



*The*  
**CHATHAM & CLARENDON**  
**GRAMMAR SCHOOL**  
*Federation*

**Public Consultation Document**

**Case for the Formal Merger of  
Chatham House Grammar School and Clarendon House Grammar School**



## **Background and Constitutional Context**

Prior to December 2008 Chatham House and Clarendon House were two neighbouring single-sex grammar schools, each with its own mixed Sixth Form, both having 4 forms of entry into Year 7. Chatham House was a boys' grammar school of 864 students at that time (including Sixth Form) and Clarendon House was a girls' grammar school of 815 students (including Sixth Form).

The two individual schools' Governing Bodies agreed to form a hard federation with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009. The successor federal Governing Body appointed a new Executive Head for the two federated schools in January 2009 and this person took up their post from Easter 2009.

In order to bring it into line with Chatham House, Clarendon House switched from being a local authority community school to having foundation school status with effect from January 2010. Then in January 2011 Chatham House and Clarendon House both became Converter Academies as part of the government's Academies Programme. As part of this process it was made clear to stakeholders that the federation's ultimate aim was to achieve full legal merger. However, at that time, official DfE advice was to convert to Academies first and merge later.

From September 2009 a process of "operational convergence" has taken place in which the two schools have increasingly worked towards a functional merger. This process began with the merger of both schools' 6<sup>th</sup> Forms under a single management team led by a single Head of 6<sup>th</sup> Form all of which was based at the Cavendish Centre mid-way between the two main school buildings. All teaching groups in the 6<sup>th</sup> Form are co-educational. The process of convergence took a major step forward in September 2011 with the move away from 2 single sex schools as the basic organisational structure to a structure based on a Lower and an Upper school. The Lower School consists of all pupils (boys and girls) in Years 7, 8 and 9 and is based on the Chatham House site and the Upper School based on the Clarendon House site consists of all pupils in Years 9 and 10. This "Urban Campus" organisational model was then used as a basis for organising all teaching in Years 7 to 11. In the Lower School all teaching is based on single sex groups. In the Upper School only the core subjects of English, Mathematics, Modern Foreign Languages, Science and Games are taught in single sex groups with all other (Option) subjects taught in mixed groups. The urban Campus structure thus completed the federation's "functional merger".

## **Overall Rationale for Merger**

- Demographic pressures - there are and will continue to be too few students deemed selective in Thanet to fully support three grammar schools.
- Manage the impact of shrinking budgets, to protect the curriculum and students' education.
- Strengthen our capacity to support local primary and secondary schools.
- The merger of the two schools, with their different strengths, will raise standards overall and better meet the new, more rigorous requirements and expectations of the 2012 Ofsted inspection framework.
- Closing The Gap: as one fully integrated school we will be better placed to enhance the educational opportunities available to all of our students.
- Structures are already in place for seamless transition to one institution – e.g.:- governance & leadership, a flourishing joint Sixth Form and a unified House system, in addition to all new appointees being employees of the joint federation rather than the individual schools.

## **Demographic trends**

As the problem of falling rolls creates surplus places across the secondary sector in Thanet, there has also been a fall in demand for Single-Sex selective education. Within Thanet, the mixed grammar school, Dane Court, competing for a diminishing pool of students, has proved to be the more popular choice for girls' parents.

As two separate legal entities Chatham House and Clarendon have separate Planned Admission Numbers (PAN) and recruit boys and girls independently. This generates unequal and uneconomic class sizes –

distorting the school budgets. Operating separately, it will *not* be possible for Chatham & Clarendon to provide a cost-effective, sustainable curriculum & maintain standards unless we can recruit into a single mixed PAN. This latter situation can only be achieved if the two schools are legally merged.

### **Financial**

At the moment we still receive two separate budgets, and the finance team are constantly juggling sums. Current diseconomies of duplication in staffing, with two sets of support staff = caretaking & site management, catering, ICT & Science technician teams, reception and back office administration teams. The annual savings which could be achieved through full legal merger, followed by single site consolidation would be significant and any such savings could be used to enhance the pupils' education.

### **Governance, Leadership & Management**

Since federating in January 2009, strongly cohesive arrangements for governance and leadership have developed & are sustainable which would guarantee a seamless transition to a legally merged school. Whether merger is to be accomplished by closing one of the schools and making the other co-ed, or by closing both and opening a new entity, the Federation Trust Board, Members and Directors, would operate exactly as they do now: strategic planning, accountability, expenditure, monitoring, etc are secured.

As one legal entity there would be no need for an Executive Head/Principal & two "Heads of School" – leadership and management would simply revert to the conventional one school model of Headteacher plus Deputy/Deputies. As our existing "functional merger" urban campus arrangement mirrors the traditional one school structure, our systems would not require major restructuring.

### **Sustainability**

The joint Sixth Form "CCVI" has operated, and proven to be very popular since September 2010. It attracts high level of recruitment & retention from our own Year 11s and from outside secondary providers, even before the forthcoming Raising of the Participation Age (234 on roll in Year 12 September 2011; 289 on roll in Year 12 September 2012). Re-branding the whole Federation as one institution, which have shared the buildings since September 2011, is already working well. A clear, cohesive identity has been established (uniform, rules & code of conduct, behaviour management, pastoral & academic leadership systems, support staff), and the co-educational use of the various parts of the Chatham & Clarendon "urban campus", by boys and girls, is working well. Amongst stakeholders – students, parents, staff, and the community at large there is tacit acceptance that Chatham & Clarendon operate as one & are on the road to merger. This strategic goal has been made clear at successive recruitment rounds, and is supported by our local MP.

The last student cohorts whose parents originally chose the schools as segregated single-sex institutions, pre-Federation, who originally joined in September 2009, will be Year 11 leavers in summer 2014. Any stakeholders whose children were enrolled at the Federation from September 2010, did so in the knowledge that merger was planned.

## **The Learning Environment**

The £25 million+ BSF Wave 4 project had been intended to promote a transformational solution to surplus places at Chatham & Clarendon, by co-locating both schools, on the Chatham House site. A merger would have been the logical consequence. Since the cancellation of BSF, we have had to utilise both sets of buildings to deliver equal educational opportunities for both boys & girls:- overcoming the lack of PE/Sport facilities for girls, and the constrained technology curriculum for boys; maximising curriculum choice at both KS4 GCSE, and in the joint Sixth Form.

Once merged and operating with a single mixed PAN, a merged Academy **could** be ‘relocated’ on to a single site for Years 7-11, with the Sixth Form occupying the other buildings. This would certainly consolidate the appeal of the school with prospective parents (no inter-site movement for younger students), reduce operational inefficiencies of split-site working to a minimum, and save expenditure on current occupancy costs of the full “urban campus”. Retaining sections of the Clarendon campus for the Sixth Form would ensure that we retain the physical capacity to cope with any increase in student numbers in the future, beyond the date for which we have reliable demographic data (intake of 2018).

## **Operational convergence**

All strata of management within the federation were restructured in 2010 & again in 2012 to end duplication of responsibility holders and to support a cohesive, coherent and unified approach to leadership of teaching & learning. In practice the staff have operated as one team since September 2010, so the difficult transition work associated with merger has already been accomplished. Unified subject teams have operated single common syllabuses since 2010/11, common dept capitation/BS&E allocations, centralised reprographics & ICT support service, etc. are also in place. This process of convergence has also been applied to all renewed contracts such as cleaning and grounds maintenance which have been negotiated federally.

The efficiency & effectiveness of this convergence, however, is also constrained because we are still legally two schools necessitating duplication of various systems which is wasteful in time and in money i.e. – registering boys & girls twice, ditto for all SIMs based data inputting & extraction, such as for attendance, behaviour, logging attainment & progress, reporting statistical returns to central government. In additional attempts at using software solutions to overcome these problems, such as Partnership Exchange” (currently cost = £21,000pa) are not working reliably for the Sixth Form and will not cope with much bigger numbers of students in Years 7-11.

## **Relationships with other schools in the locality**

There has been no reduction in our commitment to outreach and support work through federation & operating as one school. If anything, the change has extended our partnerships & outreach work. However, it would be much easier to plan, coordinate and pay for any initiatives as a result of merger. The constitutional flexibility of Academy status will allow us to formalise supportive links with other schools, e. g. to bring in primaries and secondaries with soft federation, hard federation or sponsored academy arrangements. Merger would not preclude any further strategic partnerships with other providers.

The school is part of a local primary support cluster; Broadstairs and Ramsgate Ethos Schools Improvement Committee (BRESIC) which consists of Chatham and Clarendon Grammar School, St George’s High School, Christchurch, St Laurence in Thanet, Holy Trinity and St Peters. Although Chatham and Clarendon Grammar School is not a church school, all parties in BRESIC see the advantages in involving a grammar school in the group and as a converter Academy we have an obligation to offer direct support to other schools.

The purpose of the BRESIC collaboration is to offer local mutual support for school improvement across the schools. The aim is to drive up standards of Literacy (reading and writing) and Numeracy, improve standards of Teaching and Learning and quality of provision across the schools. This will be achieved through sharing best practice and expertise across the BRESIC group of schools. An action plan has been

drawn up for the academic year and all schools are now actively involved in working towards successfully completing the aims as laid out in the action plan.

### **Accountability in changing educational landscape**

Improvements that are required under the new Ofsted framework, the revised national curriculum and tighter budget pressures etc, can be achieved as one legal entity but are impeded by remaining as two. Indeed Janet Mercer, the HMI conducting an Ofsted Subject Inspection of Art at the Federation (March 2012), stated that in future the Federation will have to be inspected as one integrated entity, and that for all practical purposes it is the only feasible way we could be inspected. She accepted our strategy that operating as one school is the best answer to issues of variable subject attainment within the federation. This view was confirmed by Ofsted following receipt of a (successful) annual “Good Schools” risk assessment later that year.

In the current situation we still have to report exam outcomes separately, using separate Chatham and Clarendon Centre Numbers & DfE Numbers – an obvious paradox when the joint Sixth Form is mixed, and by 2013 all GCSE option subject results will be those of mixed classes. This is enormously time-consuming for the federal Exams Officer & her team, our subject leaders, and unhelpfully confusing for parents, university/college admissions tutors and employers.

### **Conclusion & Our Proposed Time Frame**

We see legal merger as absolutely essential to secure the future of Chatham House and Clarendon House, for all the reasons described above. The longer the “will they, won’t they” uncertainty and speculation continues, the greater the pressure on our student recruitment and therefore on budgets, staffing and standards. In terms of organisation and preparedness we have positioned the Federation to become a new Chatham & Clarendon Grammar School as soon as is practicable.

## Public Consultation Response Form

Proposal to amalgamate Chatham House Grammar School and Clarendon House Grammar School, Ramsgate with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013

PLEASE RETURN NO LATER THAN 6th FEBRUARY 2013

To: The Principal, Chatham and Clarendon Grammar School Federation,  
Chatham Street, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 7PS.  
Fax: 01843 851907  
You can also email your views to: [principal@ccgrammarschool.co.uk](mailto:principal@ccgrammarschool.co.uk)

### Do you agree with the proposal?

Yes

No

### I am

The parent/carer of a pupil at  Clarendon House Grammar School      The parent/carer of a pupil at  Chatham House Grammar School

A pupil at Clarendon House  Grammar School      A pupil at Chatham House  Grammar School

A member of staff at  Clarendon House Grammar School      A member of staff at  Chatham House Grammar School

A governor of  Clarendon House Grammar School      A governor of  Chatham House Grammar School

Other interested party  Name of other interested party

Name:

Address:

**Chatham and Clarendon Grammar School Federation is a data controller under the Data Protection Act 1998 and will comply with the requirements of the Act at all times. We will ensure that your personal information is processed fairly and lawfully and in this instance used only for the purpose of validation, which will enable a fair and just consultation.**

Comments: