



Wednesday, 01 April 2015

Gosforth Schools' Trust

Dear Parent/ Carer

I am writing to you as the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Gosforth School's Trust and the Gosforth Federated Academies Trust. I appreciate that recent announcements regarding future school provision in our area have caused considerable confusion and concern.

From the outset can I say that both trusts, under my Chairmanship, remain fully committed to the three tier system of First, Middle and High school system which we have in Gosforth. The Pyramid schools are all regarded by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding and as Directors and Governors we are fully committed to working to improve educational provision in our area within the existing three tier system.

We are facing some big challenges, we already know that there is local pressure for school places in our area and most of our schools are already at capacity. First and foremost we are committed to the idea of Gosforth places for Gosforth families. As the Great Park extends there will be more families in and around our area and we need to plan now for how we will meet the growing demand. But we are acutely aware of the need to ensure we meet local demand first, our schools are popular and we know that extra places would be taken up quickly by families in other parts of the City. This would leave us with future problems for Gosforth families and would be damaging to some of our neighbouring schools and we do not want that to happen. We need to be able, with the help of the Council, to differentiate between local demand from local families and desire for places from families in neighbouring catchments.

Some of you will be aware that we have already agreed to increase capacity in three of our First schools. As this increase moves through the schools there will be demand for places at Middle and later at High school, we need to be planning to meet that demand now. Both Trusts want to work with the Council to develop an overall plan for future provision.

In an effort to try to contribute a part solution, the Academy Trust explored options that would deal with some of the pressures facing the Academy but which would fit into our existing organisational structure. Although somewhat ahead of the work on an overall plan the Governors agreed to pursue funds via the Department for Education for secondary school provision. It is an opportunistic bid for resources which may not be available in the future and as it is a bid, it may or may not be successful, there are no guarantees. It was always intended that this proposal should be part of any larger plan that came from the Council and should strengthen our current system. The proposal for a secondary school appears to have the most chance of success, but what we want to achieve as the Academy Trust, is a Gosforth plan which fits with the aspirations of all of our schools and which fits into our three tier system.

I am sorry if the announcement from the Academy has caused confusion and upset amongst families, as Chair the responsibility for that lies firmly on my shoulders. Please be assured that I will be doing my utmost to get both Trusts and the Council working together to find a way ahead which helps us retain and strengthen the Gosforth Pyramid of Schools and offers places to current and future Gosforth families.

George Snaith

Chair of Governors, Gosforth Federated Academies

Chair of the Board of Gosforth Schools' Trust