THE EAST 1 SCHOOLS’
PUPIL PARLIAMENT 2015

NORTON ROSE FULBRIGHT
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Swanlea School held their first Pupil Parliament, in 2005. This event was sponsored by Norton Rose Fulbright and was run in partnership with two local primary schools from Tower Hamlets. This event was a huge success and has resulted in Norton Rose Fulbright continuing to sponsor Pupil Parliament which is now an annual event.

In 2009, the parliament was renamed the East 1 Schools’ Pupil Parliament and was attended by all of the schools who have come together to form a collaborative called the East 1 Schools’ Partnership.

Pupil Parliament is a progression from individual school councils and offers young people and children the opportunity to discuss issues that are important to them with their peers from other local schools within Tower Hamlets.

During this event the parliamentarians ask questions to a panel of experts, from the local community, businesses and organisations. The questions are based on three topics which are decided in advance by the school councils of each school attending. The panel provide the pupils with advice on how they, as school councilors, can help to alleviate the problems raised in each question.

After the question and answer phase, the pupils work in mixed school groups to discuss the panel’s advice and develop an action plan for the rest of the academic year.

Pupil Parliament is a pupil led event. The topics are chosen by the pupils. Pupils that attend the event develop their own questions and, based on the answers they receive, the pupils develop their own action plans in partnership with pupils from other schools.

The main aim of Pupil Parliament is to develop pupil voice and leadership skills across the partnership. The East 1 Schools’ Partnership aims to develop pupil’s oracy, leadership and decision making skills from an early age and for this reason, a Mini Parliament was introduced in 2009. Mini Parliament is a smaller version of the main Parliament and is for the younger pupils in Years 3 and 4.

During the last Pupil Parliament, the Mini Parliamentarians observed the older pupils during the question and answer phase. Following this, they then had the opportunity to work with pupils their own age to discuss concerns relevant to their age group. During the Mini Parliament, they had their own question and answer session with a smaller panel, which provided them with an arena to develop their pupil voice. Because of the success of last year’s Mini Parliament, this year it was extended to allow younger pupils to develop their decision making skills.
The East 1 Schools’ Partnership was formed in September 2008 and is a collaborative of seven schools from Tower Hamlets. The partnership consists of one secondary school (Swanlea School) and six primary schools (Canon Barnett, Hague, Kobi Nazrul, Osmani, Stewart Headlam, Thomas Buxton). The core aim of the partnership is to work together to raise the achievements and aspirations of their pupils as well as those of their parents.

The East 1 Schools’ Partnership runs a number of partnership events and projects to work towards achieving this aim. These include projects for gifted and talented pupils, family learning activities, annual parents’ events, accredited courses for parents and a parent volunteering programme. In addition to this, English, Maths and Science Coordinators from across the partnership meet regularly to share best practice and develop independent learning skills across the partnership and have worked collaboratively to plan a number of transition projects for year 6 and 7 pupils.

One of the main objectives of the East 1 Schools’ Partnership is to develop pupil voice and leadership skills across the partnership. Pupil Parliament helps to effectively meet this objective by allowing pupils to discuss issues that they have identified as being important to them as young people. The direction of pupil parliament is steered by the young people in attendance who are representing pupils from their schools.
On the 27th November 2015, the East 1 Schools’ Partnership held its sixth Pupil Parliament event. The parliament was held in the Norton Rose Fulbright offices in Southwark and 60 school councilors from Tower Hamlets schools joined together to discuss issues that they feel effect them as young people. The parliamentarians were made up of school councilors from years 3 to 12.

Before Pupil Parliament, the individual school councils met to decide what topics they would like to discuss at the Parliament. Once the topics had been agreed the individual school councils then met to discuss and develop questions based on the theme headings.

The topics that the school councilors chose to discuss were:-

- Democracy and Law
- Opportunities for young people
- Equality and Human Rights
- The Environment

The parliamentary session was chaired by Sameeul Haque and Marzana Begum, the Head Boy and Head Girl of Swanlea School’s Student Council.

Pupil Parliament is split into 3 phases.

**Phase 1 – Questions to the Panel**

The parliamentarians asked the panel members their pre-prepared questions as well as other questions which arose as a response to the panel members’ advice. The Panel was made up of key local figures and government officials.

**Phase 2 - Developing Ideas**

The pupils split into cross phase groups to consider the advice from the panel and decide the main priorities for the East 1 Schools’ Partnership. Panel members worked with groups to support them to develop their priorities.

**Phase 3 - Parliamentary Proposals**

Each group shared their ideas and developed an action plan for the partnership.

**Mini Parliament**

After having an opportunity to watch the older students during the Questions to the Panel phase, the year 3 and 4 pupils held their own Mini Parliament, which followed the same structure as the main Parliament but on a smaller scale. These pupils were given the chance to ask a smaller panel questions on the Environment and develop an action plan appropriate to their age group.

This report documents Pupil Parliament 2015 and provides information on the school councilors’ key priorities for this academic year and also contains parliamentary proposals, which the pupils would like the government to take into consideration.
The Parliamentarians

**Canon Barnett Primary School**
- Abdur Rahman (Year 6)
- Hemli Tipu (Year 6)
- Mohammed Mahjoub (Year 5)
- Arifa Kadir (Year 5)
- Saira Chowdhury (Year 5)
- Ashraf Al Hakiim (Year 5)
- Preona Mohan (Year 3/4)
- Mahir Daiyan (Year 3/4)

**Osmani Primary School**
- Sufyaan Sheikh (Year 3)
- Priyanka Ghosh (Year 3)
- Amisha Dutta (Year 4)
- Md-Abu Tayeeb (Year 4)
- Syed-Anam Aziz (Year 5)
- Tara Koch (Year 5)
- Umar Noor (Year 6)
- Yamin Mohammed (Year 6)
- Ihsan Sattar (Year 6)
- Lamisa Worthy (Year 6)

**Kobi Nazrul Primary School**
- Zahra Islam (Year 3)
- Iqbal Miah (Year 3)
- Tahmidur Rahman (Year 4)
- Nabila Begum (Year 4)
- Sumaya Yasmin (Year 5)
- Miraj Hasan (Year 5)
- Habib Al Hoque (Year 6)
- Alimah Islam (Year 6)

**Steward Headlam Primary School**
- Ayaan Khan (Year 3)
- Ikraam Hussain (Year 4)
- Amani Ibrahim (Year 4)
- Adam Hussain (Year 5)
- Inaaya Hoque (Year 5)
- Tanzil Khan (Year 6)
- Abdurrahman Seraj (Year 6)
- Tanaaz Khan (Year 6)

**Thomas Buxton Primary School**
- Aniya Husbands (Year 3)
- Zakaria Hassan (Year 3)
- Saima Hussan (Year 4)
- Hamza Malki (Year 4)
- Yamin Ahmed (Year 5)
- Maria Khan (Year 5)
- Sahara Rahman (Year 6)
- Mahir Tahmin (Year 6)

**Hague Primary School**
- Md Yasin Kamaly (Year 3)
- Aysha Rahman (Year 3)
- Sulayman Meezan (Year 4)
- Zara Alisha Uddin (Year 4)
- Md Syed Aryan (Year 5)
- Aysha Rahman (Year 5)
- Abu Hamza (Year 6)
- Jada Howard (Year 6)

**Swanlea Secondary School**
- Rayyan Choudhury (Year 7)
- Zaina Khanum (Year 7)
- Khusi Rob (Year 7)
- Niyaz Ahmed (Year 7)
- Imon Ahmed (Year 8)
- Anisa Hussain (Year 8)
- Lazina Chowdhury (Year 8)
- Zara Sandhu (Year 8)
- Misbahur Rahman (Year 9)
- Zaria Ali (Year 9)
- Angelina Fontaine (Year 9)
- Mustakim Ahmed (Year 9)
- Sameeul Haque (Head Boy)
- Marzana Begum (Head Girl)
Panel of Experts

Catrina Smith - Partner, Norton Rose Fulbright

Catrina Smith is an employment lawyer based in London. She specialises in all aspects of employment law, including corporate transactions, equality and diversity and discrimination issues and the full spectrum of contentious and non-contentious work. She also advises on corporate governance and remuneration issues and executive appointments and terminations. Much of her work has an international angle. She has particular expertise in handling highly sensitive and confidential matters affecting employers. Catrina is a member of the Employment Lawyers Association. She has participated in a number of ELA sub-committees responding to government consultations. As a well-respected partner at a Global law firm, Catrina is a great example of achieving success in the City environment from a non-traditional background. She attended a comprehensive school and was the first member of her family to attend university.

John McLaverty - Youth & School Coordinator Oxfam GB

John works with young people, teachers and youth workers in London and the South East to involve under 18s in Oxfam’s campaigns. In practical terms he helps young people develop the opportunities, knowledge and skills to make their voices heard on global issues, whether with decision makers, such as government ministers and MPs, or within their own communities. John is a member of Oxfam’s Health and Education for All working group and represents Oxfam on the Global Campaign for Education (GCE).

Jonathan Shopley - Managing Director, Natural Capital Partners

Jonathan Shopley was born in South Africa where he trained first as a civil engineer and then combined that with a degree in environmental science to fix environmental problems in the mining industry. He left South Africa in the 1980’s and travelled by motorcycle through Africa to study development issues across sub-Saharan Africa. He settled in London, and has worked for the past 25 years on measuring, reducing and repairing environmental impacts from industry. He is Managing Director at Natural Capital Partners, a company that works with over 300 international businesses to reduce their impact on the natural environment by funding afforestation, ecosystem protection, renewable energy, and energy efficiency projects around the world. He is Chair of a Community Renewable Energy Cooperative in South England, and a Member of the Board of the International Emissions Trading Association. Jonathan writes and lectures on sustainable development and climate issues.
**Panel of Experts**

**Abdul Khan - Senior Manager, Tower Hamlets Council**

Abdul Khan is a Senior Manager working for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. His role involves making sure Tower Hamlets is a more sustainable borough. The council is committed to sustainable development, continuously improving its services, policies and practices to contribute to a better quality of life for everyone, now and in the future. This means helping the council take necessary actions to tackle climate change, actions to protect, enhance and improve the borough’s biodiversity and ensure Tower Hamlets continues to keep its status as a Fairtrade borough.

Abdul grew up in Tower Hamlets and attended local schools. He studied at London Southbank University and has a master’s degree in Engineering.

**Sameeul Haque - Head Boy, Swanlea School**

For my GCSE’s, I received 7As 4Bs which I am extremely proud of. I am currently studying English literature, history, sociology and philosophy and Ethics. My aspirations for the future are to study History at degree level and then hopefully train to become a Secondary school teacher.

**Marzana Begum - Head Girl, Swanlea School**

I am currently studying biology, chemistry, history and maths. I want to study Medicine at UCL or Cambridge and become a Paediatrician. In the future I also want to work for the World Health Organisation and help improve the healthcare of children in the developing countries. Previously, I have volunteered at my local idea store where I became passionate about working with young children. I enjoy debating and I am trying to create a sixth form debate society. I believe in helping others, while helping myself and therefore I want to be an inspiring role model for the future generations.
During this phase, the parliamentarians asked the panel members their pre-prepared questions as well as other questions which arose as a response to the panel. The answers contained in this section are not recorded verbatim but are compiled from notes taken by both adults and school councilors who attended the parliament.

### Democracy & Law

**Q. Why can’t children vote?**

**John Mclaverty** - It is a very good question, if you are Scottish and 16 you can vote. There is a campaign at the moment to get children to vote at 16. At my age you had to be 21 to vote. So I get the reason why very young children are not allowed to vote because the people who make the decisions believe you do not know enough about certain things yet. Politicians are always very keen to understand what younger people have to say. You should meet your local MP and ask them why you are unable to vote and see what they say.

**Question - How can you get children to understand more about politics?**

**Catrina Smith** - I have two children who have just turned six and eight. Thinking about any of my children voting is quite scary. Children can get interested in politics in school, by being on the school council. It is also about being interested in things which affect your school and your lives. Do you know the name of your local MP? I believe you should get involved in things you believe are important to you and get involved in it. Get involved, get interested and meet your MP! Take responsibility of your own life and others.

**John Mclaverty** - I met Nick Clegg a few years ago and he said “What do you think I should do”. He said he wanted to listen to people and do what they requested him to do. I believe nobody will do anything until you ask them to. You should make sure that people who are making your decisions on your behalf are doing what you want them to do and not what other people want them to do. The advantage you have about asking Politicians questions is that young people go straight to the chest and ask them what they are thinking, which is a great advantage.

**Jonathan Shopley** - I think that often people think politics is a national thing and is out of reach. I believe our Politicians want us to get engaged and to ask questions. People want to understand.

**Q. Do you think that the sugar tax should be put through. If you do, why?**

**Abdul Khan** - Honestly, I think yes. I have a little daughter who thinks I am fat and that is probably because I have too much sugar. If you have large amounts of sugar you will have a lot more health issues and will have to visit the dentist a lot more.

**Catrina Smith** - I would try and make healthy food less expensive. I get sad when I see the amount of packaging that goes around fruit and vegetables which is completely unnecessary and which probably adds to the cost of these items. If it was introduced I would like to see it help make healthy food less expensive to purchase.

**John Mclaverty** - I think it is true that the rich countries of the world have a problem. What is happening in most of the world is people are grabbing land which is owned by farmers and turning
it into sugar land because there is a high request for sugar for things which are more unhealthy.

Environment

Q. How can we stop people from littering our streets?

Abdul Khan - We need to educate people more because littering is bad. When we walk down the streets and we see chewing gum on the streets it is not nice. We need to make sure there is enough bins provided to ensure people can dispose of their waste instead of throwing it on the floor. If it is thrown in the bins it is then processed and buried and takes years and years to dispose of.

Jonathan Shopley - In Singapore they are very strict and will fine people straight away if they are seen dropping litter. If the places where you live, shop and travel are cherished by you, you would look after them. It may be worth banning plastic bags as there is islands of plastic bags which are affecting the fish and how they eat.

John Mclaverty - Do you think we have a litter problem in Tower Hamlets? I think most people in London are very good about litter. When I worked in Sierra Leone people used ‘flying toilets’ which is where you do your business in a plastic bag and throw it as far as you can as there was no other facility or any other way of disposing of this. If you visited London 2000 years ago, London would have been quite like that in those days. Do not just think about the problems we have, think about the challenges people have in the other countries and how we can help them out.

Q. How will you stop people polluting the air with transport?

Abdul Khan - I think now a days we see more and more cars on the street because some families have 2 or 3 cars per family. We need to start going on more public transport to help reduce the pollution. In Tower Hamlets we have one of the highest rates as a borough. A lot of people have health problems due to the air and how it is has been damaged. We should encourage people to walk and cycle more rather than driving.

John Mclaverty - I took a group of children to the Houses of Parliament to tell them how to minimise our climate change and again nothing will happen unless we ask for it. So watch out on the news to find out how this is changing gradually.

Q. We have seen lots of people rushing when crossing the roads. How can we make the traffic lights stay green for longer to make it safer?

Abdul Khan - The roads are managed by transport for London and by the local council members. I have noticed that some of the traffic lights are too short because sometimes the green man does not stay on long enough to allow people to cross the roads. I think the council do this to keep the traffic flowing. However, I agree and I believe this can be very dangerous and you should contact your local council and inform them of this to see if they can do anything to change this.

John Shopley - Sometimes a single letter is not enough. Sometimes they need to know how important this topic is. Things such as petitions are a good way of getting people involved and raising awareness. It is very critical to get your whole community involved.
Opportunities for Young People

Q. How can we create a career day for young students to start thinking about the future early?

**Catrina Smith** - I am very impressed that you are all thinking about your future. It is important that you take the opportunities to make sure that when you are thinking about what you would like to do in the future that you keep an open mind. I was very lucky that I had very supportive parents and I like to think that opportunities have got better. I have issues about access to higher education and the cost of it. Keep in mind that 25% of the jobs which are done now will not exist when you leave schools. Think about what jobs people will need in the future because they will be different to what we do now.

**John Mclaverty** - It is important to be flexible and it is important to be thinking about careers and the skills you need to make yourself successful in jobs. Learn computer skills because they will be the skills needed for the future.

**Johnathan Shopley** - Get your MPs in to talk to you and to discuss the questions you have raised here. I am sure there are businesses around here who would be very keen to have you in to visit to get a taste of what it is like.

Q. Why do we not have more youth clubs for young children to make them more sociable?

**John Mclaverty** - At the moment the government is cutting the amount of money from our taxes to the local authorities. The local authorities are cutting a large amount of services they run e.g. youth clubs, libraries. If you disagree with this you should start a campaign.

**Abdul Khan** - You should all contact the mayor of Tower Hamlets and express your voices and he will listen to you.

Q. How would you prepare us for the future?

**Johnathan Shopley** - A theme which has come out of this morning has been to talk about what you want and what people can help deliver it. Preparing you for a future where you have control over the things you care about e.g. sugar, youth clubs, it is about feeling comfortable to talk to people about the changes to make sure they are recognised. You need to make yourself fit for your future.

**John Mclaverty** - We work with people so they become good at developing their communication skills and their confidence. This is to make sure young people's voices are heard. When it comes to employment these are the skills they will be looking for to see people make decisions.

**Catrina Smith** - I would suggest once a week, once a day, do something different which you have not done before. Challenge yourself. Change will be much more rapid and will happen a lot and you need to have the skills to adapt the change and to welcome it and to have experience of it. It is good to have a routine but challenge yourself for when change happens.

**John Mclaverty** - Teachers do not know everything, the more you know the more you need to find out. Do not expect people to give you all of the answers. That is your responsibility.
Equality & Human Rights

Q - The refugees crisis has a huge impact across the worlds. Why are some countries accepting them and some not being as accommodating?

John Mclaverty - If you were to look at the Syria crisis, the countries with the most refugees are Jordan and Turkey. A large amount of people have crossed the border into the neighbour country due to the conflict taking place. The places which need the most help are the ones who are taking the most refugees in. Europe needs to sort its act out. Britain has accepted a very few refugees, we are a very rich country and we should be supporting them and adopt a joint policy. It is a massive challenge.

Q - What will you do to stop people treating other people differently due to their religion?

Catrina Smith - Religion, disability all came later. It is interesting because going back to the very first question which was about politics. Politics is about leading a nation in a particular way. When equal pay was introduced in 1970 most people would have opposed equal pay. I think there are some issues in which it takes brave and clever people to take a stand. Discrimination is one of them. We should exploit the talents of everyone in this country. Get the best out of everyone in the country. How can you stop people discriminating against people and their religion? Maybe they are not nice people. It will affect them and how they live their lives. Does anyone tease other pupils for any reason? Make sure in your own lives you are not discriminating against others. It will be in your best interest to treat everyone how you wish to be treated.

Q - What do you think about racism happening in Britain and how can you put a stop to it?

John Mclaverty - When we were in Poland we visited concentration camps. When we came out afterwards the young people and teachers were pretty down as what they had just seen was very horrible. It makes you think about discrimination and racism. We spoke about how we could change this. They all agreed that the best way we could challenge this would be to speak up and raise your voice. Tell someone! Say that you do not accept it. If you feel uncomfortable doing it yourself, do it with your friends. Back each other and support each other and we can challenge racism. People in London challenge racism and they do a great job of it. Do not ever sit back and ignore it.

Abdul Khan - When I was growing up, I saw some parts of racism. You have different groups when growing up. Now I have seen it improve during the years. People are learning to live together as one and it is really nice to see. When I was growing up my dad used to tell me about some of the racist comments he received, which were horrific. I am grateful we do not have to go through what they had too.

John Mclaverty - The reason it has got better is because of your parents and grandparents. They have already challenged it.
During the final phase, the parliamentarians discussed the advice given by the panel and agreed the main priorities for the East 1 Schools’ Partnership. They agreed a partnership action plan and identified 16 key priorities that they will work towards throughout the rest of the 2013-14 academic year.

### Opportunities for Young People

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<th>KEY PRIORITIES</th>
<th>POSSIBLE ACTIONS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To be exposed to the opportunities available to children when they are older</td>
<td>• Have a work week at school- Invite professionals into school to discuss a wide range of professions and occupations in different classes e.g. hairdresser, banker, chef, fireman etc. This could be extended to a careers day at Swanlea School.</td>
<td>• Parents (parents who can volunteer to come in to talk about their profession)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Teachers to ask friends or contacts to invite into school</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Aspirations to be encouraged and support given to achieve success.</td>
<td>• Alternatively, children could visit different work place. Trips to UCL to find out about the world of work as a scientist. • Youth club talks from local youth centres</td>
<td>• Teachers to arrange visits to different places of work.</td>
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## Environment

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<th>KEY PRIORITIES</th>
<th>POSSIBLE ACTIONS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITIES</th>
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| 1. Littering/Rubbish - Wanting a cleaner environment | • Advertising campaigns to teach people about the importance of recycling.  
• Improve & clean residential places, more community cleaning, make litter grabbers or pick a piece (of litter) a day  
• Walk/cycle to school day  
• School workshops run by Tower Hamlets recycle team to promote recycling. | • Students  
• Teachers  
• Tower Hamlets council  
• Parents |
| 2. Greater awareness of global environmental issues i.e. deforestation, greenhouse effect, climate change | • Art project promoting a cleaner and sustainable environment (globally) - could be linked to the recent floods in Northern England. | • Students  
• Teachers |

## Human Rights & Equality

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<th>KEY PRIORITIES</th>
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| 1. Celebrate diversity within our community | • Diversity day at school- bring a dish or wear your cultured dress. Learn about a culture/religion different to your own. Invite parents/carers. | • Parents/Carers  
• Teachers/support staff  
• Students |
| 2. Organise charity events/days to support disadvantaged people in the world | • Shoebox scheme- Fill a shoe box to send to less fortunate children.  
• http://linktohope.co.uk/shoebox-appeal/filling-shoebox  
• http://www.internationalaidtrust.org.uk/campaignsshops/shoebox-appeal/  
• Fundraising day for children and staff to raise money for chosen school charity. Celebrate Red Nose Day and other similar charities. | • Schools - Teachers and students |
Each school that participated in the East 1 Schools’ Pupil Parliament will receive a copy of this report. Using the partnership action plan, each school council will identify the main priorities for their school and develop an action plan which will help them to contribute towards achieving the partnership action plan contained in this report. The impact will be recorded and shared with each East 1 School.