



SARAH BONNELL
SCHOOL

Dear Parent(s) / Person(s) with Parental Responsibility,

20 June 2018

Sarah Bonnell becomes an academy on 1 July 2018

We are writing to update you on the formation of the **Newham Community Schools Trust** which is a Multi-Academy Trust made up of three schools: Sarah Bonnell, Lister and Rokeby.

Many parents will remember that in April 2016, following a detailed consultation process, Sarah Bonnell Governing Body voted to convert to academy status. The three schools have continued to work closely together since this decision but the actual formation of the Newham Community Schools Trust has been delayed.

We are pleased to be able to tell you that the Department for Education has now approved dates for the schools to convert. **Sarah Bonnell School will convert on 1 July 2018** and Lister and Rokeby will follow in the near future. This is exciting news and the opportunities we can offer through working together will make our schools even better places to learn and work.

The **Newham Community Schools Trust** is a local trust driven by Headteachers, governors and staff who share a very strong commitment to achieving the highest possible standard of education for young people in Newham. A recent NCST newsletter is attached below to give you some more information about how we will work together and some examples of recent projects we have been involved in.

Sarah Bonnell has also been successful at securing funding from the Department of Education of £600 000 towards the cost of a large building project which will enhance the school buildings and facilities by extending the ground floor of the cafeteria and developing the first floor of the Edwardian building into a Music Hub with two new classrooms, a recording studio and eight practice rooms. This is another reason why it's important we have a confirmed date for conversion as the funding will only be released once Sarah Bonnell has converted.

There will be more news to come about the building project and collaboration with Rokeby and Lister. Please remember to visit the school website and read the Weekly Message if you want to keep up-to-date with the latest news about the school.

Yours faithfully,

Ms Rae Potter

Headteacher

Mr Paul Leslie

Chair of Governors

[Headteacher: Rae Potter](#)

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Background

Our schools have common values and a shared commitment to providing the highest possible standard of education for all our students. We also have in common that we are very successful comprehensive schools, with a strong inclusive ethos, and that our admission policy is based on where students live, with no discrimination based on religion or academic ability. The Headteachers of these schools believe a collaborative and outward-looking approach, with other like-minded schools, will help us become even better schools that can continue to provide the best opportunities possible for our students and staff.

Conversion process

All the important steps to ensure a smooth conversion have already taken place (Consultation, the creation of a Trust Board and the drafting of the scheme of delegation which sets out the relationship between the Trust Board and the Local Governing Boards, which will continue to exercise day to day oversight of the schools).

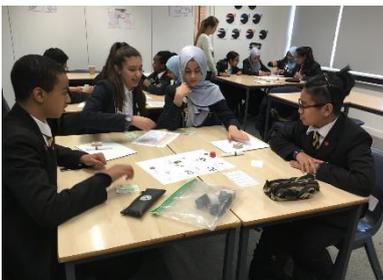
How will the schools change as a result of conversion?

All those involved - Governors, Headteachers and other members of our communities - have been clear that the **schools will retain their distinct identities**. This is set out in our Vision and Values (see below). **Conversion will not lead to any changes in the day to day life of the schools - no change is anticipated to school names, uniform, structures or organisation**. The Trust Board will replace the Local Authority as the employer of staff and the schools' and Governing Bodies will be accountable to the Trust Board rather than to the Local Authority. Our admissions policies will continue to give priority to those who live nearest to the school.

Each school will retain its own Governing Body, which will continue to have staff and parent representatives. The Local Governing Bodies will have the day to day responsibility for overseeing the schools. However, the power which currently rests with the Local Authority to intervene if a school is in difficulties, will transfer to the Newham Community Schools Trust Board which has been carefully composed including people with links to each of the three schools. The Headteachers of the three schools will also meet at least once a half-term, as they are already doing, to explore ways that we can further work together.

How are the schools working together already?

Some examples include:



- Students from the three schools working together to develop their ideas about what makes great learning, and how they can give constructive feedback to teachers about their lessons.
 - A brand new Community opera to be performed later this year at Lister which will involve students from all three schools
- Staff from the three schools coming together to share their expertise through meetings between Heads of Faculty or through the Collaborative Review process.

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- Joint training days, of which there have already been two very successful
- Days, where staff have had opportunities to learn alongside colleagues from the other schools.

- Most able conferences, where some of our most talented students have come together for special workshops in Languages, or in the most recent case to hear from a Holocaust survivor.
- Regular meetings between the Headteachers to share ideas on how the three schools can continue to support each other.

NCST Vision and Values

- The schools in the NCST have a shared commitment to working together to provide a world-class education for young people in Newham, and to develop as centres of excellence for teaching and learning.
- We are highly ambitious for our students, and keen to develop their passion for learning. We seek to do this within calm, safe learning environments where all members of the community treat each other with kindness, tolerance and respect.
- We believe that no child should be left behind, that every child can succeed regardless of their starting point and that every child should have access to a broad and rich range of experiences at school which will support their development as an active member of our community.
- We are highly ambitious for our staff, developing a strong culture of continuous professional development. We want the NCST to attract and retain the best teaching and non-teaching staff and be recognised as an organisation where staff at all levels receive outstanding support in developing their careers.

NCST Founding Principles

The Trust has been established in light of a number of founding principles, reflecting a steadfast commitment to:

1. maintain each of the schools' comprehensive values, inclusive practices and non-selective admissions policies
2. ensure that the governance of the trust will continue to reflect the schools' close links with the local community
3. recognise and value the contribution of staff to the success of the Trust, and in particular to doing so through
 - a) Formally recognising the Trade Unions that support staff in the Schools
 - b) Securing for all staff terms and conditions which at least match and in some important respects improve on those prevailing in Local Authority maintained school

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NCST Principles for Effective Partnership

The schools have also committed to working in partnership, and these are the principles around how that partnership will work.

Equal Partners: At all times the partners will strive for consensus in decision making, recognising that each school has both strengths and weaknesses. The Trust will be respectful of each school's distinctive ethos and identity. The schools will work collaboratively with each other, sharing resources, knowledge and best practice, to fulfil the Trust's mission, vision and values.

Transparency: All those involved in the running and oversight of the Trust and the Schools will be open and honest in their dealings with each other.

Subsidiarity: Decisions are to be taken at the level nearest to those affected by those decisions which is compatible with the principles of solidarity and support for the common good, avoiding unnecessary bureaucracy and aiming in so far as possible to make changes to established practices only where it can be demonstrated there is a reasonable need.

Solidarity: All those with responsibility for the Trust and the Schools share a particular commitment to the mutual support of all Schools for whom the Trust is responsible, especially those that are in need of assistance at any particular time.

The Common Good: All recognise their responsibility towards the common good, not just of the Schools for whom the Trust is responsible and the wider family of Newham schools, but of all of the families and communities in the areas served by the Trust.

For more information please email info@ncst.org or visit the website at www.newhamcommunityschoolstrust.org

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