



Castle View Primary School
July 19th 2016

Dear Parents,

I wrote to you in March this year to inform you that the Governing Body had decided to seek to become an Academy. I invited you to a meeting to discuss this with me and with Mrs Peat. A number of you came and others discussed this with Mrs Peat and parent governors informally. You told us you understood why we thought we should do this in the best interest of children at Castle View – and that we should get on with finding the best option for the school.

We have chosen to apply to join the Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Ashbourne (known as QEGS) Multi Academy Trust (MAT).

Governors, Mrs Peat and I researched all of the primary school Academies in Derbyshire and bordering Derbyshire. We made contact with half a dozen and governors have had constructive meetings with two. The Head Teacher and staff from QEGS have visited Castle View three times and we have been to Ashbourne twice to look at their school and to meet staff and pupils.

Why QEGS? Because they share our values and have the capacity to support Castle View in their development. They care passionately about children and believe that all children deserve the best education they can get. To deliver that they also believe in the need to develop staff to be the best teachers and support staff that they can be. As soon as the Head visited Castle View she could see that we have this in common and that we could work together productively. Mrs Peat has already developed productive relationships with schools in the local cluster and across the Derbyshire Partnership for Learning Teaching Alliance; this new relationship will bring access to a different range of resources and expertise. We are very excited about the possibilities.

Who are QEGS and what does their Multi Academy Trust look like?

Despite their name, they are not a selective grammar school. They were, but in common with almost all grammars in the country, became a comprehensive school in the 1970's. They have kept their name and original charter from the 1500's. They take all children from Ashbourne and surrounding areas. QEGS became a standalone Academy in 2011. They plan to take another secondary school in Derbyshire and five or six primary schools from Staffordshire and Derbyshire into the new QEGS MAT. One primary will join in November and we hope to be the second. One of the attractions of joining QEGS is that we will be in the MAT from the beginning and will have a say in how it develops.

Unlike other MATS, all of the Head Teachers will work together with the Head from QEGS to make decisions.

In practice, what does this mean for children and staff? All staff will be offered their existing post on the same terms and conditions – they will be able to transfer from Derbyshire County Council to the Multi Academy Trust as their new employer. We are asked to merge the Castle View logo with the QEGS logo, otherwise parents and children will see no change when we convert. In time though, our staff will have opportunities to train and develop and to share good practice with a wide range of primary and secondary schools; we already have talented staff and have valuable expertise to share in exchange.

What happens now? In the next few days we will apply to the Department for Education to join the QEGS MAT. They will make this decision over the summer holiday. In September we expect to begin the conversion process which means transferring all of our buildings and contracts etc. from the council to the Multi Academy Trust. This is a legal process that will take several months. We hope to join the Trust around the end of the year. In September, we will invite parents and carers to a meeting to hear more about this and to ask any questions. If you want to speak to me before that I will be in school on Thursday afternoon and you can email me at hboocock@castleview.derbyshire.sch.uk to arrange that, either before the leavers assembly or afterwards. Mrs Peat and parent governor Emma Hill will also be in school every day and can answer your questions.

You already know how passionate Mrs Peat and her team are about delivering the best education for your children to give them the best start in life. They have achieved a great deal in the last three years. Governors believe that in the current climate, joining the QEGS MAT is the best next step on our journey to excellence.

Yours Faithfully

Helen Boocock
Chair of Governors