

# REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION FOR THE NEW ACADEMY CARRIED OUT FOR LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL

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Date: 17 March 2003

## **1.0 OBJECTIVES & METHOD:**

### ***a) Telephone interviews***

300 families living in the affected wards of Eyres Monsell and Saffron (LE2) were screened for telephone interview from an Experian database specially purchased for the survey. Only parents/guardians of children of appropriate age attending schools in the nominated area were interviewed to obtain a mixture of city/county school attendance.

A 5-7 minute call was delivered based on a structured questionnaire (see appendix) agreed in advance with the Education Department. The questionnaire included a 1 minute subject introduction, 7 coded questions and 2 open-ended questions

### ***b) School face to face interviews***

250 parents attending the 6 primary schools in the City area surrounding Mary Linwood were interviewed outside of school in the dropping off/collecting zones. Heads were notified beforehand and LEA printed letters were circulated to parents via their children a week prior.

School gate interviews lasted 3-4 minutes using a similar questionnaire to the telephone (see appendix). Professionally trained interviewers were thoroughly briefed prior to and equipped with a document explaining in simple terms the proposals.

### ***c) Discussion groups***

From a) and b) we recruited a number of parents interested in attending two focus groups during half term holiday. The groups lasted 60-90 minutes and were held at Aylestone Road Leisure Centre in day or evening as preferred.

A Group Discussion Guide was prepared in advance and agreed with Education Dept (see appendix). Information was circulated by letter to attendees before the meeting to ensure they were briefed on the subject and questions areas they would be asked about.

### **Background information used to brief informants:**

Following a city-wide review, Secondary Education in Leicester was re-organised in 1999 and the number of Secondary Schools was reduced to 16. One of the schools closed was Mary Linwood School, which served the Eyres Monsell and Saffron area of the City. As a result there is no Secondary School in the local area.

A City Academy is an independent, publicly funded school designed to raise achievement in disadvantaged urban areas. City Academies are all ability schools established by sponsors from business, faith or voluntary groups working with partners from the local community. A new Academy is intended to be a focus for learning for its pupils, their families and other local people. A new building offers opportunity to be innovative in design, providing top of the range facilities, the whole providing the capability of offering exiting approaches to learning.

All Academies must follow the law as it applies to Local Education Authority (LEA) maintained Schools on the key issues of admissions, exclusions and special educational needs. As with maintained schools, they can offer a specialism in a particular area of the curriculum for which they may opt to admit up to 10% of pupils each year on the basis of their aptitude for the chosen specialism.

A City Academy must be set up as a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. It has a board of governors, which will usually comprise sponsors, or their representatives, members of the local community, including a representative of the LEA, and staff and parent governors.

The Leicester Academy:

- Would be a new school located on the site of the former Mary Linwood School.
- Would be for pupils aged between 3 and 19.
- Would have state of the art, new, modern buildings and equipment.
- Would broadly be for pupils living in the former Priority Area of Mary Linwood.

## **2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY :**

- 2.1 550 parents living in the post codes in and around the catchment of the Mary Linwood school in Eyres Monsell and Saffron were consulted in February and March on the idea of a new school.
- 2.2 32% of parents with children in City Primary schools approved.
- 2.3 27% of those in City Secondary schools approved.
- 2.4 19% of those in County schools approved.
- 2.5 Location was the main reason why most parents approved the idea
- 2.6 Expectations for higher standards of education in the new school were also considerations underpinning support.
- 2.7 Uncertainty over the type of new school proposed was a significant cause for those not supporting the idea; religion, location, and worry for educational standards all contributed to this uncertainty.
- 2.8 Parents of Primary school children less concerned about choice of school, and more approving of the new school, than parents of secondary children who regard the choice of City secondary schools as poor.
- 2.9 The closure of Mary Linwood was problematic and reduced the choice of schools available at secondary level; this has caused many parents to seek schools in the County that they say offer better standards.
- 2.10 For the new school to become accepted by those who reject or are uncertain of the idea will require assurances or clarification on a wide range of issues, these include:
  - ~ Intended curriculum (and mix of academic/vocational activity)
  - ~ Educational standards higher than existing alternatives/ML
  - ~ Intake of pupils attending and clarification over age segregation
  - ~ Funding arrangements and the effect on existing provision
  - ~ Knowledge of the Sponsor and method for selection
- 2.11 There are many attractions perceived for a new school that parents recognise: the 'new start', better equipment, and convenience of it being on the doorstep. The potential downsides concern lack of information leading to people thinking 'it will be no better' than now.

*Further consultation is necessary and welcomed by participants.*

### 3.0 DATA ANALYSIS & TABLES:

- 550 parents took part in telephone and school gate interviews
- 300 took part in the telephone survey
- 250 took part in the school gate survey
- 2 groups convened and 15 extended interviews

Age/Gender/Status/ Ethnicity of parents in total survey: 564 respondents

Age of parent	Telephone	School	Total
No answer	1%	1%	3%
18-24	1%	2%	3%
25-34	12%	18%	30%
35-44	32%	23%	54%
45-54	7%	2%	9%
55-64	1%	1%	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Gender of parent	Male	Female	Total
Telephone	9%	44%	54%
Street	4%	42%	46%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Work Status of parent	Telephone	School	Total
No answer	2%	4%	6%
Full time	20%	4%	24%
Part time	16%	13%	29%
Non-working	15%	20%	34%
Unemployed	1%	6%	7%
Retired	0%	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Ethnicity of parent	Telephone	School	Total
Asian/Asian British	2%	0.5%	3%
Black/Black British	0.5%	1.0%	2%
Mixed/Dual	0.5%	0.5%	1%
White/White British	49%	44%	93%
Others	0.5%	0.5%	1%
No answer	0%	0.5%	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 3.1 Survey Outcomes:

The parents who took part in the surveys represented 687 children. 65% of these children attended primary and secondary schools in the City, and 35% attended primary, higher or upper schools in the county. 50 different schools were covered, including 6 City Primaries\* chosen for the school gate interviews:

Schools Attended	Telephone	School	Total
Southfield Infant*	6	59	65
Newry Junior*	4	52	56
Eyres Monsell Primary*	20	59	79
Rolleston Infants*	10	24	34
Rolleston Junior*	8	26	34
Holy Cross RC Primary*	10	50	60
Riverside CC	11	2	13
Sir Jonathan North CC	32	5	37
The Lancaster Boys	44	6	50
Granby Primary	18		18
Marriot Primary	5	2	7
Sir Thomas More	3		3
Montrose	19	2	21
Avenue Junior	6		6
Ash Field School	1		1
Buswells Lodge	1		1
Knighton Fields	4		4
Fullhurst Community	1		1
Uplands Infant	3		3
Glenhills Primary	29	3	32
Waterleys	2		2
Parkland	11		11
Badgerbrook	1		1
All Saints CofE	1		1
Little Hill	1		1
Sir John Moore C of E	2		2
Green Lane	1		1
St John the Baptist	4		4
Charnwood Primary	4		4
Stokes Wood Primary	1		1
St Pauls Catholic	6	1	7
Parks Primary	1		1
English Martyrs	3		3
South Wigston High	35	1	36
Guthlaxton College	18	1	19
Leysland High	12	1	13
Winstanley Community	1		1
Bushloe High	7	1	8
Abingdon High	7	3	10
Countesthorpe Community	4	1	5
Loughborough Grammar	1		1
Thomas Estley Community	1		1
Burleigh Community	1		1
Lutterworth Grammar	1		1
The Beauchamp College	2		2
South Charnwood High	1		1
			0
Special School	3		3
Overdale	8		8
Private schools	13		13
<b>Total</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>687</b>

The number of children in each family, and the schools their children attended were:

Number of Children	Telephone	School	Total
1	24%	16%	40%
2	22%	19%	41%
3	5%	8%	13%
4	2%	2%	4%
5	0%	1%	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Schools Attended	Telephone	School	Total
City primary	21%	40%	61%
City Secondary	16%	1%	17%
County primary	7%	1%	8%
County higher	12%	1%	13%
County/City Special	1%	0%	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>100%</b>

School gate interviews were only conducted with parents of primary aged children attending 6 City schools in the Mary Linwood catchment. This gave the survey focus by giving attention to opinions of local families with aspirant secondary-age children.

It should be noted that many families with 2 + children frequently had children of different ages in different schools; a few had them in both City *and* County schools.

### 3.2 Would parents of children in a City school support the new school?

#### Parents of City Primary Children

396 responses

	Yes	No	Unsure	Total
Telephone	11%	18%	7%	35%
School	21%	31%	13%	65%
<b>Total</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### Parents of City Secondary children

116 responses

	Yes	No	Unsure	Total
Telephone	22%	48%	15%	85%
School	5%	8%	2%	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 3.3 Would parents of children in a County school support the new school?

Parents of County Primary/County Higher/County Upper children 114 responses  
 Would a new school located south of the City be an attractive alternative?

	Yes	No	Unsure	Total
Telephone	19%	61%	19%	99%
School	0%	0%	1%	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### **REASONS FOR PARENTS SUPPORTING/NOT SUPPORTING THE IDEA:**

Positive and negative comments were obtained from over 550 parents during telephone and school interviews and in focus groups/extended interviews. The telephone/school interview comments may be read verbatim on pages of this report, but for ease of reading most have been coded into the tables below where sufficient volume of like responses was obtained.

(NB: due to a smaller volume of comments arising from table 3.3 the comments from county parents are brought forward to pages 9/10).

#### **Why Parents Of Children In City Primaries SUPPORTED the idea:**

Locality	56%
Standards	14%
Previous experience	9%
Transition	9%
Religion	1%
Other	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### **Why Parents Of Children In City Primaries REJECTED the idea:**

Religion	21%
Locality	19%
Standards/reputation	19%
Settled elsewhere	17%
Transition/age ranges	15%
Other	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>



***Why Parents Of Children In County Schools Found It ATTRACTIVE:***

Location (7)

Location; less crowding

Because we live on border our child would find academy closer. Academy would be ideal as we are closer as city residents

More convenient to send them to new school

Bus fares, because at present having to pay for transport

Not happy with present school

Does not like the current school (2)

Provide a better education than other schools in Leicester

It would only be an attractive alternative if it appeared to offer his children a better education than their current schools

If money being put into it, then standards must be high

Good teachers and good results

I went to Mary Linwood so did my sister. It was a good school

Don't know, but would like to see details first

Always look into it

***Why Parents Of County School Children Found It UNATTRACTIVE:***

***Location***

Location; transport (12)

Not in area, not needed, they are living on the border (think the lady thought it was a private school)

Not in our catchment area; our child is quite happy where he is

Major roads to cross 40 mins away

Because they would have to go in the car, prefers the children to walk

***Settled already***

Settled in their schools (11)

Settled in; wouldn't want to part from friends

Settled in; Bad area; reputation

Settled at school; wrong area

She's already settled in the middle of her GCSE's (4)

Happy with the present school (4)

Wouldn't like to move them once settled in

The child chose his own school

South Wigston has good name

Because they are settled in; Achieving really well at current school (county)

Always used same school

Already sorted school; not in catchments area

Already settled in; all friends are there; achieve well in current school; too late to change as half way through course and exams

Again, is happy with South Wigston, however it is the only choice after Glenhills, without putting the child into an other junior school for a year

***Area/reputation***

Because she would not like her child to go to a school in that area (rough area)

Because Mary Linwood was poor; She doubts that the new one would be better

Hates the area

Not a very nice area (4)

Not a good area; children settled in

Will be the same kind of people as other city schools

Bad area; Kids in that are violent and disrupted

Bad reputation  
Don't think it will work in those estates

**Other**

Doesn't see the point of closing the school then opening it again; would prefer a county school  
Totally against broad; age school  
Just not interested  
Divorce and other personal reasons  
Because it is not a catholic school

It will be obvious from the tables that Location of the new school was the important attraction to those who supported the idea. This was also the main benefit highlighted in focus groups and extended interviews. Such views were held by parents of both primary and secondary school children.

Where location was as an objection this related as much to the logistics of transporting children to different schools as it did to the geographic location of home, since many parents were already transporting children to the county.

Educational standards were also a benefit expected of a new school starting afresh. This was also echoed in focus groups.

### **3.4 FEEDBACK FROM FOCUS GROUPS AT AYLESTONE LEISURE CENTRE**

The purpose of the discussion groups was to probe the factors influencing parental opinions and to involve parents in an exchange of information. 35 parents interviewed by our researchers expressed interest in a 90-minute meeting and one large and one small group was convened.

Participants came from the Eyres Monsell/Saffron lane area having children in City and County schools. An equal mixture of parents was selected, half supporting the idea and half rejecting/unsure. A £5 Boots voucher was offered.

The discussion followed the Plan as in Appendix, to which these comments relate.

#### ***Reasons For Sending Their Child To A School:***

Most parents of primary age children sent them to the nearest City school unless they were of Roman Catholic religion and sought a Catholic school. Many said that there was an adequate choice of City primary school, but no choice at secondary level.

The lack of choice in City Secondary was a factor leading a number of parents to seek County alternatives. Getting children into County schools however when not in the catchment was difficult due to the application process. About 4 parents were actively thinking of moving house to be in the County catchment.

### ***Awareness For Mary Linwood:***

The majority of parents knew the Mary Linwood school very well about 6 having actually attended the school as a pupil. The remainder were aware of it, some anecdotally. Those who had attended generally approved of the education they received saying that a 'bad press' had spoiled the image, although admitting it was a 'lively school'

Most parents were disappointed at its closure. Three had been affected saying it was a critical time for their children and a cause of stress and worry for where their children would go (many in the area want continuity of local education and the closure meant disruption and new travel arrangements). A play group also closed down causing other problems for those with young ones.

With ML closed the options at secondary were at the very least limited. So the prospect of a new school was attractive for those who wanted a local school.

### ***Important Factors In Selecting A School:***

Parents were shown a list of factors and asked to indicate which were the "deciders" and "influences" over the selection of a school. In order of importance the deciding factors were: Location teaching quality, reputation of school. Other factors had influence over choice (if they had a choice) which were, the Facilities, Discipline in school and a degree of Parental Involvement.

Parents of primary aged children gave less thought to the selection issues than those who had children at or near secondary school age. The latter were especially concerned for quality of teaching, the teaching curriculum, and the opportunity the school gave for pursuing further education.

Logistical factors also were important to those with more than one child and those who had to think about going to and from school. If parents had to travel a long way to school this was a disadvantage and local schools meant less problems when children were late leaving, cars broke down etc.

Location was the most critical matter for parents of primary school children especially for security and being able to drop them off conveniently.

### ***What Was Their Ideal School:***

Parents of primary school children wanted a local school that offered a good academic education for the whole child. They also wanted special needs facilities for those with disability and a system of segregation and management for different ages of children.

Parents of secondary aged children wanted a dual type curriculum that offered a good, basic academic foundation course with vocation options for those seeking practical work. Another consideration was sports facilities. The creative curriculum suggested was also felt appropriate.

Due to previous problems associated with the Mary Linwood school and local concern for safety, parents rated school discipline highly and they wanted a new school to have stronger discipline than its predecessor.

Preference for schooling in the county had arisen primarily due to lack of other local choices. It was also influenced by anecdotal evidence from friends who felt that educational standards to be better in the county. Trying to get a child into a county secondary was difficult but it was an insurance policy.

### ***Views On The New School:***

Parents sought much clarification for the structure of the new school, making definite comments. Overall the idea of the new school seemed appealing because it implied a fresh start with new equipment and facilities. What was less obvious was the style of curriculum to be offered and whether the standard of the education offered would be the same or better than the school it replaced/other County schools.

Young parents with primary aged children readily accepted the new school on the basis that it was local and would have new facilities better than the old. For these parents it would be better to have the school on their doorstep than anything else.

Older parents and those with secondary aged children had already selected a school elsewhere and were unsure of the merits of changing to the new school. This was mostly fired by a poor history of Mary Linwood and the fact that they had already made existing arrangements.

The main uncertainty concerned the implications for funding of existing schools if the new school came into being. Parents were worried that the resulting lower roll in existing schools would expose them to closure or at the very least would leave them strapped for cash with less numbers.

Further uncertainties surrounded the legal position and the management of the new school given the involvement of sponsors. For many of these parents further clarification of the school's status and funding implications would positively affect their opinion and sway them towards it.

Once the principles of status and curriculum were clarified about half of those who were uncertain of the school were moving in favour of it. This was providing that the new school could guarantee them standards of education higher than those received currently or in the past.

Problems regarding the sponsor were mainly that it was a new and unknown source, and that they would not like an incompatible sponsor to be foisted upon them; there were also concerns for financial continuity in the event of a sponsor going bust.

Hard-core detractors were simply suspicious that the new school was just going to be "another Mary Linwood". Also that deprived area status would ultimately turn it into a "ghetto school", which parents would not respect or feel attracted to send their child to.

### **Questions That Parents Would Like Clarified:**

1. What effect would the new school have on the funding of other schools and the prospects for schools funding in the area.
2. What would be the school curriculum and how would this be broken down between academic and vocational activity.
3. Who would choose the sponsor and would parents have a say in this
4. What would be the tender basis that would attract the right sponsor
5. Would it be better to use the investment to improve the existing schools, ie stay with the same choice of schools (even though they knew this option was not on).
6. How would children of different ages be segregated and protected for security and safety reasons.
7. What additional support facilities for statemented children and those with learning difficulty/disability.
8. What would be the allocations procedure and how would this affect admission in/out of area.

### **How Would They Like Further Information To Be Sent:**

The majority of parents welcomed further consultation on the new school once further information was available to clarify the above issues. About a third would be prepared to attend a group consultation, whilst others would like to receive information in the post, a newsletter, or postings on the LC website. A few also indicated that they would like information to be displayed at their local library.

*The above comments from the focus group were echoed by the qualitative interviews carried out on the telephone with those who could not attend.*

### **3.5 Comments of parents taken from telephone/school interviews:**

For each category of respondent we have extracted verbatim comments showing why parents voted the way they did. The following indicate their voting opinions on the new school for/against the idea..

## **Why Parents Of Children In City Primary Supported The Idea:**

### **Locality**

Quite reasonably close and I went there  
Would be close to home; sounds good "big academy"  
Very local; good that you wouldn't have to move kids (3)  
Proximity; peer group, child's decision (4)  
Near home; shorter transition primary secondary  
More local; much safer walk for the children  
Local if it was good quality then would definitely consider it  
Locality; no other secondary school near; both parents went to ML and believe the new school would be successful in the right location  
Local; happy with standards  
Local, sounds impressive  
Local, good for the estate  
Local, convenient  
Local if it was good quality then would definitely consider it  
Local, close to home (41)  
It's within walking distance & it sounds good; it's up to date  
It's nearer to where I live also if there was bullying I'd be able to fetch her  
It's nearer than any other school  
It's closer to home; I just don't like the area the school is in bad; Not until I know a bit more about it  
It's closer than Wigston school where she might go on to when she's finished Junior school  
It's closer than Montrose; no better standards would have to improve so much  
It's a lot near and safer route to get there; I quite like the idea of them staying at same school  
It would be a closer to home; next option if Lancaster boys and I prefer a mixed school  
Easier to get there; some bus fare it will save £10 week if they doesn't go to Riverside  
If it's the only one round here for her; It's near here  
Being in the catchment area; have no idea not had information  
Easier to get to, close to home  
Good location  
Easier to get to

### **Standards**

State of recent school (ie Holy Cross)  
Not too keen on present school values  
Must not be the same as Mary Linwood ; good, excellent standards and facilities, open soon  
Same rules & regulations across the board; basically I'd like to keep the same locality all the while plus the fact it's within walking distance & I used to go there  
Sounds good, if quality was high, would be considered  
Not very impressed with local schools; a new school would be beneficial  
It would probably be better than it was so I'll give it a chance. M.L. had no discipline, it went down hill; It's nearer in the catchment area  
In the hope of it being a better school and education; more encouragement, more support for children where bullying concerned  
If it had good standards then definitely would consider it  
If it had good reputation and results, if it offered more than Sir Jonathan North  
Hopefully they'd get a better education than they do at the moment. Teachers to push the child they need it  
Hope of better opportunity for advanced learning  
Hope it's a good mixed school; learning; travel  
As long as it was good  
But would only consider if could see the quality of the school, if it was good, better than others, would wish to send child there  
Better teaching  
Better for them to the same one; better prospects; educationwise  
better education

### **Previous experience**

Good school  
I used to go to Mary Linwood  
I used to go there and know it was a good school

I think it's a waste of school - shouldn't have shut it done; It's closer than the others at Wigston  
Went there myself (4)  
Previous exp. Of Mary Linwood school good (2)  
Older children went to former Mary Linwood, would be happy to send her other children to new school  
I've always liked Mary Linwood. The teachers were brilliant; It's nearer home

#### **Transition easier**

Area with 3-19 idea  
Basically they won't have to keep changing schools, teachers or friends  
No pressure of changing schools  
You've got to look at long term going on to Secondary education  
You wouldn't have to keep moving your children from school to school  
They'll stay in the same school  
They could be in the same school; better for education; safety  
Likes the idea of staying in school from 3-19  
Kids would settle down better  
I like the idea of the age groups what they're offering; staying until 19 years  
Don't need to move kids from school to school

#### **Religion**

Without being racist, our school is Muslim dominant

#### **Other**

Sounds promising  
Parent went to a brand new school which was brilliant, so would consider it a good idea  
Mixed school; new technology  
If they're going to spend that type of money on equipment and we live nearer; Are the classes going to be a lot smaller?  
If needs were taken care of  
Education; transport; facilities  
Don't like current school  
Young children having to find "new friends" at this age is not a good idea; too far than other schools... I don't drive  
Wrong area  
Would send them to the area; standards aren't high enough; age not a 3 year old in school with 19  
Would not send her child to a state school  
Would not like to move children  
Worried about sub-cultures  
We are mains area to county  
Wants children to be taught in Roman Catholic environment  
Wants catholic education

### ***Why Parents Of Children In City Primary REJECTED the idea:***

#### **Transition/age**

Too scary for the 5 years old; too big an age range  
too big for little kids  
Too big (2)  
There will be too many children for them to teach them properly  
School too big; would not like ages to be that mixed  
Same age only  
Prefer only secondary; it will be too big school  
Not under 11; distance nearer

No chance to meet new children; not challenging enough for the children being in the same place the whole time

Me & my husband have talked about it having 19 years old with 3 years old?!

It wouldn't work - too big gap; they'd have to shut the infants school down; they'd have to improve a lot

Intake of children not desirable

I wouldn't know what it was like when they have so many there; they don't get taught so well; shouldn't have such big classes

I think the size of the school is too big; too many different ages to be mixed

I think mixing children from the age of 3-19 would result in a lot of bullying. I think kids would feel intimidated as well

I don't like the idea of 3 with 19 years old; too big a gap; I'd not be happy with that; My children go to Catholic school

I don't like the age range, too far apart; I don't think they'd have the right teachers; These schemes try to get more in for less

I don't agree with them all put together. It would be like Riverside at Rowley Fields; It's diabolical, no control, children bullied

Don't think it's right to have that age range too much going on; the younger ones would see what older ones would do; swearing and older conversation

Bullying would go on 3-19; bad idea mixing such ages

Because of ages; not catholic

Age gaps too big; too big school

19 shouldn't be mixed with 8yr olds

It's a large age space (3-19) would prefer junior school and a senior school

Concerned by the age; influenced by older children

### **Locality**

Too far away/to travel (16)

Too far, Lancaster Boys close and I have no transport; worried about class sizes being too big

There is a nearer school, more appropriate = convenient

She's in at S. Wigston now; they ought to build another school near here; my older daughter went S. Wigston and she's get on great

Poor area (2)

Locality is convenient at current school (5)

I live far away from the school; Just distance

Don't like the area, there are needs for more schools but in nicer areas

Does not like that area so would not like to send his children there

Believe it to be a rough area, where it would be located (2)

Because Lancaster Boys is only 100yds from home so can walk; academy would mean taking a bus

Proximity is good; When it is built then she can consider it properly

Nearer, depends what it's like

Does not know how long it would take to get there

Close, but would need to look around, meet teachers etc...

### **Standards/reputation**

This one's bad

The same problems will still persist, a new school will not make a difference

Takes a long time to build moving up to senior/ middle school anyway (already organized)

Son is already settled. Further more she doesn't see the point is opening another school on to former site when it wasn't very nice last time

Reputation; not a good name and league table results not good

Reputation of area/previous school bad (6)



Past history of the area; bad reports  
Not a good area/school  
If it's like old school, no. Prefer idea of separate senior school  
I'd much rather they went to S.Wigston...  
I went there; I'd like to live in the county, the city get rough sometimes  
Hated Mary Linwood teacher, went there as a child  
Grades, class size  
Former students; reputation  
Fell out with teachers  
Bad reputation; very bad area (10)  
Bad area; old school had bad reputation  
Bad name, hates the school  
Bad area; want to move (2)  
Bad reputation; lives opposite where it will be built  
Bad reputation; I'm trying to get them into S. Wigston High; They wear uniform and get sent home if they're not wearing it

### **Settled elsewhere**

Very happy where they are  
They're settled at Rolleston anyway and if it's opening in a few years time they'd be at Guthlaxton anyway  
They are already settled in their current school  
They're happy with present schools and eldest is giving to J. North; No its already arranged  
Their school - take them to Countesthorpe & I prefer them to go there  
The school at present is fine, the quality and locality  
Special school; therefore wouldn't want to place them into normal school  
She'll be going to same school as other daughter at Abington  
She'll automatically go to J. Nth with her sister there  
She would only send her child there if her child's school closed down because he is settled there  
Prefer Lancaster Boys  
No all friends go to another school  
Likes the school they're at, as she was a governor for them  
Less disruptive  
Kids happy where they are  
I've just got them all in new school so I wouldn't consider moving them again  
I want him to be with his older brother  
I prefer them to go both to Lancaster  
I prefer her here, she's happy here and she's learning well  
His son leaves school next year, didn't really want to move school  
Happy with this school (3)  
Content with where they are currently  
Children happy where they are (3)  
Already has places for her children  
Already at infant junior  
I'd prefer her to go to Leysland  
Already confirmed place in other school

### **Religion**

Two reasons: 1st of all we are Catholic; in danger of creating a ghetto type area  
Not catholic; too big school; will have no control  
Not catholic; area is not very good  
Not catholic school; bad area and reputation  
Not catholic school as we are religious and we went to catholic schools

Not catholic (17)

Probably not as my family are catholic is it would have to be something arranging for me to change to a new school; I'm quite happy where they are and wouldn't want to prod them

Need to know if catholic; class sizes

My partner and children are catholic. That's the only reason but I probably would send if it was alright with the Jason (partner)

Must be catholic otherwise wouldn't send (6)

Catholic, therefore wouldn't send their child to non-catholic school (7)

Because the child is to go to a catholic school

### **Other**

Personal reasons

People have had enough of new schools being built and then closed down. She felt that more money should be invested into existing schools

Moving out of the area

Money badly spent, would be better spent on smaller class sizes

I'm totally disgusted!

I prefer an all boys/girls school

I just don't want to send him there

Government should put more money into existing schools, she would not consider any other schools before this was done

Don't agree with it

Do not wish present school to close

Didn't need it before

Closed town before, why re-open?

Would rather see now it goes for couple of years

Unsure as she did not know where Trennant Rd was (2)

More details; prefers mixed schools

More details

## ***Why Parents Of Children In City Secondary SUPPORTED The Idea:***

### **Location**

Willing to try new things; local

Problems with school buses

Prefer mixed, closer, both children to same school

Not happy with this school

Nearer; less travel time

Location, nearer (7)

Locality, would definitely be an option

Local; provides another choice

Local; happy with standards

It's nearer; depends on how they run the school because it (M.L.) had a bad reputation

If it was close; good grades; with a school uniform

Her son went to the former Mary Linwood school before it closed. It is very local and she would be very interested in sending her child to the new academy

Because its closer than Lancaster boys; like my son to go to a mixed school

Good location, very close

Easier locality wise

Convenient, local, has relatives there  
Convenient locally  
Closer within catchments area (2)  
Close locality; used to go to previous school there both adult and child

**Standards/reputation**

As long as right subjects  
As long as it is decent  
If it had a good reputation and results

**Religion**

Present school is Muslim dominant

***Why Parents Of Children In City Secondary REJECTED the idea***

**Location**

Doesn't like the area (2)  
Too far away (2)  
Not a good area; child settled in  
Too close to where we live and other children cause trouble so I chose to apply to school further out & M.L. hadn't got a good reputation  
This school is closer (2)

**Settled elsewhere**

Settled where they are (25)  
The son wouldn't want to leave friends  
The school the child and other children of the woman have been to has been perfectly fine  
Quite settled and quite happy with plans to send children to Jonathan Nth  
Prefer private school; current school is excellent; bad area  
I've just struggled to get her into Guthlaxton  
Too late now  
He wanted to go to S. Wigston; it was a good school and to be with friends  
Daughter is finishing school this year  
All her other children went to South Charnwood and have done well

**Age range**

She felt that her child would not be confident enough to mix with a wider range of children  
I don't like the idea of 3 with 19 years old; too big a gap; I'd not be happy with that; my children go to Catholic school  
Children are already settled and age range for school is too big

**Religion**

Wants children to be taught in Roman Catholic environment  
Not catholic  
All Catholic religion  
Catholic

**Reputation**

Former student; reputation  
Reputation of previous school (2)  
Bad area/reputation (4)

**Other**

Doesn't see the point of closing the school and opening it up again  
Child in his final year but she has a 1 year old who she would definitely send

Doesn't approve of "super school"

Abington's achievement record & they've got a uniform - so they can't argue over clothes

People have had enough of new schools being built and then closed down. She felt that more money should be invested into existing schools

Money badly spend, would be better spent in smaller class sizes

### 3.6 Comments indicating reasons for choosing a particular school/authority

#### ***Why Parents Send Children To A County Primary School:***

Parents of County Primary children		55 responses		
	Telephone	School	Total	
Didn't want to send child to a City school	5%	0%	5%	
Recommendation by another parent	2%	0%	2%	
Reputation of the county school	20%	0%	20%	
Academic results of the county school	7%	0%	7%	
Other	64%	2%	66%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

#### ***Comments from above:***

Location and friends (14)

In catchment area (5)

Closer than City school (5)

Borderline - locality the county school was nearer (2)

Live border between city and county

She went there

Settled in already there

No school uniform in the nearest city school

Needed to in order to go to secondary school

Accepted my child; close by home; convenient

Did send to City but changed as the child was bullied

Bullying at City school

Gone with friends

Glenhills is pretty good and he'll be with his friends

Troubled - needs a mixed school with hardworking

It is a catholic school

## **Why Parents Send Children To A County Higher/Upper School**

**Parents of County Higher or Upper school children** 89 responses

	<b>Telephone</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Total</b>
Didn't want to send child to a City school	17%	0%	17%
Didn't know where else to send them	4%	0%	4%
Recommendation by another parent	1%	0%	1%
Reputation of the county school	16%	1%	17%
Academic results of the county school	2%	0%	2%
Sent other child to county school	1%	1%	2%
other	55%	2%	57%
<b>Total</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Comments from above:**

Location (22)

In catchment area (5)

Gone with friends

Results

Preference

Special needs

Personal

Uniform

No decent schools in city; and because Mary Linwood has closed down

Poor reputation of city school. They were being bullied!

More options - couldn't send them to Riverside

Environment at the city schools nearby

Didn't want them to go to Lancaster boys as it is not mixed

Didn't offer mixed sex, no schools liked

Doesn't like present school too much

Mary Linwood closed

My brother went there

One child lives with her, the other with her ex-husband, they live in different areas

### 3.7 What further information do parents need on the new school

At the end of the telephone and school interviews we asked parents what information would assist their decision making and/or help them make up their minds:

Academic performance/OFSTED/results	14%
Standard of education/staff	14%
Location/catchment area/distance from home	9%
Reputation	9%
Prospectus/school policy/general/open day	9%
Class size/school size	8%
Subjects/specialities/extra-curricular	7%
Discipline/bullying/safety	6%
Recommendation from others	6%
Facilities	5%
Religion (type of - if any)	4%
Type of children - ethnicity/mixed gender	3%
Transport	2%
Uniform	1%
Age ranges/transition	1%
Other	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## **4.0 APPENDICES**

**4.1 Telephone & Street Questionnaires**

**4.2 Discussion Guide**

**4.3 Letters inviting parents**

**APPENDIX 4.1 FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LEICESTER CITY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

Introduction: I am (name) and I am calling you on behalf of Leicester Education Authority to ask parents of school age children living in (Saffron/Eyres Monsell) for their opinions on a new school to be built in the area. Do you have any children of school age? (if yes say 'excellent') , and are you a parent? (if not can I speak to a mum or dad). If you are speaking to a parent of school aged children say - our survey is very simple - it only takes 3 minutes - can we do it now?"

**At this stage IF respondents do not have children of school age at home ABORT SURVEY!**

Q1 How many children do you have aged between 3 and 16? 1 2 3 4 5 more> [ ]

Q2 Which schools do your children/child attend (tick more than 1 if more than 1 child)

Tick box/s below and then read out the additional information before asking Q3-6-

CITY PRIMARY		CITY SECONDARY		SPECIAL/OTHER	
Southfield Infant		Riverside CC			
Newry Junior		Sir Jonathan North CC			
Eyres Monsell Primary		The Lancaster Boys			
Rolleston Infants					
Rolleston Junior					
Holy Cross RC Primary					
Other City Primary (name)		Other City Secondary (name)		Name of Spec school	
<b>If any above ticked &gt; Q3</b>		<b>If any above ticked &gt; Q4</b>		<b>If above ticked &gt; Q3</b>	
COUNTY PRIMARY		COUNTY HIGHER/UPPER		SPECIAL/OTHER	
Name of Primary school		Name of school		Name of Spec school	
<b>If above ticked &gt; Q5</b>		<b>If above ticked &gt; Q6</b>		<b>If above ticked &gt; Q3</b>	

**I now have some information to give that will be of interest: READ OUT ALL:-**

“The City Council is at an early stage of considering whether to create a new school in the area. It would be on the site of a former school, Mary Linwood School. The new school would be an Academy for pupils aged between 3 and 19 years. It would be funded up to £20 million by the Government with a sponsor. Whilst independent of the Local Education Authority (LEA) it would work closely with it. The school would broadly be for the pupils of the former Mary Linwood Priority area. It would have new state of the art buildings and equipment and a curriculum focussing on the specific needs of the area. To enable the LEA to decide on what to do next with such a proposal, we seek your views and those of other parents in the locality” After reading the background ask if they understand it (clarify if necessary) say I would now like to ask a few other questions – ask these according to the type of school their child attends as ticked in the table overleaf. NB: if children attend different types of school (eg one in Primary, one in Secondary),ask for each instance)



**For parents of a child attending a City Primary/any special school:**

Q3 Would you consider sending your child that is under 11 to this new School for 3-19 year old children located at a site in the South of Leicester off Trennant Road?

YES [ ] NO [ ] if yes or no answer ask: If unsure tick > [ ] & go to Q8

Why would you wish to send your child there/not wish to send your child there?  
(Write answer below)

**Now skip to Q8 >>>>>>**

**For parents of a child attending a City Secondary school:**

Q4 Would you have considered sending a child aged 11- 16 to this new School for 3-19 year old children located at a site in the South of Leicester off Trennant Road, when they had finished Primary school?

YES [ ] NO [ ] if yes or no answer ask: If unsure tick > [ ] go to Q8

Why would you wish to send your child there/not wish to send your child there?  
(Write answer below)

**For parents of a child attending a County Primary school:**

Q5 May I ask you why did you send your child to a Primary school in the County rather than one in the City? (unprompted – tick up to two answers)

- [ 1 ] Didn't want to send my child to a City school
- [ 2 ] Didn't know where else to send them
- [ 3 ] Recommendation by another parent
- [ 4 ] Reputation of the county school
- [ 5 ] Academic results of the county school
- [ 6 ] Sent other child to the county school
- [ 7 ] Other answers (Please write in)..... Now Go to Q7

**For parents of a child attending a County Higher or Upper school:**

Q6 May I ask you, why did you send your child to a High/Upper school in the County rather than a secondary school in the City?(unprompted – tick main answer)

- [ 1 ] Didn't want to send my child to a City school
- [ 2 ] Didn't know where else to send them
- [ 3 ] Recommendation by another parent
- [ 4 ] Reputation of the county school
- [ 5 ] Academic results of the county school
- [ 6 ] Sent other child to the county school
- [ 7 ] Child went to a County Primary School
- [ 8 ] Other answers (Please write in).....Now Go to Q7

Q7 Would a new School located in the South of the City off Trennant Road be an attractive alternative to sending your child to a County school

YES [ ] NO [ ] if yes or no answer ask: If unsure tick > [ ] go to Q8

Why is it attractive to you/not attractive to you to send your child to this new school?  
(Write answer below)

Q8 What further information might you need to make/ have made an informed choice on selecting an appropriate school for your child?  
(Write answer below)

Q9 Would you be willing to assist us further by attending a discussion group? Yes [ ]

**END OF INTERVIEW, BUT PLEASE ASK FOR THE DATA BELOW**

**Gender:** M F **Age group:** 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65-74 75+

**Work Status:** Full Time[1] Part Time[2] Non-working[3] Unemployed[4] Retired[5]

**Ethnicity:**

Codes	Ethnicity
Asian/Asian British	
A1	Indian
A2	Pakistani
A3	Bangladeshi
A4	African Asian
A9	Other Asian
Black/Black British	
B1	Black Caribbean
B2	Black Somali
B3	Other Black African
B9	Any Other Black
Mixed/Dual	
M1	White & Asian
M2	White & Black African
M3	White & Black Caribbean
M9	Any other Mixed Background
White/White British	
W1	White British (inc. English Scottish Welsh)
W2	Irish
W3	Traveller of Irish Heritage
W4	Gypsy/Roma
W5	White European
W9	White Other
Others	
O1	Chinese
O9	Any Other Ethnic Group
N/S	I do not wish an ethnic background category to be recorded

**THANKS FOR HELPING!**

**Respondents surname:**

**Tel No:**

**Interviewer:**

**DATE:**

## **APPENDIX 4.2 DISCUSSION GUIDE – ACADEMY CONSULTATION**

Intro: Parents will introduce themselves informal over tea, coffee etc  
Paul explains the format of the meeting objectives/ground rules  
Sarah Tunaley identifies her role as observer/information provider

Subject: Paul opens the meeting by referring parents to the Guidance notes.

Proposition to build the new school outlined using OHP including, reasons why the Council are considering this option, how the new school could meet local needs, structure of school and facilities.  
(5 mins max)

At this point there could be an opportunity for clarification.

Discussion:

Before talking about the new school I first want to set the scene by asking where your kids go to school now. Put your hand up those with children attending county schools. And now for those at City schools.

May I ask those with children attending a County school why they send their children to a County school. And why do you others send your children to a City school? (probe reasons for one versus the other)

Now how many in this room knew the Mary Linwood school before it closed?  
(did anyone here go to school there or had kids attending?)

What were your opinions of the school (why is that?)

Those of you with children now at secondary school – were you affected by the closure?  
What do you feel about the choices you had available to you?

How do other parents feel, especially those with children in primary age coming up to secondary, about the educational choices you have now. What do you feel about the choice you have about where your child goes after primary?

What things are important when you are thinking about where your child goes to school?  
(probe factors)

I am putting up on the screen (OHP) a list of factors and I would like you all  
To tell me which three factors are the *most important* – we will call these ‘deciding factors’

Are there any other things (not as important as the last) but which sway you to pick one school rather than another. We will call these the ‘influences’

So with these factors and influences in the front of our minds can anyone with children under 11 describe to me their ideal school?

*Where would this school be?*

*What sort of school would this be (age range, structure)?*

*What facilities would it have?*

Can I now ask the same question to parents with children over 11 or shortly going up to secondary, what is their ideal school?

*Where would this school be?*

*What sort of school would this be (age range, structure)?*

*What facilities would it have?*

Thank you for that interesting information. We are now going to discuss:

### THE NEW SCHOOL

First, are you all clear about what this new school will be (clarify information as necessary)?

Ok then, what do you all think of the general idea?

Who likes it? (Why?) Probe reasons

Who doesn't like it (Why?) Ditto

Can I now ask those who have concerns about specific issues (to do with the new school) to say if/how these concerns could be overcome?

(Sarah to comment on specifics)

The Local Education authority (LEA) is open to suggestions. If it were to address these issues and give satisfactory assurances on them, would you reconsider the idea of the new school?

Do any others in the room share the same concerns, and would they like to comment on what has been said? (this might have already been answered by those listening to the objectors)

HOW WOULD YOU ADVISE THE EDUCATION DEPT TO MOVE FORWARD?

Finally, would you like to receive more information from the Education Dept in the future, on what it plans to do? How would you suggest is the best way to communicate further information?

Would anyone here like to attend other meetings like this one to debate further issues?

THANK YOU ALL VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND COMMENTS.

THEY ARE EXTREMELY VALUABLE! AS A TOKEN OF OUR APPRECIATION

PLEASE ACCEPT A BOOTS VOUCHER TO SPEND AS YOU WISH.

### **APPENDIX 4.3 INVITATION TO FOCUS GROUPS**

21 February 03

Dear

PARENT DISCUSSION GROUP: NEW SCHOOL

Following our telephone call I am delighted to confirm the date for our discussion group. I have ticked the time below when you have agreed to attend. Could you please aim to arrive at least 5 minutes before this so we can start the meeting promptly.

Time: [ ] 2.30pm [ ] 6pm Date: Thursday, February 27, 2003 Location:

1st Floor Committee Room, Aylestone Leisure Centre, Saffron Lane/Knighton Rd East  
Leicester Tel: 0116 2333040.

The Education Department of Leicester City Council wants parents of children living near the former Mary Linwood Secondary School to have the opportunity to give their views on the idea of a new school. Please read the enclosed information. By sharing your opinions you will help those who will take the decision on whether to go ahead with the proposal to have a better understanding of what parents think.

The discussion will be relaxed and friendly lasting between 60 and 90 minutes. About a dozen parents will take part; they may have differing views and wishes for their children, some supporting the idea, others not. This will make for a healthy discussion!

As a 'thank you' for taking part in the meeting you will receive a £5 Boots Gift voucher. Tea, coffee, juice and biscuits will be served at the start. Ample parking is available. The Centre Crèche is unfortunately *not open* after 2pm, but if you have any difficulties please phone the number below and we will try to assist you.

On arrival at the Leisure Centre take this letter to Reception. Then go to the First Floor, across a walkway – then you will see two doors - enter the room with the lilac door. If you have a problem attending, please phone me on 01509-219002 *before* Wednesday 26 Feb. I look forward to seeing you!

Yours sincerely

Paul Lockton  
Group leader

See enclosed sheet of Guidance notes