

27 June 2017

Dear Sir/Madam

**THE BRITTONS ACADEMY RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION ON
SECONDARY SCHOOL EXPANSION**

The Governors of The Brittons Academy have scrutinised the consultation paper that was recently circulated. We cannot deny the need for schools in the borough to expand to accommodate the growing numbers of young people either coming through the primary sector or moving into Havering. However, we would like to challenge the rationale for the decisions made to expand some schools at the expense of others. Surely we need to look at ways to promote and develop Havering schools together in a way that is equitable so that no school is disadvantaged by the proposed expansion. The Governors at The Brittons Academy feel that the Academy is at risk from these proposals.

The paper very clearly shows where the population is rising and clearly there needs to be secondary places for these children. However, two years ago a similar calculation was made and certain schools, many of them in this paper, were allowed to make small increases in their numbers. Other schools, mainly in the south of the borough, were told that this would not affect their roll as there would be surplus places and excess student numbers from the Romford area would ensure that their numbers would increase. The Local Authority did not take into account the outward drift to neighbouring authorities that year which meant that some schools saw their roll fall whilst others were allowed to expand. Our concern is that the same thing could happen with these plans. This would clearly not be fair and The Brittons Academy would be at risk of a falling roll whilst others grow.


Throughout the paper there are several references to the current Ofsted status of certain schools where expansion is proposed, although not all. We hope that the selection of schools for expansion is not based on this. Any Ofsted judgement is historical and may not reflect where that school is in the future when they expand. Furthermore, if schools that have a lower Ofsted grading are denied the opportunity to expand, this could prevent them from accessing the revenue that they need to make the changes to improve standards in the school. A downward spiralling roll for a school that has failed in the past could have disastrous consequences on its ability to rapidly improve in the future.

The consultation paper divides the borough into areas in order to select which schools need to take more students. In many respects, these lines of division are arbitrary and the cake could equally be cut in a different way to identify different schools that could have their roll increased. Our main concerns are:-

- Even though Brittons is undersubscribed, The Albany School has already been allowed to increase its student intake in a previous year.
- Furthermore, increasing schools in the central area will impact negatively on the student intake numbers at The Brittons Academy.

Our final point concerns the financial vulnerability that the proposed expansion presents to The Brittons Academy. Every school in Havering is struggling to make their budgets balance. Increased costs and static government funding is the root cause of the problem. The way to help support schools in this difficult time is to increase revenue by increasing pupil numbers. If a school is not full the lost revenue of spare places exasperates the issues of balancing budgets and makes rapid improvement and raising standards increasingly difficult. As before, our concern is that The Brittons Academy could be placed at risk by your proposals.

Yours faithfully



Mrs S Roots
Chair of Local Governing Committee



Ms S Scott
Acting Principal