

Supplementary Information Q and A

Selection by parents/ steering group of Haberdashers' Askes as opposed to Charter School.

1. Who are the “steering group” that made this decision?

The steering group has been drawn from the very first wave of supporters who signed up to the campaign for a new secondary school for East Dulwich.

We wish to give acknowledgment and thanks to the local ward Councillor James Barber that initially called the group and the efforts of his colleagues for their initial leafleting and information stalls last winter which kick-started the awareness amongst us.

Several of those signed up supporters offered practical help at the time of registering their interest. These people were all asked to attend an initial Steering Group meeting in February.

- Parents were drawn from across the wider East Dulwich area including Peckham, Peckham Rye, Nunhead, Camberwell, Dog Kennel Hill.
- We had representation of parents from almost all the 10 state primary schools located around the proposed hospital site.
- This allowed us to ensure that we had a balanced and representative section of parents with children currently from Yr 3 and Yr 4, many with older siblings and direct experience of the secondary application process in Southwark.
- The group contains parents of children with specific learning or developmental needs, some with experience of the SEN processes and related plans, interventions and support.
- The group also has parents with previous direct experience of the free school development process.
- The group also has parents with various professional strengths and practical experience from within the public and private sectors, including education, financial services, local government, community consultation and communications.

Once it was formed the steering group determined it would be apolitical:

We set about to ensure that it had its own identity and supporters of all main parties and those of no political affiliation would be welcome.

2. How did you decide what type of school you wanted?

We started off with no preconceived provider in mind, instead we discussed our key principles and the characteristics of the type of school we felt the pupils of East Dulwich needed.

The key principles of the school:

- Non Selective.
- Non Faith.
- Co-Ed.
- Sets and expects exacting standards of all its pupils regardless of their ability and has similar ethos for all its staff, both teaching and support.
- Has a fair and transparent admissions process. (Banding and distance.)
- It genuinely increases the real choice of secondary state education on offer to parents in the East Dulwich area.
- A school capable of forming learning partnerships with leading Southwark /London based institutions
- Not a large scale Federation chain.

3. What decision making process was undertaken to identify which provider you should choose?

Having established the key principles of the type of school we wanted for East Dulwich we then set about determining **the essential criteria for identifying any potential providers:**

- They must be **capable of meeting all of the key principles** of the school we wished to bring to East Dulwich.
- They should **ideally be a Multi-Academy Trust**, or have demonstrated a proven track record of creating new schools and or taking over and improving failing schools.
- They must be **capable of identifying the level and type of demand for a new school** in the East Dulwich area, and then **meeting that demand fully**. This must be done **to the exacting standards of the DfE Free School application process**.
- They must ideally have **direct experience of dealing with the Free School application process** and the key DfE (Dept for Education) and EFA (Education Funding Agency) officials involved in this process.
- They must have **robust governance structures, sound financial management**, and ideally **a track record of operating and being inspected as a multi academy trust** or similar structure.
- They must have **recent, relevant experience of developing and delivering a new school** under the Free School or Academy programmes.
- They must be **capable of managing all technical, financial and project management aspects** of the Free School process from start to finish, **only requiring the steering group to provide support to the community consultative processes**.
- They must have a **proven track record of managing complex projects** involving large scale consultative processes, and experience of dealing with local authorities on a matters of education and also successful planning applications and related issues.
- They must be **capable of producing a strong application to the DfE Free School application process** no later than the “autumn wave” call for applications, **to ensure that a school can be delivered to open in Sept 2016** to ensure that the predicted start of the bulge year excessive demand on school places in Southwark can be met/relieved.
- They must be able to engage on the process of creating and resourcing a new school, whilst **maintaining the standards of education for their existing schools and pupils**.

Fundamentally **our decision making process had also to be a pragmatic one**. We had to choose a provider we felt had the experience to hit the ground running when it comes to setting up new schools, coupled with excellent education credentials. **The selected provider must be able to deliver in both those contexts.**

4. Charter is an excellent local school, why did you not ask Charter at the start of the process?

- Charter School Trust was one of a number of other excellent Southwark secondary schools given consideration but other excellent school providers were considered clearly stronger across all the criteria.
- **Additionally there was no demonstrable evidence that Charter had;**
 - **an appetite to expand into delivering new schools,**
 - **or for taking over failing schools at secondary or primary phase in Southwark,**
 - **and therefore becoming a Multi-Academy Trust since it had opened in 2000.**
- **There was also some doubt concerning whether another Charter Trust School so close to their existing school, would be perceived and understood by both the DfE and parents as offering greater choice.**
- **The two excellent school providers that were identified as the strongest candidates at this stage were Multi-Academy Trusts with a track record in creating and delivering schools rated as outstanding by Ofsted and recent experience of successfully delivering Free Schools.**

5. How did you select between the two providers you had initially shortlisted?

- Both providers were approached to gauge their level of interest, and to see if either of them would be receptive at this point in delivering a new school for Sept 2016 in East Dulwich.
- One provider thanked us for our consideration but declined to proceed any further.
- Haberdashers' Aske's responded enthusiastically and invited us to discussions to scope out our request in more detail. At these discussions they expressed the wish to have the status of preferred bidder subject to the full consideration and scrutiny of their Federation Board of Governors.

6. Is it correct that Charter approached the steering group after you had met with Haberdashers'? How did you respond to Charter's request to be considered?

Soon after the steering group launched our campaign to gain more registered supporters, Cllr Barber received a request for a meeting with The Charter School Trust, with a view to being considered as a potential education provider. He went and met with The Charter School senior staff and reported back to the full steering group.

The steering group considered **it was appropriate** to meet with The Charter School Trust for the following reasons;

- The Charter Trust was an excellent Southwark school and had many strengths recognised by the group as part of the initial shortlisting process.
- Many members of the steering group felt more comfortable with a clear comparative process rather than the "ordination" of the remaining shortlisted provider.

- Many members of the steering group considered that as representatives of the many more parents from within the various primary schools, some with older children aiming to attend or already at The Charter School; they were obliged to fully examine the offer from The Charter School.
- Our final decision, whatever it turned out to be would be made stronger by stress testing our criteria for an education provider in a more detailed way.

7. What happened when you met Charter?

- The steering group actually met with The Charter School Trust twice, making a total of three meetings.
- At the first meeting the steering group representatives met with the Headmaster, Deputy Head Teacher and their Public Affairs Manager. The steering group representatives outlined the campaign so far and the process of identifying the preferred bidder.
- The Charter School Trust outlined the arguments to be also considered as a potential education provider. Their case was based on the following core arguments;
 - Their established presence within the wider East Dulwich area, and a known quantity for many East Dulwich parents
 - Their size and scale and total concentration on secondary education, with no interest in providing primary phase education
 - Their excellent educational attainment levels and their track record of outstanding Ofsted inspection ratings
 - Their excellent track record with the local community, parents and relationships with local businesses and institutions
 - The fact they had built The Charter Trust School from scratch back in 2000.

8. Why did you not make Charter a preferred bidder instead of Haberdashers' ?

Following the first meeting the representatives reported back to the full steering group, following discussion it was agreed by the steering group that the following should take place:

The Charter School Trust should be able to complete an appraisal document.

- This allowed The Charter School Trust to fully demonstrate in their own words how they could satisfy the essential criteria for potential providers.
- This would ensure that they were considered in a fair transparent way.
- Each part of the appraisal process was weighted with a value based on its significance and the maximum potential score was shown for each question.
- Charter was provided with all this information for full transparency.
- Notes were given that indicated what we looked for in a maximum score for each question.

The Charter School would be visited again.

- This was to allow the steering group to engage with representatives of The Charter School Trust Board of Governors.
- It would allow the steering group to further examine the areas of the criteria that The Charter School had originally been deemed as less strong than the two providers originally shortlisted:
 - Governance capabilities

- Demonstrable recent experience of Free Schools or similar DfE processes
- Demonstrable track record in major capital build projects
- Capacity to deliver this new school for Sept 2016 and maintain current levels of attainment for existing school
- Genuine appetite for growing into a Multi-Academy Trust / larger education Federation

9. What was that outcome of that appraisal process?

- The Charter School Trust appraisal submission was scored and evaluated, and compared to the same exercise with Haberdashers' Aske.
- The outcome of the scoring led to a recommendation that was made to the whole steering group.
- Extensive discussion took place over several hours.
- The steering group was given a free vote to select which of the two providers they wished to support.
- The vote of the steering group was unanimous in support for Haberdashers' Aske's Federation

10. Haberdashers' Aske's has a school that has been rated as "inadequate" by Ofsted, how does that fit with your claim to have found the best provider you could?

The proposed new school in East Dulwich will be based on the educational model and ethos created at Hatcham College. A school that is rated as "Outstanding" in all of Ofsted's inspection categories and has four consecutive outstanding inspection judgements.

- Haberdashers' Aske's has another school in Lewisham that it took over in 2005, Knights Academy, which was formerly Malory School. The school was previously failing and educational attainment was low and outcomes for pupils poor.
- Haberdashers' Aske's Federation made a conscious decision to engage with Lewisham Council in taking the improvement of one of its weakest failing schools with consequences for the life chances of the pupils that attended it.
- This is a significant and long term challenge and commitment that Haberdashers' have at the core of their Federation; offering local children an excellent education.
- This school had seen significant improvement in both the levels of educational attainment of its pupils. GCSE rates of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C passes (including Maths and English) had risen from 14% to 56%.
- Under the Haberdashers' Aske's family of schools Knights Academy gained strong management and governance structures that were previously lacking.
- The current issues highlighted by Ofsted relate to the impact of a small number of disruptive pupils and their behaviour impacting on all other students.
- Haberdashers' had instigated a robust corrective programme and management strategy to address this issue and to see the school re-inspected with a good and improving rating within 15 months of the recent Ofsted report.

11. What experience has the Haberdashers' Aske's Federation got of opening new schools?

The Haberdashers' Aske's Federation has three, each comprising a primary and secondary phase. These are Hatcham College in New Cross, Knights Academy in Downham and Crayford Academy in Crayford. In some cases these schools replaced struggling schools, where the Haberdashers were asked to step in by the local authority. Their most recent experience of starting brand new schools is:

- The secondary school at Haberdashers' Aske's Crayford Academy. This is a purpose built school to serve the community of Crayford, near Dartford, which previously had no secondary school.
- The secondary school opened in September 2010 and now has students in years 7, 8, 9 and 10. It admits 180 students per year and in future will have a sixth form of 250 students.
- Crayford Academy is in Bexley, a borough that operates a grammar school system. Crayford Academy offers a comprehensive education and has proved hugely popular. It was inspected in 2012 and judged good by Ofsted. This is a single judgement for the primary and secondary phase of the school. The informal feedback from inspectors was that the secondary part of the school was outstanding.
- The Hatcham Temple Grove Free School, expanding the primary phase at Hatcham College. The Hatcham Temple Grove Free School application was approved by DfE in summer 2012 and opened in September 2013 in temporary accommodation.
- The school was fully supported by Lewisham Council, because of the extra capacity it would provide to meet the growing need for primary places in the area. The school has 60 reception children and will grow by two forms a year until it is full.

12. Haberdashers' Aske's has two primary school projects whose buildings have not yet been completed, Hatcham Temple Grove and their primary Free School. Doesn't this show they don't have the capacity to deliver?

- Hatcham Temple Grove was being refurbished under the Building Schools for the Future programme when an accident during construction caused the building to burn down. Building Schools for the Future was a complex programme that made a Local Education Partnership (LEP), working under contract to the local authority, responsible for delivery of all such projects within that local authority. After the fire there was a very protracted dispute over insurance and liability for the fire. Ultimately, in order to expedite the rebuilding of the school, the Haberdashers' Aske's Federation took on the role of developer for the project and as a result the school is now under construction and should be complete and occupied in early 2015.
- The primary free school opened in temporary accommodation as planned, just over twelve months after it was approved by the DfE. There has been a delay to the start of construction of the permanent buildings for the school, because of the time taken to obtain planning permission, which has recently been granted. Planning approvals are the responsibility of the EFA as it is with all free school projects. In the meantime the free school continues to operate very successfully in purpose-built temporary accommodation.
- These cases illustrate some of the complexities in starting a new school and managing school building projects in a conservation area. In both instances the Haberdashers' Aske's Federation's team has been instrumental in ensuring that the projects continue to move forward. Without the involvement of their project team it is likely that both of these projects would be far less advanced than they are now.