



Courtwood Primary School

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Trish Farrelly: Executive Headteacher
Courtwood & Gilbert Scott Primary Schools
Head of School: Natasha Grant
Deputy: Jo Stawman
Secretary: Julie Kilsby

26th January 2018

Dear Parents / Carers / Members of the Community,

The Governors of Courtwood are delighted to announce that from 16th April 2018, Natasha Grant has been appointed to Acting Head Teacher and Jo Stawman to Acting Deputy Head. Both Natasha and Jo have been running the day-to-day management of the school for the last 18 months while we have been supporting Gilbert Scott and provided similar leadership during our help at South Norwood Primary School a couple of years ago. With the resignation of Tricia Farrelly, the Governors wanted to ensure that the school's ethos was retained during the change in leadership. We are delighted with the appointments and are looking forward to seeing how they will lead the school to further improve the education we provide to our pupils.

The posts have been classed as 'Acting' while the Governors are exploring converting Courtwood Primary School to an academy. We did not want to rush a recruitment process while we are looking at our future structure.

I wrote to you last year, explaining that the Governors were investigating if converting to an academy would be the right decision for Courtwood. We wanted to find a way to maintain Courtwood's vision and values while joining with other schools that would allow us to gain financial economies of scale and collaboration with other schools. We have met with several organisations and explored various different options looking at how we can get the benefits of being an academy whilst continuing to provide our pupils with a broad and balanced education.

The Governing Board and Senior Leadership Team have decided that Courtwood Primary School should look to become an academy joining The Collegiate Trust. Before we make a final decision on this however, it is important to explain to you why we have reached this decision, and to give you an opportunity to have your opinions heard and considered. Therefore we are launching with this letter, a period of consultation, during which you will be able to hear from us and The Collegiate Trust, as well as express your views on this proposal.

The Governors believe that The Collegiate Trust will provide the right levels of support and challenge for us to continue to provide a broad and balanced education for Courtwood Pupils, supporting their emotional well-being, whilst maintaining a nurturing environment of mutual

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respect and tolerance. We believe that The Collegiate Trust offer us such a partnership. The academies, which are already part of the Trust, are Riddlesdown Collegiate, Gossops Green Primary School, Waterfield Primary School and a new Free Primary School opening soon.

As part of this conversion there will be some changes to how the school is administered, however we will still be called Courtwood Primary School, the uniform will remain the same and there will not be changes to the staff beyond normal movements that are already planned.

An academy:

- is independent of the Local Authority (in our case, London Borough of Croydon)
- is funded to the same level as other local schools,
- has its site and buildings owned by the Local Authority and leased to a trust on a 125 year agreement
- is inspected by OFSTED just like other schools

An academy has additional freedoms over maintained schools. It can:

- shape its own curriculum (we do not foresee any radical changes)
- change the lengths of terms and school days, although there is no intention to do so. If this were to be considered in future, it would only happen in consultation with parents/carers and after a year's notice to all those affected. We are keen to ensure that our dates remain the same as other local schools.
- set its own conditions of service and levels of pay for its staff but would recognise the representational and negotiating rights of professional associations and trade unions. The Collegiate Trust salary scales align with Local Government and National Pay Scales.

Why the Governing Board considers conversion to an academy to be right?

The Governing Board and the staff will continue to be absolutely determined to offer to our pupils the very best educational opportunities and outcomes. We believe that academy conversion will enhance this offer through:

- The continued achievement of the highest possible standards
- Retaining our established values to provide a broad and balanced education to all pupils
- Continuing to support and challenge pupils to get the best possible start in their learning
- The school's ability to organise pupil support services to deliver most benefit to pupils
- Increased capacity to recruit, retain and reward staff of the highest calibre
- Ongoing refinement of the curriculum and curriculum progression in order to meet the individual needs of pupils.

What will be different?

- All staff at the school would transfer their employment from London Borough of Croydon to The Collegiate Trust. Their terms and conditions would remain the same and they would all have continuity of service
- The Collegiate Trust would become the accountable body for ensuring standards in the school continue to improve and will hold the Local Governing Body and the Head Teacher to account for achieving this. Day-to-day leadership of the school will be delegated to the Local Governing Body and the Head Teacher

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- The Collegiate Trust would provide support for developing the work of the school and raising standards and the Chief Executive and Primary Lead of the Trust would work in close partnership with the Head Teacher to support her work
- Some of the “back office” functions of the school (e.g. payroll, HR, admissions) would be managed centrally by the Trust.

What would be the same?

- The name of the school
- The uniform of the school
- The curriculum of the school
- The values and ethos of the school
- The role of the Local Governing Body in overseeing the work of the school, and the Head Teacher in running the school with her staff
- Admissions to the school
- Our work with other schools in our area.
- This change will not provide Feeder School status to Courtwood pupils wanting to gain entry to Riddlesdown.

Consultation process

Attached to this letter is a questionnaire providing you with an opportunity to state your opinions on what has been summarised in this document. Please let us know what you think about these proposals. This document and the questionnaire can be found on the school’s website: www.courtwood.croydon.sch.uk We value your opinions and look forward to receiving your response.

We have arranged two consultation meetings for anyone to come and hear more about our conversion from the Governors and also to hear from The Collegiate Trust on their vision for Courtwood. These will be on Monday 26th February 2018 at 2:15pm and 7:00pm. We will provide childcare during the evening meeting for pupils of the school. Each meeting will last about an hour and cover the same format of information from the Governors and The Collegiate Trust, then open questions.

The Governors hope you will share our views that to keep Courtwood Primary School providing good quality education to our pupils, with our ability to help children with various educational needs is important and that converting to an academy with The Collegiate Trust will allow us to keep doing this, seeking new ways to further improve the education we offer.

Yours faithfully



Al Roseweir
Chair of Governors

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