

## WAVERLEY SCHOOLING: A VISION FOR CHANGE

1. This paper sets out a vision for a new school in East Dulwich. It is a joint paper produced by Waverley School and EDEN, the East Dulwich and Nunhead Education Network, a local organisation which represents the views of parents in East Dulwich and Nunhead.
2. Many parents of secondary age girls and boys in the East Dulwich and Nunhead area feel that no local school presently offers the education they seek for their children.
3. Waverley School is currently a girls' 11-16 school. It is on two sites: the upper site in Homestall Road and the lower site on Peckham Rye. The school is oversubscribed with waiting lists in all years. Waverley has a strong single-sex ethos. There is no equivalent local boys' school, and no co-ed school within easy travel distance of much of the East Dulwich/Nunhead area.
4. There have been a series of discussions between the Governors of Waverley School and EDEN representatives as to how local educational provision might be transformed to meet the needs of local parents whilst maintaining the ethos of Waverley School. This paper represents the result of those discussions.
5. Those involved in the discussions hold a range of views. All those concerned believe that, if the vision described in this paper could be achieved, there would be widespread local support.

### THE MODEL

6. The model which we believe should be further investigated is for a close federation of two schools: a 4 or 5 form entry boys' school on the lower site and a 5 or 6 form entry girls' school on the upper site. Both schools should initially be 11-16, but would work quickly together towards establishing joint 16-19 provision.

7. We believe that this model has the ability to
  - 7.1. yet further improve the quality of educational provision for girls
  - 7.2. provide an equally high quality education for boys
  - 7.3. combine many of the advantages normally associated with single sex provision with many of the advantages of mixed provision
  - 7.4. provide two federated schools in East Dulwich that serve their local community.
8. A series of issues need to be resolved, and some potential difficulties overcome, if this vision is to be achieved. We cannot yet say whether all these hurdles can be surmounted. To do that we will need to work together with the LEA, the DfES, and others, in order to draw on their expertise. However, we are convinced that this provides a template for a new and transformational educational provision.
9. We understand that there are many examples of closely-linked boys' and girls' schools providing successful models of educational provision, both in the independent and public sectors: eg John Kelly Girls/John Kelly Boys, Bishop Challoner, and Sir John Cass. We are in the process of gathering more information about these schools. Although it is unlikely that they will reflect every feature of the model we propose, we believe we believe it will be helpful to us to see other similar systems of organisation in operation.

## HEADSHIP

10. Our preferred model is for a single joint head teacher or principal with two vice-principals, one for each school. We are conscious that, at least in the early years, establishing the new boys' school involve solving a different set of initial problems from those of the existing girls' school, but we believe that this is answered by a dedicated Vice-Principal for the new boys' school.

11. We believe that a single head and two Vice-Principals working closely as a team gives the best chance of creating a new and coherent vision that spans both schools.

## STAFFING

12. We would encourage, and very much expect to see, some members of staff being employed on a split basis between the two schools (e.g. specialist teachers teaching half a timetable in one school and half in another). This should enable both schools to extend the curriculum offer to further enhance the educational experience of all pupils. We would hope also to see less formal arrangements whereby the schools would swap staff on a reciprocal basis, so as to both share good practice between the schools and further extend the quality of teaching and staff experience.
13. The key to staffing across the two schools should be flexibility. The precise legal mechanisms of employment details are secondary. The actual model(s) of employment will need to be reviewed as the scheme develops, so as to ensure that the educational aspects are enhanced within appropriate clear lines of staff accountability. But there would certainly be no reason to change the contracts of existing staff at Waverley.
14. If our vision of two federated schools can be pursued, we would expect Waverley to begin, straight away, to recruit teachers who would be keen to work within the federated model.

## GOVERNANCE

15. We think there should be a single joint governing body rather than two separate governing bodies.
16. We think it likely that there would be groups (or subcommittees) of Governors with special responsibility for the boys, or the girls, school. We are conscious that, at least at the outset, the challenges to Governors posed by building up the new boys school would be different from those of continuing to govern the existing girls school. Nevertheless we think it important to stress the close linkage of the two

schools by having a single joint governing body. And we also think that a coherent vision for the development of the two schools in parallel and in partnership is much more readily achieved by having a single governing body.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOWER SCHOOL SITE

17. Considerable redevelopment or refurbishment of the lower school site is vital. Phase 3B of the programme of rebuilding on the upper site is close to completion, with renewal of the swimming pool facilities still to follow. The lower school site is not adequate. It is quite unrealistic to suppose that the boys' school could operate from the lower school site as it is at present. Even if, which we doubt, that would be workable at all, it would mean the boys school operating from buildings that were plainly inferior to the girls school. Thus there will need to be the redevelopment or refurbishment of the lower school site of which we speak.
18. Our vision for two federated schools will not work if the boys' school is, or is perceived to be, the poor relation of the girls' school. What we seek is a partnership of two equally equipped and equally successful schools, with (where that is not physically possible) an equality of provision by way of the sharing of other facilities (eg new gymnasium, swimming pool etc).
19. There will need to be provision in both schools for all curriculum areas sufficient for the relevant number of forms of entry. We are confident that planners and designers can ensure that there is provision, across both schools, for the highest quality teaching/learning areas – e.g. language laboratories in the boys' school – both to offset gender issues in language learning and to counterbalance the lack of such facilities in the girls' school.

## CURRICULUM OFFER AND JOINT TEACHING

### **Key Stage 3.**

20. Current curriculum developments need to be reflected in both schools equally from the outset. Key Stage 3 will become a year 6/7/8 programme.
21. Strong transition developments need to be agreed between the 2 schools and an identified group of local primary schools (from Ivydale, Hollydale, Heber, Goodrich, Dog Kennel Hill, Goose Green, St. John's & St. Clements, Peckham Rye) including teachers appointed to teach across the key stages. Waverley Girls is working hard to foster closer and better links with local primaries in its immediate catchment area and we would hope that this would be a joint aim of both schools.
22. At KS3 teaching will be in single sex groupings in the two schools throughout all subjects. Teachers will be expert practitioners in teaching styles that are themselves matched to the various learning styles of the pupils.

### **Key Stage 4**

23. Key Stage 4 is increasingly a mixture of core offer and individual learning pathways followed both in school and in partnership with other providers. We would expect this stage primarily to involve single sex teaching. However, across both academic and vocational routes we would also expect there to be mixed as well as single sex groupings, for instance for some modern foreign languages and perhaps for single science subjects, and for work-related learning options involving students attending Southbank University. Some visits can commence in large mixed lectures and then be followed up by single sex tutorials. ICT supported learning, including video conferencing, can provide an exciting, and flexible, mix of single sex and mixed learning environments.

## **Post-16**

24. Waverley has long hoped to introduce post-16 provision in partnership with other local schools and FE Colleges.
25. We expect to see post-16 teaching take place on both sites and probably at other nearby schools and Southwark College. The administrative centre and common room/private study areas could be placed on either site depending on space. But we think it would be important to have areas of specialist expertise and dedicated 6<sup>th</sup> form teaching on both sites: perhaps, for instance, to see art and science areas sited in both schools. This can, in itself, challenge stereotyping.
26. Curriculum development will need to be closely co-ordinated across the two schools by two strategic leaders working in collaboration. The essence will be to ensure that there is equality of opportunity and facilities, enabling all pupils to meet their full potential.

## **SPORTS FACILITIES**

27. There are important issues concerning playground, sports facilities and playing field provision for both schools. It will be necessary to ensure joint access to Peckham Rye. We do not believe this to be problematic; it supports Waverley's vision to become a specialist sports college and for the local area to become developed in an integrated way for community sports use. A link bridge would provide safe access. A number of schools in London have link bridges across adjacent roads for instance Plashet Girls, Newham; Oaklands, Tower Hamlets.
28. A range of options for playground space would need to be explored by the design team. The total space available on the Peckham Rye site could be used differently. Perhaps use could be made of roof terraces (there is an award winning primary school in Westminster that has done this) as well as the existing playground. Access across the link bridge to the Rye itself will need exploring further.

29. Creative timetabling of the Swimming Pool would be necessary to ensure access for all, including our partner primary schools. The pool building will need developing to provide full changing and shower facilities.
30. Lesson and extra curricular use of the Sports Hall would need to be carefully and jointly planned across both schools to ensure equitable access to facilities across both sites, on the Rye and at other venues.
31. The P.E. staff teams in both schools will need to be highly integrated from the outset under the strategic direction of a senior jointly appointed leading professional
32. Waverley is bidding for sports college status and if successful will be the hub of sports development in the local area. There is huge potential for the two P.E. departments, with a range of peripatetic coaches, to develop curricular and extra-curricular programmes.

#### OTHER JOINT ACTIVITIES

33. The two schools will need to promote the widest range of after-school activities reflecting both single sex and mixed provision.

#### ADMISSIONS POLICY

34. It seems to us that the two schools would have to share the same admissions criteria. This should be based on both a proximity and a sibling preference policy (to operate across the two schools). Whether this would have to be proximity to the particular school or whether it could be proximity to a point midway between the two schools we do not know. If it were possible to use the midpoint it seems to us that this would plainly be preferable, but a sibling policy would overcome most problems that might arise if proximity had to be measured from each school individually.

## SCHOOL NAMES

35. This may seem a trivial point. But public perception is important.
36. The two schools should have names that encapsulate their new linked identities. That would underline the linkage between the schools, and also underline that, for the girls' school, the federated model provides a new opportunity to achieve the school's aim of educational excellence.

## FUNDING

37. This is of paramount importance. An appropriately high level of funding must be guaranteed to ensure the boys' school is fit for its purpose as a state-of-the-art 21<sup>st</sup> century school. Waverley itself, notwithstanding the recent new build, is not yet in this condition. It would seem appropriate therefore to explore this federated model discussion with the DfES Academies' Unit. Our creative response to education provision in the East Dulwich/Nunhead area fits their brief closely.

## CONCLUSION

38. We believe that this model provides a really exciting opportunity to provide high quality education for all the young people of our community.

October 2003