

Responses to questions raised at open meeting on 29th June 2015



This document provides answers as far as possible to questions raised through individual questionnaires or group discussion sheets from the open meeting on 29th June 2015.

Admissions

1. How will admissions applications be prioritised?

Pinner High is a school for the whole of the local community. Legislation requires all schools to admit students with an Education, Health and Care Plan that names the school, and then to give highest priority to children who are or were previously looked after. After those, Pinner High has adopted the following criteria for entry in September 2016:

- Medical or social needs of the child – Children for whom it is essential to be admitted to Pinner High School because of special circumstances to do with significant medical needs and or social needs;
- Medical reasons relevant to parent(s) - Parent(s) where there are special medical reasons for seeking a place for their child at Pinner High School; and
- Distance from home to school - Places are allocated to applicants who live closest to the school. This must be the address where parent and child normally live and they must be living there on the closing date for receipt of applications.

In practice, this means that almost all places for Year 7 entry in September 2016 will be prioritised based on distance from the site, with those closest receiving highest priority. The measurement of distance is not affected by which borough students live in – so a student who lives 0.4 miles away from the site in Hillingdon would have higher priority than a student living 0.5 miles away in Harrow. Given that the site is on the boundary between Harrow and Hillingdon, we anticipate that roughly half of the cohort will come from each borough.

For entry in 2017, we will include a priority for siblings (there is obviously no need for this for the September 2016 entry), and the criteria will then match those for community high schools in Harrow.

2. Will the school still open if only 150 apply?

Yes, although we anticipate having a full Year 7 cohort of 180.

Why choose Pinner High School for your child

3. *What are the key attractions of Pinner High for parents – why should we name it as our first preference?*

Choosing Pinner High School means that you are choosing a school that:

- has the highest aspirations for and expectations of all students and all staff;
- has fantastic facilities on a wonderful site;
- has year groups of up to 180 and so retains a ‘small school’ feel where all children are known and supported as individuals; and
- is supported by a group of very successful schools.

The students joining Pinner High in September 2016 will be our first students, our first to sit their GCSEs and A Levels, and so be the standard against which all subsequent years will be compared. We are absolutely committed to ensuring that they achieve their potential.

Staffing

4. *How will Pinner High ensure sufficient subject expertise of staff in the early years when there are fewer students in the school? How will Pinner High recruit high quality staff in the first years when they do not have GCSE/A level students at Pinner High? Will staff be dedicated to Pinner High or shared with other schools in the early years?*

The high performance of schools in Harrow is the result of high quality staff. Pinner High will benefit from, and add to, that collective pool of expertise.

Our focus is upon ensuring subject expertise in all subjects to maximise student progress. We are working with our sponsoring high schools in Harrow to ensure that we achieve this. We will recruit a range of specialist staff and supplement this with some sharing of staff with other high schools initially, with Pinner benefiting by having access to specialist staff in subjects from opening, and also having the opportunity for our staff to spend part of their time teaching in other schools to retain their GCSE and A level expertise and so ensure that Pinner High is fully prepared to start those courses at a time when GCSE and A level curriculums and assessments are changing significantly. We have a five to seven year staffing plan to manage the growth of the school – at the forefront of this is about ensuring students are taught by subject specialists to maximise their progress and achievement so that our first GCSE results are as good as we (and you!) expect.

With regards to sharing staff with other schools, there are already examples of staff in Harrow schools working with or in another school; the sponsoring schools have no concerns about this occurring effectively to support Pinner High. Where it happens there are processes in place to support professional development of the staff involvement and ensure effective performance management. Staff spending time in other schools helps identify and share best practice and is part of the Harrow schools collective approach to school improvement.

Student experience

5. *What sort of enrichment provision will there be?*

A variety of enrichment experiences is very much a part of the vision for Pinner High School. The details will be finalised as staff are appointed so as to utilise their expertise and interests. Academic, sporting, music and performing arts, cultural and community activities are expected.

6. *What will the school uniform be?*

Feedback from the public meeting in November 2014 was that there should be a simple, affordable uniform that is consistently and strictly enforced. There were a variety of views expressed about what the uniform should be beyond it being simple and affordable!

Mr Woolf and Governors are currently developing the permanent branding / logo for Pinner High School, and this will then be reflected in the uniform. We anticipate having more detailed discussions about uniform with prospective parents and students during September and October, prior to making final decisions before Christmas.

7. *What will the school day be?*

The school day will be similar to other local high schools, and will take into account the school day at our local primary-phase schools. It will be confirmed in September 2015.

8. *Will classes be grouped based on ability?*

There will be ability banding in Maths and English, but mixed ability classes in other groups. Mr Woolf will make recommendations to the Governing Body to this effect as part of preparing the curriculum prior to the Open events in September and October.

Site and facilities

9. *Will there be building plans available for parents to see before submitting applications for 2016 Year 7 entry? Will parents be able to look round the building?*

Yes and yes. At the open events on Saturday 26th September and Monday 5th October prospective parents and students will be able to look round the site. The plans for how the building will operate from 2017/18 onwards (when only Pinner High is on the site) and during 2016/17 when we will be hosting Avanti House will also be available.

10. *What capital works are planned for the site? When will they happen?*

There will be three phases of capital works on the site, broadly:

Project Phase	Estimated Phase dates	Scope of Works
Phase 1	July - Nov 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Works required for occupation by Avanti House• Toilet upgrade works & refurbishment

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICT Infrastructure • Refurbishment of the previous Primary School area into secondary age provision
Phase 2	Spring / Summer 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversion of swimming pool hall to Design and Technology accommodation • Preparation for Pinner High launch
Phase 3	July 2017 – May 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works required following Avanti House occupation • External works • Final ICT and furniture / equipment works

11. Will the swimming pool be kept?

Pinner High is fortunate to have a fantastic site, including considerable playing fields, and an excellent indoor sports hall.

We have developed the accommodation requirements for the school based on government guidance. We need more teaching space on the site than is currently provided – mainly the creation of a Design and Technology faculty. The Government is unwilling to provide new-build accommodation for Design and Technology while retaining a swimming pool that is not required for the core curriculum. So to ensure that the school has the accommodation it needs for its curriculum, the only viable solution is to refurbish the swimming pool area into teaching space.

Hosting Avanti House

12. How will Pinner High and Avanti House work together during 2016/17?

Avanti House will be hosted on the Pinner High site from summer 2015 to summer 2017 while its permanent building on the Whitchurch playing fields is constructed. During 2016/17 both Pinner High and Avanti House will be on the Pinner High School site. During that year, each school will have its own dedicated area with general classrooms, ICT, and science provision. The two schools will then share the specialist spaces such as the sports hall and Design and Technology spaces where that represents the best use of resources.

There are benefits to Pinner High of this arrangement:

- Potential for shared enrichment activities and some sharing of staff – both of these would address points that prospective parents raised at the November 2014 meeting;
- Sharing of the costs of running the site and buildings, which would otherwise be a significant burden on Pinner High (since it would only have 180 students in a building capable of accommodating nearly six times that many).

Mr. Woolf is already working closely with the Headteacher of Avanti House School to develop the detailed arrangements.

Traffic

13. How will the school help deal with the potential traffic problems as the school grows?

Pinner High School is a school for the local community, where almost all places in 2016/17 will be prioritised on distance from the site (and from 2017/18 siblings would be given priority before children without siblings, with prioritisation still based upon distance from the site).

Pinner High will admit up to 180 Year 7 students each year. Nower Hill High School and Whitmore High School have cohorts of 300 and 270 respectively, and for the 2015/16 Year 7 cohort had a 'last distance offered' of 1.05 and 1.11 miles respectively. On that basis, we expect places to be taken by local students, and we expect them to walk, cycle or use public transport to get to school. We will develop a school travel plan on this basis, and will work closely with local residents.

Other questions

14. What are the key challenges in opening Pinner High and how are you overcoming them?

The two key challenges for 2015/16 were to secure a good site and recruit an excellent Founding Headteacher – we are delighted to have achieved both of those.

The next challenges are to recruit students, and then to recruit high quality staff to teach and enthuse them. We are delighted by the community support for the school and have plans in place for both of those. There are then a number of steps necessary to ensure that Pinner High is ready to open – completing the refurbishment works, finalising the detailed curriculum and schemes of work, finalising the policies for the school and so forth. Mr Woolf will lead these areas of work, drawing on the expertise and support of new staff as they are appointed, and is being supported by the local high schools.

15. When will Pinner High have its first Ofsted inspection?

New schools are usually inspected in their second year of opening.

16. Is there any research about whether a school's first cohort does better or worse than subsequent cohorts?

No Free Schools have yet had their first cohort's GCSE results. However, Mr. Woolf has experience at Dulwich College Beijing, which was also a new school. Their first results were extremely impressive, suggesting that the first set of exam results are so keenly anticipated by parents and by the school (as it sets their initial benchmark) that students are extremely well supported and exceed expectations in this situation.

This weblink gives a similar perspective from a new school in Hackney:

http://www.hackneygazette.co.uk/news/education/gcse_results_the_city_academy_s_first_cohort_achieves_outstanding_grades_1_3735370