

**Cabinet report for 19th May 2005
Proposal for a Hindu primary school**

Evaluation of the submissions for a Hindu primary school

The two separate submissions, from I-Foundation and Sai School of Harrow, have been evaluated by officers against fifteen educational criteria. These criteria were set by Harrow Council before the final submissions were received, and were sent to the two promoter organisations for their information three days before the deadline for their submissions to be received.

The format of this Evaluation document takes each of the educational criteria in turn. Commentary on each submission is given in relation to the criteria, and comparative comments are made as relevant to the criteria.

i. Educational ethos and vision within the context of Harrow's education service

I-Foundation

The vision of the I-Foundation is "to develop each child's full potential, spiritually, morally and academically," delivering a high standard of education in these areas and "preparing students to become individuals of good character, behaviour and competence."

The submission describes a series of aims and values which would underpin this vision, with a strong emphasis on Hindu values.

There is a strong commitment to integration with local schools. This is illustrated by a number of appropriate examples.

The school's contribution to community cohesion is outlined, especially in developing citizenship and contributing to the Council's goal to "increase the number of residents participating in learning opportunities". In addition a range of extended school activities is described.

The submission includes a number of references, especially in the use of ICT, to innovative approaches.

Finally the school proposes a strong contribution to addressing both the underachievement of ethnic minorities and drawing on the multi-faith and multi racial population it might serve.

Sai School of Harrow

The vision for the Sai school is “driven by the belief that the Hindu community must play a fully integrated part in the community in Harrow in the wider society beyond.”

The ethos will be inclusive, with a focus on preparing for citizenship, teaching respect for all faiths.

The school seeks to be welcoming and outgoing with a strong community focus, developing extended schools services. There is an emphasis on high educational standards for the full range of pupil achievement.

The school’s contribution to, and development in the light of, the national educational priorities is identified.

The submission identifies its contribution to the evolving areas of the Every Child Matters agenda. It also identifies clearly how it would contribute to the Council’s vision and key strategic priorities, in particular strengthening local communities and making Harrow a centre of excellence for lifelong learning.

ii. Extent, balance and quality of the educational programme

I-Foundation

The submission includes an entitlement to the full statutory National Curriculum in all relevant Key Stages. This is enhanced by the “added incentive of exploring and experiencing the rich cultural heritage of Hinduism”.

The development of a curriculum appropriate to all pupils is mentioned. The submission describes a number of particular strategies that would be used to raise standards. These include the development of curriculum specialisms; collaboration with other schools; effective use of study support; use of ICT to identify progress; and appropriate range of extra- curricular activities.

The submission includes the detail of a subject-based outline scheme of work for the school.

The curriculum approach described is sound, if lacking an appreciation of recent curriculum development initiatives in the Primary phase.

Sai School of Harrow

The submission includes an entitlement to the full statutory National Curriculum in all relevant Key Stages

Although lacking the detailed curriculum of the I-Foundation submission, the Sai School also identifies, but does not detail, some curriculum approaches that would be used.

These include a focus on the creative arts; developing a Centre of Excellence; specialist coaching and an emphasis on citizenship education. This emphasis is described as a strength of the school's current provision.

The curriculum approach described is sound, but is lacking detail that would be required to evaluate it further at this stage.

iii. Evidence of emphasis on the quality of the teaching and learning

I-Foundation

The submission describes the approach to teaching that will allow children to 'develop' and 're-inforce Hindu teachings and lifestyles'.

A range of appropriate teaching styles is described, with a focus on accelerating rates of learning. Effective use of ICT and support staff, set in the context of the school's clear approach to the 'School Workforce (Remodelling) Agenda', is described.

The submission describes a range of 'innovative approaches' to teaching and acknowledges the need to develop a range of learning styles.

The description of teaching is interesting and indeed innovative, e.g. in the use of the same class teacher for the whole of a child's school career. Detail of the expectations of teaching and learning on a day-to-day basis is limited.

There is no reference to the role of the school leadership in promoting and developing good teaching.

Sai School of Harrow

The submission rightly notes the importance of 'excellent teaching and learning'. It describes, but does not detail, the teaching framework that might produce such teaching, including the development of good teaching through collaboration with other schools.

The use of ICT to enhance teaching is set out.

A framework for teacher development, including a reference to, but no detail of, the remodelling agenda is set out.

There is a brief reference to the importance of strong leadership by the headteacher and governors.

iv. SEN policy

I-Foundation

There is reference to appropriate schemes of work for children with special educational needs.

Harrow's SEN strategy would be adopted although this is not spelt out in detail.

The importance of accessibility for children with special educational needs and disabilities is acknowledged and detailed.

Sai School of Harrow

The proposal recognises as part of its vision that all pupils must have their needs met.

Children with special educational needs are referred to in the context of raising achievement and the importance of them being helped to reach their potential is recognised.

Booster classes to support the learning of some pupils are proposed and it is assumed this would include some children with special educational needs.

The proposal indicates adherence to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, DfES 2001, including the use of a graduated approach, Individual Education Plans, inclusion in mainstream provision, curriculum differentiation, parental involvement and working with outside professionals.

Reference is made to the use of ICT in terms of ensuring access for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

The appointment of a special educational needs co-ordinator forms part of the structure of responsibility areas to be covered.

Modifications to the building to ensure accessibility for those who are disabled are planned.

Overall the Sai proposal provides a more comprehensive description of how children with special educational needs will be catered for within the context of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, DfES 2001, and related legislation and guidance.

v. Pastoral organisation

I-Foundation

The submission focuses on the class teacher's role, re-inforced by the class teacher moving through the school with the pupils. (This does raise issues of appropriate curriculum knowledge). The strong ethos of the school provides the framework of pastoral development. A range of other adults contributing to the development of pupils is threaded through the submission.

Sai School of Harrow

The submission notes the importance of class teachers, working with a range of other key professionals across a range of agencies, in developing well

being, and health and safety. This is set in the context of effective (self) discipline and opportunities for contemplation.

vi. Transitional arrangements to Secondary schools

I-Foundation

The submission notes and describes arrangements for effective curricular and pastoral transition to secondary schools.

The proposal is clear that the “The Hindu School” will not seek to establish linked school arrangements with Harrow community schools but will look towards the possible provision of a Hindu secondary school. Pupils from the School who, for whatever reason, wish to apply for a place in a community high school will have a lower priority under the admission rules than children from Harrow’s community primary school. Under this scheme there will be minimum, if any, impact on current patterns of application to Harrow’s community high schools.

Sai School of Harrow

The submission notes and describes arrangements for effective curricular and pastoral transition to secondary schools.

It is not intended that the Sai School will be linked to a particular Harrow community high school. The intention is that the School will actively engage with all secondary schools in the area to enable smooth transition between phases. Under this proposal pupils from the School who, for whatever reason, wish to apply for a place in a community high school will have a lower priority under the admission rules than children from Harrow’s community primary school. Under this scheme there will be minimum, if any, impact on current patterns of application to Harrow’s community high schools.

vii. Evidence of level of faith support and sustainability of that support

Both submissions provide evidence of faith support, including original research that has been undertaken and expressions of support.

Sai point to the support for the Sai supplementary school in Harrow, and cite research undertaken in 2003. I-Foundation point to the UK and international track record of their affiliated organisation the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), and cite research undertaken in 2004.

I-Foundation

The officially affiliated religious organisation for the new school would be ISKCON, which operates Bhaktivedanta Manor in Aldenham, the largest Hindu temple in Europe, and a private Hindu school established in 1975. Harrow residents comprise over 40% of the regular congregation at the

temple. A waiting list for a new school was launched and closed after two months with over 700 primary school children signed-up.

ISKCON operates more than 50 schools around the world, and operates other educational services in the UK. Appendix 2 contains letters of support from Hindu bodies in the UK.

During 2004 ISKCON conducted research into the demand for a Hindu faith school in Harrow. Key findings from the research included:

- There is consistent demand across the age groups that will be maintained long-term
- Over 90% across age groups agree there should be a Hindu school in Harrow, and almost all of those agreeing would send their own children
- The Hindu community in Harrow is well rooted, and Harrow is a prime destination for Hindu families
- Most parents intend to send their children to local state sector schools, and Harrow is the overwhelming borough of choice
- Most Hindus consider themselves practitioners of their faith and visit temples
- 89% of parents would consider using a minibus system for the school journey

Sai School of Harrow

The Sai supplementary school has been operating in Harrow for some ten years. The school was launched in 1995 with 108 pupils, and has grown to more than 500. There is a new Nursery intake. The pupils are predominantly from Hindu faith backgrounds. Very few pupils drop out from the school. There is a two year waiting list for places at the school.

Sai provide a list of support from agencies and individuals (Appendix 1).

A survey of parents of students at the supplementary school was conducted by Sai in 2003 to ascertain whether there was support from supplementary school parents for a full time maintained Hindu faith primary school. Key findings from the survey included:

- 79% of parents would definitely or probably send their children to a full time Hindu primary faith school, with less than 2% unlikely to do so
- 96% of parents reported that their children enjoyed the Saturday school most or all of the time, with 4% enjoying it for some of the time
- More than 97% of parents felt that a new faith school would make their children better citizens of the UK
- More than 85% of parents would be prepared to use coaches rather than private transport in support of a travel plan.

Sai are able to evidence faith support for their supplementary school within Harrow which has grown over the 10 years of its existence. ISKCON refer to extensive experience of operating educational services, and to a significant proportion of their temple congregation residing within Harrow. Both have

undertaken research that demonstrate evidence of faith demand and sustainable support for a Hindu primary school within Harrow.

viii. Proposals for, and evidence of, community engagement

Both submissions make several references to their intention to engage with the local community. Specifically:

I-Foundation

- Seeking healthy cooperative relationship with local community, including local schools
- Acting as a resource and hub for adult learning
- Acting as a resource and providing facilities for other schools
- Interacting with local schools for sporting/musical activities
- Networking with local business
- Joint commitment to the local environment
- Providing summer programmes
- Offering community based learning programmes

This list covers many desirable objectives which we might hope to see in a new school; however, despite the length of the proposal document, there is very little detail about how any of these aspirations might be delivered or evidence of past achievements in community engagement.

Sai School

The Sai School sets out its belief in the Hindu community playing a fully integrated role in the community in Harrow and beyond as a key part of its vision. It places emphasis on engagement with other schools and the wider community as the cornerstone of its approach. There are several references in the proposal about how the supplementary school has put this objective into practice, e.g. involvement in the Millennium Volunteers programme, the Duke of Edinburgh programme, participation in the SACRE and the Interfaith Partnership, contributions to the Harrow Arts Festival etc. The proposal also gives details of the supplementary school's engagement with other Harrow teams in Urban Living, the Domestic Violence team and Connexions. A list of links is provided in the appendix.

There are also several references to new provision towards becoming an extended school, providing English language classes, childcare, family learning etc. The proposal refers to being part of a 'wider learning community.'

When outlining the building requirements, the Sai School makes clear its plan for integrating extended school provision into the design.

Overall, the Sai School proposal includes substantial reference to community engagement and this is a theme that runs throughout the proposal. There is

evidence that the supplementary school has already shown that it can achieve parts of the objective.

ix. Admissions policy within the context of harrow education service

The School Admissions Code of Practice requires that all oversubscription criteria need to be clearly defined and objectively assessable. Common criteria (e.g. siblings) should be explained. For faith schools, admission arrangements should make clear whether:

- a statement of religious affiliation or commitment is sufficient;
- whether it is to be “tested” and if so, how;
- and what, if any, references would be required.

I-Foundation

The proposed criteria are similar to those of other VA schools in Harrow in that they give priority based on commitment to the principles and values of the Hindu faith. They are, however, quite general and do not give sufficient explanation of how they will be “objectively assessed”. Governors will need to clarify whether applicants will be required to provide “proof” and, if so, give information on what is needed.

For the sibling link, will any “blood” relative living at the same address qualify for the sibling link or is the requirement a “blood brother/sister”? It is not clear who the “or living at the same address” applies to. The criterion should be specific about whether siblings have to live at the same address to qualify. The criterion should also make clear whether any special conditions apply to twins, triplets, etc.

The Code of Practice recommends that where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of a week, the oversubscription criteria makes clear how the ‘home’ address will be decided in a fair and considered way.

Whilst the criteria are listed in priority order there is no indication of what will happen in a tie-break situation and how decisions will be made to resolve this.

Further clarification of how the “shortest walking distance” will be measured is needed (e.g. will the route use shortcuts, paths across parks, through shopping centres, etc).

Sai School of Harrow

The proposal is clear that the admissions policy will be drawn up following consultation, including the Harrow Admissions Forum, and will comply with the Code of Practice on Admissions.

The criterion, which gives priority to children who are members of the Hindu faith, is similar to those of other VA schools in Harrow. The other proposed

criteria will need to be more specific and each criterion will need to be clearly defined and objectively assessable.

The requirement for children to be enrolled at the Sai Saturday School and to give priority to siblings of students at the Sai Saturday School will need to be assessed more closely and legal advice will be required on the validity of such criterion within the admissions policy.

The admission rules will need to make clear the order of priority in which the criteria will be applied and how tie-break decisions will be made – for example, by using the distance from home to the school and how this will be measured.

x. Impact on current provision

There is currently a surplus of provision in primary school places for the whole borough, with a particular issue in the south east sector. It is planned to address this surplus through the Shaping Schools for the Future Strategy agreed by Cabinet in February 2005, and through demographic changes in the longer term.

Both proposals are based on a rolling programme of admissions building up year on year, so the impact will be incremental and spread over some eight years. Both will admit from across the borough and neighbouring areas. These factors should minimise the impact of the increased number of primary school places that a new school would represent.

xi. Financial arrangements

I-Foundation

There is no mention of any revenue funding proposals.

Sai School of Harrow

The only mention to revenue funding is that funding will come from the Schools delegated budget. The submission states, "It is anticipated that part of this revenue funding will allow for the early appointment of the Headteacher and other senior managers to ensure a good start for the school." If such funding was to be made available then this would need to be agreed outside of the formula funding but within the Schools Budget and would need the agreement of the Schools Forum and the Secretary of State. Depending on the sum agreed this would have a small redistributive effect on other Harrow schools.

xii. Governance

I-Foundation

The submission details an 'I-Foundation team' without clarifying the nature of that team with regards to initial governance.

An appropriate model of the proposed governing body for the school is detailed.

There is no reference to the role of the governing body, although this is implicit through the submission.

Sai School of Harrow

The submission notes the need for a temporary governing body in the first instance.

It identifies correctly the formal position of the school's governing body with regard to the LEA and sponsor organisation.

It states the Governing Body's role.

xiii. Site proposals from an educational perspective

I-Foundation

The bid sets out good criteria on how the building will contribute to the learning experience. The DfES document 'By Design' and 'Learning Through Landscapes' has been used in part as guidance for preparing this bid.

Educational Performance – well covered - refers to DfES guidance.

Inspirational Environment – well covered - good statement to build the design on.

Staff Satisfaction and the School Workforce - well briefed.

Pupil Satisfaction - Although this section of the bid touches on SEN pupils the bid makes no reference to BB93, which considers the acoustics in the building (although this is more relevant to new build rather than refurbishment). However the refurbishment by good practice should incorporate improving the acoustics.

Community Involvement – does not cover in much detail extended schools. This section seems a little lightweight.

Creating Opportunities for Innovation – some interesting thoughts around the allotment idea.

Flexibility and Adaptability – made reference to ensuring that specialist areas are sited from the outset in the correct location but in a way as to allow the

school to grow without having to remove and relocate expensive specialist areas in future expansion proposal. This section makes no reference to Key Stage 3 specialist rooms? Are they to be provided for year 7?

Safety and Security – no reference is made to involving the Police Crime Reduction Unit. No mention of an intruder alarm system and meeting the Association of Chief Police Officers Policy on managing the intruder alarm system.

Entrances – a reasonable statement.

Access and Inclusion - covered most issues but again no mention of BB93 (although not statutory on refurbishments).

Furniture and equipment – costings provided and seem appropriate.

Sustainability and Environmental Performance – The BREEAM method to be used.

Area Requirements and Capital Costs – area requirements in line with DfES guidance. However the site adaptation costs may be low. As to the externals this is difficult to quantify, as we do not have a condition report for the building and external hard standing report. Security costs not shown. Fixed Furniture & Equipment seem to be reasonable.

Sai School of Harrow

The bid sets out good criteria on how the building will contribute to the learning experience. Reference is made to using the DfES criteria but unlike the I-Foundation bid does not break the areas down into areas, which can be considered. It is not apparent from the documentation how large (in Sq feet) the building is including the externals.

Educational Performance –this bid makes little reference to government guidance and does not cover the external environment as a place for extending the curriculum other than for PE and sporting activities.

Inspirational Environment – the bid seems to cover more of what is expected rather than inspirational vision for the building and the surrounding environment.

Staff Satisfaction and School Workforce – not covered/brought out well.

Pupil Satisfaction – can build on good practices already established at the supplementary school located at Stanburn Schools.

Community Involvement - the building should adapt well for community use. It is centrally located in Pinner and the school again can build on established links.

Creating Opportunities for Innovation – a little sketchy. Reference made to the possibilities of using the adjacent park and Pinner Village Garden.

Flexibility and Adaptability – without viewing the building it is difficult to say if the proposals are achievable. It would be useful to know how old the building is and to have sight of the condition survey for the building and to know if asbestos is present, as removal/adaptations may prove costly.

Safety and Security – no reference is made to involving the Police Crime Reduction Unit. The bid discusses the use of an existing CCTV system and security infrastructure. No mention about how pupil security externally will be maintained or monitored other than separation of cars from students.

Entrances – reasonably covered.

Access and Inclusion – issues around physical accessibility covered but not other disabilities such as hearing and visual impairments.

Furniture and Equipment – no details or costs provided

Sustainability and Environmental Performance – no details provided

Area Requirements and Capital Costs – area requirements not shown or broken down against costs. Just global capital costs shown. Would be able to work out a cost sq m if floor area provided.

xiv. Green travel arrangements

I-Foundation

The bid makes a lot of assumptions, for example, the proposed numbers of students that will arrive at the site using private buses seem very high and could be costly to implement. No indication as to the number of buses needed. The location of the site would limit the number of students who would be able walk or cycle to school (need more information on the catchment area. The general impression of this site is that is located off a very busy main road and junction. The planners may have some views on this issue.

Sai School of Harrow

Many assumptions have been made but there is nothing to support what will happen. The bid fully lists what options for consideration are open to them.

xv. Proposals for extra mural activities such as sport, drama etc

Please refer to criteria ii. for commentary.