

19th January 2017

Dear Parents and Carers,

Up-date on Danesgate's application to be an Academy

Danesgate application to convert to an Alternative Provision Academy

You will remember that I wrote to all parents in October 2016 about conversion to an Academy. I am pleased to confirm that the consultation period ended without any negative feedback. We hope to convert in the Autumn term 2017 and will be working with all York schools and the LA to ensure a seamless transition so that we continue to offer the same high quality of support for vulnerable young people in York as we do now.

In my October letter I also alluded to the benefit of us also looking into opening a new school for young people who have statements or Education, Health & Care Plans. The idea for this is not because we want to grow Danesgate but because we want to ensure we have the right school in York for young people who have needs at the level of a statement or Education Health and Care Plan. Danesgate already looks after these young people and we are simply wanting to make sure we have the best, long term school provision for them. The Management Committee have done a lot more work on this idea and I have put an up-date on this project below.

Danesgate's expression of interest in opening a Free School – Special - for Social Emotional and Mental Health needs

Prior to the consultation period for the Academy we had been in discussions with the Local Authority and the RSC about the potential need for a new special school for SEMH in the region. This was mainly being driven by the numbers of pupils with statements and EHCPs being accommodated on a permanent basis at Danesgate but also by the ambition to offer high quality local provision for young people with complex needs. At the same time we were getting applications from other Local Authorities to take young people with EHCPs so recognised there was a growing need for our sort of specialist provision. So, following consultation with our Management Committee and local stakeholders, it has been agreed that Danesgate will work on an application to open a Free School called Danesfield at some point in the future. We hope to have our application ready for March 2017 but this is only the first step in what will be a much longer process and I will be giving parents regular up-dates on this exciting project.

With so much strategic development underway at Danesgate we need to make sure we are sitting within a Multi Academy Trust. This is what the DfE expects but it also makes sense in terms of joint working with other schools on school improvement and to gain economies of scale when buying supplies etc. In order that we can continue to work with schools we already work closely with, Danesgate will join the MAT developments of our existing geographical cluster – South York. This is the group of schools we have already been in a partnership with as part of the cluster school improvement model and so to join that MAT is a natural extension of that relationship. Please find attached a letter that is being sent to the parents of all the schools in the South York Partnership so that you can understand which schools will be in the Multi Academy Trust alongside Danesgate.

The Danesgate Academy and – if we were successful in our bid - a Free School for SEMH would be co-located and work in close partnership to provide a continuum of provision for young people from across the City whose needs require a specialist setting.

If you have any queries please do contact me by email on tricia.head@york.gov.uk or by ringing 01904 6242611. Regular up-dates will be coming through and our web site will be kept up to date with information also.

Yours faithfully,

Patricia Head

Headteacher