



Highbury Grove School Vision Revised January 2006

Overall school vision

Highbury Grove's vision is of three inclusive 'schools within a school' where a combination of flexible, multi-purpose learning bases and high quality specialist provision across a range of curriculum areas will provide a positive, attractive and personalised learning environment, for all students.

This environment will enable teachers to develop high quality schemes of work and learning programmes and deliver an exciting and innovative curriculum which meets the needs of all students. This will be underpinned by an ICT infrastructure which provides access to learning at all times.

The new school will ensure that all students are provided with appropriate and challenging pathways for progression into higher education, work and lifelong learning. The new school will provide all students with the fullest possible range of support and opportunities to take part in a wide range of enrichment and extra-curricula activities both within and beyond the new school.

Highbury Grove School aims to be a centre of excellence which will enable our students to radically improve their performance and attainment. The BSF programme will also provide the high quality environment that will enable the delivery of the school's five main aims :

- To promote an ethos of high expectations that will raise achievement for all.
- To offer a broad curriculum that is relevant and challenging, to meet the needs of all.
- To equip students with the skills and qualifications for life.
- To encourage students to develop a sense of responsibility and respect and for others within a welcoming, stimulating and safe environment.
- To forge a partnership between members of the school and the local community.

In addition to these five aims, we have added a sixth, which supports Islington's vision for education in the borough:

- To develop collaboration and partnership with other schools and other education providers in order to support the effective delivery of 'one school' in Islington

A glimpse of our school in the future

The following is a glimpse of the school in five years' time, and illustrates what our vision would mean in practice and what we would like BSF investment to help us achieve:

- Outstanding standards of academic and personal achievement for all students
- High quality, accessible and inclusive community secondary educational provision for mainstream and special needs students.
- A centre of excellence in business enterprise activity and learning for school and community users.
- A centre of excellence for initial and in-service training for all staff.
- A centre of excellence for accessible extended hours learning, sport, arts and ICT provision for local residential, community and business use.
- Effective and high quality governance, leadership and management of the entire site

Specialist facilities, accessible to students from Highbury Grove and Samuel Rhodes and for extended hours community use to include:

- On-line ICT based mainstream, special and extended curriculum
- A state of the art business enterprise centre
- State of the art language facilities (potential second specialism)
- A multi-media resource library to facilitate independent learning
- PE, health and fitness, sport and dance facilities
- Performance / display / assembly facilities for art, dance, drama, debate and music
- Restaurant facilities
- Facilities to develop health and social care and/or catering as vocational specialisms.

This vision will only be achieved through collaboration and partnership with all members of the school community, parents and families, sports clubs and other users, our partners in the Islington Consortium, other secondary schools, partner primary schools, the City Learning Centre, Islington EiC partners, City and Islington College, Islington Council, CEA@Islington and other local businesses and resident groups.

How our vision will meet the needs of young people, as set out in the five outcomes for children within Every Child Matters

Being healthy

The new school can meet this need by:

- Developing a robust Healthy Schools programme.
- Ensuring that all students participate in a broad, balanced and varied programme of quality physical education

- Promoting healthy eating through the school's restaurant and catering facilities (an integral part of a possible vocational specialism).
- Promoting a healthy work-life balance for children and adults
- Providing on-site facilities for local health services.

Staying safe

The new school can meet this need by:

- Being designed as a 'safe building'
- Employing a range of staff with different skills and expertise
- Creating an ethos and atmosphere where violence or bullying will be seen by everyone as unacceptable
- Working closely with school based police and other support services
- Making effective use of technology (eg CCTV) where useful and appropriate
- Ensuring that road safety issues around the school are taken on board at the design stage.

Enjoyment and achievement

The new school can meet this need by:

- Providing a high quality, flexible and personalised curriculum for all students.
- Developing a four-track approach with clear progression routes for all students.
- Providing a state of the art, high quality learning environment built around the learning and support bases of the three 'schools within a school' and the specialist provision
- Enhanced curriculum enrichment and extra-curricula opportunities
- Attainment for all at the highest possible level.

Making a positive contribution

The new school can meet this need by:

- Providing opportunities for students to take on responsibility in school eg peer mentoring (we already have this in operation), monitors/prefects.
- Providing opportunities for students to have a say in how the school is run eg through the School Council
- Providing opportunities for students to take part in community service activities.
- Establishing links and joint activities between students at Highbury Grove and students at Samuel Rhodes.

Achieving economic well-being

The new school can meet this need by:

- Teaching progression readiness qualities and skills through the school curriculum.
- Developing a robust programme of work related learning
- Developing an enterprise culture within the school.
- Developing excellence in a vocational area which through qualifications will lead to employment.

- Building on the progress and development already made as a Business Enterprise College.

‘One School’ approach

- Highbury Grove welcomes the ‘one school’ approach across Islington. We already share many of our facilities with other schools, both, secondary and primary, and we have well-established models of collaboration, eg the Islington Consortium (post-16 provision) and the School Sports Coordinator Programme.
- Our vision of ‘schools within a school’ mirrors the Islington vision – the combination of flexible, multi-purpose learning bases and high quality specialist provision across a range of curriculum areas will provide a positive, attractive and personalised learning environment for all students. This has to be underpinned by an ICT strategy and infrastructure which provides universal access to learning at any time.
- A second aspect of this vision is a full service extended school which is open beyond ‘normal’ school hours and which is accessible to students from other schools and to the local community. Finally, our ‘one school’ approach will encourage the development of shared facilities and extend collaboration and partnership with other schools, including co-location of Samuel Rhodes Special School.

Diversity and Achievement

- The diverse nature of the school’s population reflects that of the borough as a whole. Furthermore, there are measures of improvement in the performance of Highbury Grove students which mirror improvements across the borough.
- Achievement is celebrated during the year through assemblies and achievement evenings.
- The new school will not only reflect and celebrate the diverse nature of its population, but also ensure that it provides a comprehensive and inclusive education which meets the needs of all young people. Through this it will provide the opportunity for all students to achieve at the highest possible level.

Inclusion

- Highbury Grove is already recognised as a very inclusive school. Our exclusions are amongst the lowest in the borough – a tremendous achievement when it is considered that we are one of the largest schools with a very disadvantaged school population and 75% of our students are boys.

- Part of our vision for the new school is that it will be more accessible to young people with physical disabilities.
- We welcome the co-location of Samuel Rhodes Special School on to the school site, not least for the opportunities this will bring about for collaboration and partnership.

Key policies for delivering the school's vision

Achieving personalised learning for all

Every child will be offered a positive and attractive personalised learning experience through creative teaching, an exciting curriculum and innovative and inclusive environment.

Excellence in learning and teaching

The new building will reflect the overriding emphasis on developing excellent teaching and learning. Classrooms and teaching spaces should be inspirational and motivational. The building design should allow professionals to be leaders of learning, and students to be leaders of their own learning.

The design should ensure a strong profile for individual faculties, with identifiable curriculum bases, empowering subject and faculty leaders to develop a learning culture within their own space.

14 – 19 curriculum

The school already has an innovative approach at 14-19 including the development of academic, vocational and work related pathways at KS4, each with clear progression routes into the Islington Consortium or other post-16 provision.

The new school will provide a centre of vocational excellence, as part of a 'one school' borough wide programme in which all schools are developing such provision. At this stage we are focusing on art and design, health and social care and catering as potential vocational specialisms.

Post-16 provision at Highbury Grove is well established. Last year saw a 50% increase in numbers as part of the new Islington Consortium. Part of the vision for the new school is for a new Sixth Form Centre to be built on this site. This forms an integral part of our 'schools within a school' vision: learning, resource and support bases for different age groups (11-14 / 14-16 / 16-19) plus a wide range of state of the art, specialist provision which is used by all ages at different times.

The new sixth form centre will also enable the Islington Consortium to play contribute fully to the development of a coherent and comprehensive provision across the Islington 14-19 partnership, thus enabling the effective delivery of the 14-19 Education and Skills

Implementation Plan.

Access and inclusion

The school already has an integrated Student Support faculty and a wide range of quality provision including in-class and small group learning support, the Learning Support Centre (Leading Aspect Award), Learning Mentors, an Exit Room and the Impact Centre as an alternative to exclusion.

The current building effectively excludes children with physical disabilities and this would need to be addressed. The new school should be accessible to all, including those with mobility issues.

In seeking to build on what is already a very inclusive school we would extend the range and effectiveness of support services for students and their families by aiming for full service provision which would include school based education welfare and social services, improved health and mental health provision, youth services and advice for parents.

Behaviour and attendance

Highbury Grove is categorised by the DfES as a very challenging school. Despite this we have succeeded in reducing fixed term exclusion as follows:

- 2001 - 2002: 120
- 2002 - 2003: 74
- 2003 - 2004: 30
- 2004 – 2005: 31

There have been no permanent exclusions for 3 years

The school operates the following support facilities to prevent exclusion:

- Exit Room – immediate referral for poor behaviour
- LSC – preventative work in behaviour management
- IMPACT Centre as an alternative to exclusions

50%+ of the students are on free school meals, and many students come from disadvantaged families. There is also a high incidence of dysfunctionality and mental health problems within many families. A high proportion of students have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The school has a clear code of behaviour along with a system of rewards and sanctions. Students sign a Home-School Agreement on entry and are taught the rules of the school. The school articulates clear values which are communicated through a variety of means to the students and has invested heavily in student support systems and staff.

Attendance is above 90% overall and has been improving steadily in recent years. The school has a full time EWO + a separate Attendance Officer.

A key part of our vision is that a radical improvement in the school environment, combined with state of the art facilities and an innovative, exciting curriculum will create step change improvements in attendance and behaviour.

Health and safety

The site is large and has two main roads along its boundaries. The fencing is 6ft high. Access is through a controlled system for students (with a student reception) and a separate reception area for adults and the public. The open nature of the site does create safety and security issues which we would expect to be addressed in the design for the new school.

There is a police officer on site for approximately 2-3 days per week. There is a patrol system in operation throughout the school day. There is open access to the site from 7.00-9.05am and 3.30pm onwards.

As set out in the sections relating to Every Child matters it is essential that the new school is designed to assist managers and staff in creating a safe and healthy working environment for all members of the school community and other users.

Specialisms and diversity

We have already achieved specialist Business Enterprise status. Our new Business Enterprise Centre opened earlier this year. We are considering making a second application in Languages with the aim of ensuring that every student studies either a modern and/or a community language. We believe that this approach would reflect the multi-ethnic, multi-lingual nature of our intake in a positive manner.

The new school would be a centre of excellence for business enterprise and languages, and would have state of the art facilities which would be accessible to primary schools and the community

ICT

The new school will need to deliver high quality ICT provision across the entire curriculum. We ascribe to the aims, policies and strategies set out for ICT within Islington's ICT vision and strategy.

Children's services and community links

The school currently runs a well-established, extensive and successful Enrichment Programme on a Friday afternoon. In addition there is a wide range of after school clubs, a breakfast club, holiday revision classes and a Saturday School. In recognition of this, the school recently achieved the QUISS award.

Part of the school's vision is to become a full service extended school within the new building. This would include a full programme of extended school provision both before and after school, at weekends and during holiday periods.

There is already very extensive community use including: use of the CLC and Business Enterprise Suite, community lettings (eg churches and weddings), extensive use of the swimming pool by primary schools and swimming clubs, use of other sports facilities by sports clubs, community drama club, use of main hall (largest in Islington) for community events, parents groups.

Part of the school's vision is to become a full service extended school within a new building. At present there is no spare capacity in which to develop this.

Workforce remodelling and CPD

The remodelling agenda provides the opportunity to extend the range of adults and other professionals available to support students' learning. This, in turn, provides the opportunity for teachers to develop their expertise and focus on developing schemes of work and learning programmes of the highest possible quality. This will lead to the delivery of excellent teaching and learning in both learning bases and specialist areas.

The school will be open from early in the morning until late at night to facilitate the extended school programme. This will involve flexible working hours for both teaching and support staff.

Sport

Sports played include: Football; Basketball; Cricket; Athletics; Gymnastics; Trampoline; Swimming; Table Tennis. The facilities for indoor PE are in a poor state of repair (eg changing rooms/swimming pool) and outdated. The school has 3 playgrounds but no grass or all weather pitch for games. The school runs competitive teams in football, cricket, basketball, table tennis and swimming. We have also entered borough competitions in tag rugby. All training takes place on the playground.

The school hires a stadium for Sports Day however there are no facilities for athletics training. The school has a swimming pool which is well used by the school, primary schools and the community throughout the year. We have been awarded Sportsmark Gold and have been successful in a bid to NOF for £1.7m to build a new sports hall.

There is a deep well of sporting talent at Highbury Grove and a record of high attainment in sport in spite of the lack of facilities. The facilities planned for the new school would enable us to extend and improve the range, quality and outcomes of PE and sports activity for both students and community users. The retention and redevelopment of the swimming pool is essential

Current design/layout and suitability of building

The school was designed and built in the 1960s. Although it is in many respects a striking building and has many interesting and (for its time) innovative features, it is no longer fit for purpose. Some of the main issues are as follows:

- The building is increasingly difficult to maintain to an acceptable standard. Despite a carefully planned programme of maintenance in recent years the fabric of the school has suffered from historical periods of neglect. Some problems eg leaking roofs, decaying plaster, damaged floors have proved impossible to overcome.
- From the suitability and condition standpoint the school is deficient in many areas eg resource areas, toilets, storage facilities, indoor and outdoor sports facilities, specialist provision (particularly in the creative arts and technology).
- ICT provision is limited by the ability of the necessary infrastructure to be integrated into the existing buildings.
- The site is not secure and is virtually impossible to supervise effectively. The layout has numerous nooks and crannies that allow bullying to take place. Lack of proper social and circulation space also contributes to discipline problems.
- The site is built on an almost bewildering range of different levels thus creating real problems in terms of DDA access
- The internal configuration of the school militates against DDA compliance, for example the stair cores are cramped and present significant control problems due to the lack of visibility. Absence of lifts significantly restricts access to the curriculum for disabled pupils. In addition there are narrow corridors with doors that are not designed with disabled users in mind. Circulation routes almost always involve changes in level, again there is no disabled provision in the form of platform lifts to overcome this.
- Existing decorative schemes have not been designed with the needs of the visually impaired in mind, nor is the signage.
- The two main teaching blocks comprise classrooms on both sides of the building separated by a narrow central corridor with stairs at either end. There is no natural light in most corridors and the artificial lighting is inadequate. Some corridors are particularly prone to dangerous levels of congestion.
- The acoustics throughout the two main teaching blocks are very poor.
- There is an unacceptable variation in the relative size of classrooms throughout the school. Many are generously sized, but others are very cramped. This creates planning, timetabling and management problems.
- The building and layout are no longer suitable to meet current expectations, let alone the enhanced expectations of the school's vision.
- There have been a number of recent building projects on the school site which have produced new, good quality facilities. These include the City Learning Centre, a new kitchen, restaurant and music block, the Business Enterprise Centre, a new staffroom and Sixth Form Common Room and the refurbishment of the Library/Resources Centre. However, these new facilities also serve to highlight the inadequacy of much of the rest of the provision.

The new school

We want the new school to be visionary, both in the way that it supports the curriculum, but also in its appearance. It is essential that it conveys a message of the school's vision, to all users and the wider community. We want the completed school to have a strong identity which is associated with achievement and success.

The building will not only convey this message, but will also play a vital part in the community. The building itself should be a catalyst for change and regeneration, and play a key role in creating a sustainable environment.

We hope that BSF will offer the opportunity to match the needs of the community with the design of the buildings by ensuring the provision of multi use, flexible spaces that can be used throughout the day and year:

Finally, we want our school to be designed in such a way that it can be used as much as possible and by as many people as possible in line with the school's vision.

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