

28th September 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing with an update on Phase Two of the build of The Charter School East Dulwich. Phase Two includes our school hall, a drama suite, libraries, administrative block, music classrooms and most importantly, a purpose-built special provision for students with autism. As you may know, the completion of the school construction has been significantly delayed due to the impact of covid and rising projected costs. More recently, the main contractor withdrew from the project based on prices, and the target date for completion of the whole site is now August 2024.

Southwark Council and Department for Education are funding the project together, and Southwark is providing the project management. The department's role is to monitor delivery and ensure quality and value for money. Our role is to support the design and delivery process to ensure the school has the best facilities possible as soon as possible.

This new delay is not the situation that we or anyone involved in the project wanted. This project remains a priority at a local level and at the DFE. We are grateful to Cllr Ali, Cllr Williams, Cllr McAsh, Helen Hayes MP, Southwark council, and the DFE team for their support and commitment to the project.

There are now significant pressures on our school. We have planned for this risk to minimise the impact on students this year and ensure we deliver a good education for your children. I want to thank Ms Harbottle, and her team for the heroic building works completed during the summer holidays. They have adapted the current buildings to ensure we have the maximum possible space and facilities for our expanding student numbers this year.

Southwark and the DFE are working together to develop a strategy to complete the project and ensure the school has enough accommodation in the next academic year. A temporary music and administration block is being planned for delivery in the summer term. The landscaping of all the outside areas should go ahead in the spring term as Southwark recognises the importance of providing more outdoor space for students as soon as possible. Our new autism provision will also open in September 2023 for ten students and will be based in a purpose-built temporary block.

Southwark has also begun to appoint a new contractor to build our permanent assembly and drama block and renovate the Dulwich Hospital, which will be the final home to our music teaching, 6th form and autism provision in 2024.

We continue to advocate on behalf of our community. Completing this long overdue project is so important to the young people of our local community, and we thank you all for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely

Cassie Buchanan

CEO