

PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING
CONSULTATION REGARDING THE POSSIBLE CLOSURE OF JOHN
LOUGHBOROUGH SCHOOL

Held at 7pm on 7th November 2012, TOTTENHAM GREEN LEISURE CENTRE

PANEL:

SARAH EBANJA, Independent Chair of Panel

COUNCILLOR CLAIRE KOBER, Leader of Haringey Council

BERTON SAMUEL, Acting Chair of Governors, The John Loughborough School

JENNIFER DUXBURY, Head of Admissions and Organisation- Haringey Children and Young People Service

LES CRAGGS, Assistant Director- Haringey Children and Young People Service

LIBBY BLAKE, Director - Haringey Children and Young People Service

NEVILLE MURTON, Head of Finance- Haringey Children and Young People Service

DAVID WILLIAMSON, Former LA Officer and member of the review group

SARAH EBANJA- Chair of Panel

- 1.** The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed those present, she explained that she was independent of the local authority and had been chair of the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust, the Bernie Grant Arts Centre and Newlon Housing Trust.
- 2.** The Chair explained that her role was to ensure that the meeting ran on time and smoothly enabling as many people as possible to share their views and opinions and ask questions. She explained that the meeting was part of the consultation process; the process will end on 19th November 2012.
- 3.** The Chair asked that people who contributed gave their names and stated their interest, informing those gathered that note of the meeting

would be recorded and available on Haringey's website from 14th November 2012.

4. The Chair reminded those assembled that a printed version of the proposal was available at the entry desk.
5. The panel introduced themselves and stated their roles. The Chair outlined the proceedings for the evening that: Councillor Kober, Libby Blake and Benton Samuel would each make a brief statement then the floor would be opened to those assembled to give their views and ask questions, members of the panel would respond to questions where possible or research answers which would be published on the Haringey website.

CLLR CLAIRE KOBER- Leader of Haringey Council

6. Cllr Kober stated that the school is at the heart of the community acknowledging that The John Loughborough School is a caring school where behaviour is good and parents feel positive about sending their children there.
7. The focus of Haringey is to ensure that children achieve well at school and are set up for a successful adult life.
8. Over a number of years there have been concerns about the attainment of pupils attending The John Loughborough School.
9. Cllr Kober stated that this is a genuine consultation and she has an open mind, the decision to close the school would not be made until February 2013, and she was particularly interested in hearing the views and ideas of those present. She stated that the status quo could not be maintained, action needs to be taken to ensure that the pupils need to have the best possible education, the meeting is an opportunity for everyone to express the views and ideas about the best way forward for the school and its' pupils.

LIBBY BLAKE -Director of Children's Services Haringey Local Authority

10. Ms Blake, thanked everyone for attending and stated that everyone in the room was here to get the best for the young people.

- 11.** Ms Blake outlined the recent background of the school which had led to the present consultation process:
- i. In December 2011 The John Loughborough School had been inspected by OfSTED, the outcome of the inspection was that the school had been put into a category as requiring Special Measures because the school was not doing well enough.
 - ii. The Local Authority has met with governors to establish what help could be given to improve things.
 - iii. In the past teachers, leaders and governors have been changed; radical ideas and solutions are required to ensure that pupils get the best possible educational experience to give them a solid foundation for adulthood.
 - iv. The LA and other agencies undertook a joint review of the school, the review found that financially and educationally the school was not viable, due to falling pupil numbers and transition, the breadth and quality of the curriculum and the quality of education it provides continues to be inadequate.
- 12.** Considering the outcome of the review the council arrived at the decision to consult on the closure of The John Loughborough School.

BERTON SAMUEL- Acting Chair of Governors The John Loughborough School

- 13.** Mr Samuel stated that he wanted to share some issues before a motion was put to cabinet to close The John Loughborough School, He wished to challenge both the financial and educational reasons that had been cited as reasons for closure.
- 14.** Mr Samuel highlighted the background of the school:
- i. The school was established in 1980 as an independent school with the objectives of providing a Christian education for Seventh-day Adventists and the wider faith community; and more specifically to address the poor levels of academic attainment amongst pupils of black ethnicities at that time.
 - ii. In 2007-2008 there was turmoil and unrest within the schools leadership which was followed by a period of instability.
 - iii. In 2009 the school was placed into special measures

- iv. In 2010 there was an acting headteacher then a new headteacher was appointed.
 - v. In 2011 the school was re-inspected and remained in special measures
 - vi. Since then the Governing Body and the Leadership Team have been strengthened, a consultant headteacher has worked with the school and things have changed.
 - vii. The 2012 exam results were not as good as hoped for.
 - viii. The HMI monitoring visit which took place in October 2012 acknowledged that satisfactory progress has been made towards all areas requiring improvement.
 - ix. It is clear from the report that progress has been made, if we are given the time and resources we can demonstrate that we can maintain and embed these improvements and progress.
 - x. Since 2011 the school structure has improved.
- 15.** Mr Samuel highlighted areas of the HMI report: (the full report is available on the OfSTED website)
- i. Together with other senior leaders, the headteacher has brought greater clarity about the school's vision of the future.
 - ii. Quality of teaching- Progress since the last monitoring inspection – satisfactory
 - Improve the quality of teaching to raise students' attainment, especially in mathematics, to bring it at least in line with national averages by summer 2013.
 - iii. Evidence from lesson observations shows that students continue to engage well in their learning.
 - iv. The new governing body is astute and has a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
 - v. Given the starting points of students, including the minority who join the school at different times during the school year with little or no spoken or written English, un-validated data indicate that a large majority made the progress expected in English.
- 16.** Mr Samuel highlighted that the top 10% students make good progress.

17. In 2008 the school had a £210,000 budget deficit and produced a five year plan to pay it back to the council. Currently 4 years later the deficit is £16,000.
18. Mr Samuel summarised that the school is making progress and needs time to consolidate then ensure that these changes are maintained.

SARAH EBANJA- Chair of Panel:

19. The Chair opened reminded those in attendance that the meeting formed part of the six week consultation process and invited submissions and questions from the floor.

Member of the public

20. *Does the council recognise the achievement for Afro-Caribbean students at The John Loughborough School?*
21. *GCSE attainment data of Afro-Caribbean at The John Loughborough School compared against the Haringey average from 2003 to present was presented. The figures show that Afro-Caribbean students at The John Loughborough School often attain better GCSE results than Afro-Caribbean students in other Haringey schools.*
22. *It was suggested that when making decisions about the future of the school the attainment of pupils at The John Loughborough School is considered compared to the attainment of similar groups of students across the borough and nationally.*

Previous Headteacher at The John Loughborough School

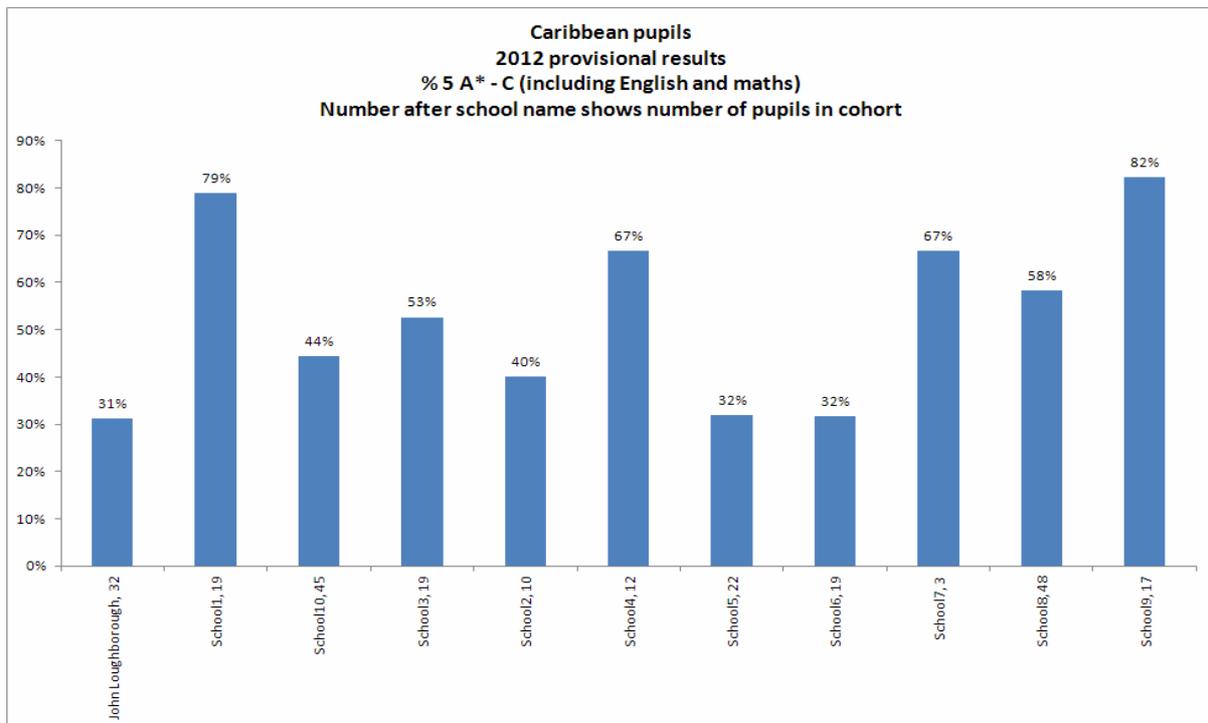
23. *highlighted that he had been the headteacher when the school moved from Independent to maintained status.*
24. *drew an analogy between the betrayal of Christ through a persons' secret meeting with the council and a meeting that took place in 2007 between school members and the council which he believed lead the school to the position it is in today.*
25. *gave a brief history of significant dates for the school:*

- i. The loss of grant maintained status brought the school into a relationship with Haringey council.*
- ii. In 1998 the school applied to Haringey for maintained status, it was felt that the council had not wanted another faith school as they felt that religious schools were divisive and already had two.*
- iii. In 1999 the council met with church leaders requesting the replacement of the governing body, the school resisted this move. At this time the council said that the school was not financially viable and did not have the wherewithal to succeed academically.*
- iv. Over a 10 year period the attainment of Afro-Caribbean students has been above Haringey averages for four years and in line with Haringey for two years.*
- v. The council feels the school should not be here. In 2002 14 inspectors were sent to the school who concluded the school was not viable.*
- vi. The council intervened wrongly in 2007 and sought to get rid of the Headteacher who had raised the attainment of Black and Afro-Caribbean students.*
26. *he felt that Haringey's charge is disingenuous and hypocritical; data shows that the attainment of Black and Afro-Caribbean students is better at The John Loughborough School than in other schools and I would contend that the proposal to close the school is a discriminatory act.*
27. *The destination of students from the school is important, young people leave the school with the motivation to do well and go to university.*
28. *The council needs to withdraw its' proposal on the basis that it is discriminatory.*

LES CRAGGS- Assistant Director Haringey Children's Service

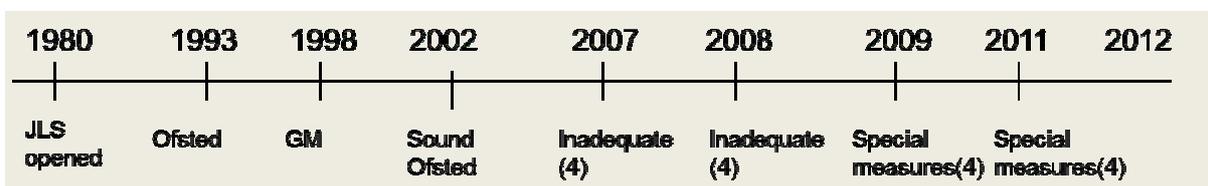
29. Mr Craggs responded the conclusion from the review was that the school is not financially or educationally viable.
30. The Chair of Governors has read some highlights from the monitoring report there are other areas which state that progress is inadequate.

31. A graph showing the 2012 GCSE attainment of Caribbean pupils at The John Loughborough School was displayed to those in attendance which showed that standards were low at the school



32. Mr Craggs informed those present that the 2012 data does not support the argument that Afro-Caribbean students do better at The John Loughborough School than at other schools.

33. A graph indicating the timeline of the school which showed a downwards trajectory from 1993 to present was displayed.



34. A point of order was made from the floor that the panel members refer to page numbers where information is held rather than present it which takes time from attendees.

CLLR KOBER- Leader of the Council

- 35.** Cllr Kober stated that she could not comment on the past history of the council's relationship with the school.
- 36.** The council under her leadership has no bias against faith schools. The proposal to close the school is not anti-faith, it is because the council is concerned about the outcomes for students.

Former pupil

- 37.** *Given that the council has had concerns about the school for some time why was a super-head not put into the school in 2008?*
- 38.** *Do you feel you have a role to play?*

Member of the public

- 39.** *Have you already made your minds up to close the school?*
- 40.** *Children find a home at The John Loughborough School, can we have your assurance that you are here to listen to us.*

LIBBY BLAKE -Director of Children's Services Haringey Local Authority

- 41.** Ms Blake stated that the appointment of the headteacher is the decision of the governing body, who wanted a headteacher in keeping with the ethos of the school.

CLLR KOBER- Leader of the Council

- 42.** This is a genuine consultation, but we have an issue to resolve which has been highlighted by inspection reports and young people's attainment.
- 43.** There are three possible solutions- school closure, an academy sponsor or a home grown solution. Any home grown solution will have to be a radical departure from what has gone or been tried before.

Former Teacher

- 44.** *referred to page 3 of the consultation document; he stated that intervention fell down when consultants did not engage with staff.*
- 45.** *Regarding academy status, how will concerns be resolved before academy status is entered?*
- 46.** *The spring term consultation was agreed before the faith body had an input.*
- 47.** *raised a concern that one hour is not sufficient for consultation.*

Member of the public

- 48.** *Was encouraged by the statistics from the chair of governors which shows that the school can make progress.*
- 49.** *The John Loughborough School is a Christian school and it is important that we do not undermine faith in the borough and the country.*
- 50.** *My sons are appalled at the way the school has gone down, we have changed the headteacher but need to change the way to make a difference.*

LIBBY BLAKE -Director of Children's Services Haringey Local Authority

- 51.** The report is not intended for recriminations but to help young people. As times change the responsibilities such as the appointment of consultants are the responsibility of the governing body.
- 52.** The Local Authority has no role if a school becomes a sponsored academy.

BERTON SAMUEL- Acting Chair of Governors The John Loughborough School

- 53.** Mr Samuels told those present we can continue as we are, it is clear that we have not sat on our laurels; the governing body has made changes.

- 54.** We have brought in consultants, the teaching infrastructure has been changed things are still being done. We will not let this process impact on what we are doing for children, we have taken the right steps.
- 55.** History is important but the way forward from today is what is really important.

Current parent

- 56.** *The councillor made reference to the importance of children having a good education; that is important. It is also important to parents to know that their children are in a safe environment, safe from gun and knife crime. The school is a family, the staff know our children and have our children's best interest at heart.*
- 57.** *If you close this school our children's relationships will be affected as well as their education.*
- 58.** *Please do not close our school.*

Current pupil

- 59.** *You got to these conclusions through stastics, why are you doing this now?*
- 60.** *I want to know what will happen in my future, this process does not help our education; it is distracting.*
- 61.** *Did you ask the Headteacher and the governors to look for a sponsor?*

Voluntary Educator- member of the public

- 62.** *Why were national measures not put in place to support the school in English and maths?*
- 63.** *Why close the school?*

DAVID WILLIAMSON- Former LA Officer and member of the review group

- 64.** The council undertook the review jointly with the South England Conference of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Children and Young

People's Service officers and members of the SEC were on the review team, together with an experienced educational consultant familiar with the school.

65. The review team drew the published conclusions. The SEC are looking for an sponsor academy sponsor which is running parallel to this consultation. The decision to consult on closure has not been taken lightly.

LES CRAGGS- Assistant Director Haringey Children's Service

66. We are considering closure now because that is where we are now, prior interventions have not been successful; there is no further deterioration. The OfSTED inspection regime works on a national timescale and there are expectations on schools and local authorities when schools are placed into categories, which are highlighted in the consultation document.
67. National measures to support English and maths in the school were put into the school the consultants were part of the national strategies.

Dr EDWENA McFARQUHAR- Headteacher The John Loughborough School

68. *Dr McFarquarh informed those present that: it is our desire and wish for students to receive the best standard of education. From 2007 input has been piecemeal, just recently the stability of the SLT has allowed the school to focus on the issues that the school needs to resolve.*
69. *It takes time to change a culture and thinking, every HMI report has indicated that the school is moving in the right direction We still have a way to go with attainment figures, however if you look at levels of progress 70% of students make at least 3 levels of progress and are meeting and surpassing national standards of progress. You do not turn around a school overnight, I ask the council for an approach which gives the school time.*
70. *It is a school with a mission that is on a journey, teachers are refining their skills.*

Current parent

71. *When will there be a consultation meeting with parents?*

Parent of former student

72. *her daughter left the school with 9 GCSEs and is now in university.*

73. *The panel do not have enough knowledge of the school, you need to look at the history.*

74. *The headteacher took the council to court for unfair dismissal and won.*

75. *The Local Authority has consistently lied and cheated and gone into the school to destroy it.*

76. *The headteacher was in there the church and the chair of governors had gone wrong, she had children, a family and you destroyed her life.*

77. *You have already made your decision.*

78. *Romany gypsies have been put into the school, and you will destroy lives.*

79. *In the church we have leaders and educationalists; we pay our taxes we are not begging for money for our children.*

Member of the public- Founding Member

80. *we had a big fight with Haringey, we train doctors, teachers and nurses yet the council said we do not have the capacity to do what we do. Haringey is being manipulating.*

81. *The panel should not answer questions as this takes up our time.*

82. *You have walked into our church and interfered with it. It was said that Sharon Shoemith interfered with the OfSTED report.*

83. *There were five other schools in the council in a category at the time, how much was spent on the other schools in comparison?*

84. *Our headteacher has a doctorate in education and is a trained OfSTED inspector.*

Current parent

- 85.** *His remarks were for the gathering.*
- 86.** *A disingenuous and dangerous decision has been made and we have to fight tooth and nail to keep our school.*
- 87.** *In the past parents protested at intervention, we were taken to court and we won, Beware of lies and statistics, we need to look at quality as well as quantity, we would like information regarding attainment on entry, The John Loughborough School is adding more value to the achievement of pupils.*
- 88.** *In 2008 I was removed by the police from the school, I was not causing any trouble, that year the school was the most improved school in Haringey. 40% of our year 10 pupils had secured GCSEs and we were criticised for entering them early, we were improving, we would have possibly been a beacon school but the council did not want that.*

Member of the public & a governor in a Haringey school

- 89.** *I think the councillor should know the history of the school because it is important.*
- 90.** *Why was the school not allocated additional pupils who did not get there preferred place schools?*
- 91.** *Greig City Academy, St Thomas More and The John Loughborough School were not allocated additional children because the LA did not allocate them to faith schools.*
- 92.** *There needs to be a meeting for parents and another opportunity to meet for consultation; there has not been enough time allocated tonight.*

Teacher at The John Loughborough School

- 93.** *The John Loughborough School is not a black school, children from 52 countries come to the school because they want a Christian school, Adventist education is important.*

Member of the public

- 94.** *When I went to university I was told that BAC children were underachieving. We have solicitors, doctors and other professionals, what has this country done for our people, the answer lays in society. There are a lot of different races in the school, and we work together. The John Loughborough School was an achieving school, if it was once one of the most improved schools why don't we go back to the old system.*
- 95.** *Why us? we believe in education we do not discriminate.*

Member of the public

- 96.** *Given the impassioned pleas from tonight the council must realise an additional meeting is required.*

Current student The John Loughborough School

- 97.** *You have heard people say that students are greatly affected, we are worried that our school will close, where will we go?*
- 98.** *We need someone to turn the school into an academy, we are a family. I do not think that the school should shut down.*
- 99.** *I moved from another Haringey school that was considered to be a good school because I was not happy, I was a shy and introverted girl. I am now happy and have the confidence to be able to sing and play guitar in front of the whole school.*
- 100.** *I have the support of friends and staff who think I can achieve.*
- 101.** *Please listen to students, if you shut the school you are limiting the leaders of the future.*

SARAH EBANJA- Chair of Panel

- 102.** *We have heard the views, feelings and strong emotions expressed which will feed into the decision making.*

103. *A point of order was raised that compelling points of analysis and data had also been given.*

104. The Chair invited Berton Samuels to make closing remarks.

BERTON SAMUEL- Acting Chair of Governors THE JOHN LOUGHBOROUGH SCHOOL

105. Mr Samuel thanked everybody for attending.

106. He stated it is clear that emotions are high, we have a clear mandate, we need to get documentation together and get responses from the council.

107. I would like to request another meeting where we take note of the qualitative data, and a meeting for parents. I urge all to work with us to move forward.

CLLR CLAIRE KOBER- Leader of Haringey Council

108. Cllr Kober stated I know that we are facing difficult decisions, the councils concern is for the achievement of children. There are two options ahead either an academy sponsor or closure. If it is decided to close the school we will have to ensure that there is as little disruption as possible to the students.

109. *There was a call from the floor for clarification on whether a proposal for academy status had been rejected, Mr Benton Samuels confirmed that a proposal had been submitted to the secretary of state for education which had been rejected as it was felt that the proposed sponsor did not have the capabilities to help the school move forwards at this time. The DfE will continue to work with the school to identify a suitable sponsor.*

110. Cllr Kober informed those present that the school needs to improve swiftly, the five year improvement time-frame suggested from the floor equated to an entire generation of pupils, and reiterated that academy sponsorship is a matter for the DfE not the Local Authority.

- 111.** She urged people to put forward their ideas for the future and not look back at the past.
- 112.** If the school wishes to organise consultation meetings to gather further input it is free to do so, tonight's meeting was the formal meeting with the Local Authority.

SARAH EBANJA- Chair of Panel

- 113.** The Chair reminded those present that the consultation period will end on 19th November 2012.
- 114.** If the school wants to hold a meeting the views gathered should be forwarded to the council and will be considered along with the views from this meeting and written responses to the consultation. The Local Authority is following good practice guidelines by holding a six week consultation.
- 115.** The Chair closed the meeting at 9pm.