

Statutory proposal to close Whitton School (and replace it with an academy)

Full collation of consultation responses

Introduction

On Friday 11 September 2009, the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames published a notice and prescribed information of the proposal to close Whitton School on 31 August and replace it with an academy on 1 September 2010, with responses requested by a closing-date of Monday 26 October.

Simultaneously, but separately, Appleyards, the DCSF-appointed project management company, undertook wide-ranging consultation on the details of the academy proposal, as outlined in a brochure and on the www.richmondacademies.org website. In addition to the meetings listed below, Appleyards undertook consultation with pupils who attend the each of the schools listed.

Earlier, less formal consultation had previously taken place in the summer of 2008 and between March and June 2009 with a wide variety of local people.

Consultation methods

The notice was published outside the school entrances, in the Richmond and Twickenham Times and on the Council website. The prescribed information was also published on the Council's website. Copies of a leaflet summarising the details and implications of the proposal were distributed to staff, governors and all parents of children at Whitton School, to parents of children at its formally linked and other feeder primary schools, to the five neighbouring local authorities and the four diocesan boards of education. The leaflet was also widely circulated in public libraries and other council buildings. The notice and the leaflet invited responses to be emailed or posted to Matthew Paul, Deputy Head of Commissioning, by 26 October.

Consultation meetings, for parents, staff and governors, were held jointly with Appleyards and Kunskapsskolan, as listed below. Part of each meeting was devoted to responses to the Council's proposal to close the school and the other part of each concerned responses to the details of the academy proposal.

Whitton School	14 September
Primary Headteachers' Forum	16 September
School Admissions Forum	16 September
Edgar Road Support Group	22 September
Secondary Headteachers' Forum	30 September
Heathfield Junior	1 October
Trafalgar Junior	8 October
Crane Park Primary (Hounslow)	12 October
Governors' Voice	13 October
Bishop Perrin Primary	14 October
Chase Bridge Primary	15 October
Nelson Primary	16 October

The total attendance at those meetings was 220. At each junior school listed, parents, staff and governors of its attached infant school were also invited to attend. Members of the public with no direct connection to any of the schools concerned were invited to attend any of the meetings at the schools. At each school listed, Appleyards undertook separate consultation on the academy proposals with pupils. In total, 26 separate meetings were held to discuss the Whitton Academy proposals.

Number and types of respondents

20 responses were received, which can be broken down by type of respondent, as follows:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ▪ Local councillors | 4 |
| ▪ Diocesan boards of education | 1 |
| ▪ Whitton School Governing Body | 1 |
| ▪ Chair of Governors of Whitton School | 1 |
| ▪ Parent Governor of Whitton School | 1 |
| ▪ Governors of linked or feeder primary schools | 1 |
| ▪ Parents of children at Whitton and/or its linked/feeder schools | 9 |
| ▪ Other residents* | 2 |

* I.e. those who could not be identified within any of the other categories.

Responses are given below:

Type of respondent	Comments
Local Councillor	<p>I should like to write in support of the closure of Whitton school to allow it to be re-opened as an academy. My reasons for supporting this include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That it will give added momentum to the school's improving standards and the school's and Local Authority's ambition for the institution to become an Outstanding secondary school • That the rebuilding and refurbishment of the facilities will lead to a perception of increased standards and a rise in popularity of the school as an attractive choice for parents and young people transferring into secondary education in the local community, including my ward of West Twickenham and the junior school for which I am an LA governor (Trafalgar Junior School) • That the Academy will provide a level of choice and quality in line with the LA's wider strategy of secondary school improvement and reversal of the trend of some parents choosing secondary education outside the borough. • That the vision of the main sponsor for personalised learning will lead to excellence in performance being achieved by pupils of all abilities and from the wide diversity of backgrounds pupils are currently drawn from. • That the commitment of the sponsor to continue sports as one of its main specialities will be a welcome source of continuity, as will the commitment to allow the community access to the sporting facilities outside school hours (including the new facilities in my ward based on Lincoln Field) • The closure of the school and reopening as an academy is an exciting opportunity that will benefit both present and future generations of students, the local community and the whole of the borough and is one I fully endorse.
Local Councillor	<p>Please take this email as an indication of my support for the closure of the two schools, HCC and Whitton, and their transmogrification into Academies. While my preference would have been to carry on supporting comprehensive education I acknowledge the need for capital investment in these schools, and in Shene too for that matter, and that the only way that this can be achieved is to accede to the Government's Academies programme. Having said that, I welcome wholeheartedly Kunskapsskolan sponsorship of the two Academies. I think that their brand of personalised learning will be extremely beneficial to the pupils, and will improve educational standards while providing our children with a renewed interest in learning. This can't be understated. A major problem with the transition from secondary to tertiary and university education is the difficulty that pupils have in coming to terms with doing the work unsupervised,</p>

	and I have great hopes that the Kunskapsskolan's approach will pay dividends in this respect.
Local Councillor	Here is my official response to the consultation on the closure of HCC and Whitton Secondary Schools. I think that is a well thought out idea and I approve of the closure of the two schools and the re-opening of them as Academies. The most important thing is that it will raise standards in the schools by giving access to a top Swedish education provider. What many residents have told me is that they wish to have a choice of secondary education locally that will help their children achieve good results. It will also bring much needed capital investment to HCC and Whitton. This is particularly needed at Whitton as the school building is in disrepair and there is no other way of funding a rebuild.
Local Councillor	I am responding to the proposal to establish an academy on the site of Whitton School. I understand that this will involve the closure of the school and the subsequent opening of the academy. I am in favour of this process. I am a Heathfield ward councillor since 1986 and a former Chair of Governors of the school. Though I have no other connection (as a parent or former worker at the school) I am an observer and a close supporter over many years. It has always seemed to me that the school fails to attract the support of a substantial proportion of the local community who would normally send their children there, and this, despite the efforts over the years of successive heads and staff. They have striven by every means possible to establish the school as a positive image in the minds of the whole community. A major impediment to this progress has been the condition of the buildings which the local authority has been largely unable to improve owing to the lack of capital spending which the authority has suffered during the time that I have been a councillor. The academy process apparently addresses this defect and provides for major capital investment in the site which would otherwise not be possible. It seems to me that the educational philosophy of the sponsors, with its person-centred emphasis will be of great benefit to students and have a positive effect on their education. It is for these reasons that I support the change. On the question of the possible change of name, which in my opinion is rather a side issue, but seems to have excited some local heat, I would contend that a new identity is necessary for a new institution. I have no strong opinions as to what the new name should be.
Archdiocese of Southwark Commission for Schools and Colleges	We will not be making any objections to these proposals and wish you well with them.
Governing Body of Whitton School	Governors, on the whole, are in support of the Kunskapsskolan Academy at Whitton School. There are obviously worries concerning the take over of the school, as there is in any major change. We have had meetings with Kunskapsskolan since the plans first began and many questions have been answered during the consultation process. The proposal that we have been finally presented with gives a comprehensive overview, and previous questions have been addressed. Some individual views have been received by me, though I feel that as this is a

	<p>proposal there is still time for discussion and adjustment of the plans. It is not the finished product.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ That there is a lack of detail and questions are not answered fully. ▪ Staff are still feeling confused. ▪ The make-up of the Academy governing body –that there is a lack of input from the community. ▪ Some questions still about the name. <p>The Kunskapsskolan principle of personalized learning and the plan for Whitton School is an exciting prospect and we hope would be a plan that would build on the existing improvements that we have made to the education and success of our students. We would look forward to working with Kunskapsskolan to provide the best education that we could for our students and working environment for our staff.</p>
Chair of Governors of Whitton School	<p>I am writing with my personal view on the Academy consultation at Whitton School. Steve Bolingbroke has worked well with the school from the first ideas through to this final proposal with the appointed team on behalf of Kunskapsskolan. I was also privileged to go out to Sweden to see the Kunskapsskolan ideal in action which I found to be extremely helpful and put the whole idea into perspective. It was obvious that the idea as it stands in Sweden could not be transposed in its present form and this has always been acknowledged. The idea of such personalized learning with the input of the best that we have in Whitton is an exciting prospect. It is a daunting prospect and I can understand people’s worries, but feel that with careful integration of the system and structured training and care of our hard working staff we could have an excellent school giving an amazing education to our students. There will still be work to be done and there are questions still to be answered as the process continues, if the final decision is made to accept the Academy run by Kunskapsskolan to Whitton School. I expect there will be adjustments, (this is a proposal not the final plan) but by working together I think that this could be a great opportunity.</p>
Parent Governor at Whitton	<p>1. Consultation</p> <p>The process has been a very one-sided and slanted consultation. No voting option has been offered at any time, or the question asked if the school should be closed to become a KS sponsored Academy. No questions asked on what anyone thinks of Whitton School, and if it should be given a chance to continue with its improvements in standards, discipline, behaviour, and academic performance. One example of the one-sided approach is demonstrated in an article from Richmond & Twickenham Times 23 October http://www.richmondandtwickenhamtimes.co.uk/news/richmondnews/4700376.Councillor_has_turned_consultation_into_sham_/?ref=rss. Cllr Malcolm Eady, Cabinet Member for Education and Children’s Services has written to his Lib Dem colleagues suggesting reasons they can use to support the proposal to close the school and re-open as a Kunskapsskolan sponsored academy. It has come across as more of a tick-box exercise than meaningful consultation. Carefully stage-managed. Most of the time was taken up with listening to a presentation with</p>

PowerPoint slides. Attendance has been low at the meetings I have been to, except the seated at tables session in May, which had a major promotional push. Aside from this exception, it was often commented about poor communication of the meetings. (A mention in Whitton Weekly is not enough by itself, not always necessarily read in full or digested). It has been insisted that the decision is not a done deal and yet some decisions to date indicate otherwise. E.g. £15m originally intended for Whitton School for refurbishment and modernisation, reallocated to primary schools. The Principal Designate appointed in September to commence the role from January 2010.

2. Information provided

The Expression of Interest document provided a helpful background and some statistical data, (which needs updating) with an overview of intentions. However, there was much detail that needed to be added regarding the proposed academy, to enable a properly informed view or conclusion. The expectation was for all information and all of the answers to be provided in the feasibility report, available at the start of the statutory consultation process in September. It is disappointing and unsatisfactory that we were only provided with a brochure, which is more of a promotional prospectus. It does not add much in the way of new information or changes to the EOI document of 29 August 2008, apart from colour, pictures and diagrams. This would have been fine as a complement to the more detailed report and a choice for people of what to read, but not as the only publication.

3. New building

It is concerning that we are leading to a final decision in November before most, if not all of the details are known or made clear. Particularly with regard to the new building, the design, construction, site, and education arrangements during construction. This is a very important element and for many, the main reason why they may support the change to becoming an academy. I fear that with a strictly finite budget, and no reserve support available, the end result could be a substantially scaled back version of the vision that has been portrayed. The open plan design with large lecture style theatres are a new concept that may or may not work. I've heard mixed views about it but the feasibility stage has not revealed the feedback given during the informal consultation period. Some of the quoted ideas in the brochure, claimed to be from students, seems dubious.

4. Transition period

We do not know how this will work and at what inconvenience to teaching and for students.

Q1 What kind of consultation will there be about this?

Q2 What if there is dissatisfaction or unhappiness from students, teachers, or parents, or all of these parties? Would anything change because of this?

It is a concern that with redevelopment in a tight space, the sponsor intends to increase the intake by 30 to 40 students each year (they have not said how). It may well be that there is less inclination to send students to Whitton during the earlier stages of this construction phase but should that not be the case, there must be a clearly stated priority of care, well-being, and minimum interference for students presently at Whitton School.

Q3 How will the additional funding for 2010/11/12/13 be made use of?

Q4 What additional benefits/resources can be expected in the first 3 years?

No information has been provided on this. In fact, there is little on offer for students presently at Whitton School, apart from more choice of qualifications to take. Yet from year 9 from 2010 they will be expected to adapt to a new stepped system of learning and will experience disruption to their learning through the building works and loss of space, particularly the outside area. The proposed benefits of a KS Academy will only have a chance of being realised in the new building from 2013.

5. Educational performance

Before a final decision is taken, it should be noted that Whitton School has shown very good improvements in standards, discipline and behaviour over the last year under the leadership of Phil Davies, the acting Headteacher. The GCSE results have shown consistently good improvement over the last two years. For five GCSE's, from 41% in 2007 to 60%. Including English and Maths, from 29% to 42%. The gap with the LA average has substantially narrowed and for 2009 the GCSE results have exceeded the borough target by 10%. Kunskapsskolan has not given any measure of expected future performance and further improvement expected. In fact there is no measure provided, by which they can be deemed to be successful compared with the predecessor school. They pledge to transform Whitton School from good to outstanding. Yet they do not provide their definition of what will be deemed as outstanding, to be judged by. The impression conveyed is that it is a guarantee, without actually using that word. It is potentially misleading the less well informed, who may take this statement at face value. Quote from a Swedish parent on Teachers TV at <http://www.teachers.tv/video/35159>. "To cope with Kunskapsskolan, you probably need to be a capable and responsible student with a lot of self-discipline".

Q5 How will KS deal with those that are lacking in all or any of these elements?

It is one example of what we don't know on whether the KS learning approach will work here.

In the new building design, we need to know the strategy for ensuring control and structured learning at all times.

Q6 How will a KS academy ensure that the potentially disruptive and less willing to learn do not impede or distract the committed, conscientious and well behaved students?

Q7 What examination boards will be used? If KS, what recognition will it have in England?

Q8 Will KS offer international GCSEs and the baccalaureate? If not, why not?

6. Specialism

Digital Technologies can mean anything and nothing to most people. This is a wasted specialism that is just about getting additional government funding but harder to measure the achievements in return for that funding. If the specialism were to have any genuine significance, it should have been one of the following: Maths and Computing (as originally intended). Or Science. KS specialises in both at their new KNC based at the University of Stockholm in Sweden. Languages would have been a logical choice for promoting the global aspect.

Q9 Where is the evidence to show that Digital Technologies came out as the preferred option from the consultations and interactive topic session?

7. Post-16

Here is another missed opportunity and potential benefit for providing post-16 education (sixth form) that could have complemented local college provision with the right specialisms. This is appears to be another cop out.

Q10 What evidence can be provided to show that the majority consensus did not support post-16 education provision?

8. Governance

This is a fundamental and significant change overlooked by many, which removes local democratic accountability and decisions taken, from a broad mix of representation on an independent and free vote basis. Strategic decisions are taken at a KS corporate level to fit in with their corporate plan. The local governance, by way of the Academy Council will have just one parent, one staff and one student council representative (the latter is a good and welcome

addition). They have published this as their intention and it follows the minimum requirement. Yet they could include more than one parent or staff representative if they choose to. And they could include community representatives (that are not an agency or business 'partner').

Q11 Why has KS refused to do this?

These points were raised and rebutted at the meeting with governors on 14 September. Governors were informed that they were volunteer amateurs and that KS governance would be professional. That is concerning (and insulting) rather than reassuring.

Q12 What experience of governance and English secondary school education knowledge will KS representatives bring and what training will they undertake?

Q13 Who will be the training providers?

The KS document states that all must be committed to the KS vision and that effectively removes the critical friend role, that can both challenge as well as support and not tied to any particular agenda or vision. The LA representatives will have no power or veto as the LA role as co-sponsors is in an advisory capacity only. KS representatives will form an as yet unspecified majority.

Q14 Why has the total number of the Academy Council and number of KS representatives not been revealed? What will it be?

The range of issues discussed and decisions made will be of a much narrower range and must conform to the corporate KS requirements. We do not know what information will be publicly available and how readily that will be accessible. It is worth reproducing the following article by Joan Sallis OBE in the Anti Academies Alliance Governors' Briefing July 2009:

Some readers will perhaps have heard of me as a *TES* columnist or as a lifelong campaigner for equal access comprehensive secondary schools, governed by, and accountable to, their own communities. In the 1970s, after leading a successful campaign to achieve comprehensive secondary education and community governance of all schools in my own borough of Richmond-on-Thames, I also contributed as a parent member of the Taylor Committee to a massive reform of school governance in the 1980s which gave every local authority school and voluntary school, both primary and secondary, a genuinely community-based governing body. This was composed of elected parents and staff who

with local authority and wider community (and in voluntary schools the church) representatives would make all the important decisions and be accountable for the school's policies. As a system it has achieved massive respect and authority. Elected parents constitute at least a quarter of members in LEA schools, and elected teachers have worthwhile representation, along with the LEA and the local community and in voluntary aided schools the church or other responsible body. I can scarcely believe that with this Academy model the Government have embarked on a programme to create secondary schools whose governance is 'up for grabs' to an unaccountable body with no democratic credentials whatsoever, perhaps outside that community, in some cases outside our country even. I have described it many times as a new form of 'cash for honours'. The worst aspect of the takeover by far is that instead of a sizeable representation of freely elected parents on the governing body as we have now – six for instance in the school where I serve – the sponsors will appoint all but one, in addition to being directly represented in their own right. In my own LEA half our comprehensive schools now face this monstrous loss of democratic governance for which many of us fought so hard. What extraordinary principles, theories or hopes lie behind such a system? Sometimes it looks like a product of despair in a service whose very image should be hope, of control by self-styled experts in a service where democratic governance and accountability to families and community are lifeblood. I wish your campaign all success.

9. Parental engagement

The KS learning approach places a high emphasis on parental engagement and involvement.

Q15 How do they intend to achieve this?

Q16 How will they improve it?

Q17 How will they reach the hard to reach?

Q18 What will they do about the hard to reach or those that choose not to get involved?

There are no explanations or strategies on the how. One example of what a difficult challenge this may be is the experience of trying to set-up and run a Parent Forum, which was intended as being helpful during the transition and with the knowledge that it is a mandatory requirement as an academy. A letter was sent to every household, setting out the reasons and potential benefits, as well as reminders in the Whitton Weekly. 19 attended the inaugural meeting in September, including a deputy headteacher and LA governor. Nothing could be agreed, even the election of a Chair. At the next meeting in October, only 9 attended. No one wants to volunteer for anything. I have taken on the role as temporary acting Chair until we can gain an attendance considered reasonable for electing a Chairperson. As it stands presently, the proposal of just one parent representative on the Academy Council that is the Parent

Forum Chair, is flawed.

10. Freedom of Information

There may be a possibility of the government including academy schools under section 5 of the Fol Act “to be accompanied by action outside the Act to promote proactive publication and openness”. The intention is welcomed and reassuring but it would be a cause for concern if it falls through for any reason. Meanwhile, as part of this consultation, it should be public knowledge before Richmond Council decides to close Whitton School, what information Kunskapsskolan will make available, and how, and what information will be not be made public. Some examples are:

- How much does the Principal earn?
- What bonuses are paid and for what reason?
- How many students have been excluded?
- How many staff has left?
- How many teachers are unqualified?

Q19 Will KS practise proactive publication and openness of all information and meeting minutes?

11. Kunskapsskolan

Kunskapsskolan are a Swedish owned corporate business. Their intention is to expand and promote their education model in England and internationally. In other countries they will be allowed to make a profit. In England not yet but this seems to be the longer term aspiration, as stated by the KS founder and former chief executive Anders Hultin in a Guardian article recently. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2009/oct/06/swedish-state-schools-conservative-plans>. Of course it means that they have a great incentive to succeed, which is the positive side, but at what price in doing so? Once the Richmond LA closes Whitton School they have no control over this. Kunskapsskolan will gain full control of the school backed by central government funding, capital for a rebuild and additional transitional funding for four years. KS will be setting challenging goals for students and requiring monitored accountability through close scrutiny, yet none of these aspects appear to be applicable to them.

12. Local Authority

It has been well promoted that it is Whitton School's only chance of a new school and modernisation for 15 to 20 years. Yet £15m intended for Whitton School was reallocated to primary schools. The 2008 Local Development Framework Core Strategy states the following: 8.3.6.8 'Council has a duty to modernise schools and provide new facilities to meet changing curriculum requirements.' This would suggest that Whitton School should be a local priority if it were to remain as a community school, and a much shorter wait than the long period that has been claimed. The Academy Programme is a cunning way of passing over that duty and responsibility.

Q20 What working relationship can be expected between KS and the local Conservative Party, if they are elected next May, considering their hostility to KS?

Q21 What LA scrutiny will there be? Can Overview & Scrutiny Committee consider KS academy issues?

Q22 What will the LA role be as co-sponsor?

Q23 What happens to staff such as catering and cleaners who are employed via buyback from the Local Authority?

Q24 What obligation does the Local Authority have to employees who do not want their contracts to be transferred to an Academy? Do they have any right to be re-deployed and remain employed by the Local Authority?

Q25 What is the forecasted impact and cost to the LA of KS buying in from their own pool of resources and not from the LA?

13. Academies

Academies in their short history to date have a mixed record of achievement and probity. 1 in 3 academies to date are below the minimum GCSE standard and considered as failing. Some have been put into special measures. There have been issues around sponsors abilities, competence, financial irregularities and highly questionable salaries and bonuses paid. Refer to <http://www.antiacademies.org.uk/> for the media articles. Noting the review of primary school education report from 16 October 2009, the following could also be said of secondary school transfer to academies. http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/markeaston/2009/10/is_primary_education_threatene.html.

Today's report, with its stark warnings of "authoritarian mindset", "the disenfranchising of local voice" and "the rise of unelected and unaccountable groups taking key decisions behind closed doors" hints at a totalitarian ideology now at work in primary education.

When it comes to policy in our schools, "education appears to mirror the wider problems recorded by those who see British democracy in retreat," it suggests. Warming to its theme, the report accuses government of stifling

free debate with "the use of myth and derision to... discredit alternative views".

14. Measures of success

Cllr Malcolm Eady is quoted on page 17 of RTT of 23 October as follows: "The biggest problem we have is three or four schools under performing. I have come up with an option for three of them to become academies and believe the fourth, Grey Court will come round of its own accord."

Q26 Based on the latest results and assessment, is Whitton School still deemed as under performing? If so, why?

Q27 Why does he not believe that Whitton School will come round of its own accord, considering its significant improvements?

GCSE results, standards, discipline and behaviour have all significantly improved from Sept 2008 against a reduced budget, due to the departing loss of an exceptional higher roll in July 2008 against a 22 students lower year 7 intake in September 2008. Whatever KS achieve, it should be noted that it will be from a much more generous funding position and it should be considered what Whitton as a community school could achieve, with increased Local Authority investment.

Q28 How will the KS performance be measured against the predecessor school, taking any funding difference into account?

Q29 How will we know what is attributable to KS against what the predecessor school would have been expected to achieve with similar funding?

Q30 What are KS aspirations for qualifications and GCSE results for 2011, 2012, 2013 and beyond?

Q31 What is the target measure to recognise that KS has achieved the outstanding category?

Q32 What will KS do if the intake from local primary schools does not increase beyond the transitional funding?

Q33 What other strategies are planned for increasing the number on roll?

Q34 Who is responsible for setting the targets and measuring outcomes, including pastoral care and special educational needs?

Q35 Who will the Principal be accountable to, and how will performance management be undertaken?

15. Co-operation

Q36 What is the KS strategy to achieve better co-operation with neighbouring boroughs, mainly Hounslow? E.g.

Education Welfare officer. Special needs.

Q37 What are the KS plans to involve the local community with the academy? (Beyond use of facilities).

16. Choice

In Sweden, they give parents/carers an education voucher for them to choose which school they want to send their son/daughter to. In this borough and for those living in Whitton, there is little genuine choice. The Twickenham and good Hounslow Borough schools are oversubscribed. The Twickenham schools are very difficult to get an admission place. Teddington School is impossible.

Q38 What choice is there for the students presently at Whitton School?

From year 8 the applications were submitted before there was any idea of the possibility of Whitton School becoming an academy. The intention is a takeover of the school by Kunskapsskolan to operate as an academy, under their rules and vision. It is not building a school on a new site and then inviting prospective parents/carers of students to apply.

Q39 What will Richmond LA do to help dissatisfied parents that want to remove their son/daughter from the KS Academy and transfer to another school?

This is surely an essential question to answer that has been ignored, on the false presumption that all be happy with this major change.

17. Policies and Funding Agreement

Q40 What policies will be put in place and where will they be published?

Q41 What will be their complaints and grievance procedure and policy?

Q42 Will all these points and others be part of the funding agreement?

Q43 Will the funding agreement be a public document that can be viewed? If so, how and when?

Q44 Can KS change any part of the terms of the funding agreement at a later date, and if so, on what basis and what procedure for doing so?

18. Conclusion

	<p>While I can recognise some of the benefits that Kunskapsskolan could potentially offer, the case has not been adequately made to support the closure of Whitton School and transfer control to Kunskapsskolan as lead sponsor of Whitton as a new academy. It is giving away ownership, control and democratic accountability far too easily and needs much closer scrutiny and questioning, with more information, details and justification provided. Before any decision is made, the information in the following links should be taken into account:</p> <p>http://www.antiacademies.org.uk/ Front page features many recent news summaries. New Governors Briefing AAA http://preview.tinyurl.com/yzmvuib. http://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/news/Parents-and-teachers-vote-39no39.5688906.jp A school in Northampton that put it to the vote received a 93% no response to becoming an academy. (30 September 2009).</p>
<p>Chair of Governors of a feeder primary school to Whitton</p>	<p>As you will know from the consultations at Trafalgar and Whitton that I've attended (four in all) I have had concerns throughout and continue to have concerns about the building schedule and funding. It is evident to me that if the monies are not secured before the end of this financial year and sealed and signed the rebuild will at best not happen on time if at all. The Tories are keen on academies but only the classic model with private money building state sponsored private schools. The other parties have committed to slash budgets. Consequently, despite arguments put forward I'd be more confident if there were plans that we could see and a clearer published schedule. Ultimately, the potential of the educational model will be limited by the site. That said I am reassured to a degree. Whilst not normally a big fan of the LA it is important that a new school is part of the LA family and that it will remain wedded to the comprehensive ethos. Over time I would like to see more opportunity for direct community engagement and involvement in the running of the school but can see reasons why this should be limited at present whilst the school could become a political football. I'm also impressed with the proposed educational model. It is not as radical as perhaps was first being sold. It is in fact quite like what happens in many effective primary schools so wouldn't seem so shocking for future pupils. I'm also reassured that it's as much about Kunskapsskolan taking the best of the English system into Sweden than the other way around. It is unfortunate but not surprising that some local activists (especially local Tories) are seeking to label this approach as radical, progressive and experimental. Some of us would suggest that a school which has struggled for years could benefit from a more progressive and radical approach but as a qualified teacher and trainer what is being proposed is established best practice in education and is proven to work. Much of it ironically reflects what private schools do and charge a fortune for and which have the support of many of those most critical of the proposals. I also want to state that the name change is very important to establishing the school as different and giving it a fresh start. This was necessary anyway regardless of the academy. Only the most die-hard Elvis Costello fan has heard of Whitton outside the area and I don't think he actually went to the school. Whitton's name will be safe with its train station and High Street and hopefully some of the same locals will be as active and vocal when the BNP turn up there next to further harm its reputation. Taking the title of Twickenham Academy is obvious, especially given that no other school has Twickenham in its title. I also support the</p>

	choice of specialism. Sport makes sense on many fronts given its proximity to the RFU and both rugby codes at Harlequins, as well as at St Mary's and along the river. Design technology offers a good creative balance and again has potential to develop and utilise the expertise in the wider area via Teddington and Twickenham studios, Shepperton, Pinewood and the BBC.
Parent of children at Whitton and a feeder primary school	I do believe this is something that is needed within the area and will be happy to send my child there when he reaches the age to change schools.
Parent of a child at Whitton	I just wanted to comment before the scrutiny meeting of the 16th November at which I propose to speak. I have commented on the Appleyards Questionnaire to which I have made clear that I am unhappy at a proposed academy at Whitton School. I have attended all meetings and feel the information has been vague and changes each time to try and convince the public that the Swedish vision is appropriate for Whitton School. I am not going to comment at length as none of my questions have been answered to date. All I would like to point out that I hope that I will be provided a place at another local school for my child, who attends Whitton School, as I have been happy with the traditional teaching methods at good schools in the Borough for my three other children.
Parent of children at a feeder primary school	Broadly speaking, I am in favour of the proposed changes. However, I strongly feel that the new academy should have a sixth form. I am also concerned about the validity / thoroughness of the initial consultation (in June??) – I consider myself an interested parent and wasn't aware of it. I am in favour of the name Twickenham Academy. I wish you all the best with the planning process and thank you for all the work that you and your team have clearly done already in trying to improve our schools.
Parent of children at a feeder primary school	On the whole and speaking for my husband too, we are in favour of Whitton becoming an academy. We have some concerns about the academy process which I will expand on below and equally feel there are some good points about the specific proposal for Whitton worth noting. In fact we feel that this type of intervention is not only necessary but long overdue and would like to see it get underway without delay. I recognise that by the definitions of Ofsted, Whitton is not a failing school but by the standards of other secondary schools in this borough and the generally excellent primary provision, it has been significantly underperforming for many years. This has meant that generally it has not been the school of choice for many parents and pupils and more importantly, that a large number of young people have not had the secondary education that they deserve and not been able to fulfil their potential. This is very wrong and though I am sure the LA does not like to hear this, they have to accept some responsibility for not tackling this problem more effectively a long time ago. It does also feel like there is no real alternative way to improve Whitton

	<p>School. The consultation process seems to be very clear that there is no other source of funding. We understand that if the Academy doesn't go ahead then the LA will continue to support the school but assuming that this has been the case for the last several years, achieving the goal of an 'outstanding school' seems unlikely. The school seems to have had lots of changes of leadership and staff with considerable numbers of vacancies compared to other schools and the site is in real need of a re-build. On the positive side, I feel that the LA has made a good choice of partner for the Academy, Kunskapsskolan, seem to have a real vision for Whitton and a genuine enthusiasm for education. We are concerned that this will be their first school in the U.K system and think that this will be very challenging but feel that they are a far more appropriate sponsor than some of the organisations running academies elsewhere. It is also a plus that the sponsor will be working in partnership with the LA. With the current pressures on admissions it is important that the academies remain within the Richmond 'family' and that the learning and experience that the new sponsors bring can be combined with the experience of the authority in running local schools. Whilst Whitton has not been a success some of the other secondary schools in the borough are very good. It does also seem that sponsors have chosen a very strong candidate as potential head for the new academy. From our observations of other schools this seems to a really important criterion for success. Our main concern over the academy proposal is that the finances are not currently in place and if they are not secured that it will not go ahead. Already because of a change of minister at the DCSF, the process has been delayed, and we understand that actual money for the rebuild is not due until 2011. I very much hope that the partnership gets the written assurances they need from the government but it is still a concern that if there is a change of government or public spending is further cut the money may not actually be forthcoming. This is a big unknown and to a large extent out of the hands of the LA and the sponsor. We don't doubt they will be making every effort to secure funding. In summary, there are some uncertainties about this proposal, but it should be pursued as it seems by far the best option available and, although it is too late to help our own children, we very much hope that the new Academy opens successfully and is able to provide the high quality secondary education that local young people deserve.</p>
<p>Parent of children at a feeder primary school</p>	<p>As a parent whose Year 6 child has already chosen Twickenham Academy/Whitton School as her secondary 1st choice preference, can I say that I wholeheartedly support the plan to close Whitton School and reopen as an Academy. I support the school in whatever the outcome, but it is the Academy and its style of "learning" that I truly wish for my daughter.</p>
<p>Parent of children at a feeder primary school</p>	<p>The following is in no way an attack against Whitton School (a change has to happen as the borough are only now acknowledging that they have failed the school) the proposed Twickenham Academy or against the borough's political leaders but is intended to be a thought provoking agenda for discussion and for numerous unanswered questions to be answered. It could be described as confrontational, but when a child's freedom of choice pre their secondary education is potentially at stake, parents are allowed to be confrontational. It is not to be turned into a <i>party</i> political debate but its is a very political matter that affects the whole borough, but primarily those in West</p>

Twickenham or whose children attend Trafalgar School, and as such has been sent to a number of individuals at local and national political levels, prospective parliamentary candidates from the main opposition parties and others involved in the borough's education system as well as the local press. The following points could be split into two sections, one highlighting questions re the whole school selection and provision process and the other in relation to the proposed Academy or matters relating to the Academy & Whitton School, however this is not really possible as all points cross both possible subdivisions so the following is in no particular order of importance. Unfortunately, the proposed Academy has taken a hammering because of failings within the local authority and people are now using this whole situation as the blue touch paper to stand up and vent their frustrations.

- Why is the borough perpetuating its discriminatory policy re the provision of single sex education, i.e. no provision of a boy's school? We are aware of the stock answer of the claimed proof that boys do not learn as well in a single sex environment but boys also do not learn well in schools that are academically lagging behind other schools in the borough and at schools they are forced to attend. A boys school is not the answer and is probably not wanted but why take away a mixed school site to provide a single sex school in part of the borough that does not have a mixed secondary school?
- Why was the borough girl's school site moved from its original location (now Richmond Adult Education College) to Waldegrave.School. The Waldegrave site was formerly Thames Valley Grammar School, a mixed school from 1928 to 1973, then a sixth form college from 1973 to 1977. see <http://www.twickenham-museum.org.uk/schools/school.asp?SchoolID=20>.
- This mixed school was taken from West Twickenham and is needed back, in times of such educational under provision the borough cannot perpetuate this discrimination and continued underprovision of a good and fair education to all.
- Why has the borough closed secondary schools over the last 30+ years and not opened new ones? i.e. the former girl's school which is now the adult education college and the former Kneller School at the top end of The Meadway, the former Fortescue School that was adjacent to the station. There may be others?
- Has there ever been a referendum to gauge local opinion as to the residents desire to turn Waldegrave back to a mixed school, or would this suggestion and its results be treated with the same contempt as a referendum re the Riverside development. What consultation was there when Waldegrave was opened as a girls school? An extensive and costly consultation process would not be needed as I am sure the name of the school could remain as Waldegrave with the same crest and a simple referendum is not costly, especially if administered via the boroughs primary schools and local residents.
- It is encouraging that our senior elected representatives, Cllr Eady, are acting as puppet masters to their colleagues when advising them to complete this questionnaire and also what to write, per an article in Richmond & Twickenham Times 24th October.

- Is turning the Waldegrave site back to a mixed school simply a case of the Emperor's New Clothes, i.e. no one realises what has been taken away and how it can be rectified until people stand up and demand action
- Turning Waldegrave into a mixed intake could not be easier; it would simply mean having a mixed intake from ideally September 2010 or at worst 2011. The cost of any alterations would be negligible as it used to be a mixed school so at most the costs would relate to changing and toilet facilities. Alternatively build a new school on the utterly enormous and underused Waldegrave playing fields. They have more land than any other school in the borough but with one of the lowest intakes.
- Why is the adult education site not taken back by the borough and opened as a traditional mixed school or move the girl's school back to its original site and revert Waldegrave to a mixed school. There were rumours the Adult College was to close/move its location. Funds should not be an issue as we are deemed to be a very wealthy borough.
- Is the borough's opening of new / extending existing primary schools closer to Teddington and Orleans a way of pushing children from Trafalgar to Whitton, by creating an oversupply to Teddington & Orleans that enables Whitton to benefit from the proximity ruling of children from West Twickenham.
- Why as a family with one son and one daughter are we going to have to send our son to Whitton but our daughter will have the option of Waldegrave or Whitton, i.e. the best and worst in the borough?
- If a West Twickenham boy is academically gifted and wants to attend an academically successful school their "choice" of schools will be Whitton or Tiffin Boys in Kingston. What is the choice if the child is not academically gifted, does not achieve the 98% 11+ pass mark for Tiffin or simply does not want to go to Kingston everyday? It will be Whitton. Those who can do so have more chance of getting into Tiffin than they do of getting into Teddington or Orleans.
- Why has Trafalgar all but lost its linked status to Teddington and the historical link with Orleans when others such as Archdeacon Cambridge, St Mary's St Stephens etc retained or obtained theirs? Is there a bias towards faith schools, is this another point upon which the borough is being discriminatory. It is very "odd" that the only two non faith schools in West Twickenham, i.e. Trafalgar & Stanley are the two that are being "re-linked". I believe it now to the case that Stanley has lost its link to Teddington and is now formerly linked with HCC but St James's who had no formal link now has one with Teddington?
- How does the borough feel about parents that are moving children from certain primary schools to new primary schools that have formal links with Orleans and Teddington? Surely this is just playing the system and if the system can be played then the whole process is flawed.
- Why are all the primary schools named in the Twickenham Academy booklet Whitton schools plus Trafalgar, which is a Twickenham School, it could not be more located in Twickenham and must be one of the oldest school sites in the borough and the Waldegrave site must equally be one of the oldest school sites in the borough and their must be a historical link between these two schools. Are the schools in the Hampton

- Why are virtually all boys from Trafalgar being forced to Whitton with no choice or realistic alternative, we refer to boys as the girls have an option of going to Waldegrave as many have done, have had to do. The whole issue relates to the removal of choice.
- Why when questioned about the “proposed” Academy at Whitton and its educational style were parents told, by Matthew Paul, Deputy Head of Commissioning Delivery and Service Improvement, that even if they did not approve of the new teaching methods or felt it not to be correct for their child that this would not be deemed an acceptable reason not to send ones children to the new Academy and insist upon a different school?
- Why has the Head of Commissioning, never appeared at the numerous meetings?
- Why was it so difficult for the Conservative party prospective parliamentary candidate for Richmond Park to obtain copy papers re the academies process from the Borough under the freedom of information Act?
- Will the Swedish system of teaching actually work in the UK? Is there a different social and ethical outlook towards education from the people of Sweden to those in the UK, i.e. is Sweden like a number of other European countries whereby the value of education is better understood and children are wholly encouraged into education and that is simply no the case in the UK. How will UK children treat a room of expensive IT kit that is available for free study?
- Will children in the UK that are from a traditional method of teaching actually adapt to the new freer form of pupil self management .Most 11-16 year olds in the UK cannot motivate themselves, hence the traditional form of education in the UK.
- Will sixth form colleges, universities and employers look down on the new teaching system and a school being given Academy status? Most parents see the word Academy and read failing. i.e. the worst performing schools in the borough (based upon A-C exam grades achieved as a percentage of the pupils attending without any weighting) become academies. Will children be labelled?
- Does it have called an “Academy”, this implies a problem school. I do not agree that it does not carry a stigma, it quite simply does, it is thought of as being on the same level as a City Technology College. Simply look at Grammar and Comprehensive or Universities and Polytechnics. It mattered when these changes were brought in and it still matters now. Why not call it Twickenham High School or Thames Valley High School, at least that way there is some historical associated between the new school and the historical school site that the children of West Twickenham should be sending their children to. If Kingston Grammar can be a private fee paying school then why can Twickenham not have a state High School?
- If a child attends the Academy and then for whatever reason moves schools how will they integrate into a more traditional system elsewhere in the UK.
- If the borough is so keen to adopt Swedish teaching methods can parents apply to the borough to receive the total sum of monies that it will cost the borough & national government to educate my child from age 11 to 18

- Is the borough sure it wants to enter into agreements with a relatively unquantified, in the UK, entity re the building of a new school, please refer to previous problems with Jarvis during the rebuild of Trafalgar and what happened to Edutrust, the proposed sponsor for Sheen.
- When Edutrust failed, why was Kunskapsskolan not offered the opportunity or if offered why did they not take it up?
- If HCC and Whitton are in such desperate need of funds and the only way these can be obtained quickly is via the Academy route, how did Teddington receive such a large sum of money for a rebuild in advance of these two schools? Surely it is not a case of funds to those that already have good reputation to make it even better, whilst letting others wait?
- The new Academy name is proposed to be Twickenham Academy, is there to be a formal association with the St Margaret's Dance studio of the same name? Surely the brand image of the new Academy is extremely important, i.e. new name, new uniform, new teaching methods etc.
- On the point of Uniform, is it really a good idea to let the pupils choose their new uniform? Will it be hoodies with a graffiti logo and trainers?
- Why has a new out of area head been "appointed" to run the new Academy? It transpires that there is a long standing historical relationship between Kunskapsskolan and the newly appointed designate head? Was it an open recruitment process or was that not needed as one of the sponsors is a private entity?
- Why do both the current temporary headmaster of Whitton School (per his speech at the school open evening) and the current chair of the governors (in a letter to the Richmond & Twickenham Times) both refer to "outstanding" academic results when compared to schools with a "similar intake". Why is the intake relevant, surely it should be an intake from all social and academic groups, it implies a lower standard of intake to other schools? Surely a standard is a standard and outstanding is a regulatory grade set by Ofsted?
- If, per the head of Whitton School, that everyone at the school is behind the proposed Academy status, why is there more than seven Whitton school teaching vacancies on the boroughs website and most other schools do not appear to have any, let alone seven. Why are people leaving and why are teachers not clambering to take up the opportunity to get in at ground level.
- Will Kunskapsskolan be empowered to remove staff that are not up to the job of the new Academy?
- With a general and local election pending what happens to the Academy programme in the event of a change in national or local government?
- If Siblings at a specific school is an entry criteria, then the borough needs to add parent's schooling to the list, as a large number of people that live in the borough grew up here and now have their own families that they wish to send to specific schools and have now had the few choices they had all but removed.
- Why are those who live in West Twickenham penalised against other parts of the borough i.e. Teddington or

- What percentage of children from outside the borough take places at borough schools and therefore impact upon the choice for children from within the borough, i.e. let borough children and children in the current primary system have first choice and residual places can then go to out of borough applicants. We do not accept the argument that we can apply to schools outside the borough, as we simply should not have to?
- Why does the borough wish to perpetuate the exposure, of children at Trafalgar School, to mobile phone mast radiation. There is currently a mast very close to the Trafalgar site as well as to the Whitton School site, both less than 10m from the boundary. There are none at all in the vicinity to Teddington, Orleans or Waldegrave schools. Do the children at Trafalgar and Whitton simply not count - <http://www.sitefinder.ofcom.org.uk/> - see research papers on ELF & EMF radiation and its harmful effects at http://www.cogreslab.co.uk/our_research.asp. I am sure that accredited scientist and specialist in the field of EMF & ELF radiation Roger Coghill would attend site to consult on the process of mast siting / removal, he is eminent in his field and has some alarming data that would alarm parents.
- Why has the borough relied upon such a large proportion of residents sending their children to private school, this is a huge failing because as soon as the economy changes there is an over subscription of children coming out of the private sector and into the state sector, so those in the state sector suffer or equally people put their children through the private prep system and then sideways step into the state system at the age of 13 missing the age 11 year 7 crush. Applications after year 7 are made directly to the school and not via the borough.
- In simple mathematic terms there are approx 35 junior schools and 8 secondary schools in the borough. If it is assumed that each primary school produces a year 6 turnout of say 3 classes, therefore a total of 90 pupils that amounts to 3150 pupils which means each secondary school has to provide for an intake of 393 pupils or 13 classes for each secondary school.....in simple mathematic terms it does not add up and it does not happen, a simple example of the gross under provision of the current system
- When looking at a map of primary and secondary school locations it is very easy to map out what secondary schools are served by what primary's until you get to West Twickenham which is totally under provided for as Waldegrave is not part of the equation for boys, see the following link http://www.richmond.gov.uk/home/community_and_living/local_maps/primary_schools_map.htm.
- When Twickenham was its own borough it incorporated, in 1937, Teddington, Whitton & the Hamptons with sufficient provision of secondary education, but in 1965 it merged with Richmond to include Kew, Barnes, Richmond etc. Why then does 50% of the intake to Whitton School come from Hounslow? Is the Academy name a similar situation to Twickenham Borough i.e. it took the Richmond name and Whitton School is destined to take the Twickenham name?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are Appleyards the right people to undertake the consultation when senior members of their staff sit as governors of academies in Kent and therefore are already involved in the academy process?
Parent of children at a feeder primary school	<p>I am writing to let you know that we are fully in favour of the proposed academy. Our daughter is currently in year 6 at Chase Bridge, and, as a family, we have decided to make Whitton School our first choice of secondary school. We are very excited at the prospect of the Academy, as we feel that it would be brilliant for our daughter, who is a bright, eager learner, and also because it will benefit all the children who attend. The ethos of the Academy is admirable, and would build on the improvements that have already been made at Whitton School. It seems to tie in very well with the lovely supportive atmosphere and flexibility that exists there already. My brother left Whitton School in 2008, so we know a fair amount about the school, both from him and from parents who have children there currently. We are happy for our daughter to attend Whitton School as it stands, but wholeheartedly approve of the proposed Academy, and hope that it gains approval.</p>
Parent of children at a feeder primary school	<p>I was at the consultation meeting at Nelson School on Friday and I would very much like to express my opinion on the proposed closure of Whitton School and the Opening of Twickenham Academy. My view is that the proposed academy has the potential to really turn the school around into an excellent school. Whitton School has a very bad reputation, although I understand that the present headmaster has had some success in improving the school over the last 12 months or so. I believe that the academy can build on this and with its new ideas, I believe it is the best chance the school has for real improvement. I also believe that it is of utmost importance to change the name of the school as this will give it a vital kick-start to look to a brighter and better future and leave behind all that is bad about the present school. "Twickenham Academy" is an excellent choice of name; for years Teddington and Whitton have had schools named after them, but the much larger centre of Twickenham has not (apart from a private prep school which is no longer located in Twickenham). Twickenham is known internationally because of its famous stadium - it's high time it has a school as well! Lastly, I am concerned that you will not get enough feedback from the local community - partly because I don't think the consultation process has been very well publicised and partly because all that I see in the local press is bad publicity for the new scheme which mostly arises from a few handfuls of the local community, some of whom went to Whitton School many years ago and have some nostalgic memories of it and others who just don't like to see change. I very much hope the proposal gets the go ahead and I look forward to hearing the outcome of the cabinet meeting on 23 November.</p>
Parent of children at a feeder primary school	<p>I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposal to close Hampton Community College and Whitton School and re-open as academies. I am a parent of children at Stanley Infant and Junior Schools and therefore both the schools subject to this proposal are ones that they may attend in the near future. I firmly believe that schools should stay in the control of the London Borough of Richmond, with decisions made by democratically elected representatives, at a local level. The proposals would place control of the schools with a private enterprise whose</p>

	primary objective is profit and who would be accountable to a central government department. The schools currently perform well and any change in management style required, could be implemented within the current framework. The only advantage that the proposals offer is the infrastructure funding from central government, effectively a bribe to follow their current dogma. I do not believe this warrants the loss of the fundamental loss of local democratic control over our community's valued schools.
Local resident	I am writing to object to the proposal to change the name of Whitton School especially if it has Twickenham in the title. I was a pupil at Whitton School and even now I can remember how important it was to me as a young person to go to the school that was named after the area I lived in. It was as if that school was put there especially for the young people of Whitton. I am now a teacher and in my school pupils have very strong opinions of the school name it makes them feel a part of the community. There are many schools in Twickenham and I would suggest if the council are so desperate to have a "Twickenham" school that they rename one of those actual in the area.
Local resident	I continue to be concerned that Richmond is the only Borough without a Catholic Secondary school. Regrettably the Council are giving priority to promoting two experimental systems very close to each other rather than a Catholic School. I would like to continue to register and hope that they rethink about a Catholic Academy.

The Appleyards consultation

At each of the public meetings listed on page 2 of this document, Steve Bolingbroke, Managing Director of Kunskapsskolan UK, gave a presentation on the details of the academy proposals and answered any questions arising from it. Many questions were asked and many concerns were raised. Although the majority of feeling among attendees appeared to be in favour (see below), there were some voices of dissent, particularly at the meeting at Whitton School.

At the end of each meeting, the Appleyards representative present asked attendees for a show of hands to indicate general satisfaction – or not – with the proposals. At all of the meetings, there was a clear consensus in favour of the proposals. At the most well-attended meeting – at Whitton School, where there were 55 attendees – the majority of attendees supported the proposals.

135 people completed – either in paper form or online – the questionnaire that Appleyards issued on 11 September.

Of those respondents, the percentages of responses to the question “To what extent are you in favour of the vision for the proposed Academy?” were as follows:

Very much, 49%; To some extent, 30%; Not Very Much, 10%; Not at all, 7%; Don’t know, 4%.

The percentages of responses to the question “Overall, to what extent are you in favour of the arrangements for the proposed Academy as set out in the consultation document?” were as follows:

Very much, 42%; To some extent, 37%; Not Very Much, 11%; Not at all, 5%; Don't know, 5%.

The percentages of responses to the question regarding post-16 provision, that, “It is proposed that the Academy would be an 11-16 school with strengthened progression links with other local education providers, principally Richmond upon Thames College and West Thames College – to what extent are you in favour of this proposal?”, were as follows:

Very much, 38%; To some extent, 43%; Not Very Much, 8%; Not at all, 7%; Don't know, 4%.

The percentages of responses to the question “The proposed name for the Academy is ‘Twickenham Academy’ – to what extent are you in favour of this name?” were as follows:

Very much, 41%; To some extent, 27%; Not Very Much, 13%; Not at all, 15%; Don't know, 4%.