

From:
To: <head@congleton.cheshire.sch.uk>
Date: 17/01/2011 05:22 PM
Subject: [***SPAM*** Score/Req: 06.8/5.0]

Dear Mr Hermitt,

Myself and are writing to tell you about our views on changing to an academy school. We do not think that it is a good idea for our school to change into an academy this is due to the disadvantages that we have found.

Firstly we think that your point about and I quote 'an academy is in a better position to recruit and retain the best staff'. This implies that some of our current teachers may not have a job at our school if we ever became an academy myself and Laurens point of view is that if you al of a sudden go about changing the teachers in our school would make a massive impact on students learning as it takes a lot to get used t a new teacher and the way the each their lessons, also for current A-Level and GCSE students they need teachers the teachers that they are learning with at the moment because they have the support and the teachers understanding of where they are and if a new member comes in then this will destroy that.

Another reason that we do no agree with your choice to change our status is you made a point about 'targeting additional funds to support your work with gifted and talented' but gifted and talented isn't for everyone it singles the higher achieving people out and gives them new opportunities when that money could go to give new opportunities to lower achieving students to help with their self esteem. Gifted and talented is something that I do think is a very good idea, celebrating what people have done well, but I think that if your just going to put more money into making their gifted and talented day better then it's a waste of the extra money we'd be getting, I think that if you were to do it, it should be something that the whole school can enjoy and get something new out of. Because I know that when I was in the lower school it used to knock my confidence when I heard that someone that get's praised all the time and gets notices a lot, got chose over me to go out and do something interesting. And from this is just think that more students should be involved as its celebrating what students can do not the marks they can achieve.

Thirdly we also think that the local authority that run us now have a better idea of what we our need everyone that works in this authority have specialist area's to ensure that our school runs smoothly. We think that because an academy school would be run purely by you this will mean that we will lose out on al the opinions but in by the local authority and the decisions that they make and I think that this will make a big impact on the school not only on students but staff, yourself and the local neighbour hood as it will be for you to make the overall decisions and decisions

that may not go down well with everyone.

Finally the extra money that we would be getting may fund the resources we say we need, but as a foundation school at the moment we seem to be fine using the resources that we have already got. We al manage fine with what we have and I don't see how having state of the art technology in say something like ICT will make us a better school because its always been stated about our 'state of the art technology in ICT' that clearly doesn't work. So it would be a waste of money to go out and spend on resources that our school can't work. However having the extra money may help when we maybe need a new piece of gym equipment I don't think that if we didn't change we would feel the effect because we have never had the money so we won't feel like something is missing.

We hope that you take into consideration what myself and Lauren think and that before making your decision you take everyone's opinion into consideration as from what I have heard a lot of people do not agree with the 'academy status'. We hope that we hear back from you soon.

Yours sincerely

Students 'A' and 'B'

From: "David Hermitt" <head@congleton.cheshire.sch.uk>
To:
Date: 19/01/2011 07:35 PM
Subject: Re: [***SPAM*** Score/Req: 06.8/5.0]

Dear Students 'A' and 'B'

Thank you for writing to express your views about Academy Status.

As regards staffing, I am pleased to reassure you that we intend to keep our high quality staff. In fact, all staff will be transferred into the Academy with their present terms and conditions by law. There are no plans to make any changes that would result in our best staff leaving the school and harming your learning. Our intentions are quite the opposite: we wish to retain the services of our best staff!

Any additional funding made available through being an Academy would be spent on the priorities of our school. Currently we have less students gaining A*/A grades than we should expect. There is a need to improve the way we support our most able students and so that is why this is mentioned as an example. Our priorities are all formed by everyone's views and so future spending will target agreed needs which includes boosting the self-confidence of all students.

Many students assume that the Local Authority plays a significant role in decision making. However, this is not the case. Their role is to provide challenge to underperforming schools and this in turn has meant that schools such as ours do not get much attention. We work closely with our neighbouring schools to make decisions and this will continue. Our legal services and other insurance would remain in tact to avoid any future unforeseen costs.

You have correctly identified our ICT needs. We are spending one of the lowest amounts in Cheshire on ICT due to our priority to invest in teachers. Consequently, any additional funding could make a big impact in this area.

Thank you again for writing to me and I hope that the above responses provide you with re-assurance that the move to Academy Status would be of benefit to you and your education.

Regards

D Hermitt

From: Student 'C'
To: head@congleton.cheshire.sch.uk
Date: 17/01/2011 05:54 PM
Subject: Academy Status

Dear Mr Hermitt

I am writing to express my concerns at the transformation of Congleton High School into an Academy.

I acknowledge the benefits of increased funding by removing the school from local council control, however my concerns regard the teachers. I have a fear that I may lose teachers as a result of the move and as such this would greatly disrupt my A-Level studies. In addition, as the school would be liable itself rather than the local council, we may be susceptible to huge costs should such a legal situation occur.

I feel that running a school like a business is not the right approach. It would make our school elitist, and as I am someone who came to the school after finishing my GCSEs at Biddulph High School, this is a concern as those like me may struggle to get in. I believe that there are issues which can be addressed without reforming our school into an academy, namely:

- Offering a varied curriculum
- Offering more extra-curricular activity
- Increasing learning resources

I don't believe that in order to these things a teachers contract has to be renegotiated, it simply involves discussion and working out how we can use our resources more effectively. I believe that academy status would be bad for teachers, therefore bad for students and ultimately bad for the school.

Yours Sincerely,

Student 'C'

From: "David Hermitt" <head@congleton.cheshire.sch.uk>
To:
Date: 19/01/2011 07:35 PM
Subject: Re: Academy Status

Dear Student 'C'

Thank you for writing to express your views about Academy Status.

As regards staffing, I am pleased to reassure you that we intend to keep our high quality staff. In fact, all staff will be transferred into the Academy with their present terms and conditions by law. There are no plans to make any changes that would result in our best staff leaving the school and harming your learning. Our intentions are quite the opposite: we wish to retain the services of our best staff!

The school already runs as a not for profit business. We have employees, income and expenditure and we are required to set a balanced budget. To enable us to fund the priorities that you name we need to be prudent in financial decision making so that our funds are used to fulfil our school aim "Achieving Success Together".

Any additional funding made available through being an Academy would be spent on the priorities of our school. Currently we have less students gaining A*/A grades than we should expect. There is a need to improve the way we support our most able students and so that is why this is mentioned as an example. Our priorities are all formed by everyone's views and so future spending will target agreed needs which includes boosting the self-confidence of all students.

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Thank you again for writing to me and I hope that the above responses provide you with re-assurance that the move to Academy Status would be of benefit to you and your education.

Regards