

1. As Raine’s is not a church trust voluntary aided school, why did the local authority discuss the future with the London Diocesan Board for Schools (LDBS) and not the Trust?

Raine’s Foundation School is a Church of England voluntary aided school. The process for closing a maintained school is set out in guidance provided by the Department for Education (DfE). Where the school is designated as a Church of England (C of E) school, there is a duty to consult the relevant diocese. The site trustees do not need to be consulted until the local authority (LA) is ready to issue the consultation documents.

2. Are you aware that the numbers are wrong and the total number of students aged 11-18 allowed is 750 as the lower school has not been in use for a number of years now?

The overall planned capacity for Raine’s School is 1050 pupils. This includes 750 pupils on the main site at Approach Road and 300 pupils on the site at Old Bethnal Green Road. The reason why Raine’s School was not able to make proper use of its accommodation at Old Bethnal Green Road was because of the decline in its pupil numbers. However, this does not mean that this accommodation could therefore be discounted from the school’s overall planned capacity, particularly as the school continued to claim and receive significant funding for operating on both sites.

3. Why did Christine McInnes say on 30th October that the first local authority intervention took place in 2018, when in fact LBTH forced the resignation of the governing body in December 2015?

The Local Authority had met the Governing Body at the time regarding concerns relating to the leadership and governance following the Ofsted Inspection in 2015, where Ofsted had judged the school as ‘Requires Improvement’. The Ofsted report stated the following:

“The governing body does not provide effective challenge to leaders and does not hold them to account sufficiently well. Records of their meetings lack appropriate focus, strategy and detail. Leaders have not focused enough on improving the quality and consistency of teaching, learning and assessment. This means outcomes for pupils have not improved rapidly enough.”

The full Ofsted inspection report (November 2015 can be accessed [here](#))

Given the above, a Senior LA officer had met with the Governing Body in December 2015. It is not the case that the Governing Body was forced to resign, in fact the Governing Body resigned voluntarily

4. The mental health of young people is at a low locally and this situation will affect the wellbeing & attainment of young people, impacting on their future.

What safeguarding is in place for students leaving Raine's?

For pupils that have already left Raine's Foundation school, the LA has discussed the implications with the headteachers of schools receiving Raine's pupils and offered support if it is required. The executive headteacher of Oaklands School has written to all the receiving schools asking to visit and meet with the pupils. Reports received from headteachers indicate that pupils have settled well. There has been one incident of bullying reported directly to the LA. Work was undertaken to follow up on this and to resolve it. The parent of the child wrote to the LA confirming she was satisfied with the action taken and that the matter was resolved in a satisfactory manner.

For Raine's pupils taking up a place at Oaklands School, the executive headteacher meets regularly with pupils and no parents have raised complaints or concerns, in fact there has been positive feedback.

5. Was an audit done in safeguarding?

Prior to September 2018, the LA was aware of a number of parental complaints in relation to poor behaviour and bullying at Raine's School which were a matter of concern and these were raised with the then headteacher and governing body. The LA has a Schools Safeguarding Team which carries out audits in schools. The most recent safeguarding audit was carried out at Raine's School during the autumn of 2018 and this identified a number of actions which have now been completed.

With regard to pupil safety in relation to the potential risk of bullying when transferring to another school, this would be addressed through the receiving school's pastoral support programme which helps pupils to establish relationships in the new school. Any incidents of bullying (one has been reported to the LA) will be dealt with under the schools' anti bullying policy.

6. How many ex-Raine's students have been subject to bullying? Have any received support?

Of the 143 pupils that have transferred, the LA is aware of one pupil as the parent contacted LA officers about the matter. It was discussed with the headteacher of the school and the staff took action to resolve it promptly supported by a member of the LA Behaviour Support Team. The parent of the child wrote to the LA confirming she

was satisfied with the action taken and that the matter was resolved in a satisfactory manner.

7. Sir John Cass C of E School is oversubscribed and the alternative is out of borough (and oversubscribed). LBTH offers two non-C of E faith schools as an alternative. How is this OK and what C of E school can my child go to that isn't oversubscribed?

There are several other faith schools in Tower Hamlets and neighbouring boroughs and parents are at liberty to seek a place at any of these schools. If a place is initially refused they have a statutory right to ask an independent appeal committee to grant a place on the grounds that it is justified by the special circumstances, even if the school is technically full.

8. Why can't Oakland's join with Raine's? The building is far bigger at Raine's and the problem with the lower site and 6th form would be solved.

The proposal under consideration is for Raine's to close: given its low standards; falling pupil numbers; the financial implications for the school; and the need to continue to provide high quality education for its pupils. The parallel proposal is for Oaklands School to expand to accommodate the displaced pupils from Raine's. There is no proposal for the two schools to join together. It is also the case that the proposals are about the schools as human institutions and legal entities; not the buildings they occupy. If the changes go ahead it would be theoretically possible for the vacant Raine's building to be occupied by another school; but only if the owners of the building agreed.

9. A LBTH paid consultant advised redundancies to save £1M wages but supply costs rose dramatically. How wise was it to lose experienced staff and rely on supply?

Staff salaries are the main expenditure for a school and unfortunately as pupil numbers continued to fall over a protracted period, staffing had to be reduced. A consultant worked with school leaders and the governing body to agree a solution which included deleting a number of staff posts and downgrading others. Under HR requirements, the school could only delete posts where there was too much staff capacity. The school could not delete posts and then bring in supply teachers to do the work. The supply teachers were covering staff sickness or vacant posts due to staff leaving for other jobs.

In this case, the fact that the school was judged Requires Improvement by Ofsted twice will have impacted on the recruitment of staff. The LA would not recommend relying on supply teachers; however, when a school has a falling roll and there are concerns about standards it is often difficult to recruit staff.

10. Will Raine's pupils applying to other schools get preference?

The LA will ensure that Raine's pupils applying to Tower Hamlets' community schools are given first priority. The LDBS has made arrangements with The Urswick C of E School in Hackney that any pupil at Raine's who meets the Church admissions requirements for the Urswick School will go to the top of the waiting list.

11. Do LBTH still view this as an amalgamation with Oakland's?

No.

12. If LBTH still view this as an amalgamation, can they explain how a faith school can be properly amalgamated with a non-faith school?

Not applicable.

13. Can the LA provide analysis carried out to show predicted grades if pupils attend other schools? Does it include reference to government statistics on ethnicity and achievement?

LA analysis of predicted grades is not available. Historical analysis of educational outcomes illustrates that Raines has underperformed against other schools in Tower Hamlets over the past few years, as below:

Raines's Attainment 8

2015/16 41.3 (this is 8.9 below the TH average of 50.2)

2016/17 39.8 (this is 7.4 below the TH average of 47.2)

2017/18 34.9 (this is 11.9 below the TH average of 46.8)

Raine's English and maths combined 2017-18

33% Raine's pupils v 64.3% TH average at grade 4 & above

22% Raine's pupils v 44.8% TH average at grade 5 & above

Raine's Progress 8 2017-18

-0.84 Raine's pupils v 0.14 TH average

14. Why have campaigners been faced with a wall of silence when they try to ask questions and obtain minutes?

Individuals who have contacted the school/LA requesting minutes, have been either sent minutes of the Governing Body and IEB meetings and/or have come into the school to view minutes and related documents. There are instances where due to

GDPR the confidential minutes cannot be shared, as they contain sensitive information.

15. Do you acknowledge that the construction work 2011-14 with containers in the playground effected admission numbers? As in GB minutes.

The LA cannot speculate on the specific reasons for the school's decline in pupil numbers. However, it is evident that Raine's School saw a marked decline in pupil numbers in the years from 2011 -2014 and that these numbers continued to markedly decline, even after the building works were completed, from 2015 – 2019. The decline in pupil numbers also coincided with the school's fall in standards as evidenced by the 'Requires Improvement' Ofsted judgments in 2015 and 2017. Building works have been undertaken at other schools which have remained popular during construction.

16. LDBS denies a meeting with the Interim Executive Board (IEB) in Nov 2018 yet you cite meetings on 16 and 30 November. Why don't you release the minutes?

The IEB had met in November on the above dates and the minutes of these have been shared.

17. Do you recognise the Trust as owners of the lower and upper building?

The Trust own the upper school site outright, but documents show that the Trust owns only a small proportion of the lower site with the rest of the site being owned by the Anglican Diocese and the LA.

18. Has the Henry Raine's legacy been discussed?

The LA is aware of the importance of keeping the name of Henry Raine alive in the borough. A commitment was made to the chair of the Foundation Trust in correspondence on the 7 May 2019 to discuss further ways in which the legacy and name of Raine's is preserved in the borough of Tower Hamlets.

19. Have you discussed a federation?

For more information please see the 'Report on alternative options to the closure of Raine's School', which forms appendix 5 to the [report](#) presented to Tower Hamlets Cabinet on 30th October (page 107).

20. It is stated in minutes that 210 children had short term Child Protection (CP) orders in September 2017 with many in Year 7. Who was responsible for this situation?

Minutes from the governing body July 2017 state the number of pupils about whom there were concerns (not Child Protection orders):

'there were 52 pupils known to Social Care. Since September 2016, 101 pupils had some form of child protection concerns – of which 5 pupils were under Child Protection and 9 pupils were 'Child in Need.'

The next reference to child protection is in minutes from the governing body of January 2018:

'The Head said that there were a number of CP issues which had affected the attendance figures. There were also a number of school refusers. Tracy McCormack (one of the two Raine's Foundation representatives on the Governing Body) asked whether the figures included new CP issues. The Head replied that there were new cases as well as cases from September. The Head added that the school had high number of CP issues and vulnerable students.'

Without the reference to the specific minutes that the numbers in the question are taken from, it is difficult to comment on the question. The decision about whether a child has a CP plan is made at a CP conference, which is a meeting of professionals such as social workers, doctors, teachers and police officers. The meeting is held after an investigation which would be carried out in response to an incident. Every LA is required by law to provide CP plans for children who need special protection because they are at risk of physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect.

Raine's Foundation School participated in the Fair Access Protocol which is an agreement between secondary schools where children at risk of permanent exclusion are given a fresh start at another school. Raine's both moved children and received children under this protocol, until a request was made for Raine's to stop receiving new pupils, which was agreed.

21. When was Raine's exempted from the Fair Access Protocol as stated by Cllr Danny Hassell? Are there minutes to prove this?

Raine's School has not been required to admit pupils under the Fair Access Protocol (FAP) since September 2017 and only admitted a total of three pupils under the 'hard to place' category in the six year period between September 2011 and July 2017.

Minutes of FAP meetings concern specific and sensitive information about schools and vulnerable children and are therefore exempt from disclosure under Freedom of Information.

22. Will you write off the debt in Aug 2020? Why can't you produce a signed copy of the 5 year deficit? Why are you saying 3 years when the agreement was 5?

If the school closes than the LA will meet the whole deficit from school budgets. There are regulations related to school funding. The Raine's deficit was agreed when the rules were more flexible and it was agreed that the school could repay over five years. However, the repayment plan was calculated on an intake of at least 100 pupils per year and significantly fewer were recruited which impacted on the school's income so the school could not make the repayments. The DfE has since changed the regulations, so now if a school cannot clearly show how it would be able to repay a debt within three years, then a deficit cannot be agreed by the LA.

The evidence of the deficit is recorded in minutes of governing body meetings. The LA agreed a deficit with the school but there is no signed copy of the deficit agreement available.

23. How much do you expect the debt to be in August 2020?

This will be dependent on pupil numbers and staffing. An interim position will be calculated at the end of this financial year.

24. In a 2018 planning application for Raine's Sixth Form in the Lower School, it was described as thriving. When did the LA change its mind about OFSTED Good in relation to the 6th form?

The LA acknowledges that the Raine's 6th Form was previously a strength; however the decline in numbers across the school and particularly in Year 7 has meant that the numbers of students progressing to the Raine's 6th Form have also significantly fallen. The school's 6th form is not therefore sustainable, given the current student numbers, limited curriculum and recent government changes to Post-16 funding arrangements.

25. Why does LBTH take no responsibility for the Targeted Intervention Group installed to raise standards?

The running of a school is the responsibility in law of the governing body and the LA cannot instruct a school leadership team or governing body what to do without going through a legal process.

When the LA has concerns about a school, then (with the agreement of the school leadership) a Targeted Intervention Group (TIG) can be put in place to help the school improve. There are a number of TIGs in place every year and generally these are a successful strategy to get the school back on track. Occasionally, such as in the case of Raine's, a TIG does not work because the problems are too deeply entrenched. When it was clear the TIG was not working the LA agreed with the diocese that a different approach was needed and so an executive headteacher from

another school was put into Raine's.

26. Has this whole process been more about protecting the financial future of Oaklands as they need to expand in order to survive?

No. Oaklands does not need to expand to secure its financial future. The proposed expansion of Oaklands is to ensure that, should Raine's close, its pupils have the opportunity to attend a nearby school that has been consistently judged as 'Good' by Ofsted and has amongst the highest GCSE outcomes in the borough.

27. 6th Formers of both schools are affected with the lack of service. They're being taught in a school hall with no facilities, impacting on health. Why isn't LBTH supporting?

The increase in numbers in year 12 does create additional pressures and has meant that some of the school's original non-teaching spaces are now being used temporarily. However, it is anticipated that this situation will be addressed in the relatively near future.

28. How many ex Raine's students (including gender) are now at Oaklands and in which year groups? Are they being used to balance the demographic there?

The table below gives a breakdown of the pupils who transferred from Raine's to Oaklands for September 2019.

| | Boys | Girls | Total |
|-------|------|-------|-------|
| Y7 | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| Y8 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Y9 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Y10 | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| Y12 | 5 | 12 | 17 |
| Y13 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 13 | 22 | 35 |

It is not clear what the questioner means by "used to balance the demographic"; but these students are being educated at Oaklands as a result of their parents' choice and are not in any sense being "used" by the school.

29. Why were the 6th form numbers and performance excluded from the feasibility and consultation?

This is not the case. The historical and declining numbers of pupils in the Raine's 6th form was included in the public consultation paper (page 19); along with an explanation as to why it was considered that the 6th Form provision was no longer sustainable.

30. Raine's 6th Form has consistently been rated Good by OFSTED. Why not build on that and keep the Raine's 6th form?

The 6th form is too small to keep it running without it being part of a school, there would not be enough income to employ the teachers and teachers would not have enough work to keep them in post. Generally teachers spend a small proportion of their time teaching in the 6th form.

31. Are there minutes of meetings with any members of the Diocese? Are the Archdeacon, Bishop of Stepney and Area Dean happy?

There are no minutes from meetings with any members of the Diocese.

The Chief Executive for LDBS commented that 'I am sure that the Bishop of Stepney, Archdeacon of Hackney and the Area Dean would not be happy with a proposal to close a school whether it is a church or a community school. They are not official consultees and it would be for the Diocese which is part of the consultation process to make its own internal arrangements.'

32. Manipulation of planned admission numbers (PAN), confusion about which year groups are open and the airbrushing of a successful 6th Form – is LBTH congratulating themselves for sabotage?

The LA is naturally disappointed that it is now, along with the Diocese, having to propose the closure of Raine's Foundation School. However, it is satisfied that it has made every reasonable effort to manage this process in a way that ensures the continuity of good quality education for Raine's pupils.

33. As I have an interest in children at Oakland's what is being done about current overcrowding and what if Raines closes & you can't use the buildings?

The planned use of the former Raine's lower school site is separate to the proposal to close Raine's. The LA would want to make the site a sixth form centre for Oaklands School, regardless of whether or not Raine's School closes. The building has been empty for some considerable time and the opportunity provided by Oaklands is the most viable option for the building to be put to good use.

The council is currently negotiating for the use of the site with the Raine's Foundation Trust, who owns a part of site along with the LDBS and LA. The government's DfE would reasonably expect the three parties to come to an early agreement to enable this education facility to be used appropriately, for the much needed benefit of local children.

34. Why when yearly there are enough applicants to Raine’s do only a handful get allocated a place...is it because Raine’s is perceived as hard to get into rather than pupils not wanting to go there?

It is not true that there are enough applicants for Raine’s. In recent years everyone naming Raine’s as their first choice has been allocated a place. Raine’s has long since ceased to be a popular choice amongst parents in the borough and although the LA cannot speculate on the specific reasons for the school’s decline in pupil numbers, this trend has coincided with the school’s fall in standards as evidenced by the ‘Requires Improvement’ Ofsted judgments in 2015 and 2017.

The chart below shows applications and offers made to Raine’s applicants on National Offer Day (1st March 2019). Most of the applications received for Raine’s were for 2nd or lower preferences. The reason why these applicants were not offered places at Raine’s was because they were successful in securing a place at their 1st or a higher preference school. Parents receive one offer of a place on national offer day and this will be for the highest preference school at which a place can be offered.

| Raine’s | 1st Pref | 2nd Pref | 3rd Pref | 4th Pref | 5th Pref | 6th Pref | Total | Planned Admission Number | Offers |
|----------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| 2011 | 96 | 106 | 107 | 46 | 34 | 36 | 425 | 150 | 150 |
| 2012 | 71 | 94 | 90 | 56 | 22 | 37 | 370 | 150 | 114 |
| 2013 | 63 | 61 | 72 | 46 | 37 | 28 | 307 | 150 | 102 |
| 2014 | 65 | 85 | 74 | 57 | 33 | 36 | 350 | 150 | 95 |
| 2015 | 62 | 64 | 62 | 44 | 24 | 22 | 278 | 150 | 89 |
| 2016 | 57 | 55 | 57 | 28 | 36 | 23 | 256 | 150 | 88 |
| 2017 | 62 | 54 | 37 | 37 | 30 | 13 | 233 | 150 | 91 |
| 2018 | 49 | 65 | 40 | 26 | 25 | 11 | 216 | 150 | 72 |
| 2019 | 29 | 23 | 35 | 17 | 13 | 16 | 133 | 150 | 36 |

35. Christine McInnes refers to a ‘grey area’ and the governing body not having to follow advice. Minutes indicate that in 2016 the governing body and LA were cooperating until disagreement over who paid. Why?

The running of a school is the responsibility in law of the governing body and the LA cannot instruct a school leadership team or governing body what to do without going through a legal process and with the agreement of the DfE. The government generally expects schools to pay for their own school improvement and the LA is not in the position to provide unlimited funds for school improvement for an individual school.

In 2017 the LA arranged for a one-off bid to be made to the DfE for a school improvement grant for Raine’s Foundation School. This took a number of months to be agreed and during this time the governing body were asked to sign a standard agreement about the funding of school improvement support. Unfortunately, the governing body refused to sign the agreement until the grant was confirmed.

36. If Oaklands needs expansion as per feasibility why did it increase its PAN prior to this announcement & get allocated oversubscribed including down to choice 6?

Oaklands has not increased its PAN. The LA is currently consulting on a proposal for Oaklands to increase its PAN for the start of the 2021/22 school year. This could be sooner, should a decision be reached where Raine's School closes in August 2020.

37. Are the fire & other emergency safety arrangements such as pupil: staff ratios correct given the huge numbers of children at Oakland & no real increase in staff?

Notwithstanding the arrival of the additional pupils from Raine's in September, the school's fire, emergency safety arrangements and staffing ratios are still within current guidelines and are therefore not adversely affected.

38. How does Oakland's education space allocation compare to what is required of a secondary school when it was supposedly short prior to taking Raine's pupils?

The increase in the numbers of students in years 7 to 11 can be accommodated within the current space requirements. The increase in numbers in year 12 does create additional pressures and has meant that some of the school's original non-teaching spaces are now being used temporarily. However, it is anticipated that this situation will be addressed in the relatively near future.