



NOTTINGHAM
FREE SCHOOL

Public Consultation Report

February 2014





NOTTINGHAM
FREE SCHOOL

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1

Executive Summary

The process for establishing a Free School includes a statutory requirement, under the Academies Act 2010, to consult 'with those they think appropriate'.

In establishing proposals for the Nottingham Free School, its proposers, The Torch Academy Gateway Trust, have actively engaged potential partners and other stakeholders throughout the process. This ongoing consultation has played an important part in shaping the project so far, and if the Nottingham Free School is approved, discussions will continue until the Free School is opened and beyond. This wider consultation has included 17 meetings throughout the proposed catchment area, the establishment of an active parent forum group and a provisional local governing body.

This report covers only the public consultation carried out as a response to the statutory requirement, and sets out the audience, activities undertaken and the responses received. The statutory consultation started on 16th December 2013 and finished on 26th January 2014.

The statutory consultation involved a number of different methods in reaching out to the public and included a questionnaire geared specifically to the Nottingham Free School's offer. The methods employed are outlined in more detail in the report.

Given the lack of a definitive location for the school a post-code at the mid-point of the catchment was used, with a three mile radius from this point assumed for the final school location. This three mile radius extended beyond the school's proposed catchment area in to areas of Nottingham City, Arnold and Gelding that are not intended to be served by the Nottingham Free School.

Objections to the Nottingham Free School tended to refer to school place issues within the Gelding area or to ideological opposition to the Free School programme.

The overall response from the public consultation period indicates that the majority of respondents support the establishment of the Nottingham Free School, with support offered for the key features of the school.

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Consultation Overview

Introduction

The proposed Nottingham Free School will be an 11 – 18 Secondary Mainstream Free School and will deliver a high quality education, ensuring that students secure high levels of achievement. At Key Stage 3 the full National Curriculum programme will be taught. At Key Stage 4 the curriculum will deliver a suite of English Baccalaureate qualifications, supplemented by an extended school day and options programme, offering a wide range of extra-curricular activities and other GCSE courses. The breadth of the curriculum will ensure that students are fully prepared for the new DfE 'Progress 8' and 'Attainment 8' measures.

Stakeholder Consultation

The Academies Act 2010 requires proposers to consult 'with those they think appropriate' on whether the Free School should be set up. The Academies Act contains no information on the scope of consultation required (for example its length or persons to be consulted). DfE guidance suggests that it should include consultation with local bodies or groups having strong links with the proposed school. The consultation period was of sufficient duration to enable a wide range of responses and was supported by a wide range of approaches seeking to reach out to the community.

If the Secretary of State accepts and approves the proposal, then the Nottingham Free School would open in September 2014.

The Torch Academy Gateway Trust has received a great deal of support since it announced its intention to submit a proposal for a Free School in this area of Nottingham over a year ago. It is significant that the school is heavily oversubscribed in the first admissions round.

This report contains only those responses received within the public consultation period.

Approach

The public consultation period began on 16th December 2013 and concluded on 26th January 2014.

Details about the proposed Nottingham Free School were set out on the school website, in letters to key stakeholders, via social media (Facebook and Twitter) and in leaflets distributed throughout the proposed catchment area. The public was invited to respond to a specific questionnaire relating to the Nottingham Free School and was also encouraged to make additional comments during the consultation process.

Throughout the public consultation period, the Torch Academy Gateway Trust has actively engaged with stakeholders to:

- Ensure stakeholders understand what the Free School status would mean
- Communicate the vision and ethos for the proposed Nottingham Free School
- Seek the views of stakeholders on the vision and the curriculum proposed for the Free School
- Capture all feedback from stakeholders, responding where appropriate
- Stimulate wider interest in the Free School
- Facilitate the stakeholders input to the development of the proposals
- Seek endorsement to enter into the funding agreement with the Secretary of State

The public consultation was developed to provide those both directly and indirectly affected by the proposal with as much information as possible about the plans, and give them an opportunity to respond and raise any concerns.

The following key methods of engagement were used to inform the various stakeholders and public about the Nottingham Free School proposals:

- Website
- Answers to Frequently Asked Questions
- Consultation questionnaire
- Dedicated telephone line
- Direct mail and letters
- Email and social media (Facebook and Twitter)
- Press releases
- Leafleting and posters throughout the catchment area
- The offer of face to face meetings in a local community centre.

Key Outcomes

The consultation process undertaken by the Torch Academy Gateway Trust has provided a real opportunity to engage with stakeholders and anyone interested in our Free School proposals throughout the consultation period.

The responses and enquiries received came from a broad spectrum of the community including teachers, parents and carers, union activists, two secondary schools and interested members of the community.

The total number of consultation questionnaires received was 36. Of those responses, 23 were fully supportive (64%) and 13 (36%) opposed parts of or all of the plans.

One letter was received from a Nottinghamshire Secondary School located outside of the proposed catchment area.

A detailed analysis of the responses is outlined later in this report.

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Public Consultation

Since plans were announced to establish the Nottingham Free School an extensive period of on-going dialogue has taken place. This has involved meetings with officials from Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City Local Authorities, Primary and Secondary Headteacher, Prospective parents/ careers, community faith leaders and 17 public meetings. The plans have been widely publicised. This has included regular coverage in the Nottingham Evening Post, discussion on BBC Radio Nottingham and the BBC TV regional politics show. Leaflets about the proposed school have been distributed throughout the catchment area both to homes, via primary schools and in local markets and community venues.

The consultation questionnaire was available on-line and in hard copies left in community venues. In addition the public were able to phone our dedicated telephone help line to ask questions or to submit additional comments.

Website and Social Media

The information about the Nottingham Free School and the public consultation period was also available online throughout the public consultation period and direct responses could be submitted through the website. Facebook and Twitter were also used to publish the consultation process. Our database was used to e-mail over 200 members of the public who had previously requested to be kept in touch with our plans.

The information available was detailed and specific. This included:

- Vision and ethos
- Proposed catchment area and map
- The Curriculum offer
- The extended school day
- Extra-Curricular activities
- The team behind the proposals, including the track record of the Torch Academy Gateway Trust
- Admission Arrangements
- Frequently Asked Questions

Leaflets

500 leaflets were distributed through local community venues during the consultation period, inviting public comment on the plans.

Direct Letters

Invitations to respond to were sent to local secondary and primary schools, local counselors, MPs and officers of the appropriate Local Authorities.

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Analysis of the Consultation Responses

The consultation questionnaire asked six clear questions to which the possible answers were 'yes', 'no' or 'maybe'. There was an opportunity as part of the consultation questionnaire for respondents to make additional comments on each question, and an additional invitation to make any further comments. We asked all respondents to provide some information about them including an email address and their name.

Consultation Questionnaire results

A detailed breakdown of the questions and responses posed in the consultation questionnaire follows.



Question 1:

Should the Secretary of State for Education sign a Funding Agreement with the Torch Academy Gateway Trust to open and run Nottingham Free School?

Responses:

Yes: 23

No: 13

Comments	Response
Money should be spent on other local schools	<i>This is an ideological objection. The start up funding is from the DfE and would not be distributed to other local schools.</i>
Place shortages are in primary, not secondary, it may threaten viability of good schools	<i>The proposed catchment does not have a surplus of places in good or outstanding secondary schools. Many parents currently have to send their children many miles to access their choice of secondary school. One primary school sent Year 6 students to over 14 different secondary schools last year. This is divisive to the community and re-enforces educational disadvantage and inequality. Many parents tell us that out of catchment places in an 'outstanding' school are only usually available through selection through specialism. The increase in primary numbers adds further support for the long-term viability of the school.</i>
It is not wanted by local community	<i>The evidence does not substantiate this comment. The school is heavily oversubscribed, and public meetings have been very well attended.</i>
We don't yet know where the school will be.	<i>We agree with this concern. Once the location is confirmed we believe that this will remove some of the concerns expressed by residents and schools in the Gedling area.</i>
We need it – the local community is in desperate need of a good local secondary school	<i>We agree. Our public meetings received overwhelming support for the proposed school.</i>
Ofsted does not lie, so many poor schools ... local schools are poor	<i>Ofsted reports and the Ofsted data dashboard are a matter of public record.</i>
Torch Group have a proven record of educational attainment	<i>This is evidenced by our work at Toot Hill and Meden schools.</i>
There is no suitable local provision	<i>We agree. There is not a good local secondary school serving large parts of our catchment.</i>
There is a real need in this exact catchment area	<i>We agree</i>
Will provide safer options for young people with regard to travel and give them the opportunity to go to school with peers from their own community	<i>We agree. There should be no need for local students to travel many miles to their secondary provision.</i>

Question 2:

Do you believe that there is a need for a local secondary school in the Sherwood, Carrington, Mapperley Park and Woodthorpe and Mapperley areas of the city (Within a 4 mile radius of NG5 4AB)?

Responses:

Yes: 23

No: 13

Comments	Response
There is no evidence	<i>We have been involved in extensive community liaison over the past 15 months. This has included providing evidence to the DfE of sufficient demand, tested through a rigorous application process. Public support has been very strong, meetings very well attended and the proposed school is heavily oversubscribed in its first year, even before the site is announced.</i>
There are enough schools in the area	<i>Many parents living in our catchment area dispute this and many would further question the quality of some of the existing schools. The Ofsted judgments and examination outcomes are a matter of public record.</i>
There are several spare places in other schools	<i>Data indicates that the highest performing schools just beyond our catchment area are oversubscribed. There is not a mainstream, secular secondary school located within our proposed catchment area.</i>
Other schools play tricks with admissions, they select and cherry-pick. The DfE should investigate their sharp practice. They should stick to their own community not mine!	<i>We are aiming to provide a non –selective outstanding local school for the community. All schools should be compliant with the School Admissions Code. There is a formal complaints process that a concerned parent could follow.</i>
Yes – Carrington is a good primary school with a strong sense of community and it would be nice to see our children have the choice of a good, local school, so that this community feel can be maintained and transferred to secondary school	<i>We agree</i>
Children currently scatter to multiple secondary schools. A solid offer locally would be welcomed by many.	<i>This is the response that we have overwhelming received when meeting parents/carers within the catchment area.</i>

Question 3:

Do you support the ethos and aims of Nottingham Free School as outlined in the prospectus?

Reponses:

Yes: 25

No: 6

No clear statement/answer: 5

Comments	Response
The aims are no different to current schools	<i>Our offer is distinctive from other schools. This includes running an extended school day, extensive curriculum enrichment, single and discrete teaching in science, Latin, varied lesson length, tiering, personalised learning, small school feel etc.</i>
All schools have a similar ethos	<i>We disagree. Ofsted reports are a matter of public record.</i>
Yes – the aims and ethos are very person-centered and support partnership between children, parents and school in a more direct and positive manner than traditional schools	<i>We intend to build very close partnerships between home and school and introduce a number of innovative approaches.</i>
We are impressed by the large variety of extra-curricular activities	<i>This is a core part of our offer and our extended school day will provide a broad, well-rounded education.</i>
They will offer academic opportunities coupled with pastoral care backed by a professionally qualified team	<i>Our strong commitment to pastoral care is evidence in our current schools and our expectations of school staff.</i>
Long day – welcome	<i>We believe that this aspect offers children the opportunity to learn well beyond the traditional school day and will have a massive impact on self-confidence and achievement. This model is being successfully used in other Free Schools and in Charter Schools in the United States.</i>

Question 4:

Do you feel the proposed specialisms of Performing Arts and Science reflect the needs of the community?

Responses:

Yes: 16

No: 10

No clear statement/answer: 10

Comments	Response
The E- Academy is a Specialist Science school	<i>This school is located outside of our catchment area.</i>
There are other schools covering this, e.g. E_Act	<i>As above.</i>
Redhill have similar	<i>As above.</i>
I would like to see evidence that these are local deficiencies	<i>Our choice of specialism derived from dialogue with the local community. There is strong support for Arts as Sherwood/Carrington has a thriving community Arts scene. The intention is to build on community strength and provision in the Arts, rather than any local deficiency. Science is an important academic discipline.</i>
The proposed specialisms reflect the culture and aspirations of many of the families in the community.	<i>This view was widely expressed to us during our meetings in the community.</i>
Girls in particular need schooling that positively encourages their development in the sciences.	<i>We agree.</i>
The UK is desperately short of students who take science subjects. Performing Arts promote confidence and a sense of self, which leads to developing leadership and management skills.	<i>We agree.</i>
My child would thrive within these specialism	<i>We agree.</i>

Question 5:

Do you agree with plans to have an open admission policy with no selection?

Responses:

Yes: 28

No: 4

No clear statement/answer: 4

Comments	Response
It should be an inclusive school	<i>That is a vital part of our ethos.</i>
Yes – unlike some other schools who select by the backdoor	<i>We will not use any form of academic selection.</i>
No – what’s wrong with selection?	<i>We believe in open access to our school and that all children can achieve.</i>
Yes – but children should be taught by ability in academic subjects, but tutor groups and pastoral activities across abilities	<i>Our tiering systems ensure all children are appropriately placed for learning. Our tutor groups and pastoral activities will not be organised by ability.</i>

Question 6:

Do you agree with plans for the school to only employ qualified teachers?

Responses:

Yes: 28

No: 5

No clear statement/comment: 3

Comments	Response
Absolutely	
Eton does not always use qualified teachers	<i>We believe that staff training is a vital part in delivering high standards. All our staff will engage in regular, ongoing training, which will include Masters level qualifications in conjunction with The University of Nottingham. We will only use qualified teachers.</i>
This is the case in other local schools	<i>We are not in a position to comment accurately. Independent schools, academies and free schools are not obliged to employ qualified teachers. This is a 'freedom' that we do not intend to use.</i>
Whether you want to or not you will be able to employ unqualified people.	<i>This ability is offered to all academies, free schools and independent schools. We are on public record as undertaking not to use this freedom.</i>

Additional comments or questions raised:

Comments	Response
<p>What steps have you taken to make this consultation well known? ...</p> <p>Will you give him (Mr Gove) all responses or send a summary? Will you publish the details locally?</p>	<p><i>We have employed a wide range of strategies to ensure that this consultation and our offer is known locally. This has included leaflets, direct mail, contact through primary schools and the use of social media. As this report demonstrates we are responding to all comments/themes. The details will be published on our website, sent to local stakeholders and placed in community venues.</i></p>
<p>Location is a big issue</p>	<p><i>We agree. This should be resolved shortly.</i></p>
<p>A good local school is needed</p>	<p><i>Agreed</i></p>
<p>Look at Ofsted views on Nottingham Schools</p>	<p><i>This is a matter of public record.</i></p>
<p>The community will benefit from a school which is able to offer students a smaller school environment ... my children would struggle to develop their full potential in a large comprehensive</p>	<p><i>This is an important part of our ethos.</i></p>
<p>There are already 7 schools within Gedling ... spare places in Gedling ... previous issues with places in Gedling</p>	<p><i>Our school will not be located in Gedling. We believe that once the location is confirmed the concerns raised from a couple of Gedling Schools will be negated.</i></p>
<p>Please let the DfE know that the delay in securing a site is seriously undermining the good work you have done</p>	<p><i>The team is working hard to secure an appropriate site.</i></p>
<p>It is exactly the sort of school we have been waiting for. We had to pay for our elder son to get the sort of education he should be entitled to. The Nottingham Free School will offer this for free.</p>	<p><i>We agree. Mr. Gove spoke recently about taking the best practice from the independent sector to improve state schools. Our model contains the best features of many fee-paying schools, including a longer school day. We will be proud to be an inclusive, non-selective, state school.</i></p>
<p>The curriculum offer is too narrow</p>	<p><i>We don't agree with this view. We will follow the National Curriculum at KS3 and ensure that all students at KS4 are fully prepared for the new 'Progress 8' and 'Attainment 8' measures. Our extended school day ensures that our students will receive a well-rounded education. Our overall offer is broader than many local schools and will include LAMDA qualifications.</i></p>
<p>Please consider adding vocational subjects at KS4</p>	<p><i>We will add vocational subjects to our KS4 options offer as and when appropriate.</i></p>
<p>Can teachers belong to Unions?</p>	<p><i>Yes.</i></p>

Who will be the Headteacher?	<i>Mrs. Jenny Brown has been appointed as Head of School designate. She is currently Deputy Headteacher at Meden School and was previously Head of Mathematics at Toot Hill School. She will be supported by Mr. John Tomasevic, as Executive Headteacher. Mr Tomasevic is Executive Heateacher of Toot Hill and Meden Schools and is a National Leader of Education.</i>
Will you work in partnership with local schools?	<i>We aim to. We will join the Torch Teaching School Alliance, linking with 23 other local schools.</i>
Free Schools are wrong. Planning should be left to the Local Authority.	<i>This is an ideological position. We believe that Free Schools can help to improve choice for young people and parents. A mixed economy of schools helps to drive and improve standards.</i>
This is an elitist white middle-class school, copying the independent sector ...	<i>The catchment area is very mixed, with areas of significant deprivation. Ethnic minority groups and pupil premium students are well represented in local feeder schools. We anticipate a student profile in line with that in the current primary schools across the catchment. Mr. Gove recently suggested that the best of the independent sector should be offered in state schools and we agree. A good education should be offered to all, regardless of ability to pay. The Torch Academy Gateway Trust has a track record of working in areas of disadvantage, for example in the former mining community of Market Warsop.</i>


Conclusion

The Torch Academy Gateway Trust believes that the public consultation has been robust and extensive. The majority of the feedback has been very positive. The small number of respondents who have objected to the proposal are those who have strongly held political or personal views that the Free School policy is wrong or have concerns relating to schools in the Gedling/Arnold area. We believe that the latter concerns will be eased once the location of the school is announced, as the consultation radius extended in to the Gedling area.

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Appendix A:

Questionnaire for Consultation



**NOTTINGHAM
FREE SCHOOL**

Telephone Enquiries
01949 863 053

Press Enquiries
01949 863 053
01949 863 042

Postal Address
Nottingham Free School
c/o Toot Hill School
The Banks
Bingham
NG13 8BL

Name*

E-mail Address*

Message*

Statutory Consultation

The following questionnaire forms part of Nottingham Free School's Statutory Consultation period. The consultation period runs from 16th December and ends on the 26th of January. The consultation is part of the process that every Free School must undertake to secure funding. The following questions can be submitted online using the form below or a paper copy can be supplied. If you would like a paper copy of the questionnaire to fill in please contact us on 01949 863 053.

If you would like to meet a representative of Nottingham Free School to discuss any of these questions further please contact us by phone or using the contact form above and we will inform you of future consultation meeting dates.

Name*

E-mail Address*

Should the Secretary of State for Education sign a Funding Agreement with the Torch Academy Gateway Trust to open and run Nottingham Free School?
Please type your comments here

Do you believe that there is a need for a local secondary school in the Sherwood, Carrington, Mapperley Park and Woodthorpe and Mapperley areas of the city (Within a 4 mile radius of NG5 4AB)?
Please type your comments here

Do you support the ethos and aims of Nottingham Free School as outlined in the prospectus?
Please type your comments here

Do you feel the proposed specialisms of Performing Arts and Science reflect the needs of the community?
Please type your comments here

Do you agree with plans to have an open admission policy with no selection?
Please type your comments here

Do you agree with plans for the school to only employ qualified teachers?
Please type your comments here

Do you have any other comments?
Please type your comments here

Appendix B:

Free School Leaflet – Statutory Consultation



NOTTINGHAM FREE SCHOOL

Nottingham Free School would like to offer local stakeholders the opportunity to comment on our plans to open a secondary school to serve the Sherwood, Carrington, Mapperley Park, Woodthorpe and Mapperley areas of the city.

The school is scheduled to open in September 2014 and further information about the school, its ethos and the group running the school can be found on our website at:

The consultation period runs from 16th December and ends on the 26th of January. The consultation is part of the process that every Free School must undertake to secure funding.

As part of the consultation process, we have prepared a questionnaire which is available online:

www.nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk

The questionnaire can be submitted online or a paper copy can be supplied. If you would like a paper copy of the questionnaire to fill in please contact us using the details below. We would also welcome comments via email or in writing.

If you would like to meet a representative of Nottingham Free School to discuss any of these questions further please contact us by phone, post or email and we will inform you of future consultation meeting dates.

CONTACT US:

email - contact@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk

telephone - 01949863053

post - TAGT, The Banks, Bingham, NG13 8BL

Appendix C:

Free School Prospectus



Nottingham Free School is a new 11 to 18 state secondary school opening in September 2014 for year seven pupils. Our school will serve the Sherwood, Carrington, Mapperley Park, Woodthorpe and Mapperley communities.

WELCOME

I am delighted to be able to introduce you to the Nottingham Free School and the tremendous opportunity this will offer for your child. This is the most exciting development in education I have been involved in during my 35 year career.

The Nottingham Free School is a direct result of overwhelming parental demand for a new secondary school in the Sherwood, Carrington, Mapperley Park, Woodthorpe and Mapperley areas. We will deliver the communities vision of a local outstanding school providing the highest standards of education and care for each child.

We have a proven track record of delivering outstanding education for young people. Our flagship school Toot Hill is currently rated outstanding by Ofsted and is in the top 2% of all schools nationally for pupil progress.

The Nottingham Free School will offer a traditional academic curriculum, delivered by high quality teachers with a track record of success. Our extended school day offers the unique opportunity of an extensive extra curricular programme alongside additional academic support.

With only 90 places initially available it is very important that parents apply quickly. Applications can be made directly to us and further details are available on page 11 of this prospectus and on our website.

We look forward to you and your child contributing towards making the Nottingham Free School an outstanding community school.'

John Tomasevic



ETHOS:

The Nottingham Free School has a very clear and distinctive ethos. Our culture is highly aspirant, centred on our passionate belief that every child can succeed.

- We encourage staff to be creative, independent and ambitious. We expect them to challenge and inspire our students, providing high quality learning experiences that motivate students to be the very best they can. High standards and academic rigour underpin our daily work.
- We value commitment, independence and courtesy from all of our students. We respect the very highest standards and in return we value and respect student ideas and opinions.
- We explicitly promote leadership skills and offer a range of opportunities for students to take an active role in developing their school.

Our extended school day enables us to offer a wide-ranging enrichment programme and opportunities to promote independent learning. Students are expected to learn beyond the classroom and to develop the skills and attributes they need to compete with the very best in the country.

ACHIEVEMENT:

Student achievement is at the heart of everything we do. We believe that academic and examination success provides the foundation that allows students to make the most of their lives and associated opportunities.

Exciting, engaging and inspiring lessons encourage achievement and we constantly strive to provide your child with the very best educational experiences.

Should a child require additional support a range of services are available to ensure every student's success, whatever their individual educational needs.

Our track record at Toot Hill School demonstrates our ability to deliver high levels of achievement. In 2012 82% of all students in Year 11 gained 5 or more GCSE grades A*-C including English and Mathematics, placing Toot Hill in the top 2% of all schools nationally.









CURRICULUM

Our curriculum will follow National Curriculum guidelines and will provide a broad and balanced learning experience for all students.

At Key Stage 3 students will study a two-year programme that covers all the National Curriculum subjects. Students will be taught in ability groups in the majority of subjects, ensuring that every child is taught at a level that matches their ability.

During our three year Key Stage 4 programme all students will study the English Baccalaureate core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science, a Modern Foreign Language and a Humanities subject.

A wide range of option subjects including visual and Performing Arts, Computer Science, Technology and Sports will supplement the core curriculum. We expect all our students to achieve at least 8 passes at grades A*-C (or future equivalents) including the English Baccalaureate subjects.

The Nottingham Free School will deliver educational provision at Key Stage 5 that is primarily focusing on A Level courses (or future equivalents).

EXTRA CURRICULAR

Extra curricular activities are an essential part of a balanced and exciting education. We will offer students an extensive range of opportunities built into the extended school day. From 3.15pm until 5pm an extended curriculum will be provided for all students.

Each student will have the freedom to develop his or her interests and skills through the highest quality provision, provided without additional cost. We will offer an extensive programme which will provide creative, sporting, social and academic opportunities throughout the school year.

- We will provide a rich and varied range of creative activities above and beyond the curriculum provision. Drama, dance, music, art and creative writing will be complimented with the opportunity to study formal LAMDA qualifications.
- We will offer both team and individual sports coaching and competition and provide the opportunity to compete against other schools in regular sporting fixtures.
- We will ensure that students have a wider range of social experiences through links with other Torch Academy Schools and the wider community, both locally and nationally.
- We will deliver a comprehensive range of additional educational activities, which will support classroom learning and provide wider intellectual and academic growth. This will include links with universities, external providers and educational trips.





“Particularly good care, guidance and support are offered to students.”

TOOT HILL SCHOOL Ofsted (NOV 2011)

PASTORAL CARE

High quality, student centered pastoral care is an essential element in the success and happiness of every student. At the core of this provision is a year system led by a Head of Year and supported by Tutors.

At the Nottingham Free School your child's tutor will play a key role in ensuring their continuing happiness, well-being and academic success. Tutors serve as the first point of contact between school and home.

You will also receive regular updates on your child's progress through termly reports, online data, parent consultation days and a parents' evening.

As your child progresses through the Nottingham Free School their attainment and well-being will be closely monitored, ensuring that students are recognised and rewarded when they succeed and supported when things are more challenging.

The Nottingham Free School is fully committed to creating a caring school community and the health, happiness and well being of every student underpins our overall educational ethos and philosophy.





TRANSFER ARRANGEMENTS

Choosing the right secondary school for your child is a very important decision.

We will offer regular open evenings throughout Year 6 allowing you to meet our staff and ask any questions you might have to help you make the correct choice.

Applications for a place at the Nottingham Free School are made independently of the local authority process. This will allow you to select the Nottingham Free School as your first choice school and still select other local schools though the Local Authority Scheme.

Applications to the Nottingham Free School can be made directly on our website www.nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk or you can request an application pack by telephoning 01949 863053.

We understand that the transition from primary school to secondary school can be a daunting prospect for both pupils and parents. Once you have chosen the Nottingham Free School we will provide a comprehensive programme of events throughout the year allowing your child to meet their peers, engage with staff and begin to make lasting friendships.

We will also offer a series of meetings for all prospective parents allowing you to develop a strong working relationship with the school staff and other parents.

THE TRANSITION TIMETABLE IS AS FOLLOWS:

STEP ONE: AUTUMN TERM, YEAR 6

Pupils and parents will be invited to an open evening to discuss the school and address any questions they may have. We will also offer students and parents/carers the opportunity to visit Toot Hill School.

STEP TWO: AUTUMN TERM, YEAR 6

Applications must be submitted to us by the 31st of October and we will announce the outcome of applications on February 14, 2014.

STEP THREE: SPRING/SUMMER TERM, YEAR 6

We will run a programme of taster events designed to help support students as they make the transition from primary to secondary.

STEP FOUR: SUMMER TERM, YEAR 6

Year 6 students will meet with their classmates for a 'Taster Day' to allow them to familiarise themselves with the school. (Building dependent) Students with Special Educational Needs may well have an additional visit.



**NOTTINGHAM
FREE SCHOOL**

c/o The Banks, Bingham,
Nottingham NG13 8BL

Tel: 01949 863053

Email: contact@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk

Web: www.nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk

 Nottingham Free School

 NottinghamFreeSchool

Executive Head Teacher:

John Tomasevic

B.A. (Hons) Econ, Cert.Ed., M.Ed., N.P.Q.H., N.L.E.



Appendix D:

Stakeholders Letter



NOTTINGHAM
FREE SCHOOL

Mr P Smalley
Headteacher
Southglade Primary School
Beckhampton Road
Bestwood Park
Nottingham NG5 5NE

16 December 2013

Dear Mr Smalley

Nottingham Free School would like to offer local stakeholders the opportunity to comment on our plans to open a secondary school to serve the Sherwood, Carrington, Mapperley Park, Woodthorpe and Mapperley areas of the city. The school will be within a 3 mile radius of NG5 4HA.

The school is scheduled to open in September 2014 and further information about the school, its ethos and the group running the school can be found on our website at:

www.nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk

The consultation period runs from 16th December and ends on the 26th of January. The consultation is part of the process that every Free School must undertake to secure funding and will allow us to respond to community issues.

As part of the consultation process we have prepared a questionnaire which is available online at:

www.nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk

The questionnaire can be submitted online or a paper copy can be supplied. If you would like a paper copy of the questionnaire to fill in please contact us using the details below. We would also welcome comments via email or in writing.

If you would like to meet a representative of Nottingham Free School to discuss any of these questions further please contact us by phone, post or email and we will inform you of future consultation meeting dates.

contact@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk

Tel. 01949 863053
Nottingham Free School
The Banks
Bingham
Nottingham NG13 8BL

Thank you in anticipation of your response

Nottingham Free School Team

Nottingham Free School
c/o Toot Hill School, The Banks, Bingham, Nottinghamshire, NG13 8BL
01949 863053 | contact@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk | www.nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk
Executive Head Teacher: John Tomasevic B.A. (Hons) Econ, Cert.Ed., M.Ed., N.P.Q.H., N.L.E.

Appendix E:

Consultation Letter



THE NOTTINGHAM
FREE SCHOOL
SCIENCE & CREATIVE ARTS SPECIALIST

Dear Parent/Carer,

Nottingham Free School would like to offer local stakeholders the opportunity to comment on our plans to open a secondary school to serve the Sherwood, Carrington, Mapperley Park, Woodthorpe and Mapperley areas of the city. The school will be within a 3 mile radius of NG5 4HA.

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Thank you in anticipation of your response

Nottingham Free School Team

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www.nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk www.torchacademy.co.uk

Appendix F: Website

Home Team Ethos Pastoral Curriculum Extra Curricular Applications Contact Statutory Consultation

Home

OPENING SEPTEMBER 2014

On the 22nd of May, 2013 the Department for Education announced the successful applicants of the 2014 Free School bidding round. Out of the hundreds of organisations that applied, only 102 bids were selected and there was only one successful secondary application in the East Midlands...

Welcome to Nottingham Free School

NOTTINGHAM FREE SCHOOL

An Outstanding Community School

I am delighted to be able to introduce you to Nottingham Free School and the tremendous opportunity this will offer for your child. This is the most exciting development in education I have been involved in during my 37 year career.

The Nottingham Free School is a direct result of overwhelming parental demand for a new secondary school in the Sherwood, Carrington, Mapperley Park, Woodthorpe and Mapperley areas. We will deliver the community's vision of a local outstanding school providing the highest standards of education and care for your child. We have a proven track record of delivering outstanding education for young people. Our flagship school Toot Hill is currently rated outstanding by Ofsted and is in the top 2% of all schools nationally for pupil progress.

Nottingham Free School will offer a traditional academic curriculum, delivered by experienced teachers with a track record of sustained high quality practice. Our extended school day offers the unique opportunity of an extensive extra curricular programme and academic support.

Applications are now closed, but please [Apply Here](#) if you wish to register your child's details as an expression of interest.

We look forward to you and your child contributing towards making Nottingham Free School an outstanding community school.

John Tomasevic
Executive Head Teacher

Latest Updates

Even though applications have now closed, work on Nottingham Free School continues unabated behind the scenes.

Final application numbers for the Free School were very encouraging, showing that there is a real need for the school. Early indications are that the projected 90 to 120 places was an accurate assessment of demand from the community.

We will notify all parents who have applied for a place for their child at Nottingham Free School of the outcome of their application on the 14th of February 2014.

The Department for Education are currently in negotiations regarding the site for the school and as soon as we have confirmation of a location we will let you know.

We had our first Interim Governors meeting last night which was very well attended. If you are interested in working with the group contact Jack.

We are currently working on plans for a series of events for Year 6 students in the spring term and will update you further in the near future.

Free Schools have been featured in the press recently, raising some questions about how the schools operate. As a school within the Torch Academy Gateway Trust, Nottingham Free School will be run to the same exacting standards as our other schools; Toot Hill, Meden and the Nottingham University Sarnworth Academy.

Nottingham Free School can assure all parents that:

- All teachers will be fully qualified
- The school will be open and accountable to its Governing body
- School meals will follow DfE guidelines on nutrition and food standards
- The school will follow the National Curriculum

Buildings Update

At present we are still waiting for the Department for Education to identify a school site.

This process can take months and it is possible we may not know for some time.

We have requested that the school be situated within the Sherwood, Carrington, Mapperley Park and Woodthorpe communities, as this is where demand from parents was strongest.

We can assure you that as soon as we know the location of the school we will let you know.

Latest Tweets

29th Nov 2013: Free School Update - Still no news to report on location of the site, but the first order for the school uniform has been placed.

12th Nov 2013: The 1st interim Govers meeting was held last night. If you are interested in working with the group email contact@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk

12th Nov 2013: If you are interested in NFS for your child but didn't apply in time we are accepting expressions of interest via <http://t.co/88TT18Oavc>

12th Nov 2013: Final application numbers were very encouraging and the projected 90 to 120 places was an accurate assessment of demand from the community

12th Nov 2013: Apps have now closed but work continues behind the scenes. The DfE are in negotiations & as soon as we have confirmation of the site we will let you know

APPLY ONLINE HERE

DOWNLOAD THE PROSPECTUS HERE

Appendix G:

Frequently Asked Questions



NOTTINGHAM
FREE SCHOOL

Frequently Asked Questions

Section A: Developing a Free School

1: What is a Free School?

Free Schools are state or maintained schools that receive their funding entirely from central government. As such they are automatically 'Academies' and sit outside Local Authority control but adhere to the School Admissions Code of Practice. Free Schools are non-selective and free to all attending pupils. They are set up by interested local groups who feel their area would benefit from a Free School and can demonstrate local demand for one.

2: Why are you establishing the school?

We believe that every child deserves a good, local school. Local residents tell us that an additional secondary school choice would be welcomed. Many students currently do not secure places at their first choice school and end up travelling long distances, leaving the state sector or attending schools they had not chosen.

The community deserves a new outstanding school.

3: How many children are you accepting in September 2014?

We are accepting 90 places for September 2014. We will only be accepting Year 7 students in the first year. We will build year by year, with an eventual number on roll of 600 students by September 2018.

4: Why do I need to express my interest now?

In order to secure funding we have to demonstrate sufficient parental interest in our school to the DfE.

Expressing your interest in the school by completing our survey is all you have to do at this stage, indicating that The Nottingham Free School may be a preference for you. This will help ensure that you and other parents have the future choice of The Nottingham Free School.

5: What if I sign up then change my mind?

Expressing your interest at this stage does not commit you to sending your child to the school. You will complete your school choices when your child is in Year 6 in the usual way.

6: How and when do I apply to The Nottingham Free School?

Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City residents should apply through the Local Authority application process, selecting The Nottingham Free School as one of your preferences. The school is happy to assist with this process. The process starts when your child is in Year 6.

We will retain a list of potential parents and keep you updated on our progress.

7: Is your location decided and has the site been secured?

We have identified suitable premises. Once public consultation has been concluded we will work with the Department for Education to finalise the plans and get the site ready for opening.

8: How will my child get to the school?

Once we have a clearer idea of where pupils live in relation to the school we will begin to explore transport options. Nottinghamshire County Council are currently committed to funding transport to parent's first choice school.

9: How does the funding work?

The Nottingham Free School will receive a package of funding direct from the DfE to set up and establish the school. From September 2014

the school receives a per pupil funding settlement from the Local Authority in line with all maintained secondary schools.

10: What happens if there is a change in government / education policy?

Upon opening, all free schools receive the same legal status as academies. We are joining a group of hundreds of existing academies, a policy supported across the political spectrum.

Section B: Academic Culture and Ethos

1: Will you be focused on academic excellence?

Yes. Our academic priority is to deliver excellent GCSE results in the English Baccalaureate subjects, providing a secure foundation for 'A' level success. This will enable students to secure places at the Russell Group Universities.

2: What is your track record?

The Torch Academy Gateway Trust currently leads two secondary schools. Our founder school was rated as 'outstanding' by Ofsted in 2011 and is ranked in the top 2% of all schools nationally for student progress. For the past 4 years every student has secured at least 5 'good' grades at GCSE.

Our sponsored school has been transformed under our leadership and is one of the most of the most improved schools nationally.

Our track record of success is second to none.

3: What is the track record of the school leaders?

Our Executive Head teacher is a National Leader of Education, with extensive experience of leading secondary schools.

He is supported by an extended leadership team, used to securing high outcomes for students. This includes experienced 'Heads of School' and an accredited Ofsted Inspector.

In December 2011 Ofsted made the following comment:

'The headteacher sets exceptionally high standards for students and staff. He is supported by a strong leadership team.'

4: What will you be looking for in your staff?

We will be recruiting outstanding professionals, who share our vision for education, our passion and who are committed to do whatever it takes to deliver excellence for our students. We will be recruiting teachers on the basis of their academic qualifications, quality of classroom practice, commitment to learning (that of students and their own) and our vision.

Being part of a highly successful wider group of schools enables us to use teachers who we already know are outstanding.

5: My child has special needs? How will you cater for them?

We will follow the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice to ensure that students are appropriately supported. We have access to experienced, specialist support teachers, for example to support students who are dyslexic.

6: Will there be a school uniform?

Yes. School uniform is an important factor that helps promote school identity and set high standards. Uniform will include blazers and school ties. There will be a competitive package available for parents to buy directly from the school.

7: Will there be after schools clubs for those with working parents?

Yes. The Nottingham Free School will run an extended school day, which will finish at 4.45pm.

8: What sports will be offered?

Sport will form an important part of our school. We will offer a wide range of sporting opportunities and and high quality sports coaching. Sports will include team games (for example football, rugby, cricket, netball, and rowing) and individual pursuits (rowing, athletics, personal fitness). A big difference between us and other schools will be our use

of specialist coaches, ensuring sporting excellence can be developed and nurtured.

9: Will you encourage arts education – music and drama?

Yes – this is a key part of our offer. Our afternoon sessions will allow access to music, drama and artistic opportunities. We will use the skills of professional actors, musicians and artists to enhance the quality and variety of our overall provision and provide students with experience of professional working practices.

10: What other activities will you offer?

We will offer opportunities for leadership development, public speaking, debating, enterprise activities, language exchanges, Duke of Edinburgh, community development, social responsibility and residential trips and visits.

11: Do you intend to open a Post-16 school?

Yes, we will extend our provision to Post 16 where we will offer a suite of A-Level subjects.

Section C: How to get involved

1: How can I become more involved now?

The Nottingham Free School is committed to serving the community. We are initially looking for parent ambassadors to promote the School and its ethos during the development phase.

Once the school is running parental involvement through the governors and the Parent Association will be a vital part of school life.

2: How can parents get involved in the running / future of the school?

We seek to engage positively with our parents. Parents will be invited into school regularly and will meet formally with their child's mentor twice a year.

A parental focus group will operate throughout our pre-opening stages and this will continue to offer a regular voice for parents after opening.

Parents will be represented on the school's governing body.

3: How can I stay in touch as the project develops?

Over the next two years we will continue to involve prospective parents in every aspect of the project.

We will provide regular updates via Facebook, Twitter and our website.

We will also run regular formal and informal information evenings and provide a range of extra curricular opportunities for potential students.

Appendix H:

Admissions Policy



NOTTINGHAM FREE SCHOOL

ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2014 -2015

Nottingham Free School is a member of the Torch Academy Gateway Trust. The Free School serves the geographical areas of Carrington, Sherwood, Mapperley, Mapperley Park and Woodthorpe. The catchment area is defined on the NFS Catchment Map, which is available on our website.

The Nottingham Free School will deliver a traditional academic curriculum centred on English Baccalaureate subjects. The school will offer an extended school day and students are expected to participate in a range of extracurricular activities to promote their personal development. The school has high expectations for student achievement and behaviour.

The Trust, which is its own admission authority, has a responsibility to ensure that this admissions policy complies with the School Admissions Code and School Admissions Appeal Code, and is implemented objectively and fairly. The Trust delegates this responsibility to the Nottingham Free School Local Governing Body.

Nottingham Free School will directly process applications for admission in to Year 7 for September 2014. Application forms are available on our website www.nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk or by telephoning 01949 863053. The deadline for applications is 31st October 2013. Offers of places will be notified to parents/carers by the Nottingham Free School on February 14th 2014. Late applications outside the normal round will be considered after those received on time. In-Year applications will be considered upon receipt.

Inaccurate or false information on the form could result in the offered school place being withdrawn.

From 2015 onwards, admissions to the Nottingham Free School will be co-ordinated by the Local Authority. Information on the process for applications for Nottingham Free School in 2015 will be published when the Admission Arrangements are amended for 2015/16 onwards.

Nottingham Free School does not process applications based on aptitude or ability, either on the basis of the school's specialism or on any other criterion.

The published admissions number (PAN) for Year 7 in September 2014 is 90. Year 7 is the only point of entry for the academic year 2014/15.

Until the school is oversubscribed we will admit all students whose parents name the school as a preference. If more applications are received than places available, applications will be ranked against the following over-subscription criteria for the school. The school will operate a waiting list until the end of the summer term in the year of entry and applications will be ranked against the following criteria in the order set out below. If the school is over-subscribed, parents may request that their child be placed on the waiting list.

Admission Oversubscription Criteria for Year 7

The school will admit a child with a Statement of Special Educational Need if the Statement names the Nottingham Free School, before any of the following criteria are applied:-

1. Looked after children and previously looked after children.
2. Children of staff, specifically teaching or support staff, full or part-time, on the payroll of the Torch Academy Trust working at Nottingham Free School at the time of admission, where: a) the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made, and/or b) the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

3. Children who live in the catchment area and who at the time of admission will have a sibling (see definition below) attending the school (applicable from September 2015 onwards);
4. Other children who live in the catchment area;
5. Children who live outside the catchment area and who, at the time of admission, will have a sibling(- see definition below) attending the school (applicable from September 2015 onwards);
6. Children who are eligible for the pupil premium.
7. Children whose particular medical needs, mobility support needs, special educational needs or other social circumstances are supported by written evidence from a doctor, social worker or other relevant professional stating that the school is the only school that could cater for the child's particular needs, based on evidence presented at the time of application.
8. All other children.

Tie –Breaker

In the event of oversubscription preference will be given to children who live nearest the school. The distance from home to school is measured as a straight line from a single fixed point in the centre of the home address (the “seed-point”) to the main pedestrian school entrance. Accessibility of private or public transport will not be considered. All distances will be measured using a computerised Geographical Information System (GIS) administered by the Torch Academy Gateway Trust. In the event that distances in the tie-breaker are the same, random allocation will be used. Names will be randomly drawn out of a hat, and the process will be overseen by a person independent of the school and Trust.

Where places become vacant they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria.

Independent Appeals

Places in Year 7 at Nottingham Free School for September 2014 will be allocated on 14th February 2014 and advised thereafter. Parents have the right to an independent appeals panel if you are not happy with the outcome of your application. Repeat applications in the same academic year will not be considered unless there is a significant and material change in circumstances. Parents wishing to appeal should write to the Secretary to the Directors, Torch Academy Gateway Trust, c/o Toot Hill School, The Banks, Bingham, Nottinghamshire NG13 8BL within 20 school days of notification. Notification of the appeals date will be given with at least 10 school days' notice and the deadline for submission of written case will normally be 6 working days in advance of the hearing date. Independent appeals panel hearings will be organised with Nottinghamshire County Council. The appeals process will be conducted in accordance with the School Admissions Appeals Code.

Key Terms and Definitions

Home address

The child's place of residence is taken to be the parental home, other than in the case of children fostered by a local authority, where either the parental address or the foster parent's address may be used. Where a child spends part of the week in different homes, one of which is not a parental address, their place of residence will be taken to be their parent or parents' address. If a child's parents live at separate addresses, where the child permanently spends at least 3 'school' nights, ie. Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday will be taken to be the place of residence. Addresses of other relatives or friends will not be considered as the place of residence, even when the child stays there for all or part of the week.

Evidence that a child's place of residence is permanent may also be sought. Such evidence should demonstrate that a child lived at the address at the time of the application, and will continue to live there after the time of admission. Informal arrangements, even between parents, will not be taken into consideration. The Governors' Admissions Committee may also seek proof of residence from the courts regarding parental responsibilities in these matters.

Looked After Child

The definition of 'looked after children' has been broadened by the School Admissions Code 2012 and includes children looked after by the local authority or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order. A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions in accordance with section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989. An adoption order is an order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'residence order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

Parents:

For school admissions the governors will consider the following as parents:-

- the mother of the child
- an adoptive parent
- the father of the child where he was married to the mother either when the child was born or at a later date
- the father of the child if (since 1 December 2003) he was registered as the father on the birth certificate
- any other person who has acquired 'parental responsibility' through the courts.

Siblings:

For school admissions the governors will consider the following as sibling:-

- a brother or sister who shares the same parents
- a half-brother or half-sister or legally adopted child living at the same address to the child
- a child looked after by a local authority placed in a foster family with other school age children
- stepchildren or children who are not related but live as a family unit, where parents both live at the same address as the child.

Twins and Multiple Births:

Where one child of a multiple birth can be admitted, the other child/children will also be admitted.

Appendix I:

Letter from Carlton Academy

The Carlton Academy

Coningswath Road
Carlton
Nottingham
NG4 3SH

14 January 2014

Nottingham Free School Consultation

Nottingham Free School
c/o Toot Hill School
The Banks
Bingham
NG13 8BL

To whom it may concern

Consultation on the proposed Nottingham Free School

It is with considerable concern that I provide my response to the proposed Nottingham Free School as part of the current 'consultative window'.

As the recently appointed Head of The Carlton Academy, I have spent time becoming familiar with the local area and the communities that both we and other schools serve in the Arnold, Sherwood and Gedling areas of Nottingham. It has become clear to me that the following factors are true in respect of both the current school provision and features of the proposed Free School bid:

There is no shortage of secondary school places in this area - some 'good schools' are currently working hard to recruit learners into their already successful and rapidly improving schools where there is a surplus of school places

The proposed 'catchment net' for the free school is seemingly looking to create an elitist and almost selective catchment based around the more affluent neighbourhoods and seems to purposefully avoid the areas of deeper deprivation

That any additional new school may serve to have a serious consequence for existing schools both in terms of their pupil numbers and in the recruitment of high quality staff who work tirelessly to improve outcomes for learners and their families

The Carlton Academy is one of the current 'good' schools and is on a journey towards becoming outstanding. As part of our development, we are already looking at significant increases in numbers for September 2014. This success is built on a number of years of very hard work by the whole community and the increase in numbers will allow us to grow our provision and fully utilise our large and established school site. The possibility of losing applications in favour of an unproven and seemingly 'curriculum narrow' free school is both making the choices of families harder than it should be, whilst also providing uncertainty for successful schools as they look to further develop their comprehensive offer.

The argument by some politicians and commentators that a Free School is not a potential financial risk to established schools is simply untrue; loss of pupils in an area with a large number of existing vacant school

places is a massive threat to the future sustainability of existing successful and improving schools. This in turn can impact negatively on the recruitment of staff, especially high quality teachers, if there is any perceived uncertainty about the sustainability of the current school provision. Why would the government want to work against schools that are making great progress and having impact in their local communities?

There are already a number of increasingly successful Trusts and cross phase Teaching Alliances within the city boundary catchment. These networks are working tirelessly to improve their outcomes for young people, many in challenging areas, and are working to further engage their local communities in the progress agenda. The arrival of another organisation, outside of these existing successful partnerships will both potentially dilute the excellent impact of current partnership work and impact negatively on local communities. Schools should be at the heart of their community, offering comprehensive education to local families.

In a recent speech, David Cameron spoke on the theme of 'bringing down the barriers to cohesion'. Within this, he discussed the notion of 'educational apartheid' and the need to remove the gap between 'good' and 'bad' schools, most especially in the poorer urban areas. In my opinion, the opening of a free school is only going to make this situation worse and in fact goes totally against the notion of allowing those good and improving schools to have the freedom to develop, inspire and transform the lives of the wonderful young people in Nottingham. If we end up with yet another possible school for families to choose from, the vision for sustainable and successful educational communities is at threat.

The Torch Academy Gateway Trust has yet to prove its long term sustainable impact in supporting secondary education and has only recently taken on its support role with Nottingham University Samworth Academy. The job of work to be done at Samworth is one of significant challenge and will need considerable resource in order to have long term impact for a mid-sized school serving an area of significant deprivation. Whilst I am sure that the Trust employs very experienced and able staff, surely there is a limit to the sustainable strategic impact that can be had across a range of very different initiatives at the same time?

I trust that those who make the final decision will see common sense. We must ensure that resources are focused on supporting existing schools and their communities and not in enabling a divisive and seemingly non comprehensive, curriculum-narrow school to make the hard work we already all do harder than it needs to be and damaging to the futures of those who have already made their own good choices.

Yours sincerely



Richard Pierpoint

Head Teacher

The Carlton Academy

Copies to:

Vernon Coaker – Member of Parliament

Lord Nash - Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools

Appendix J:

Response to Carlton Academy



30th January 2014

Consultation on the proposed Nottingham Free School: Response to issues raised by The Carlton Academy

Basic need in the locality of Nottingham Free School: Until recently the NFS 'catchment' was served by the former Haywood School. This City school was closed for a variety of reasons but, critically, it had lost the trust and support of parents. Consequently the community that the NFS intends to serve has no local secondary school: indeed, one primary school currently sends its Year 6 pupils to no less than 17 different secondary schools. Such a distribution has an impact on the ease of transition into secondary education for those children. Meetings with their parents evidenced considerable dissatisfaction with such an arrangement and concern for the children's welfare.

Catchment Area: The Nottingham Free School's defined catchment area is not within that of The Carlton Academy. We question the notion that our defined catchment area is 'elitist and almost selective'. A tour of the catchment area will strongly indicate that it is an urban residential area with a very diverse range of housing.

Effect on neighbouring schools: The opening of Nottingham Free School does not hinder the present or future pathway of The Carlton Academy. Parents will have a range of choice and will select according to their own criteria. The putative financial risk of Free Schools to established schools is very difficult to assess. In today's educational climate no school is immune to financial risks arising from parental preferences. Just as the opening of the NFS may have an impact on other school rolls, equally the performance of other schools in an area will also have a positive or negative effect.

Nottingham Free School Curriculum: We question the description of our Free School as 'curriculum narrow'? Our curriculum covers all the national curriculum subjects and more. It has been designed to meet the national expectation around E.Bacc, Achievement 8 and Progress 8. Significantly our learning day is considerably longer than that of most schools in the area and consequently we aim to provide a whole range of enrichment activities alongside the core curriculum.

Contention that the Free School is 'unproven'. This concern, whilst understandable, should be tempered by the fact that the inception and development of the Nottingham Free School is led by an outstanding organisation. It was that reputational factor that gave so many parents the confidence to support the Nottingham Free School.

Partnership Working: We have strongly indicated to Nottingham City Local Authority that we wish to play a full part in collaborative working. Given our role with another City school (NUSA), we believe that it is in the best interests of all schools to establish strong partnerships. At the end of the line, all schools wish to benefit children and improve their life chances. We have more in common than in contention on such matters. We cannot foresee how the NFS will impact negatively on its community, when it is the families in this same community that have given their support to the new school.



'Bringing down the barriers to cohesion': We believe that the argument against the free school drawn from a speech given by David Cameron is based on a misunderstanding. The Prime Minister argues for improved social mobility through greater choice and the extension of outstanding education.

Finally it is our contention that our capacity has been closely investigated, assessed and validated by the DfE throughout the application, interview and on-going pre-opening processes of the Free School.

I recognise that any change is a potential threat of competition to established providers, whatever the sector. Any new organisation can be seen as a destabilising influence. However a new school can be of long-term benefit if it raises standards and helps other schools, directly or indirectly, to raise their own. For our part, Toot Hill School has always had to compete with the Lincolnshire Grammar Schools who actively recruit the most enabled and privileged students from our feeder primary schools. I trust that once the NFS is established the focus in all schools will quickly switch to the tough reality of securing achievement for all the children we serve. The Torch Academy Gateway Trust is committed to helping all children, without discrimination, to achieve their full potential.

I very much hope that I have been able to provide reassurance to you and your learning community. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to meet and discuss the matter in more detail.

Yours sincerely

John Tomasevic
Chief Executive Officer

cc
Vernon Coaker MP;
Lord Nash, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools
Chair, Torch Academy Gateway Trust





For further information, please call **01949 863053**
or visit **www.nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk**



NOTTINGHAM
FREE SCHOOL

c/o The Banks, Bingham,
Nottingham NG13 8BL

Tel: 01949 863053
Email: contact@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk
Web: www.nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk

 Nottingham Free School
 NottinghamFreeSchool

Executive Head Teacher:
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TORCH
ACADEMY GATEWAY