

Ref: SBE/TTR

WILMINGTON ACADEMY

WILMINGTON



ACADEMY

Principal: Mrs T Trusler

Head of Apollo: Mr P Devlin  
Head of Minerva: Mr M Gore

21 September 2016

Dear Parents/Carers

**RE: The debate on extending grammar school provision.**

Whatever the future shape of education policy, schools within Leigh Academies Trust are uniquely placed to offer the best education across the region. We have a long history of providing choice to families and achieving excellence for pupils of all abilities. Stationers' Crown Woods Academy in Greenwich, which is run by Leigh Academies Trust, has a highly-successful grammar college on-site even though the Borough is fully comprehensive. Our four Kent high schools are consistently amongst the most successful in the County. The Leigh UTC, which specialises in engineering and computing and which will admit pupils into Year 7 from 2017, is achieving national acclaim for its dynamic, ground-breaking and employer-led curriculum. Furthermore, we are excited that in September 2017 several of our secondary academies will be offering the highly-accredited International Baccalaureate Careers-related Programme (IBCP) as well as more traditional A Levels so that we carry on meeting the needs of all pupils.

You will have seen in the news on Friday that a small local high school is consulting on whether it should become a grammar school by 2018. We are aware that this has caused concern already amongst the local community and has led some people to comment that this is a rather premature announcement. We hope this letter will help to address some of the questions which are being raised. Points to bear in mind are as follows:

- The proposal has neither the support of Kent County Council (KCC) nor the Regional Schools' Commissioner (RSC).
- The new Conservative government does not have an electoral mandate to extend grammar school provision and their existing plans are in green paper form only at this stage.
- The debate on grammar school extension is likely to be protracted and hotly-contested.
- The suggestion to extend grammar school provision is already opposed by Ofsted, all political parties other than the Conservatives, 80% of the teaching profession, all teaching unions and will face considerable opposition in the House of Lords where the Conservatives do not currently have a majority, even if it passes through the House of Commons.

Leigh Academies Trust's position currently is to contribute to the grammar school debate constructively and in due course, work with other local partners to continue to meet the growing need for high-quality school places across the region. **We would welcome your views more generally on whether the area would benefit from an additional grammar school. As such, we would ask you to complete the reply slip below and return to your child's school. You can also give your views electronically by going to our academy website and clicking on the Homepage link.**

We can reassure parents that both KCC and the RSC have confirmed that should legislation to extend grammar schools come into Law, decisions about how, where and when to create new grammars will certainly not be decided on a first come first served basis. A more careful, sensible and measured approach will be taken to ensure decisions are made in the best interests of all pupils and the communities in which they live.

Yours sincerely

Simon Beamish  
Chief Executive  
Leigh Academies Trust

Tracey Trusler  
Principal  
Wilmington Academy

Common Lane, Wilmington, Dartford, Kent DA2 7DR Tel: 01322 272111  
Email: admin@wilmingtonacademy.org.uk www.wilmingtonacademy.org.uk



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**REPLY SLIP (please return to the Wilmington Academy Reception): or email [admin@wilmingtonacademy.org.uk](mailto:admin@wilmingtonacademy.org.uk)**

**I would support a plan for an additional grammar school in the area:**

**AGREE / NOT AGREE (please circle)**

**Parent Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Child's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Academy Attended:** Wilmington Academy

**Year Group:** \_\_\_\_\_