

**Public Consultation Meeting on a proposal to close Raine's Foundation School  
(including plans to expand nearby Oaklands Secondary School, for the transfer  
of Raine's pupils)**

Meeting held in the Hall at Oakland's Foundation School on

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2019 at 6pm until 8:17pm**

**Minutes**

**In attendance:**

Inigo Woolf - London Diocesan Board for Schools (LDBS) Representative

**Local Authority Officers:**

Debbie Jones – Director Children's Services

Christine McInnes - Divisional Director Education and Partnership

Terry Bryan – Head of Pupil Services and Pupil Sufficiency

Lindsey Bell – Strategy and Policy Officer

Runa Basit – Head of Governance and Information

Farhad Ahmed -Training and Business Development Manager Governor  
Services

Rochelle Clerk - Governor Support Officer

Councillor Danny Hassel – Lead Member for Education

Raine's Foundation Student, parents and carers

Members of the Public (approximately 50)

Press

*\* Members in this document refer to members of the public/parents/carers or  
other unspecified.*

**1. Welcome and Introduction of Chair**

Patrice Canavan, Executive Headteacher of Raine's Foundation School and  
Oaklands Secondary School welcomed attendees to the meeting.

Alan Parker would Chair today's meeting.

**2. Chair opens the meeting**

Alan Parker had been appointed as an independent Chair to the Joint  
Steering Group for the Governing Body of Oaklands Secondary School and  
the Interim Executive Board (IEB) of Raines Foundation School as he was a  
neutral party.

Alan Parker gave details of his background, he had been the Director of Education at Ealing Council, moving on to become a Schools Adjudicator for 8 years where he worked to mediate and find solutions when process such as this went wrong. This meant that he had a good understanding, particularly given his legal expertise.

Alan Parker introduced the key officers on stage, **Inigo Woolf**, Chief Executive of the London Diocesan Board for Schools (LDBS); **Christine McInnes**, Divisional Director Education and Partnership; and **Debbie Jones**, Director of Children Services.

**Runa Basit**, Head of Governor Services, **Lindsey Bell**, Strategy and Policy Officer, **Farhad Ahmed**, Training and Business Development Manager and **Rochelle Clarke**, Governor Support Officer were present to ensure a clear record of the meeting was taken.

It was noted that members of the Governing Body, IEB and senior staff members were also in attendance.

Alan Parker detailed the layout of the consultation meeting for attendees. Key officers would go through the detail outlined in the consultation document. It was noted that a detailed consultation document had been produced and hard copies was available at the meeting and is also available online.

This was a difficult and challenging situation so it was important that there was openness and transparency so that the school community felt that decisions were not being made for them.

The reason for the meeting was to enable the Diocese and the Local Authority to provide background and context and to give the school community an opportunity to ask questions and get feedback.

Alan Parker informed that he would make sure that the school community was heard.

### **3. Introduction to the consultation and background information**

Debbie Jones thanked all in attendance for coming to the meeting today.

Following discussions over the spring term, it was the view of the LDBS and the Local Authority that Raine's Foundation School was no longer sustainable. Due to this the Local Authority was proposing that the school be closed with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020. The Local Authority was also proposing the expansion of Oaklands Secondary School to increase local parental choice.

A huge amount has happened at the school since 2013 and closure was being proposed in response to the decline in pupil numbers. The school has a legacy deficit budget and this was rising year on year. This was now beginning to affect the school's ability to provide a high quality education for the pupils at Raine's Foundation School.

### **4. Input from the London Diocesan Board for Schools**

**Inigo Woolf** informed that over the last five to six years there had been several attempts to increase pupil numbers to assist with the deficit budget but these attempts had been unsuccessful. Due to the financial constraints, this was restricting the quality of the religious education of pupils and this was why the decision to move to consultation had been made.

**Christine McInnes** went through the sequence of events that lead to the decision to go to consultation as there were a lot of questions coming from the school community around why this decision had come at this time.

~~The school intake is 160 pupils.~~

In 2011 the school was graded 'Good' by Ofsted but only received 63 first choice applications.

In 2014 the school worked with the Local Authority Admissions Team with a view to increase pupils numbers. There were 65 first choice applications.

In 2015 Ofsted reported that the school Required Improvement and indicated in the report it had found weakness in the Governing Body.

Following the report the Local Authority identified the school as a 'school of concern' and was in the process of executing its statutory requirement to send a formal warning to the school when the Governing Body decided to resign. This meant that the Local Authority was unable to serve the warning notice. New governors were appointed, constituting a new Governing Body in January 2016.

In 2016 there were 57 first choice applications.

In 2017 the school was graded 'Requires Improvement' for the second time. The Local Authority issued a warning notice and started the process of gaining permission from the Department of Education to remove the existing Governing Body. This process is evidence based. Evidence is needed to be submitted to the DfE who was in agreement that the school was not operating properly.

There were 63 first choice applications.

In 2018 the DfE agreed the removal of Governing Body and an Interim Executive Board was appointed to govern the school. As well as this an interim Executive Headteacher was appointed to run the school. There were 45 first choice applications.

Progress was made in 2018 and this was acknowledged by Ofsted.

*A number of questions were asked by the school community. The Chair informed attendees that questions could be asked after the presentation had been given.*

In 2019 Oaklands became the support school for Raine's. There were 29 first choice applications.

For a long period of time families have not been choosing to send their children to Raine's Foundation School and a present the school is half empty. By the end of the year when the current Year 11 leaves the school this

number will be lower. The deficit is growing. The Local Authority is happy to support with these costs but the deficit is growing.

The Options explored by the Governing Body and the IEB were outlined:

- Converting to academy status and joining a Multi Academy Trust.

This option was not plausible due to the financial situation at the school.

- Federating or Amalgamating with an existing Church of England School was explored by the Diocese but was subsequently deemed as not possible given the distance between the two schools and that they served different communities.
- Reducing the School size through its Planned Admission Number was looked at but was deemed unviable due to the financial position of the school. The school was already experiencing a significant decline in applications for entry to Year 7 and also other year groups and was already substantially below the four forms of entry that would have been required to secure it financially.

Places at Oaklands will be made available for any Raine's Foundation School pupils in Years 7 to 11, should parents wish to take it up. There will also be 1-2-1 meetings with parents and the Local Authority for parents that have any questions relating to their children.

**QUESTION:** *We have been told by the Headteacher that there will be no Year 10 at Raine's next year. This is not what your presentation is saying. The information being presented is incorrect.*

Alan Parker reminded attendees of the process of the meeting and informed that if there were any issues relating to the facts he would investigate this after the meeting, during the consultation process. There would be time during the consultation to raise any concerns.

Christine McInnes informed that the consultation would end on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2019. After this time, if the plans proceeded, statutory notice will be published in November 2019. There will then be a four week consultation period with a final decision made by Cabinet in the spring term 2020.

*Hard copies of the consultation were handed out to attendees.*

## **5. Chair opened the floor to questions**

The Chair informed those in attendance that the press were in attendance. Anything said from the standpoint of the key officers was on record. If there were any questions from the floor, please can that person make clear to the press if they would like to be identified or not.

*Danny Hassell left at 7:15pm*

The Chair asked attendees to listen to the responses from the Diocese and the Local Authority. If there was any disagreement with the responses, they had up until 24<sup>th</sup> July to disagree. The Chair promised he would read every single disagreement and use his position to investigate further.

Attendees were informed that if they left their email addresses they would receive the full consultation.

**[Question are included below]**



Raine's FAQ.pdf

Debbie Jones on reviewing all of the questions informed that the key officers were going to group together the questions so they could ensure that they answered as many questions as possible. Full answers would be provided.

The fact that attendees were saying there were issues with information accuracy and the issues around not being able to access information and the lack of response would be investigated and dealt with by Terry Bryan, Head of Pupil Services.

Terry Bryan (TB) who was in attendance at the meeting introduced himself to attendees. Terry informed that he had met some of the families present during surgeries at the school. One of the questions related to the history of what the Local Authority had done to support the school when it was struggling. In 2011 the school was rated 'Good' by Ofsted however since then application numbers had declined. TB informed attendees that if they went online and looked at the Admissions booklets for Secondary Transfer, it gave a historical breakdown of applications for Raine's Foundation School.

In 2014 there were 350 applications, 65 of which were first choice.

In 2015, 278 applications, 62 were first choice applications.

In 2016 256 applications, 57 were first choice applications.

In 2017, 233 applications, 62 were first choice applications

In 2018, 215 applications, 49 first choice applications

In 2019, 133 applications, 29 first choice applications

There was clearly a trend in declining pupil numbers. When Mr Bradshaw first became Headteacher the first thing he did was to contact the Local Authority to request support with the issues of pupil recruitment. The next thing he did was to review the Admissions Policy. TB said that the LA had supported the school in rewriting its admissions policy, to encourage more applications from children of world faiths. The LA also helped the School in introducing scholarship programmes for Maths and Sports to further encourage applications from children with a particular interest in these subjects.

The School had also tried to emulate arrangements at other community schools by introducing pupil ability banding. Children who did not get their first choice were offered places at Raine's Foundation School in an effort to further boost the schools pupil numbers.

The LA had supported the Raine's by agreeing (with other schools) that the School would not have to take In-year admissions of children that had been previously excluded from other schools, given its difficulties with pupils with challenging behaviour.

Although the LA has experienced numbers increasing in its Secondary schools, the numbers at Raine's were still declining.

**QUESTION: How many families were offered a place in Year 7 this year?**

40 originally and then that went down to 36. Most families have now got offers in alternative schools. There are now only 17 children that have not accepted alternative offers.

**QUESTION: Will there be no Year 10 next year?**

*[Remark from a parent noted: this is incorrect; I spoke to Mr Ramsey myself this week]*

TB clarified that there are currently 65 pupils on roll in Year 9. After meeting with some of the parents and due to the risk of closure, children starting their GCSE's in Year 10 may be subject to a different curriculum offer if they have to move school in Year 11. 45-50 families have made the decision to apply to another school to avoid the distress this would cause the pupils.

**QUESTION: A member commented that – ‘90% of the families I spoke to were willing to finish Year 10 and start at Oaklands but they were so shocked by the behaviour at Oaklands, the racist and verbal abuse. Four police vans had to be called. Also due to the religious abuse they changed their minds. The Headteacher did nothing about this but write a letter to say sorry. This is unacceptable.’**

**QUESTION: ‘I saw the school was still advertising its sixth form and so I emailed the Executive Head to see if I could apply and I have had no response. Is this false advertising?’**

‘If you were consulting the parents would have been properly consulted. This is a done deal.’

**QUESTION: ‘The Diocese has said nothing, there is no provision for our faith at Oaklands, and I have checked this. How can you let our children down? Our children’s faith is not being nurtured.’**

Inigo Woolf said we don't control the school it has its own IEB/Governing Body. We do agree that it is our responsibility to ensure our children are provided for. We want to make sure if children are transferred there will need to be an adequate provision for our children to support their faith. This has not been planned yet as we are still in the consultation phase.

**QUESTION: Is the Diocese in support of the school closing?**

We want to make sure that the children have the support they need for a good education.

STATEMENT: Before you redeveloped the school there should have been a plan

**QUESTION: What can the parents do to support the school and stop it from closing?**

The Chair said, if you read the consultation, this outlines what the school has already done. We are here because they have run out of ideas. If there are things you think they should do this is your opportunity to share.

STATEMENT: Everyone who works in Children's Services should be glad they have parents who really care.

QUESTION: We don't want alternatives, we want Raine's. How can we keep the school open? If its money we can start a crowd fund page.

STATEMENT: We are invited now when you want to bring the schools together but not when the school really needed the support to turn it around.

**QUESTION: Raine's was meant to become an academy. Why was this turned down when it was all set to go ahead?**

This is not for the Local Authority to answer as this would not have been a decision the Local Authority could make and would have been for the Governing Body at the time.

STATEMENT: You are taking away the only Church of England School in the community - this is against our human rights.

**QUESTION: Couldn't we merge with Sir John Cass?**

Inigo Woolf said that he believed that the foundation would not have supported this –

STATEMENT: I checked this and you did not ask the school.

STATEMENT: You have been trying to close the school for 30 years. This is an accumulation of your incompetence. You are a disgrace. STATEMENT: They put in an IEB illegally and then after that they put in another IEB and that was probably illegal too.

QUESTION: You say there was a decline in pupil numbers, did you compare this to other schools.

Yes we did, TB, this information is publicly available..

QUESTION: I work for the Trust and I was also a governor at Raine's. We went down to the Town Hall to raise concerns and ask for support in 2015. You did not give us any support, you directed us to local companies as you said you did not know the demographics.

The Chair informed he would ensure that any information that had been requested that was not in the consultation document would be shared with attendees.

Laura Gibson from the Parents Steering Group advised that if attendees shared their email address with her she would ensure that they received all paperwork.

QUESTION: When was Mrs Canavan appointed onto the IEB?

QUESTION: Will the Local Authority be committing to pastoral care for those who have just finished their exams. My son is worried.

Yes, the Local Authority is working with the current IEB to ensure pupils get the support they require.

QUESTION: What will happen with the sixth form?  
The plan is to refurbish the previous lower school building.

QUESTION: But you don't have a lease on the building?

The LA is in talks with the Diocese.

QUESTION: why did you spend £17 million on refurbishing the school – if the school was failing? Why wasn't this money spent on promoting the school, investing in staff, fixing the school.

The Chair informed that he was going to bring the meeting to a close. This was not the end of the process as there would be a similar meeting held at Raine's Foundation School next week where this conversation would be continued.