise any concerns. This takes place on Wednesday 27 January 2010 (6:00pm, School Theatre)

You can comment until Friday 26 February 2010. The Governors will review all the comments and will decide whether to go ahead with the proposal. If you would like more information on what being a Trust School involves, you can access detailed information (including the enclosed Frequently Asked Questions document) on the Trust Status page in the Parents section of the school website (www.crawshawschool.org.uk)

Yours sincerely,

Mrs J Ruse
Headteacher

Dawn Horner
Vice-Chair of Governors (Parent Governor)