



# The academies programme: Consultation on proposals to close Hampton Community College and Whitton School (and replace them with academies)

## A message from the Director of Children's Services and Culture

Richmond Council is determined to ensure that the improvements made recently in secondary education are embedded and built upon. We aim to ensure that local state schools are the best choice for all of our residents.

The proposals for Hampton Community College and Whitton School to close and be re-opened as academies, co-sponsored by Kunskapsskolan and the Council, are designed to give local children the opportunity to attend schools that will offer outstanding education in state-of-the-art facilities. We want to hear what you think about these proposals.

This leaflet explains the statutory consultation and decision-making process regarding the proposed closure of the existing schools on 31 August 2010 and their replacement with academies the following day. It explains how you can make your views known and how we, as the Council, will consider your views in the decision-making process.

*Nick Whitfield, Director of Children's Services and Culture*



## What are the proposals?

In January 2008, we published 'A Strategy for Change' for secondary education in Richmond Thames, in which we included our proposal for both Hampton Community College (HCC) and Whitton School to become academies. We put this forward as a way of building upon the recent improvements in standards at the two schools so that they would become 'outstanding' and the first choice of local parents.

Since then we have chosen Kunskapsskolan as the sponsor for the two proposed academies and have undertaken informal consultation with local people. We are now at a point where a decision on the proposed academies is needed based on formal consultation.

It is therefore proposed that on 31 August 2010 both HCC and Whitton School would be 'discontinued' (closed), on the basis that they are re-opened as academies on 1 September 2010. That would mean that the schools would pass from the Council's control to that of Kunskapsskolan's academies charitable trust, the Learning Schools Trust (LST), which would be responsible for all aspects of the academies' educational provision and organisation. However, the LST would work with us to play a full part in existing arrangements so that the academies are within the local family of schools.

To match the rise in primary school numbers, the academies would each have an admission number of 210 (at Hampton from 2010, and at Whitton from 2013) and admissions would continue to be administered in accordance with the current oversubscription criteria, including the priority given to children attending linked primary schools.

Both Richmond House (at HCC), which provides for up to 25 pupils with behavioural, emotional and social needs, and The Gateway (at Whitton), which provides for up to 20 pupils with autistic spectrum conditions, will, subject to separate formal consultation and decision-making processes, remain within local authority control and become part of a borough-wide special school provision.

It is further proposed that some enhanced special educational needs provision will be placed within all secondary schools in the borough, including the proposed academies, although the exact nature of the needs to be met within each school are yet to be determined. The Council's review of special educational needs across the borough will be formally consulted on in early 2010.

Full details of what the academies would offer and how they would be managed and governed are available in the two brochures that are being published at the same time as this leaflet.





### What has happened in the Feasibility stage?

Kunskapsskolan has been working with staff at HCC and Whitton to see how its teaching methods can be adapted to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. In order to assist that process, the headteachers and other senior leadership team colleagues from the schools visited some Kunskapsskolan schools in Sweden in May.

With Kunskapsskolan, we held a series of public meetings from March to June. Information-giving meetings were held at feeder primary schools, and with the Ethnic Minorities Advocacy Group. Well-attended meetings were held at HCC and Whitton, and these consisted of presentations and discussion groups which focused on what the detailed design of the academies, in terms of themes such as buildings, curriculum, parental involvement, and post-16 provision, should look like. For a summary of views expressed, please visit [www.richmondacademies.org/its.html](http://www.richmondacademies.org/its.html)

At the end of June, the Principal of HCC, Dr Sue Demont, was appointed to the post of Principal-Designate should the school become an academy. The Department for Children, Schools and Families agreed with our and Kunskapsskolan's view that Dr Demont has shown excellent leadership in the last four years and

should be given the opportunity to lead the proposed opening of the school as an academy, should it be approved.

As Whitton does not have a permanent headteacher in place, the Principal-Designate post for the proposed academy at Whitton has been advertised nationally and shortlisted candidates will be interviewed in September.

Initial work has started on the tendering processes associated with design and build, which would be project-managed by the Council.

### What is the consultation process?

Statutory notices (one for each school) to close the existing schools on 31 August 2010, and to re-open the schools as academies the following day, will be published on 11 September 2009. In line with statutory requirements, there will be a six week period for responses that will last from 11 September to 26 October 2009. The notices will be published in the *Richmond and Twickenham Times*, posted outside each of the two schools and will be available on the Council's website, at [www.richmond.gov.uk/academies](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/academies).

The notices should be read in conjunction with 'prescribed information' which outlines, within a statutory template, the detail of the proposals. That information is also available on the website, or can be requested in hard copy (see over).



Parents and other local people will be able to make their views known by 26 October, by writing to Matthew Paul, Deputy Head of Commissioning, Delivery and Service Improvement, at the address below or by email: [m.paul@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:m.paul@richmond.gov.uk)

At the same time, Kunskapsskolan, the main sponsor of the two proposed academies, will be publishing brochures (one for each school) which outline the details of what the academies will offer and which will answer the questions that local people have asked during the informal consultation that has been held to date. The brochures will be accompanied by a separate consultation questionnaire asking for views on the detail of the academy proposals. Meetings will be held

to accompany the launch of the brochures, and part of those meetings will consist of Council officers explaining the proposed closure of the existing schools and how parents and other local people can make their views known (see dates below).

Once the consultation period has ended, the Council's Cabinet, in its role as local decision-maker, will then consider the statutory proposals, the strength and quality of the responses to those proposals, and whether the proposals are in the best interests of young people, before deciding whether or not the existing schools should be formally closed. It is anticipated that Cabinet will make those decisions at its meeting on 16 November 2009.

#### Public meetings

Whitton School	7.00pm	14 September
Forge Lane Primary School	6.30pm	17 September
Ethnic Minorities Advocacy Group	2.00pm	22 September
Hampton Junior School	7.00pm	24 September
Hampton Community College	7.00pm	28 September
Hampton Hill Junior School	7.00pm	29 September
Heathfield Junior School	6.45pm	1 October
Buckingham Primary School	7.00pm	7 October
Crane Park Primary School	3.30pm	12 October
Bishop Perrin CE Primary School	7.00pm	14 October
Chase Bridge Primary School	7.00pm	15 October

Further meetings are due to be arranged at:  
Nelson Primary, Oriel Primary, Stanley Junior and Trafalgar Junior schools.

For more information on the academies programme, including development of the proposed academy at Shene School, please visit: [www.richmond.gov.uk/academies](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/academies)

Or contact: Matthew Paul, Deputy Head of Commissioning, Delivery and Service Improvement, Children's Services and Culture, Regal House, London Road, Twickenham, TW1 3QB Email: [m.paul@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:m.paul@richmond.gov.uk) Phone: 020 8891 7588

Please contact us if you need this leaflet in Braille, large print, on audio tape or in another language.  
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