

WH/RNM

31st January 2018

Dear Parents and Carers

THIS IS AN IMPORTANT LETTER; IF YOU WANT TO RESPOND YOU SHOULD DO SO BY FRIDAY 9TH FEBRUARY 2018.

We believe joining The GORSE Academies Trust (TGAT) will enable us to provide an Outstanding education for our children.

Despite that, Leeds City Council (LCC) has objected to our application.

It wants to close Boston Spa Academy, sell the land for development and instead build a new school and other facilities in Wetherby.

PLEASE READ ON

At the heart of our decision to join TGAT is our determination to provide our children with a truly Outstanding rather than a Good quality of education. We firmly believe this will be achieved through our current partnership with TGAT and by us joining it formally in the near future - although we have adopted the name "Boston Spa Academy", the formal process has not yet been completed.

The response from both parents and the wider community has been emphatically supportive. This is reflected by the large numbers who attended our open evening and who went on to express a preference for a place at Boston Spa Academy for September 2018.

What are the LCC proposals?

- To close Boston Spa Academy and build a new school in Wetherby, which would replace Wetherby High School.
- The funds from selling the land in Boston Spa would also be used to build a leisure centre, community library and council services in Wetherby.

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These proposals make no sense to us. We believe they are motivated by politics and conflicts of interest and do not put the best interests of our children first because:

- Wetherby High School has been judged by Ofsted to “Require Improvement” at its last 3 inspections. Boston Spa Academy has been judged “good” at its last 2 inspections and yet LCC wants to close it.
- The fabric of our building is well looked after. Over £1,000,000 has been spent by LCC since last summer which addresses all the current priorities in our condition report for the next five years; additionally our current facilities exceed anything that the new DfE building guidelines allow.
- LCC has a very poor track record of securing outcomes for students when it closes and merges secondary schools.
- It has taken LCC nine months to put these proposals forward. This has delayed, without good reason, our application to join TGAT.
- A local councillor is the director of a company which provides Wetherby High School’s catering. That councillor supports LCC’s proposals. We believe he should be playing no part in this process.

What can we all do about these proposals?

The Governors of Boston Spa Academy have unanimously voted to reject the LCC proposals. They are resolute in this decision because:

- We have already seen such a positive impact in school through our partnership with TGAT.
- Six out of seven TGAT Ofsted inspections have already been graded at “Outstanding”. What better evidence could there be of our desire to join TGAT?

The Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) is the person who was responsible for making a decision on our application. As a result of the objections made by LCC, she has now referred the matter to Lord Agnew, the new Parliamentary Under Secretary of State to make the final decision. We have written to them both, urging them to approve our application and allow us to convert to an Academy with TGAT.

The Governors believe that the future education of our children is too important to be entrusted to LCC and felt compelled to write to you to explain the truth of what is taking place.

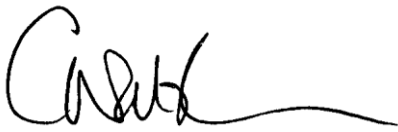
A decision is due to be taken by Lord Agnew in early February 2018. We hope that you will join us in communicating your views about what LCC is seeking to do to our school by emailing the Alec Shelbrooke MP using this email <mailto:alec.shelbrooke.mp@parliament.uk> by Friday 9th February. There will also be some social media activity using [#BuildABetterBoston](#), where we would also be grateful for your support.

Please be assured that despite this distraction all at Boston Spa Academy remain committed to and focussed on the achievement of our children. We remain united behind, and committed to, our TGAT partnership plan.

On our part senior leaders and governors will continue to do all in our power to protect our school and to build for the future an educational provision for all our children which is truly world class.

Thank you in advance for your support with this.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CWALSH', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

CHRISTOPHER WALSH
Principal