



Thursday 22nd October 2020

Dear Parents, Carers and the Wider Community,

Re. PROPOSAL FOR THE DULWICH HAMLET EDUCATIONAL TRUST TO JOIN THE CHARTER SCHOOLS EDUCATIONAL TRUST – CONSULTATION INFORMATION

We have some exciting and important news to share about the future of Dulwich Hamlet Junior School and The Belham Primary School.

We know that our schools offer something unique and exceptional. We are hugely proud of the outstanding education we provide for the communities we serve, through our glittering curriculum, and commitment to inclusion.

As well as ensuring we are always improving our provision, our Trustees look to the longer term to make sure we can carry on being exceptional for future generations of children who will attend both Dulwich Hamlet Junior School and The Belham Primary School.

Following reflection and discussion, the Trustees have re started discussions about our schools joining the Charter Schools Educational Trust. The Charter Schools Educational Trust has two strong secondary schools and now an outstanding primary school, Charles Dickens Primary and Nursery. Since we first explored working with the Charter Trust in 2017, they have appointed Cassie Buchanan, the Executive Head teacher of Charles Dickens Primary School, as the Trust leader.

Why we are taking this step:

We feel that, for our schools future stability and success, we need to be part of a wider family, to make sure we can carry on doing what we do. This means having a strong and well-resourced senior team and teachers who are experts in their subjects, at a time when school budgets are under pressure.

For the future we believe that The Charter Trust can be the best possible ‘home’ for our schools because we and the Charter share the same vision and values of outstanding and inclusive education. We believe that schools should be right for the communities they are located in – for example, by making sure that children can recognise themselves and their culture in the materials they’re learning from. And we believe in schools working together to get better at what they do – including primary schools and secondary schools alongside each other, building on their existing and unique strengths.

The Charter Trust is now home to the London South Teaching School Alliance and Charles Dickens Research School, of which we have been strategic members for several years, and these organisations lead the way in South London for teacher training, supporting innovative teaching and school improvement through collaboration.

Why we are taking this step now:

Sonia Case, our Executive Head Teacher, formerly Head Teacher of Dulwich Hamlet since 2007 and founder of The Belham Primary School, will be retiring this year from education, to focus on developing new skills in the community. The Trustees are confident that the Charter Trust, under Cassie Buchanan's leadership will allow our schools to continue to thrive and grow.

Claire Purcell and Liz Cohen will continue as our accomplished Heads of Schools, leading the talented staff teams and reporting and accountable to their school's governing body. One of the benefits of joining the Charter Trust will be that we can retain teachers within our 'family' for longer, as they progress in their careers and increase their opportunities to grow and learn.

There would not be any obvious or immediate change to the education and support we provide and local autonomy will be enshrined as part of the Trust vision. As part of a wider family of schools, though, we would be able to carry on getting better and better at everything we do – from our glittering curriculum offer, to the way we support children with additional needs.

The consultation of stakeholders will begin formally now: please follow the link below that will allow you to submit questions and enquiries that will be answered in November.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZNXS8FS>

The consultation will last four weeks, and be open during the half term holiday, closing on **Thursday November 19th 2020**.

We are very excited about this next step for Dulwich Hamlet Education Trust schools.

We believe that joining with the Charter will offer children and staff a more resilient future with wider opportunities, where they can flourish. But we are now interested to hear what you think before making any commitment to change.

Yours sincerely



Crispin Tuckley Chair of Dulwich Hamlet Educational Trust

Sonia Case Executive Head Teacher