



**Lord Nash**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools

Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT  
tel: 0370 000 2288 [www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus)

Chi Onwurah MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

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Dear Ms Onwurah,

Last August, my predecessor Lord Hill took the decision to allow the application for Newcastle UTC to transfer to become a free school, promoted by Newcastle Colleges Group.

I am writing to inform you that, due to pupil recruitment issues, the free school will not be opening in September 2013. This decision was taken by the Academy Trust, who could not agree to pupil recruitment clauses in the funding agreement, which required the Trust to open with a specified number of pupils. The clauses are necessary to ensure that every free school that opens is able to demonstrate financial and educational viability.

My priority is to ensure that we only establish schools where we are satisfied that the project will lead to a successful school. One of the key tests is whether parents and pupils want the additional choice that the new school will bring, and to demonstrate that by applying for places.

The process of opening a Free School is rigorous and places substantial demands on applicant groups, with only those with the very best chance of success going on to open. I am sure you will understand that it is vital that we challenge groups to ensure that their plans are clear and coherent, are supported by parental demand and that they represent value for money for the tax payer.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN NASH