



Trust Status – A new opportunity for Castle Lower School

Dear Staff,

As you may already be aware, The Governing Body of Castle Lower School is thinking about becoming a Trust school, in partnership with Goldington Green Lower, Goldington Middle, Hazeldene Lower, Mark Rutherford Upper, Newnham Middle, Putnoe Lower and The Hills Lower Schools. These are schools we already have close links with.

Our proposed Trust

Trust schools are a new kind of school – part of the Local Authority, but supported by a charitable Trust which will appoint a maximum of two of the governors. There are now more than 100 Trust schools up and running, including the Sharnbrook, Hastingsbury and Samuel Whitbread pyramids in Bedfordshire. We already collaborate with schools within the Bedford Learning Community and the intention of forming a Trust is to strengthen the collaboration that has been a feature of our work for some years. The proposal is that we work particularly closely with other schools and other external partners, including Bedford College, The Bedford Charity [The Harpur Trust], the University of Bedfordshire and Bedfordshire Police to extend our current provision for pupils by exploring aspects of Every Child Matters through personalising learning.

Castle Lower School and our pupils will benefit in several ways:

- The partners share the school's commitment to learning for life and will help us to make it a reality for all our pupils. The partners will appoint governors with experience and ideas to help us deliver the Every Child Matters agenda through personalising learning.
- Trust-appointed governors will strengthen the governing body's work – we can draw on their expertise. They will also help us to strengthen our work to develop personalised learning by making sure that strategic decisions reflect the diversity of our pupils' needs and the range of opportunities available to them.
- Existing projects will continue, and the new relationship will make it easier to plan for the long-term.

What does this mean for staff?

The governing body, not the Trust, will continue to run the school and to be responsible and accountable for its performance. The school budget will continue to be delegated

to the governing body.

The existing rights of teachers will be fully protected if the school acquires Trust status. We will still be bound by the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document. You will be employed by the school governing body instead of the local authority – all staff will be covered by the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools)(England) Regulations 2007 -<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/20071289.htm> - which provide for all rights, powers, duties and liabilities to transfer from the LA to the governing body (paragraphs 29 to 32 of Schedule 1)] and we will continue to recognise the same unions. We will still be bound by the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document. The Trust will not be the employer.

The governing body will still have to include at least two members of staff.

The school will remain part of the Local Authority's family of maintained schools – this means that we will still teach the National Curriculum, and will be bound by the School Admissions Code – we will continue to play our full part in taking hard to place pupils, and will not introduce selection by ability.

Consultation process

There will be a meeting for all staff on Monday 24th November at 3.45p.m. in the hall of Block 1. Please let us know what you think about the proposal. You can

- write to the governors (the office will pass on all messages)
- talk to the staff governors
- come to the meeting on 26th November at 7.00pm in the Drama Hall at Mark Rutherford Upper School to discuss the proposals with governors and representatives of the partners.

You can comment until 12th December. The governors will review all the comments and will decide whether to go ahead (and whether to amend the proposals to reflect your suggestions and concerns). There will be another chance to comment on the formal proposals during the Spring Term before a final decision is taken.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Kubicek (Chair of Governors)

M. J. Marsh (Headteacher)