

Consultation On Amalgamation Or Closure Of Six Hackney Primary Schools

Additional Responses & Engagement Workshops

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Additional Consultation Responses

Introduction

Additional responses to the consultation were received by email, sent to school.sufficiency@hackney.co.uk, Council members and the Mayor's Office. The comments in the additional responses have been classified in line with Kwest's qualitative analysis classifications.

Responses

A total of 9 additional responses were received by email during the informal consultation period (5 June to 16 July 2023.)

Key themes identified

The chart below presents the key themes identified across the additional responses.

Classification key theme	
General statements:	13
Criticism of consultation / expectation buildings will be sold	5
Comments on the decision to consult & wider context	4
General comment that do not want school to close / amalgamate	4
Positive comment about existing schools:	13
School is at the heart of local community	5
Staff go the extra mile / school has a good reputation / facilities	3
Existing school provides good support for children with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities)	2
Small class sizes / schools are better for children	2
Other positive comment about existing schools	1
Other:	7
Comments about school places:	6
Demographics of population can change	2
Impact of free schools / and religious schools in the area on enrolment at the school(s).	2
Other comment about school places	1
Other local schools do not have many spaces	1
Negative comment about other schools / process of moving:	5
Move will negatively affect children	2
Parents will need support with paperwork etc	1

Impact on staff and potential loss of jobs	1
Other negative comment about other schools / process of moving	1

Overview of comments

A summary of the comments within the additional responses is provided below. Where the responses were significantly longer and included comment on a larger number of issues, a summary of the key themes has also been provided. Please note that Hackney Education responded directly where questions were raised by email respondents about the proposals or consultation process.

Responses related to Colvestone Primary School

Response 1

The respondent raised an equality concern regarding the translation of consultation documents and support for parents/families for whom English is not their primary language. The respondent requested for information to be translated.

Response 2

The respondent objected to the closure of Colvestone and amalgamation with Princess May. The respondent stated that the school is a “crucial part of the community in Dalston and Hackney” and that it is close to residents, that the closure will be detrimental to children’s education, that the school is a historic school and expressed concern that flats would be built on the site, that it has good Ofsted reports and lastly, that a decision should not be made for cost saving reasons.

Response 3

The respondent requested financial modelling data and Hackney Education projected budgets. The email states that this information had first been requested during the Colvestone engagement session in April 2023, prior to the consultation, and requested the data be provided before the end the consultation period. The respondent states that: “How Hackney Education’s modelling and budget projections for Colvestone differ from those prepared by the school are therefore essential in understanding why Colvestone is in the consultation - and to allow stakeholders to democratically interrogate the modelling and assumptions made by Hackney Education to arrive at the conclusions they have.”

Response 4

Submitted by the governing body of Colvestone Primary School, the document sets out objections and concerns over the proposed closure of Colvestone. The document notes that the governing body does not view the proposals as an amalgamation as the proposals only offer children a place at Princess May and do not include an amalgamation of staff and education. The document also states the view that the term “merger/amalgamation” has been chosen by the Council to avoid being seen to close four schools. The objections are divided into two parts. The full document is provided in Appendix 2.

Part 1 refers to the Hackney Education webpage on the proposals and responds to the

following factors considered by the Council when considering alternatives and solutions to the proposals. It raises objections and concerns related to:

- School at financial risk
 - Objections: The response states that the school has indicated it is financially viable for 2023/24; the partnership with Blossom Federation enables financial savings and has the potential to continue beyond the next academic year; there is an in year surplus this year and for two years running; and there has been significant capital investment in the last financial year and so no additional costs will be required in the future.
 - Concerns: The response states that final SMRA data has not been taken into account and was commissioned to make cost savings; the data was used unfairly to support closing Colvestone; and that Colvestone has future-proofed with recent capital investments.
- Number of vacant places
 - Objections: The response states that more children could attend Colvestone in reception if De Beauvoir closes, due to oversubscription of other local schools; that there would have been more interest in the school this year following partnership and repairs work; that it would be easier to fill a one form entry school; there has been less movement of pupils this year compared to pandemic years; and that many parents have remained at Colvestone despite the proposals.
 - Concerns: view that Hackney Education modelling was not accurate and the changing circumstances of the school have not been taken into account.
- Physical size of school
 - Objections: States that Colvestone has the ability to provide high quality education as a 1 form entry school on an “appropriately sized” site with all aspects of the site utilised and in a manageable condition; and proposes that the school keeper’s house could be used as an ARP.
 - Concerns: States that no risk assessment or costs of the size of schools has been done, or comparisons of schools.
- Geographic partnership
 - Objections: States that Princess May was selected as a merger site based on distance and that other nearest schools are church schools with full ARP; comments on the proximity of schools in the proposals (Colvestone, De Beauvoir and Randal Cremer); sets out concern about the route to Princess May and the proximity of the playground to the A10 and the impact of pollution; and states that Princess May is not geographically closer for many families.
 - Concerns: States that pollution has not been considered; and parents/carers have not been surveyed about their preferences.
- New neighbourhoods and new builds create significantly more need for school places in the future
 - Objections: The response refers to plans for 600 new homes in Dalston; shares view that Hackney Education and Planning do not have a coordinated strategy and belief that the school is key to planning aims; similarly, refers to Colvestone school as a part of aims for Colvestone Crescent, 21st Century street; and states view that the 21st Century street would bring more families to the area and school.
 - Concern: States that there has not been a discussion of the role of the school in the Dalston Plan and 21st Century Streets.
- Current OFSTED grades and predicted outcomes for children
 - Objections: The response refers to the ‘Good’ Ofsted rating; and to significant improvements at the school in EYFS data.

- Concerns: States that schools have been told that Ofsted grades are not relevant as the majority of Hackney schools are good or outstanding.
- Community impact
 - Objections: Located near Ridley Road Market, the response raises the historic significance of the area; the school is a Birkbeck school and is of historical significance.
 - Concerns: The response shares the belief that the local community has not been consulted; and again raises concerns regarding the Dalston Plan and 21st Century Street.

Part 2 states that the merger/amalgamation with Princess May has no benefits for Colvestone. The objections cover the following points, referencing the benefits of a merger stated by Hackney Education

- Context [of the Colvestone as part of the Blossom Federation]
 - Part 2 highlights successes and achievements of the school as part of the Blossom Federation. The objection states that “The deficit, the restructuring of support staff and the lack of infrastructure in the school to support teaching learning was a direct result of the previous federation.”
- Creation of one new, stronger school community, maximising the funding available to it
 - Objection: The response quotes a parent survey and states 100% of parents surveyed believe that the Blossom partnership has had a positive impact; and raises the positive impact of the partnership on the governing body.
 - Concerns: The respondents believe this has not been considered by Hackney Education in the Cabinet proposals; and the response states that governors were told that the school would have been considered for closure, if not for the Blossom partnership.
- Increased specialist expertise from a wider teaching and pupil support team
 - Objections: The response states that specialist expertise is already in place through the Blossom Federation.
 - Concerns: The respondents believe that the partnership has not been considered by Hackney Education.
- Increased potential for school improvement and targeted support in response to local needs
 - Objections: The response states that teaching and learning has improved with the development of middle leaders supported by the executive head and head of school.
 - Concerns: Questions Hackney Education processes to ensure a school does not have a deficit and states that issues were not raised in a remote audit.
- Stronger finances, with consistent resources and stable staff workforce
 - Objections: Colvestone has identified a surplus this year; the surplus has come from funding from the Schools Contingency Fund, which it had not previously accessed and objects to the suggestion that the surplus has been achieved due to emergency intervention from the Council; the respondents believe that Colvestone budgets are achievable and states that systems are in place to resolve historic debts; surplus has been achieved despite historic debts and again the respondents raise questions about the Hackney Education audit; it is also stated that the federation delivers IT support and PE support.
 - Concerns: The respondents ask whether any schools have gone into deficit within a year.

Key themes:

- Comments about school places:
 - Demographics of population can change
 - Other local schools do not have many spaces
 - Impact of free schools / and religious schools in the area on enrolment at the school(s).
 - Other comment about school places
- General statements:
 - Comments on the decision to consult & wider context
 - General comment that do not want school to close / amalgamate
- Positive comment about existing schools:
 - School is at the heart of local community
 - Staff go the extra mile / school has a good reputation / facilities
- Other
 - Other comments raised in the summary that do not fit into the key themes are included in the summary above.

For the full comments provided in the Objections document, see Appendix 2.

Response 5

The Save Colvestone document was submitted twice by email.

Save Colvestone states that Colvestone Primary School is a pillar of the community and should be able to continue in its role. The document details reasons for the school to remain open, opposition to the proposed merger with Princess May, and raises multiple questions regarding the decision to include Colvestone in proposals and raises criticism about the consultation process. The summary below provides an overview of the issues and arguments raised in the document. Headings are taken from the document. The full document is provided in Appendix 3.

- Key benefits of Colvestone remaining open
 - The response states that Colvestone as an academically strong, non-denominational, one-form entry school and the attraction of Colvestone to Dalston families.
 - Keeping Colvestone open is an opportunity for Hackney Council to recover the budget deficit.
 - The response discusses the role of Colvestone Primary School within the Dalston Plan and Colvestone Crescent 21st Century Street.
 - Provision of non-faith education at Colvestone, quoting a survey of resident support.
 - States that there is strong SEND provision at Colvestone.
 - Keeping Colvestone open would avoid the costs associated with closing the school and paying off the deficit.
 - View that Colvestone remaining open reassures residents that their views have been considered and increases faith in consultation processes.
- Key risks of closing Colvestone
 - The response states that closing Colvestone exposes pupils to air pollution at Princess May.
 - Comments on the negative impact of closing/amalgamating schools at once and cost impact.
 - Comments on the cost of closing schools.
 - Again discusses the role of Colvestone Primary School within the Dalston Plan.
 - Suggests that the closure will also negatively impact developers associated

- with the Dalston Plan.
- States that there will be a lack of school places in the area, with the proposed closure of De Beauvoir and Randal Cremer.
- Raises concern that Colvestone could be reopened as a free school.
- States that it will have a negative impact on children with SEND.
- States that it will have a negative impact on school engagement and Emotionally Based School Avoidance and damage the local community
- Challenges GLA predictions.
- States that the closure would have an impact on faith in the Council and Labour Party.
- Flaws in the consultation process
 - View that the consultation did not follow statutory guidance or the Education Sufficiency and Estates Strategy.
 - View that the Cabinet Briefing Report did not include sufficient detail.
 - View that the design of the consultation is ineffective.
 - View that the consultation was inaccessible to some groups.
 - View that the consultation process has been damaging to the schools in scope.
- Reports and underlying data
 - Resubmission of the full report prepared in the pre-engagement stage, May 2023 (referred to as the 'pre-informal' stage of the consultation.) The document states that the views in the report were not considered in the Cabinet report ahead of the decision to informally consult.
 - The Case for Colvestone Primary School
 - Addressing falling role
 - Positive financial management
 - Strong Academic record
 - Correcting future development impact assessments
 - Air pollution threat
 - Historical significance and site protections
 - Risk of current proposal: parental choice
 - Alternative options
 - Conclusion
 - Submission to the School Sufficiency team at Hackney Council, for inclusion in the Cabinet Report ahead of the meeting on Monday 22 May 2023
 - The case for Colvestone Primary School
 - Colvestone: A village school in the heart of Hackney
 - Context for Colvestone
 - Financial viability
 - Academic record
 - Parent choice
 - Impact on children with special educational needs
 - Impact on local development
 - Air pollution
 - Historical significance and protections
 - Campaign summary
 - Petition
 - Local support
 - Press coverage
 - Appendices - 1) Colvestone Parents Choice Factor Survey
2) email from a parent of children with SEN.

Key themes:

- Positive comment about existing school
 - Existing school provides good support for children with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities)
 - School is at the heart of local community
 - Staff go the extra mile / school has a good reputation / facilities
 - Small class sizes / schools are better for children
- Negative comment about other schools / process of moving:
 - Move will negatively affect children
 - Impact on staff and potential loss of jobs
 - Other negative comment about other schools / process of moving
- Comments about school places:
 - Impact of free schools / and religious schools in the area on enrolment at the school(s).
- General statements:
 - General comment that do not want school to close / amalgamate
 - Comments on the decision to consult & wider context
 - Criticism of consultation / expectation buildings will be sold
- Other
 - Other comments raised in the summary that do not fit into the key themes are detailed in the summary above.

For the full comments provided in the campaign document, see Appendix 3.

Response 6

The respondent, speaking on behalf of parents of children with SEND at Colvestone, expressed that the consultation feels like a done deal and Colvestone parents feel unheard and unsupported by the Council: “We do not feel heard, we do not feel supported by the council, we do not feel like we matter.” The respondent also expressed disappointment at receiving a standard reply to emails and raised the following comments and questions:

- Questions about the SEND services and the creation of an ARP unit in Colvestone. The respondent stated that ARP units in Hackney are oversubscribed and that Colvestone would be an ideal candidate for an ARP, citing that SEND children do better in smaller classes.
 - “Why is the council ignoring this scientific fact and refusing the right to a suitable education to these SEND children?”
 - “Why is the school not considered for an APR unit and what do we have to do to make it so?”
- Questions regarding the deficit of the school and due diligence from Hackney council
 - “When the deficit first appeared in the school, why did Hackney council continue to pour money into the school but did nothing about auditing the books and checking how the deficit was created in a fully subscribed school. Was due diligence done in this instance?”
 - “According to the reasoning behind this merger, a school that is not full can not sustain itself. Why was then a full school not sustaining itself? Why did Hackney not investigate when this deficit was being created?”
- Questions regarding the merger with Princess May, stating that Colvestone parents had made their views on Princess May clear in April, 2023 and had included survey evidence stating that Colvestone parents did not wish to send their children

to Princess May:

- “Has the Mayor actually seen our dossier? Is he now in possession of all our evidence and campaign points?”
- “What will the council do when most of the Colvestone families refuse to go to Princes May?”
- “When can we expect to have a further meeting with the council regarding the consultation and what is the council planning on doing to ensure that there is an open channel of communication?”

Response 7

Member enquiry raising a number of questions from Colvestone parents regarding the workshop events for parents:

- Whether ward councillors would be informed about parent meetings at schools in their wards
- Whether responses and information shared in the pre-engagement stage would need to be resubmitted to be included in the consultation.
- Criticism of the consultation format and structure and asked whether consultation responses could be submitted in other formats, external to the consultation questionnaire.

Responses related to De Beauvoir

Response 8

The respondent stated that “for historic reasons alone” De Beauvoir should not close. The parent referenced the age of the school and stated that it is part of the local community.

General responses or responses related to all proposals

Response 9

Member enquiry raising questions from residents and ward members regarding the use of school buildings, namely:

- The loss of historic school buildings.
- As a result of closures, concerns that there will be fewer local authority run schools in the borough and a higher number of academies.
- Resident requests for a guarantee that school sites will not be turned into flats.

Engagement Workshops

Parents and carers were invited to attend workshops at each of the schools to provide an opportunity to ask questions about the consultation proposals. Workshops were developed in partnership with school leadership teams and were adapted to meet the needs of each school community. Schools were asked to identify the language support needed for each event and interpreters were provided at the events to support parents and carers who speak English as an additional language and who may need additional support to engage with the consultation.

Overview of the workshops approach

All workshops followed a similar format and agenda, agreed with school leadership teams ahead of the events. This included a presentation from Hackney Education to provide, or reiterate, the context behind the proposals. Participants were then given the opportunity to ask questions. After the Q&A, participants could speak to Hackney Education officers about admissions, SEND support, and general concerns specific to individual circumstances in a smaller group, surgery style format. Participants were also encouraged to share their views and comments through the formal consultation process by completing the consultation questionnaire.

The above format was adapted for each school following school leadership teams' direction and understanding of their school community's needs. Baden Powell held two workshops, one focused on SEND and one on admissions. Colvestone held one workshop for parents and another for staff. The Princess May workshop was held online.

As stated, interpreters were provided at events to help parents with limited English or who do not speak English as a primary language. Schools were asked whether interpreter support was needed, parent/carer invitations were translated into the languages requested and interpreters were provided at the workshops. Colvestone requested support for Bengali, Turkish, Portuguese, Slovak and Spanish speaking parents and Baden Powell requested support for Turkish speaking parents.

The following details the questions and comments raised at the engagement events.

Overview of workshop questions and comments

Comments and questions in each of the workshops have grouped to align with the broad themes identified in the Kwest Consultation Report.

Baden Powell Primary School
Two workshops were held at Baden Powell, the first focused on admissions and the second focused on SEND.

1. Workshop 1, 26 June 2023, 3:30pm

Negative comments about other schools / process of moving:

- Participants were concerned that the move to another school will negatively affect children, stating that the move will “mentally damage” children.
- Participants asked why Baden Powell had been selected for closure and not Nightingale. Other participants questioned why Nightingale had been built, if school rolls were declining. Some participants compared staff at Nightingale and Baden Powell, stating that there is more parent interaction with teachers at Baden Powell while other participants stated that “parents at Nightingale say they do not want our children to go there.”
- Participants questioned whether there would be enough space and facilities, such as playground space and swings, for all pupils on one site.

Other comments:

- Participants made a range of other comments including:
 - Stating that closing children’s centres and nurseries would make more sense.
 - Asking what the plan is for children with EHCPs.
 - Asking whether the Scrutiny Committee had reviewed the proposals.
 - Asking how parents can know whether their voices will be heard.
 - Suggesting the government could afford to keep schools open.

Comments about school places:

- Some participants commented that current nursery enrollment is not low, stating 2020-2022 nursery children are expected to go to Baden Powell. Participants stated that most years are full at Baden Powell currently. Other participants thought enrollment could increase with new house building.

Positive comments about existing schools:

- Participants stated that they were happy with Baden Powell and praised the education at the school. One participant stated “we want a small school.”

General statements:

- One participant stated that it felt like parents do not have a choice about the closure and amalgamation.

2. Workshop 2, 3 July 2023, 3:30 pm

The second Baden Powell workshop focused on questions around SEND.

Negative comment about other schools / process of moving:

- Multiple participants commented that they do not know what Nightingale is like as a primary school and requested an open day at Nightingale to view the school and meet the teachers. Some participants asked whether the schools could work together through the amalgamation.
- Participants largely wanted Baden Powell children to move to Nightingale with their friends, in the same classes and be taught by Baden Powell teachers. Some parents shared that their children are anxious about the move: “My child is anxious about some lessons and needs more help.” One participant was concerned about bullying at Nightingale.
- These concerns were particularly shared by parents of children with SEND. Participants asked whether their children will have EHCPs and asked about the impact of the transition on children with SEND’s CAT and SATs tests. One parent stated that it would be helpful for their child to visit Nightingale weekly.

- Some participants expressed the belief that Nightingale children and parents do not want Baden Powell children to join the school and are not welcoming. Other participants stated that they would not send their children to Nightingale.
- Participants were concerned about staff jobs, asking about the number of redundancies.
- Participants also commented on the size of Baden Powell.

General statements:

- Participants stated that the decision to close the school had already been made. Some felt that the decision had already been made by the council, others felt that there was no choice other than to close Baden Powell and wanted the process to be completed: "We would rather it was decided and we had longer to prepare."
- Participants also asked if alternative solutions had been considered.
- Multiple participants raised issues including increases in cost of living, affordable housing and gentrification, commenting that housing is unaffordable and "we are being forced out of Hackney." Participants felt that other issues affecting residents in Hackney were not being adequately addressed and are a more urgent issue than school enrollment.
- Some participants also suggested that information about the proposals had been unevenly shared between schools, stating that Nightingale parents knew about the proposals before Baden Powell parents.

Other:

- Participants raised a number of other comments including:
 - Questioning whether government intervention or funding could prevent schools from closing and asking how the school will be funded if the merger does not go ahead.
 - Other participants asked how involved the headteacher of Baden Powell would be at Nightingale.
 - Other participants wanted to explore alternatives to closing, one participant suggested only closing reception.

Randal Cremer Primary School

Workshop, 30 June 2023, 9am

Negative comment about other schools / process of moving:

- Participants commented on the negative impact of the proposals and transition to a new school for children, causing stress for children and their families.
- Two participants commented on the negative impact on children with SEND and the need for more support for children.
- One participant also talked about the costs associated with moving schools such as buying uniforms.
- One participant also commented on the negative impact on staff and the stress caused by the proposals.

Comments about school places:

- Participants wanted to know when they should move their children to a new school and whether they should wait for the final cabinet decision. Parents were worried about losing out on places at their preferred schools and being able to find a school that could accommodate siblings, and the impact on children with SEND and those with an EHCP.

- Participants also commented on the impact of the proposals on enrollment at Randal Cremer and concerns about moving children to a school that may be in scope for closure in the future.

Positive comment about existing schools:

- One participant praised the SEND support their child has received at Randal Cremer.

Other:

- One participant asked why academies have been opened while birth rates and enrollment has been declining, and the level of control Hackney Education has over the opening of academies.

Colvestone Primary School

Colvestone Primary School held two workshops, one for staff and one for parents.

1. Staff workshop, 27 June 2023

General statements:

- Staff stated that they should have had the opportunity to meet with Council representatives at an earlier stage.
- Participants also wanted more clarity about the proposals and what a merger would entail: "Is it a physical move to Princess May? There needs to be clarity."
- Participants also made broad statements such as "more needs to be done" and asked that learning be taken from this process, if further closures are proposed.

Negative comment about other schools / process of moving:

- Participants asked about the process for redundancy, pension entitlement, and whether there is scope for pay protection.
- Participants commented on the negative impact of the proposals and potential job loss on staff. One participant stated: "There has been a lack of professional respect."
- One participant also stated that unions had not been in contact with staff.

Comments about school places:

- Participants asked about enrollment data and why more schools have been built if enrollment and birth rates have declined.
- One participant also commented that parents have not been given enough time to look for a new school.

Positive comment about existing schools:

- Participants stated that the quality of education has not gone down at Colvestone and that staff are dedicated to pupils. Participants cautioned that messaging needs to be sensitive to the dedication of staff.
- Participants also alluded to the changes in leadership at Colvestone: "There has been no acknowledgment of the changes we have had."

2. Parent workshop, 27 June, 2023

General statements:

- Participants raised multiple questions about the data behind the proposals, challenging birth rate data in Hackney, asking about the budget for schools in

Hackney and future modelling. Participants stated that requests had been made for financial modelling data and requests were repeated in the session. Participants also stated that Colvestone had higher enrollment than other schools in scope. Participants stated that they had provided information to Cabinet and Hackney Education and felt that their contributions had not been reflected in the previous Cabinet report.

- Participants were critical of the consultation process, asking what the purpose of the consultation was and whether consultation responses would be considered in the decision making process. Participants also asked how local residents were being consulted, stating the belief that residents had not been included in the consultation.
- Participants were dissatisfied with the workshop approach, stating that they were not aware that the workshop had been planned with space for individual conversations. One participant also stated that parents had asked for a SEND specific meeting. Participants also stated that they wanted the opportunity to talk with Councillors.
- Participants asked what information they would need to present to stop the proposals from going ahead.
 - "What do you need to decide not to close the school?"
 - "If we could wipe the deficit out, would we not be in scope?"
- Participants also expressed frustration with communication and the provision of information. One participant stated that they hadn't received a reply to email requests, another participant asked if more information was available.
- One participant commented that other schools have closed across the country.

Comments about school places:

- Participants questioned why free schools and faith schools had not been included in the proposals and asked what Hackney Education will do in regards to faith schools.
- Participants asked whether Colvestone could be a school for pupils with SEND and asked whether SEND children will be provided with alternative places in the borough. One participant stated that as a small school, Colvestone supports their child with SEND.
- Participants stated that the proposals and consultation had a negative effect on enrollment at the schools, one participant stated that it had been a "death sentence because potential parents expect closure." Participants felt that the news prevented the school from improving its enrollment figures.
- Participants also asked whether more schools would be identified for closure, including secondary schools. One participant was concerned about sending their child to a school that could also close.
- Two participants also stated a preference for one form entry.

Positive comment about existing schools:

- Participants commented on the strengths of Colvestone. One parent stated "This school is a safe haven for my child, a mini heaven, comfort zone." Participants commented on the small class size, the environment and lower pollution levels.
- Participants were also positive about joining the Blossom Federation and asked for more time to improve under the federation: "Take us off the list for two years to allow the partnership to take effect."
- Participants also referenced developments in the area, specifically new housing developments.
- One participant also commented that the school has good transport links.

Negative comment about other schools / process of moving:

- Participants stated that they did not want to send their children to Princess May, with two participants stating that their children were scared of going to a new school. One participant was concerned about bullying if their child moved to Princess May.
- Participants also wanted to know when the decision would be made and stated that December 2023 would be too late for a decision.
- One participant commented on the impact on staff, stating that morale was low.
- One participant stated that closing the school would negatively impact the local community.

Nightingale Primary School

4 July 2023

Negative comment about other schools / process of moving:

- Participants were concerned about the negative impact on Nightingale families and stated that better communication was needed throughout the process. This included the need to communicate the benefits of the merger to parents and the details of the proposals. Participants also wanted the school to provide more information to parents. One respondent commented on support for non English speaking parents.
- Participants were concerned about the impact of stress and increases in responsibilities for staff and the headteacher following a merger.
- Participants also warned that the merger will be disruptive and impact Nightingale pupils' education. Participants asked how pupils will be supported and stated that a transition plan should be in place for all children.

Other:

- Participants made other comments related to:
 - Managing the merger: Participants wanted to ensure the merger would be managed for Nightingale and Baden Powell families alike. Some suggested that there should be an induction for new parents or events to help parents to transition. Participants also wanted parents to have information about and set expectations about education.
 - Activities, clubs and trips: Participants wanted to know whether activities and school trips would be available following the merger and commented on the cost of Forest School.
 - Funding: Participants asked whether the merger would provide more funding and whether parents would have a say on how additional funding is used.

Comments about school places:

- Participants also asked a number of questions about the process for selecting schools included in the proposals, including asking about the impact of falling birth rates, demographics, and the number of schools in the area:
 - "Was the birth rate a factor?"
 - "If the birth rate keeps falling, will there be another merger?"
 - "Has Hackney closed schools before?"
 - "Apart from capacity and numbers, which factors did you consider?"
 - "Were space, money, demographics considered?"
 - "Did you look at how many schools there were nearby?"
 - "Are potentially closing /merging schools taking children for 23/24/25?"
 - "Why were parents not directed to schools with low numbers?"

- Participants asked multiple questions about the process of amalgamating Nightingale and De Beauvoir:
 - "Is there a set number of SEND children you can take on?"
 - "How are places allocated?"
 - "Why are closing schools open for 24/25/26 applications?"
 - "Will Baden Powell applicant automatically go to Nightingale?"
 - "Will there be another meeting to tell us the merger is happening?"
 - "Will parents need to apply to other schools apart from Nightingale?"
- Participants also asked whether schools in scope could become academies.

General statements:

- Participants wanted more information on the benefits of the proposed merger with some participants expressing scepticism that there would be any benefits for Nightingale: "We are worried we will not get the benefits of merger."
- Participants asked about the next steps in the process, including the date of the Cabinet meeting following informal consultation and how soon parents would be informed of a Cabinet decision.
- Other participants questioned why falling enrollment had not been addressed earlier.
- One respondent stated that the proposal would go ahead, regardless of comments provided at the workshop.

Princess May

6 July 2023, 11am

There were fewer comments and questions at the Princess May workshop, reflecting a lower turn out of parents. Five questions were asked, primarily around SEND management and funding:

- The school's senior leadership team asked how additional children with EHCPs from Colvestone would be managed alongside children with EHCPs at Princess May and stated that a support plan is "most important for the children that need specialist provision as moving to a mainstream school is a huge transition for these children and their families."
- The team asked about funding, stating that funding is Princess May's main concern and asked if the school could move to a two-form entry to provide additional teachers to support the increased class sizes following a merger. It was emphasised that the financial question and avoiding a deficit is the most serious concern for Princess May.

De Beauvoir Primary School

14 July 2023, 9am

General statements:

- Participants were highly concerned about the use of the school site, if the school closes. This included concern that the school site could be sold and converted to housing or that a free school would be set up. One participant commented on house prices in Hackney.
- Participants stated that the views of children have not been gathered as part of the consultation and engagement process. However, in response the headteacher stated that children's responses had been gathered at the start of the process.
- Participants also asked how their comments would be included in the consultation

- and how information would inform the decision making process.
- Other participants felt that the decision had already been made

Comments about school places:

- Participants asked whether alternative options had been explored, such as merging with De Beauvoir with Princess May. Many participants were concerned about securing a place in a nearby school, stating that some schools in the area have full enrollment. Other participants stated that other schools were not in walking distance or felt that other school options were not suitable, for instance faith schools.
- Participants asked about the criteria for proposing mergers and the data used to select the schools included in the proposals. Questions included:
 - "Who decided which schools would merge?"
 - "What basis was used to decide which schools merge?"
 - "Why were parents not consulted about the schools chosen?"
 - "Do you consider all years when considering which schools to close?"
 - "Do you consider where children live when deciding on closure?"
 - "Have you considered pupil/parent satisfaction?"
- Participants also asked about the impact of the proposals and consultation on enrollments, which the headteacher addressed, stating that 20% of children have already left De Beauvoir.

Negative comment about other schools / process of moving:

- Participants were concerned about the impact on staff, asking whether staff will be supported to find jobs and asking how their mental health has been supported through the process. Participants commented on the role of staff in supporting the children. Other participants praised the support they received from the headteacher, one stated: "Every point I have raised has been dealt with properly by the Head."
- Some participants also commented on the impact on children, stating that moving to an "unwanted" school would affect mental health and children would be exposed to pollution when travelling to school.

Positive comment about existing schools:

- Participants stated that the school is a historic building and has existed for a long time. Participants asked why closing a newer school had not been considered.
- One parent stated that "the school has done a lot for my child."

Appendix 1 - Pupil voice

Schools had differing opinions on capturing pupil voice; some schools were concerned about the impact and made the decision not to collect pupil voice. Randal Cremer and De Beauvoir shared the documents below, capturing pupil's feelings and worries about the school's closure. The documents have been anonymised to remove pupil names.

De Beauvoir Pupil Voice

What I think...

I think it's a bad idea because everyone at De Beauvoir ~~because~~ from Nursery up to year four tells me that they will miss the school because they don't finish the whole year.

I feel very sad because some of the people here are very upset to leave and I have ~~some~~ so many friends.

Questions I have...

When will the school be open ~~after~~ from being closed? Where there be changes in the school? Why is everyone leaving the school? What will the Hachney Council do to the school?

What I think...

Personally, I am ^{sad} ~~upset~~ ^{due} to the reported closure of De Beauvoir, but as I'm being honest, this was inevitable, from the rapid decline of the school, I could see it coming. I know I won't be affected as much, but it's kind of sad.

Questions I have...

None

What I think...

I think it would be a good and bad because if the school does ~~not have~~ close, then it might be re-built into something else but I also find it bad because even if your going to finish primary, then you might have a younger siblings that will have to go to another school and it could take them a long time to adoped.

Questions I have...

- What are you going to do with this school?
- How will you announce that the school is closing to the students?

What I think...

I think it is very sad news to hear that such a great school in Hackney could be closing. :-)

Questions I have...

what will happen with the amazing victorian building?
when or if pupil numbers rise will Hackney have enough schools?

What I think...

I have mixed feelings about my primary school closing permanently. On one hand, I'm glad that I ^{will} have at least gotten to learn to read, and it's good that teachers and ~~the~~ teaching assistants can get redundancy pay to finish their work at Debeauroir, but on the other hand it's a bit sad that ^{younger} students will have to relocate.

Questions I have...

- What other schools are closing?
- What will be the next use of the building?
- Will the council help relocate students, who have a strong friendship ~~to~~, to the same school?
- Can parents or students who used to go to the school help?

What I think...

I think this is a bad idea because the little kids in the school want to grow in the school and teachers want to see the kids grow * as well. And I get sad as well because ~~it~~ I come to school every day and see my friends and it'll be sad not to see them every day anymore.



Questions I have...



Why is the school closing I mean I get that it's a small school but atleast combine us and it'll be hard to see the teachers that have been by my side since 4 years old have me. and for some of the teachers this is like their home because they have been working here for quite a long time now

What I think...

I think is a bad idea to close the school because it was very emotional for others and I ~~love~~ admire this school a lot because they teach us educational and high quality lessons and when we make mistakes in this school there's always a possibility that we learn more

Questions I have...

what lots of pupils start to join the school?

If we regain more children would there be a consideration meeting based on if the school should close?

What I think...

I think it's bad
of you to ~~so~~ close the
school because I would love to
stay more and we all have
memory's here and I want
to stay till year six

Questions I have...

What will the school turn
into. When will it shut dow
is it that hard to find a
school

What I think...

I think its a bad
Idea to close school
because peple will miss there
friends + teacher
and some of us will be
10 years old and we love
the school and it will be hard

Questions I have...

When will school shut
Where will we go
How are we going to do our sax^{es}
Why do this to us ii

What I think...

I think is a bad idea
to close the school because I like the school
and it I think they are closing because there's not all
lots of student and am going to miss my friends
and Teachers.

Questions I have...

What is the school going to turn into?
When is the school closing?
Why are they closing?

What I think...

I think is a bad idit to
close the idit.

Questions I have...

What they brack
the school can
then build a has
so we have to go
to a new school

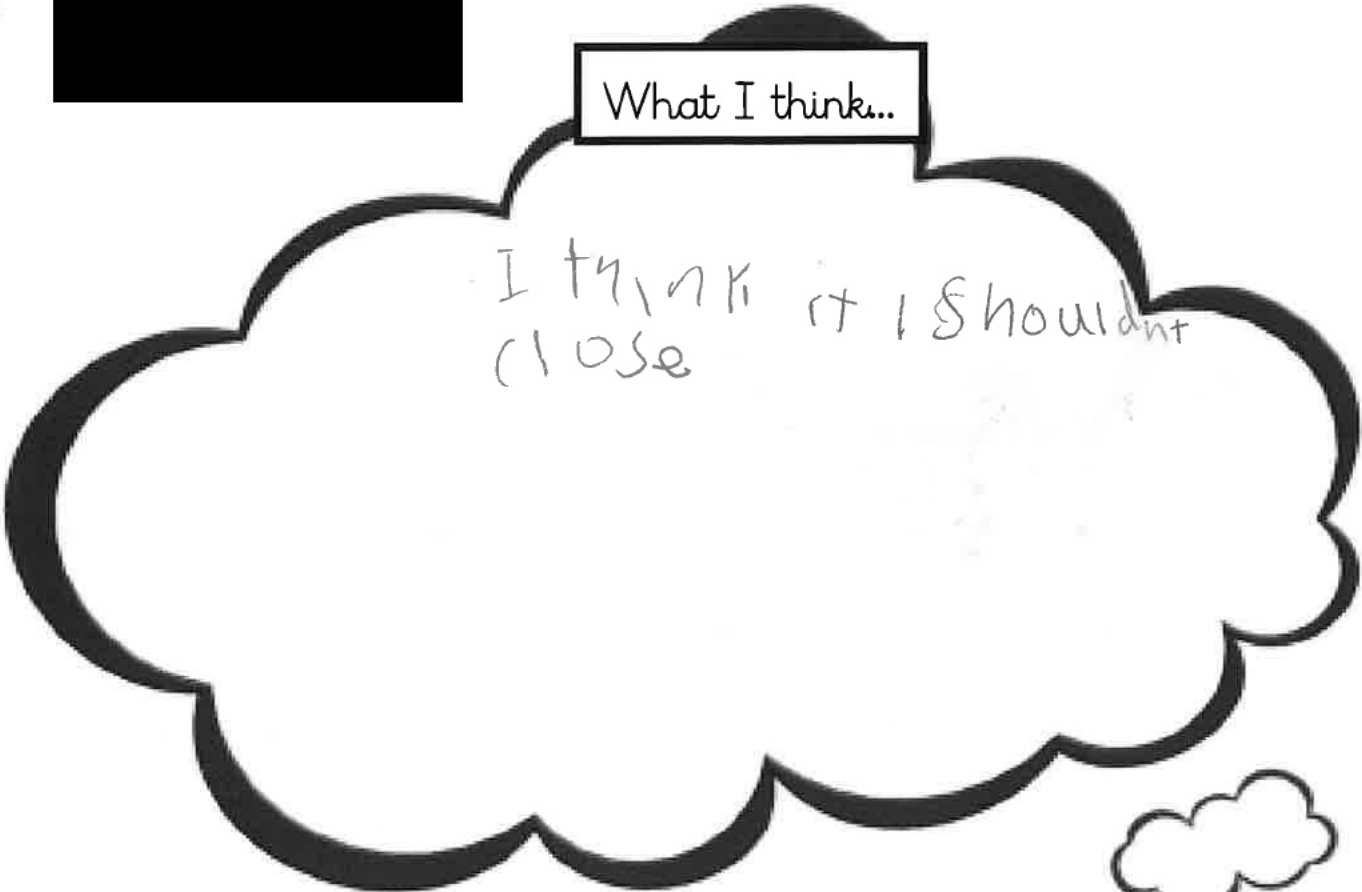
What I think...

I think it is a bad idea to close
the school because times can
be sad and ugly.
how do you feel I feel
sad.

Questions I have...



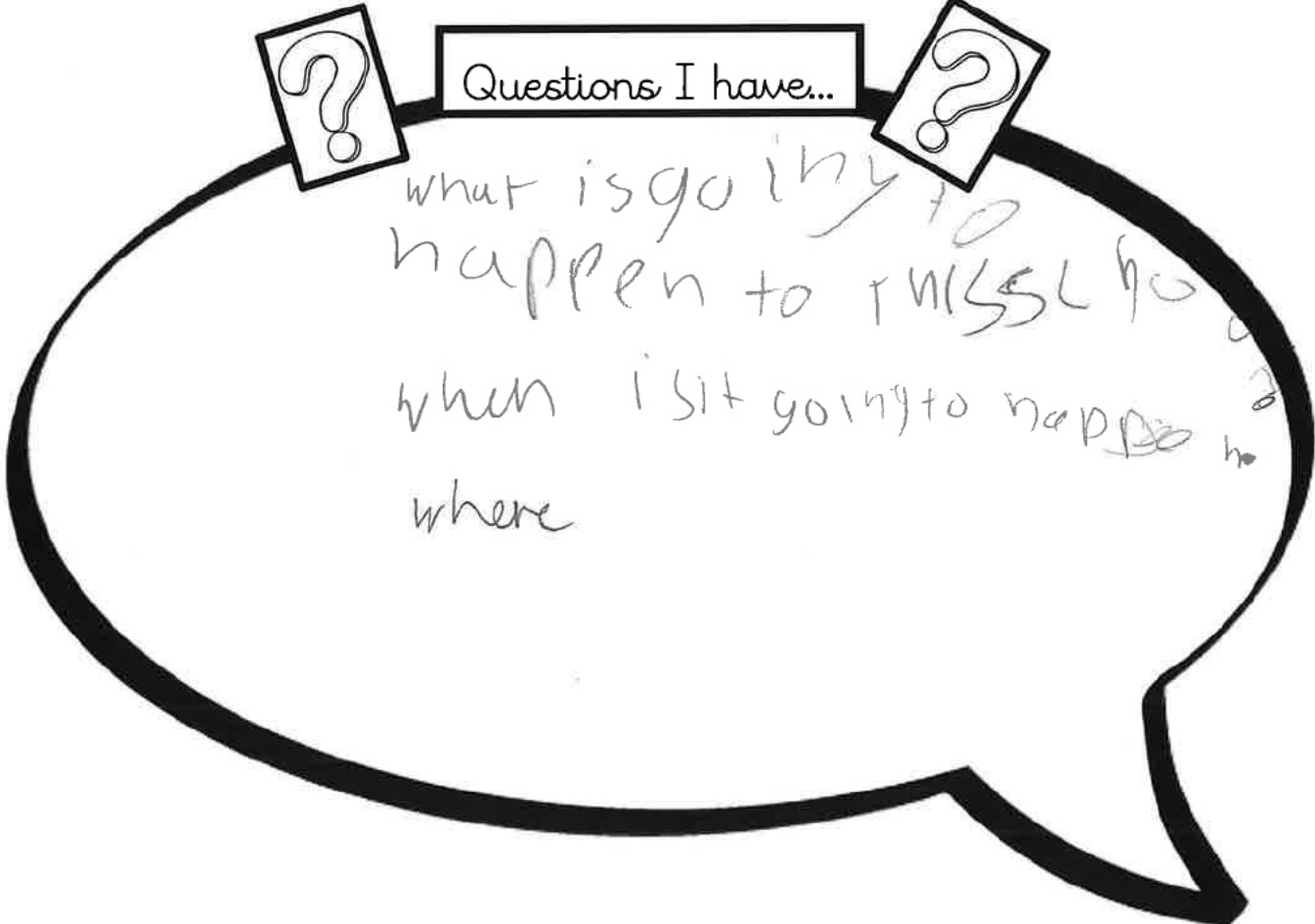
What I think...



I think it shouldn't close



Questions I have...



what is going to happen to missile
when it is going to happen
where

What I think...

I think it's a bad
I die because some people
pay for this school
and people are sad. ~

Questions I have...

Why is the school closing
How is it gonna work

What I think...

I
idea
I like

think it is a bad
to close the school because
this school
is cool.

Questions I have...

What is happening
to this school?

What I think...

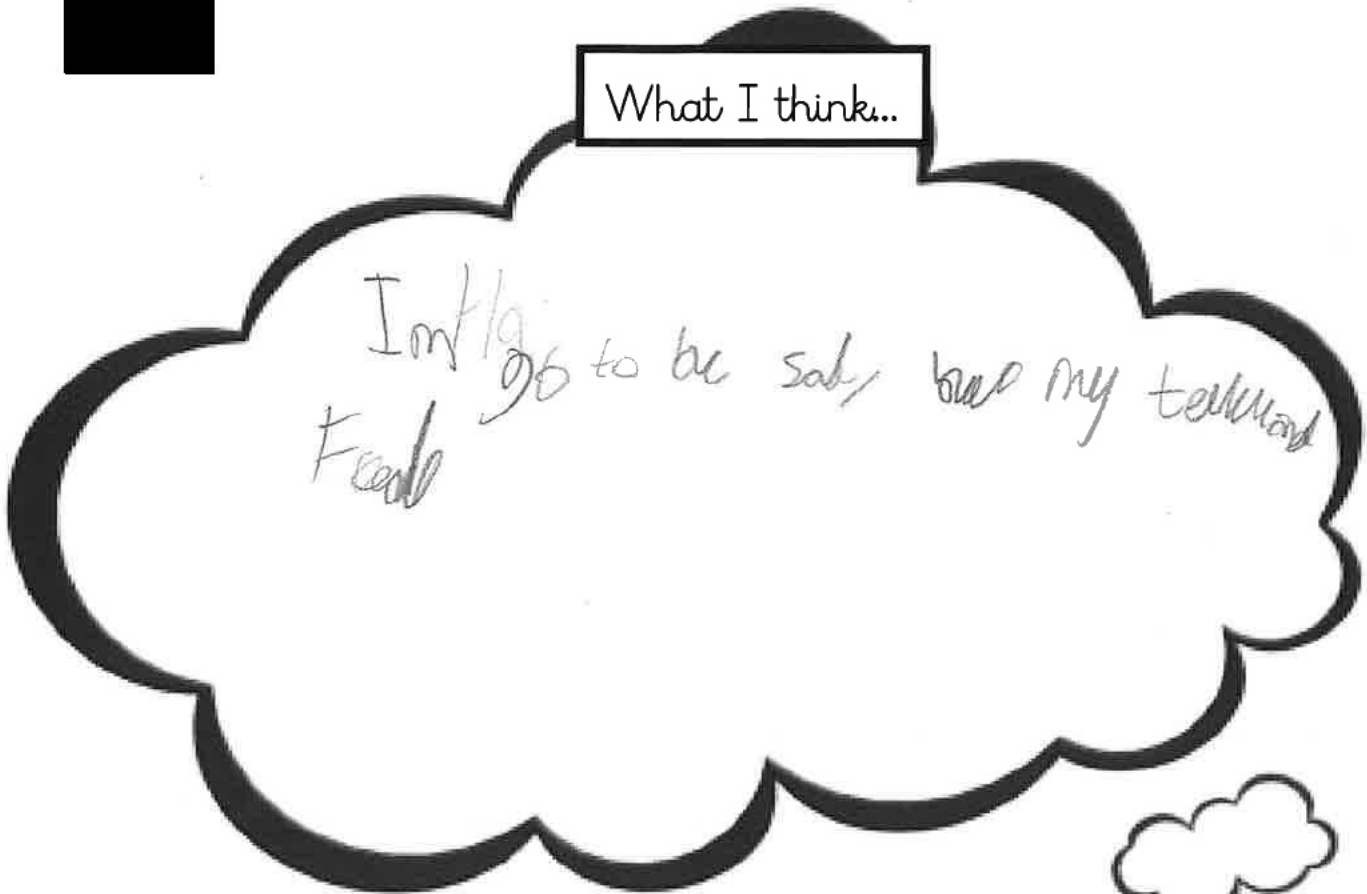
I think it is a disaster
because of the children can
not see each other

Questions I have...

What is the school
changed is a hospital



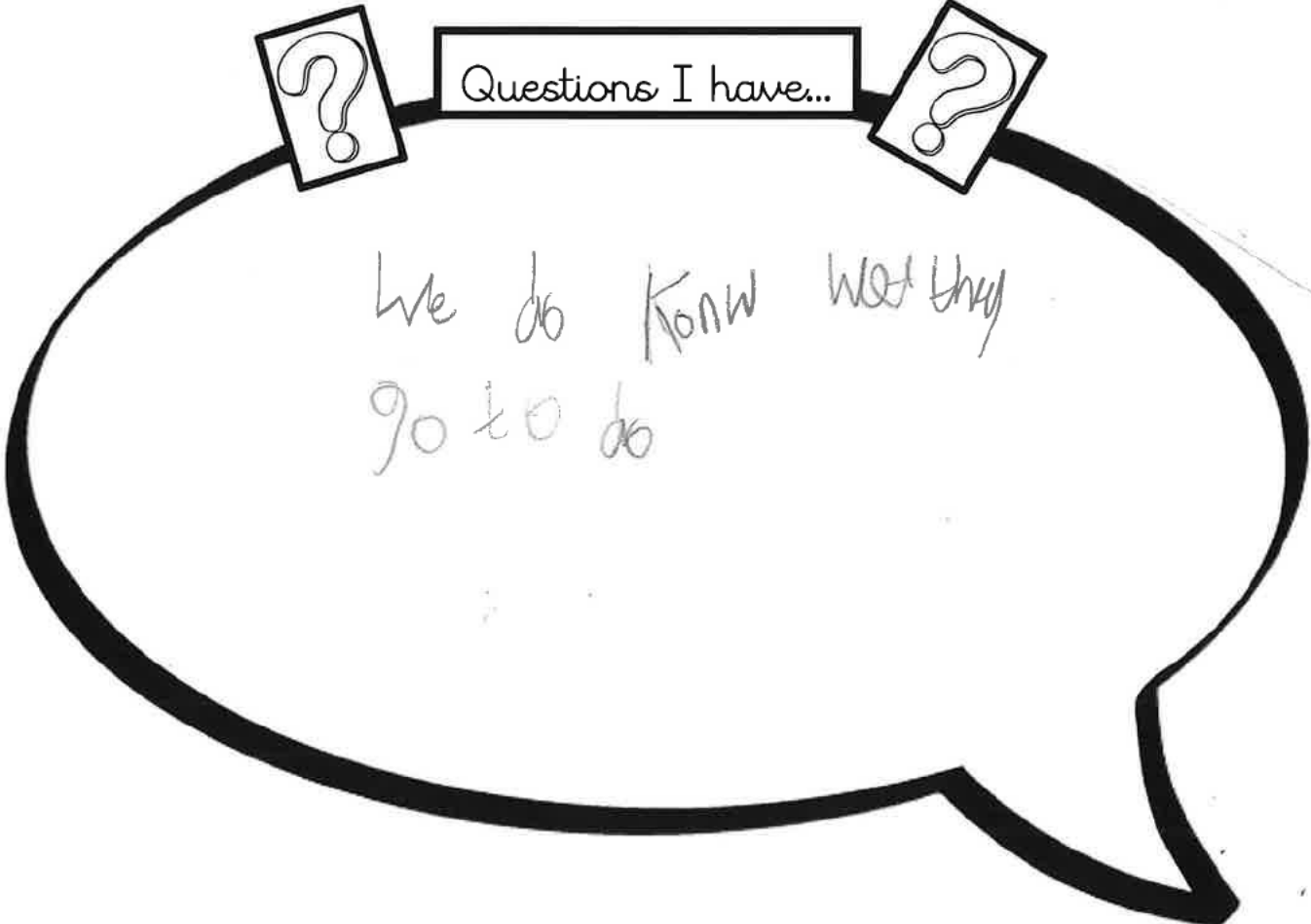
What I think..



I'm trying
to go to be safe, based on my teacher's
feedback



Questions I have...



We do know what they
go to do

What I think...

Is bad
because we won't see
our friends anymore and it's sad.

Questions I have...

Why is it closing
please

What I think...

I think it is a
very bad idea because
I will miss my friends and my
teachers and T.A.s!

Questions I have...

What are you going to do
with the school?

What I think...

I think it is a bad idea to close
the school because we won't get to
see our best friends
I feel nervous because I won't get to see
my favourite teachers and TA

Questions I have...

What are you going to turn
the school into if the school does
close down?

What I think...

I think that it is a bad idea to close the school down because what if another the future you will need to go to this school and it is closed. Also lots of kids are in school and they will miss it.



Questions I have...



When will they knock the building down? What will happen to the school building?

What I think...

I think its a bad idea to close the school because its hard to get into another new school and people were crying.

I feel sad because

Questions I have...

What I think...

I think its a bad idea because lots and lots of slugs / teachers and students like me will have to find new school carefully and even maybe move miles away from there they plus teachers will all be forced from this place.

Questions I have...

When is it possibly closing?
Why is school closing?
What is this place going to converted to?
How can you close this place?

What I think...

I think it's a bad idea to close the school because children like the school, children ~~who~~ want education, they like they're friends and when they go to a different school you do not know anyone in a new school.

Questions I have...

Why do you ~~love~~ ^{close} the school?
When is the school going to be re-opened.

What I think...

It might be a
good to close
the close school
because of too
of too because
of too

Questions I have...

What
when
where
How
Why

What I think...

I don't think it's a good idea because there is not a school like this ever again and some might not be able to get into one and I'll miss every one here and all the teachers

Questions I have...

~~When~~ What's going to happen after the school shuts down?
Will you ever change your mind?

What I think...

I think is a good reason
to close this school because
hactney is wasting more then
they shouldnt.

I feel exited am going to a new school but
I also am sad because I have lots
of ~~the~~ memories here



Questions I have...



What is hactney
going to make this
school when is going to close
when are the

What I think...

I think its a bad idea
because lots of teachers or cooks will lose
these job and kids will have to find another
school and it might take a long time.



Questions I have...



Why are you closing the school?
What are you going to do with the school?



What I think...

I really don't
want the school to go seven years
and I have made a lot of memories and
a lot of friends and so has my little sister...
she is still young and it would probably be hard
for her to go to another school
and have to make new friends!

Questions I have...

can the school
not shut down? . Does it have to
shut down? Can we merge the primary school
When will the school shut down? Is there a way
for the school to shut not shut down? How
will the school shut down?

What I think...

I think it is a ~~g~~ good idea to close the school because this school has been here for a very long time, since the Victorians age! Also not many people are coming to learn, first they come to the school for like one year and then, ~~then~~ they leave the next year there aren't many students so yeah.



Questions I have...



What will ~~happ~~ happen if you re-open the school? When ~~will~~ will the school officially close down? How are you going to close the school?

What I think..

I think this is a bad idea because it's been since Victorian's time and some kids have been since reception or nursery it feel like there home

I feel sad because schoole is closing

Questions I have...

Why are ^{you} closing schoole?

When is it closing

Will we sitill going to ~~trips~~ trips

What I think...

I think that it is a bad idea because I have been here for a really long time and it is going to break a lot of kids' hearts because they thought that they were staying here until they ~~are~~ are in Year six.

Questions I have...

What ~~too~~ would ^{are you going to} they do with the ~~stuff~~ stuff?
What would happen to the playground?
What is going to happen to the ~~st~~ displays?
displays?

What I think...

I dont think you should close down
the school because it's a beautiful school and even
if im going secondary befor it closes down, It's
still going to affect me because I dont want
to know that the school that i've been
going to befor is ^{gone} there
to be ^{not} going

Questions I have...

Why are you closing down the school
How do you think the littel children are
feeling
What is the point closing down the
School

What I think...

I think that it is a bad idea to close the school because a lot of students here have made life long memory's and it would crush peoples hearts. It would be a bad idea because it would take some time for kids to settle down and make new friends in a new school. so I think you should not close the building. People won't get the same teaching methods. You should keep the school open but get what you want in a different location.



Questions I have...



Why would you even think of closing the school down?
How would you want to close the school down if it has been here for years?

What I think...

I think closing the school is a bad idea because it will make chaos for parents of finding a new school for their children. I feel angry and upset because the school has been here since the Victorian times and it is the only Primary school I've known and stayed in.

Questions I have...

Why can't a different school merge into ours? If you close it down how can we visit it and the teachers inside?

What I think..

I think it's a really bad idea, just think of it, this school has been around for so long, THE VICTORIANS! And now your just closing it and giving it away like it's some parcell, I thought I liked you. Please give this school one more chance. PLEASE!

Questions I have...

Why are you closing it, it's not fair. Some of the teachers have been here for 25 years or more!!!! If you're gonna close it down then turn it to something good maybe a hospital? Just please.

What I think...

I ~~get~~ feel very heartbroken as the school with all my memories is getting shut down. I would most likely come back to see ~~wonder~~ children coming out of the ~~the~~ school ~~bag~~ laughing and smiling but ~~ignores~~ that won't happen

Questions I have...

Why can't we just merge with another school?

What I think...

Pretty sad
that the school is closing
i will miss my friends ☹

Questions I have...



What I think...

I think this school
~~Should~~ Shouldn't lock
down. I had so much memories
here and I want other children to enjoy
the fun too.

Questions I have...

Down. Why is it locking
why can't we merge
with other school.

What I think...

I do not think
that it should close down
it's a lovely school,
And all the little children
will have to go to a
different school.

Questions I have...

Why is it closing?
+ if it does happen then what will all the
little ones do, go.

What I think...

I think that the school shouldn't close down because what about people's siblings. This is such a lovely school. I'm really lucky to go to this school, all of my siblings went here.

Questions I have...

Why does it have to close down?
Is it just our school?

What I think...

I'm not a big fan of the school but it is quite upsetting and I wish it could stay open a bit longer.

Questions I have...

- 1) What is going to happen to the building?
- 2) Will the kids get a refund on uniform?
- 3) Who made this decision?

What I think...

I would be sad because of
all the ~~fit~~ memories and fun everyone had.



Questions I have...

Will the school be back up?
Could the school become a hospital again?
Will it be destroyed?
Where will the teachers go to?

What I think...

I think that we should
get new books some people have
favorite books they love but
when you in the book corner
you can't find it!

?

Questions I have...

?

When will you get new
books!

What is going to happen to
guiding when it's closed?

What I think...

I feel abit sad
because I've known Lebeavour
for 3 years and I wouldn't
be used to it when my favourite
primary school is closing down
and when im in secondary
school and I finish I wouldn't
get to visit my favourite
teachers.

Questions I have...

why is it closing down?
~~why are we chose~~
why is our school chosen to
close down?
who made the rules?

What I think...

I think that it's terrible.
The school closing down? Most of
our childhood memories will all be in
this precious school.

Questions I have...

Do you think the school deserves
to be shut down?

What I think...

I am very disappointed and upset about the school closing. I have ~~learned~~ been a student ~~I~~ think it will be upsetting when [is] ~~it~~ the ~~school~~ school closes. ~~in~~ this school for my whole life and I

Questions I have...

N O
questions...

What I think...

I feel devastated that the school will be closing down. I know that I will be in Secondary by the time, but I wanted to visit the amazing teachers I had.

Questions I have...

Is there anything parents can do about it?

What I think...

I am sad because I have been at this school since nursery and not at any other school. My whole life and all the teachers are so nice and helpful so I am sad to see it all go away...

Questions I have...

Why is the school closing?
Why does this school have to close?
What will the school be turned into?

What I think...

I'm very
upset because this school has
been here for 20 years and would be a
shame for it to close down. :'

Questions I have...

Nothing

What I think...

I'm sad the school is closing because my younger brother can't come to this school!

Questions I have...

what will [REDACTED] do after the school closes!
What will we have 'goggle classroom,' NO

What I think...

I feel shocked and
okay but hopefully when I am
in secondary school I'll still have
time to visit.



Questions I have...



~~still with we do~~
why don't we mix school?

What I think...

I mean My mum
want to try school at My
age am gonna miss try

Questions I have...



What I think...

I think it's a bad idea to close the school because people are trying to find jobs and pay for their children's school fees. Now that their closing the school, I feel upset and worried because I've been here since nursery and De Beauvoir is like a home to me, I need I had so much fun at De Beauvoir and made lots of friends here.

Questions I have...

When did you decide to go propose to close the school?

What I think..

I'm really sad that the school is closing because I've been here since reception and here is like my second home. Although you have no choice the school's and you should try keep the school up and running.

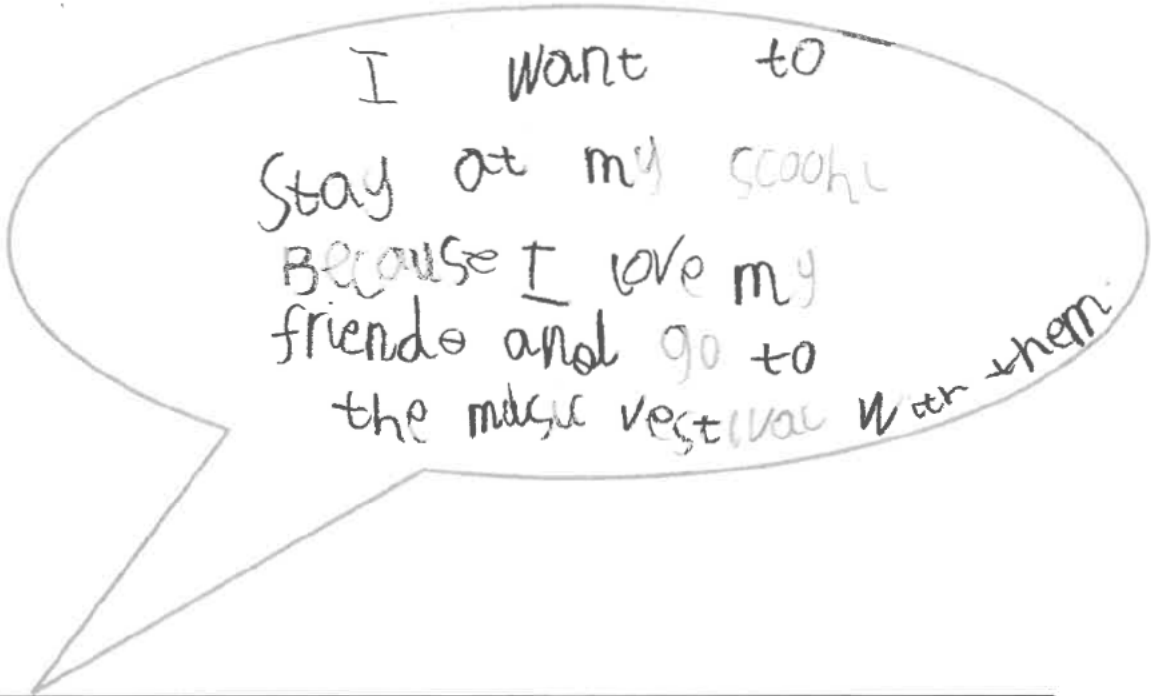
no wing adults

Questions I have...

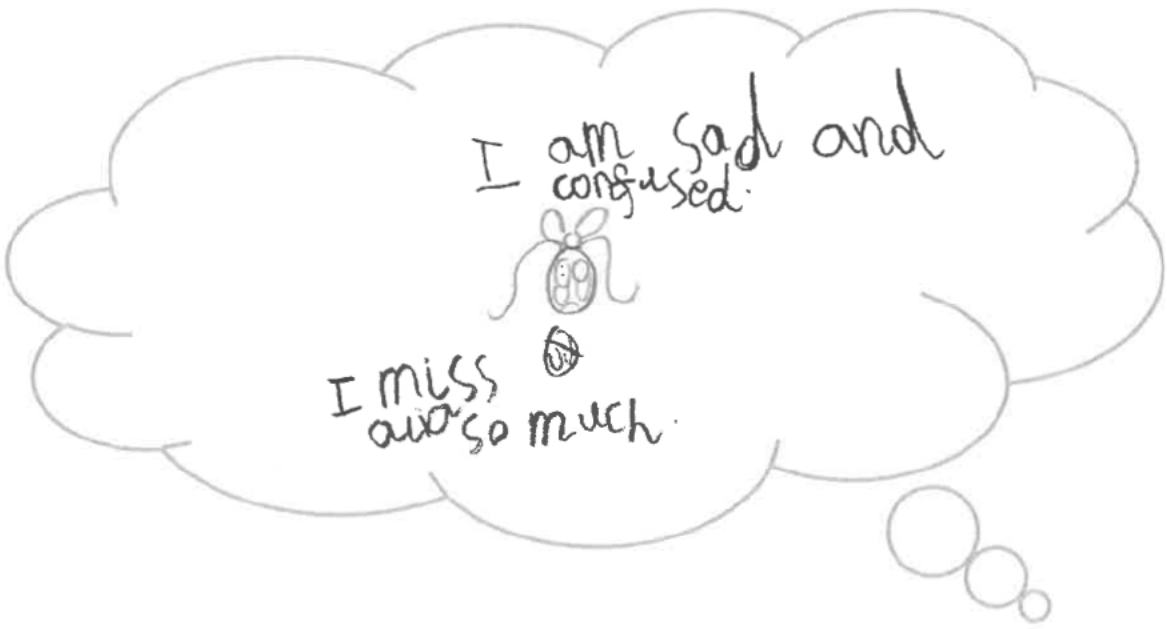
Will we still get to go on the pm 46?

Randal Cremer Pupil Voice

EYFS



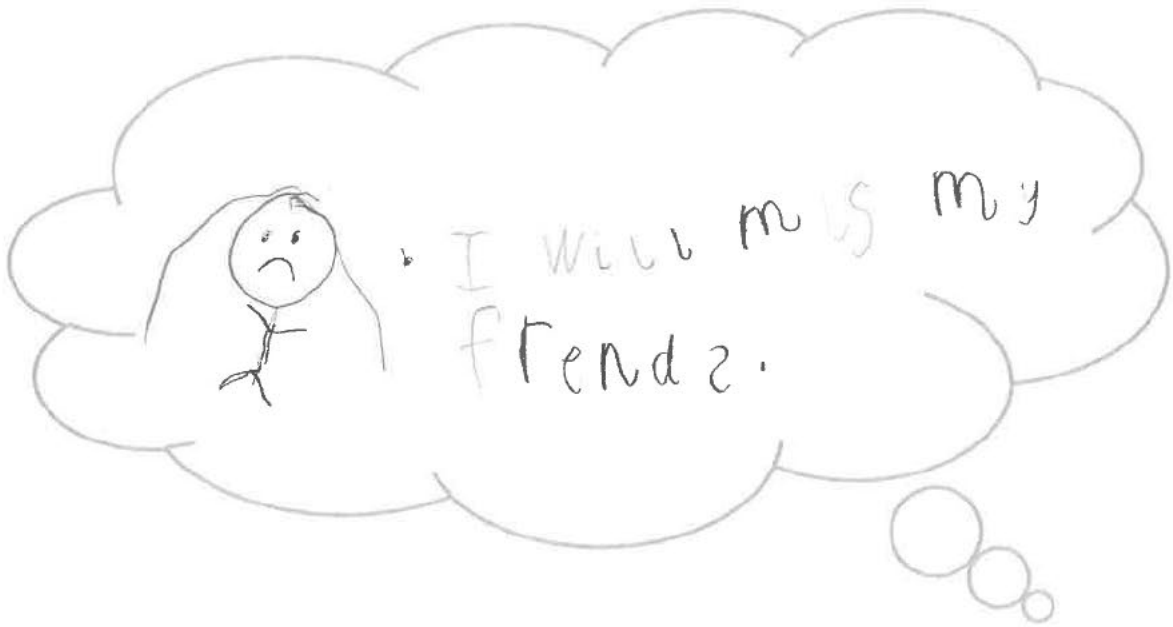
What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



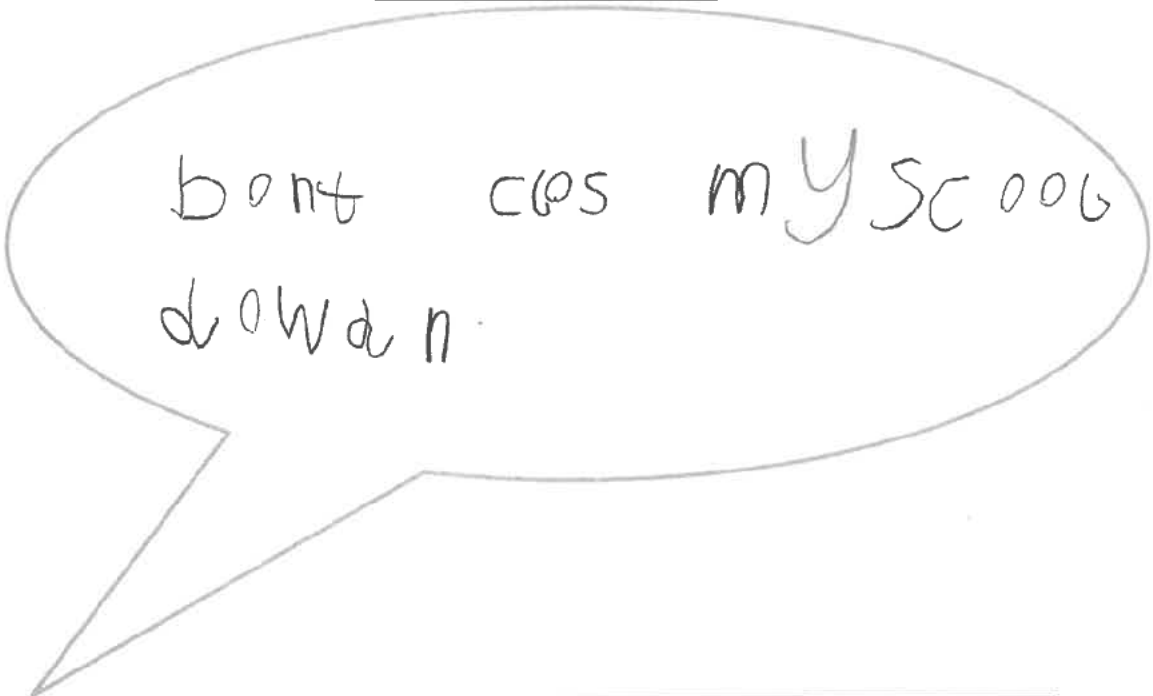
How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



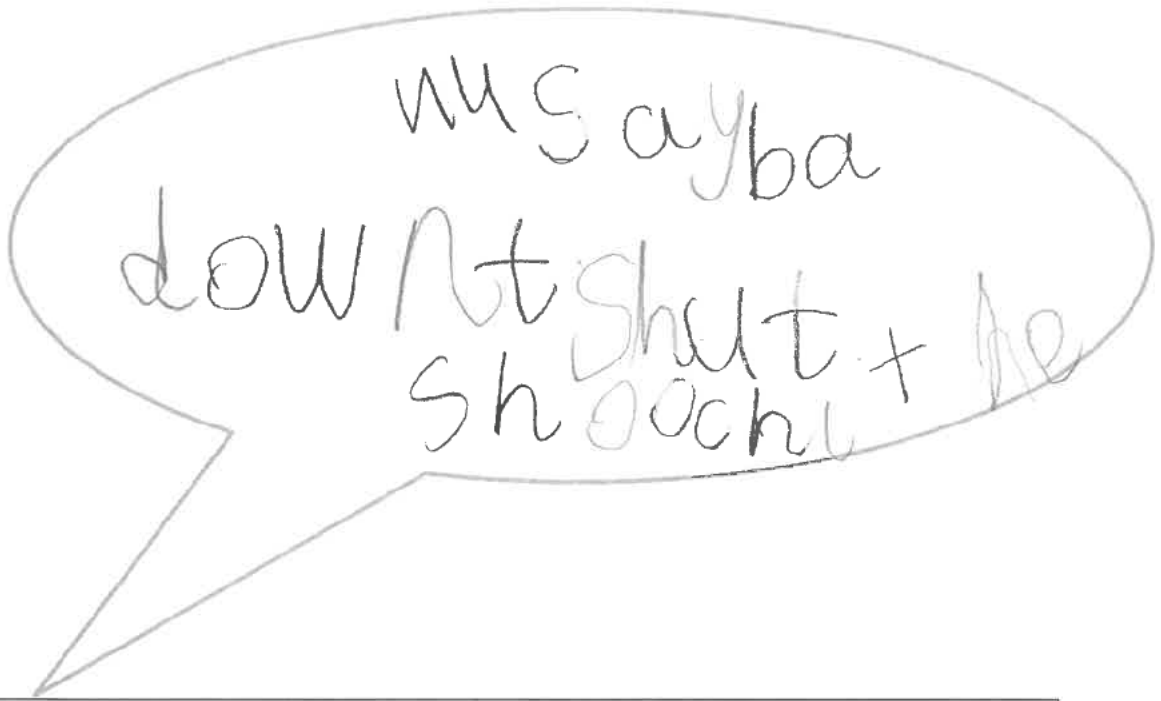
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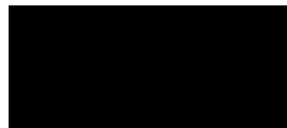
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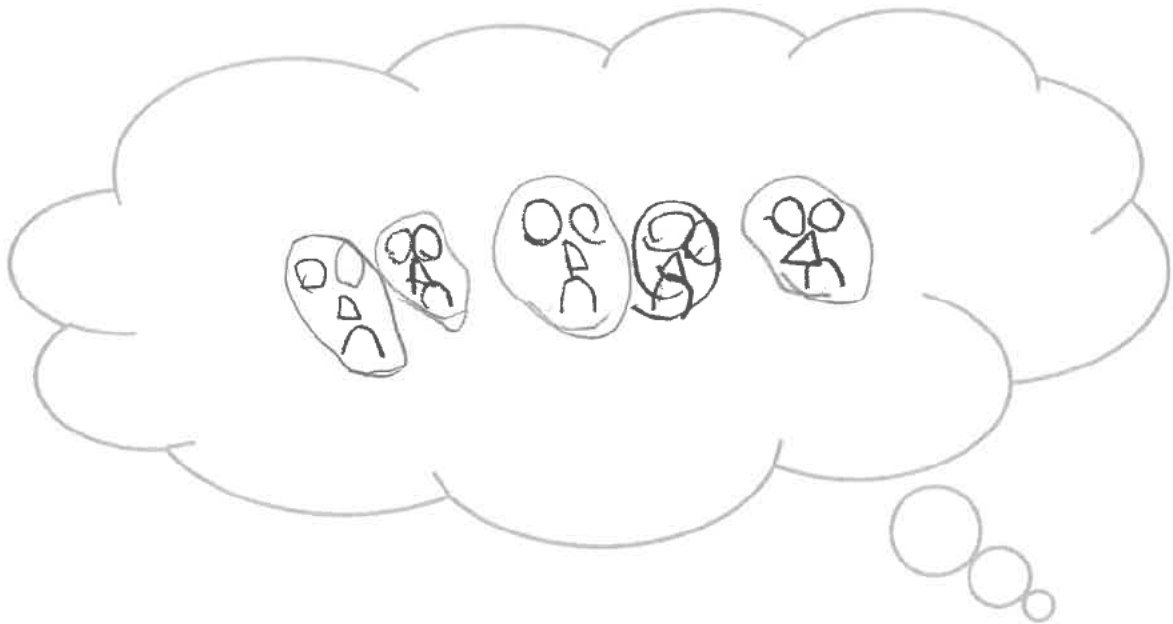
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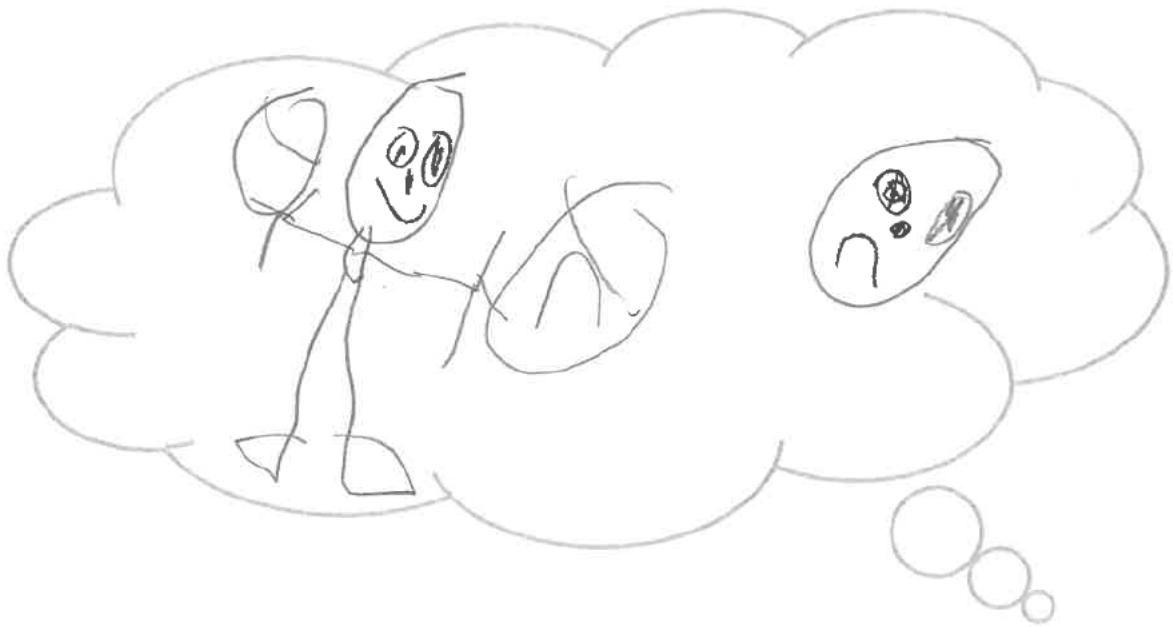
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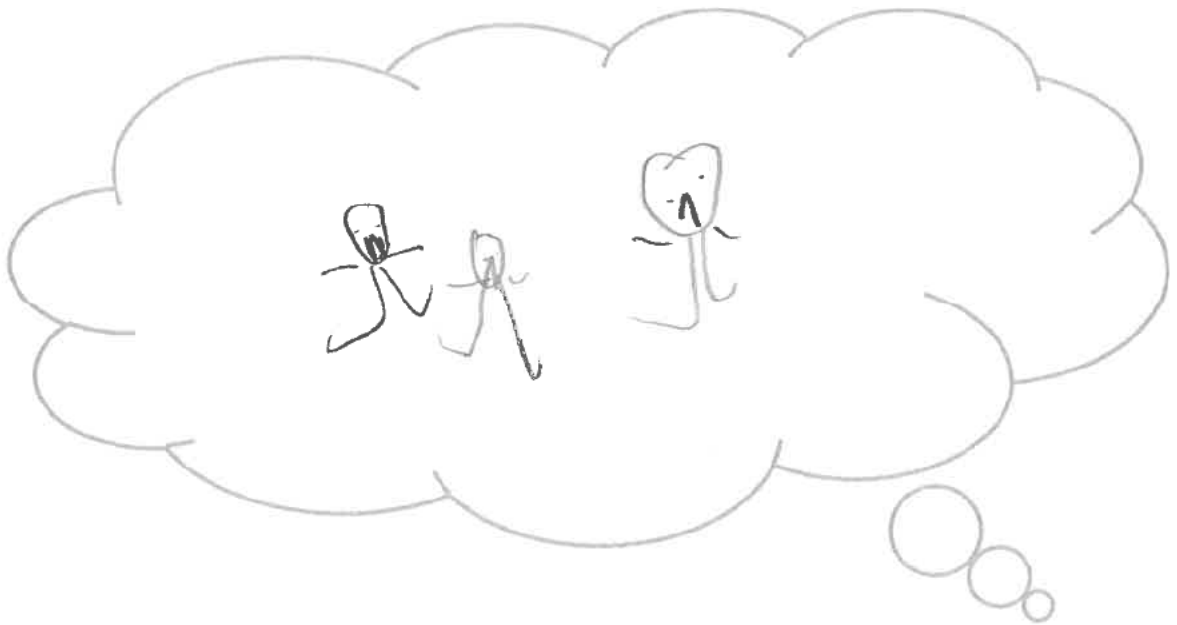
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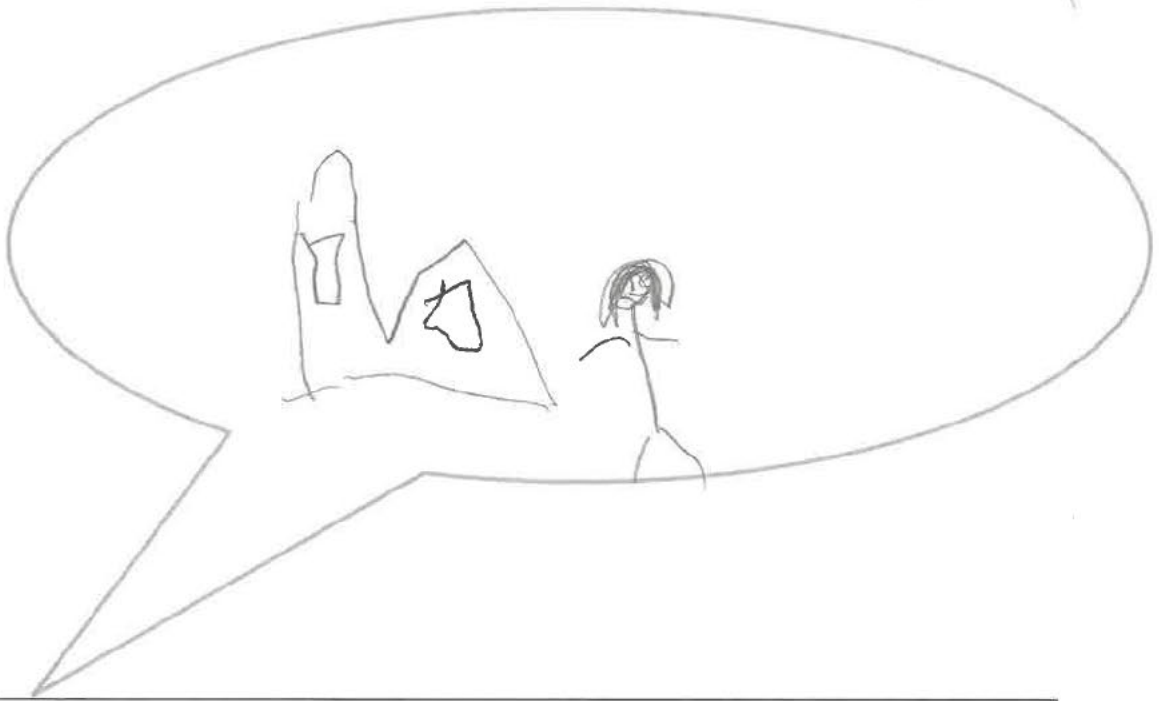
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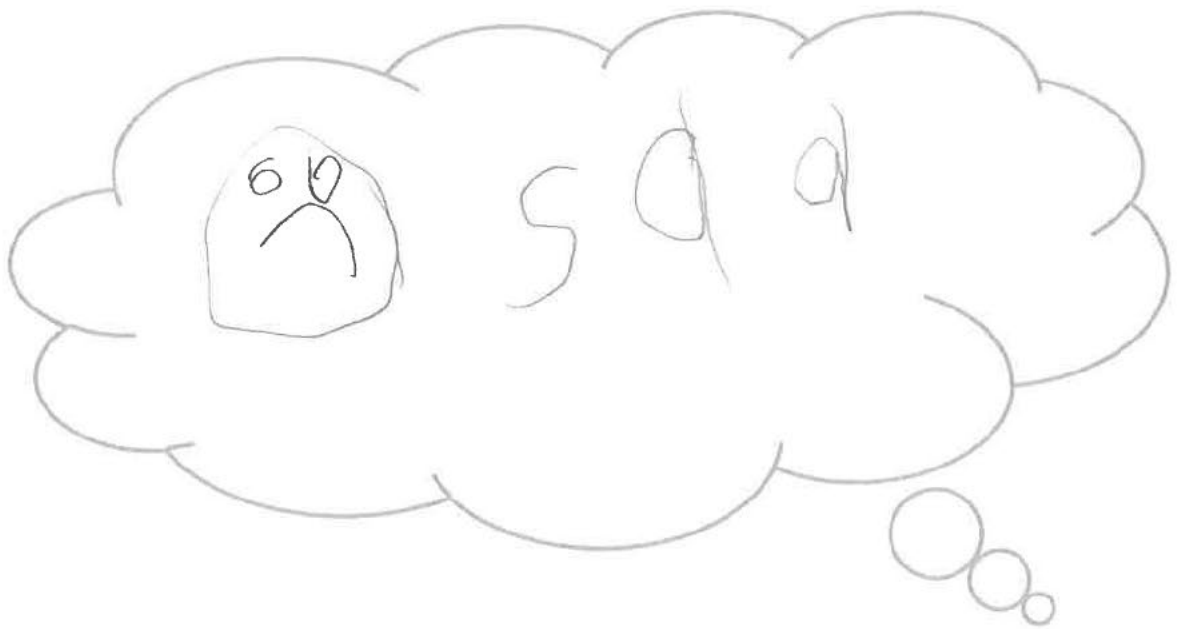
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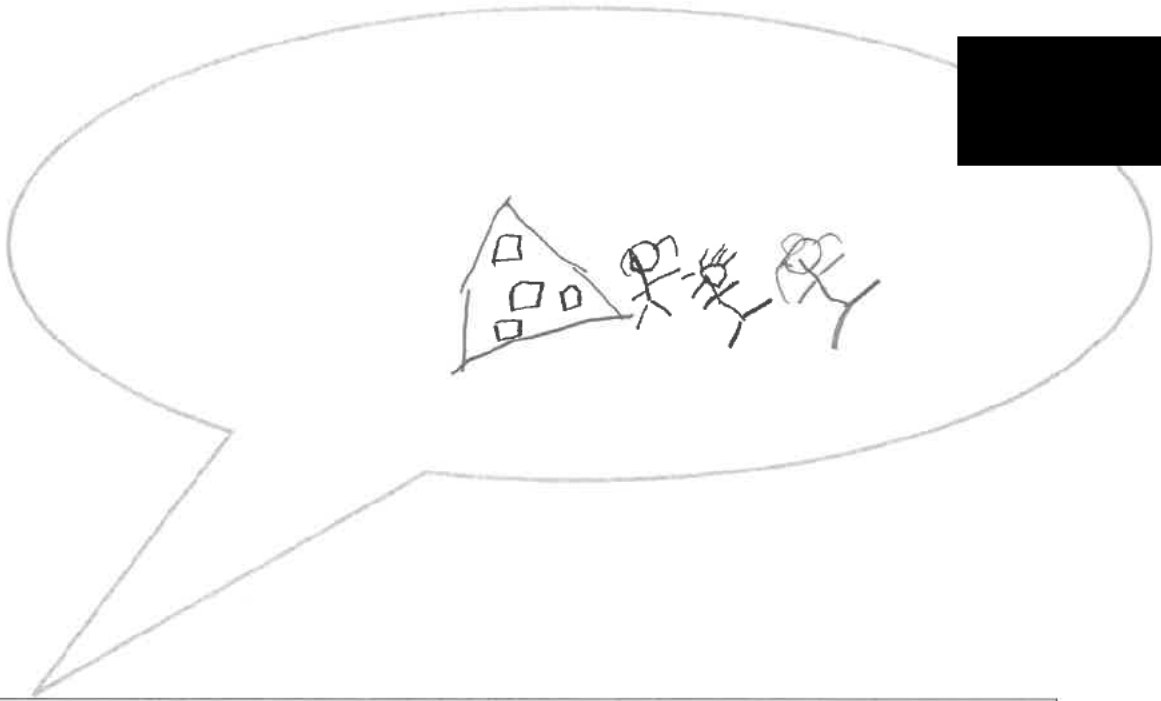
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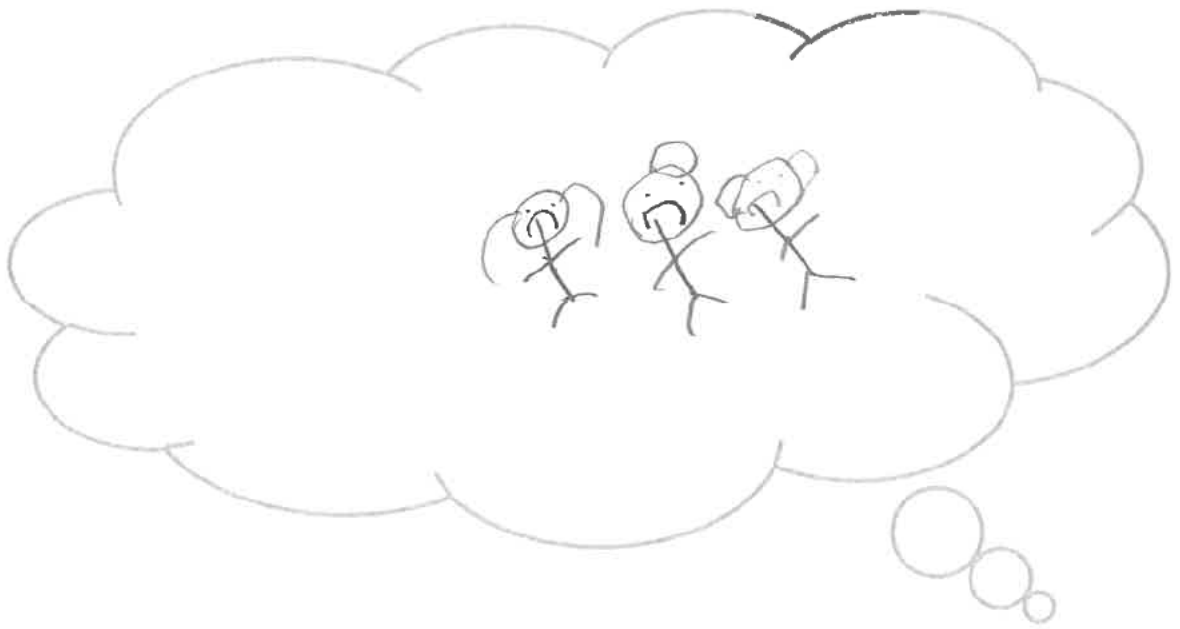
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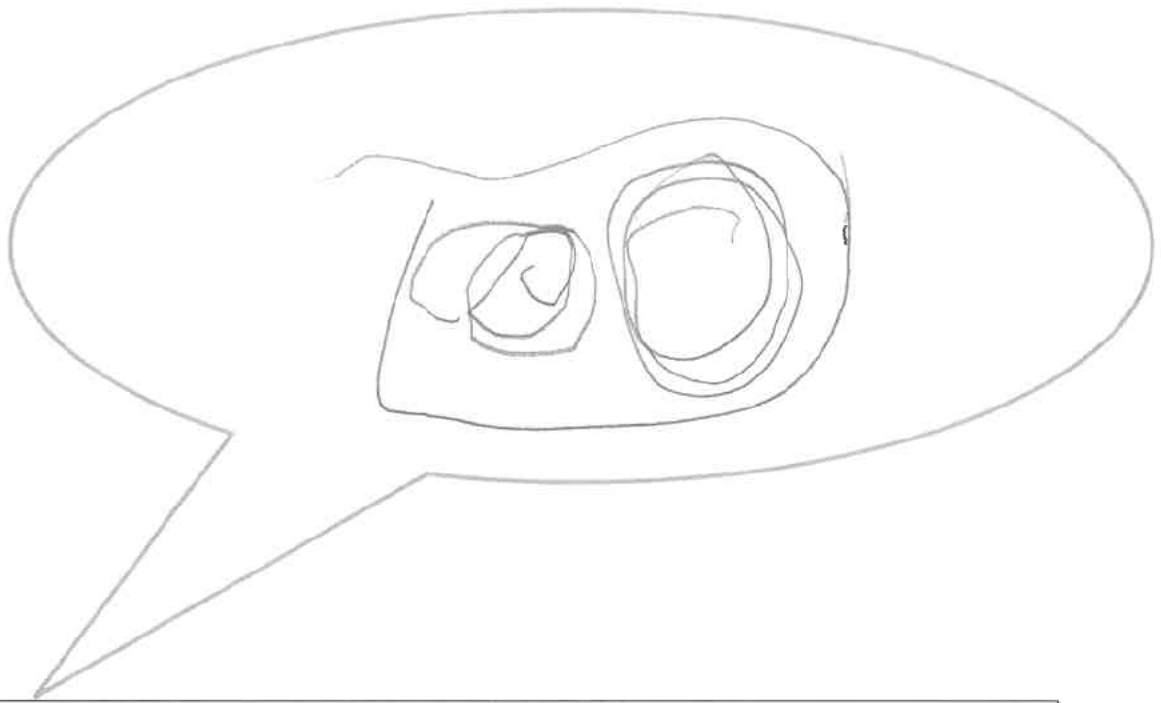
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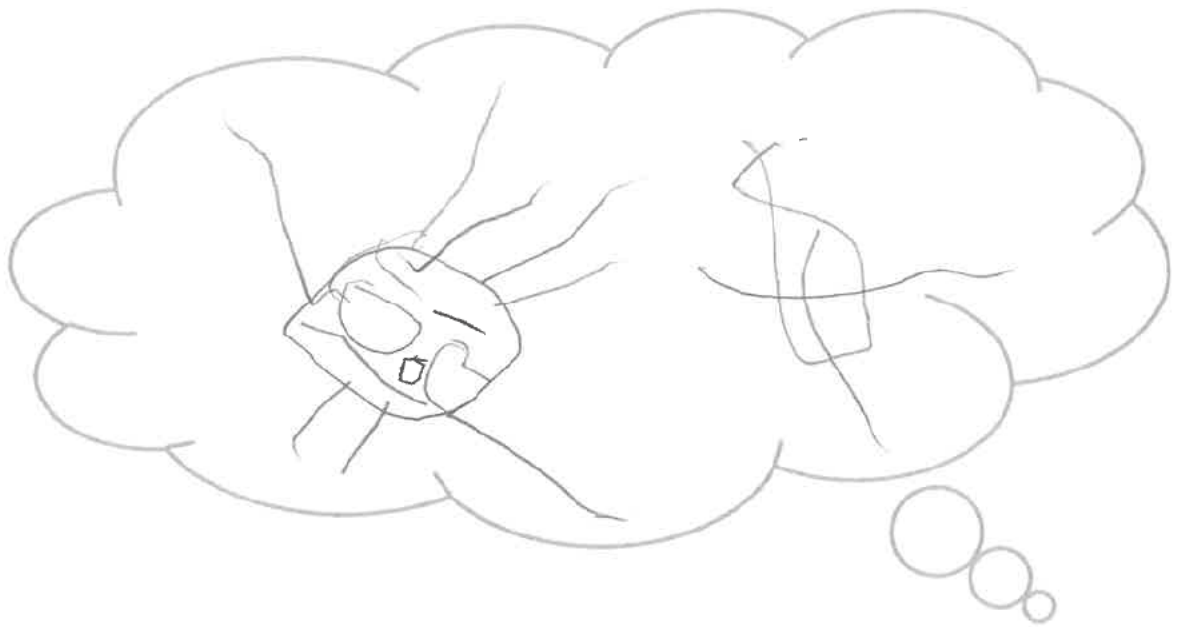
What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



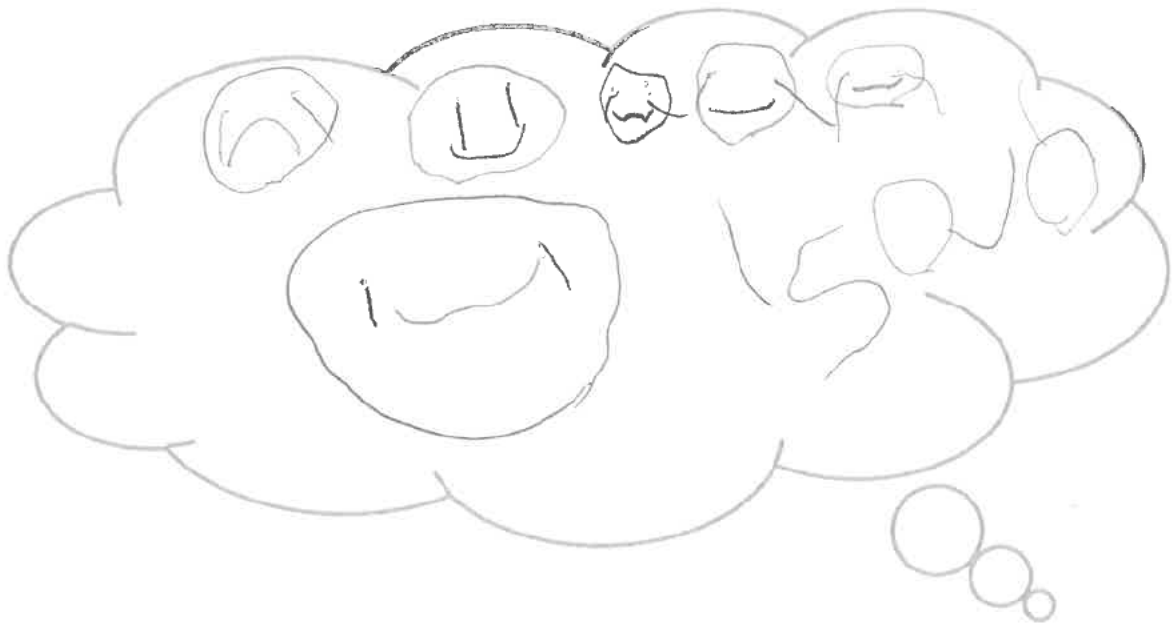
What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



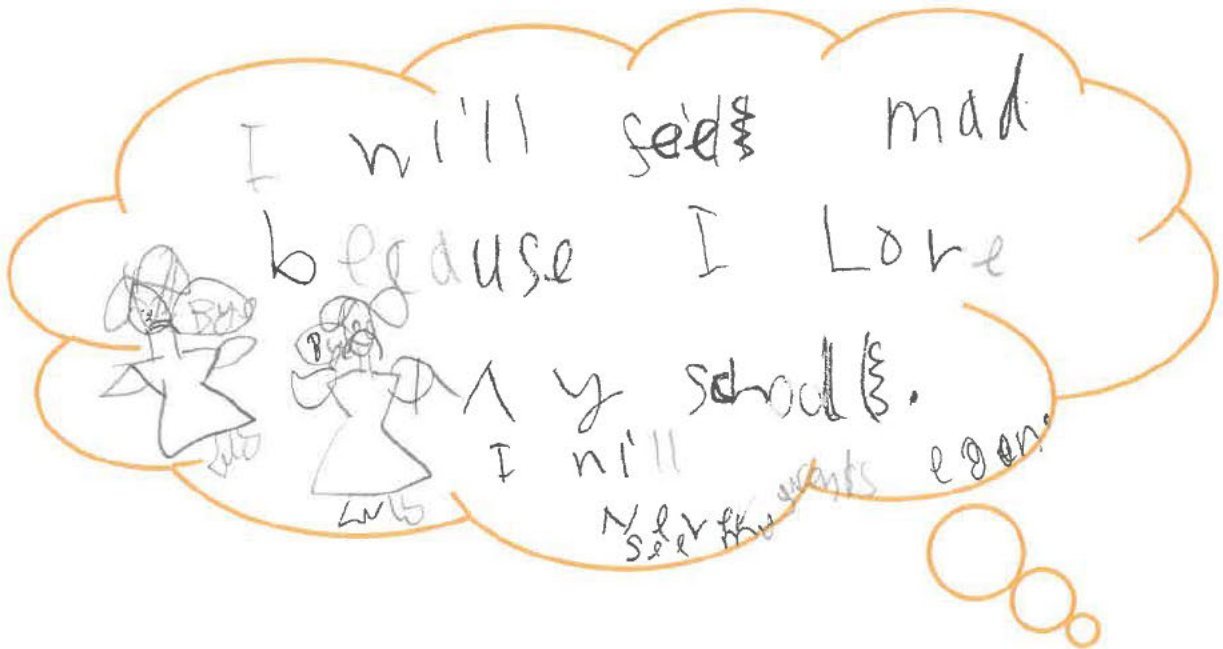
How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

Year 1

Year 1



What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



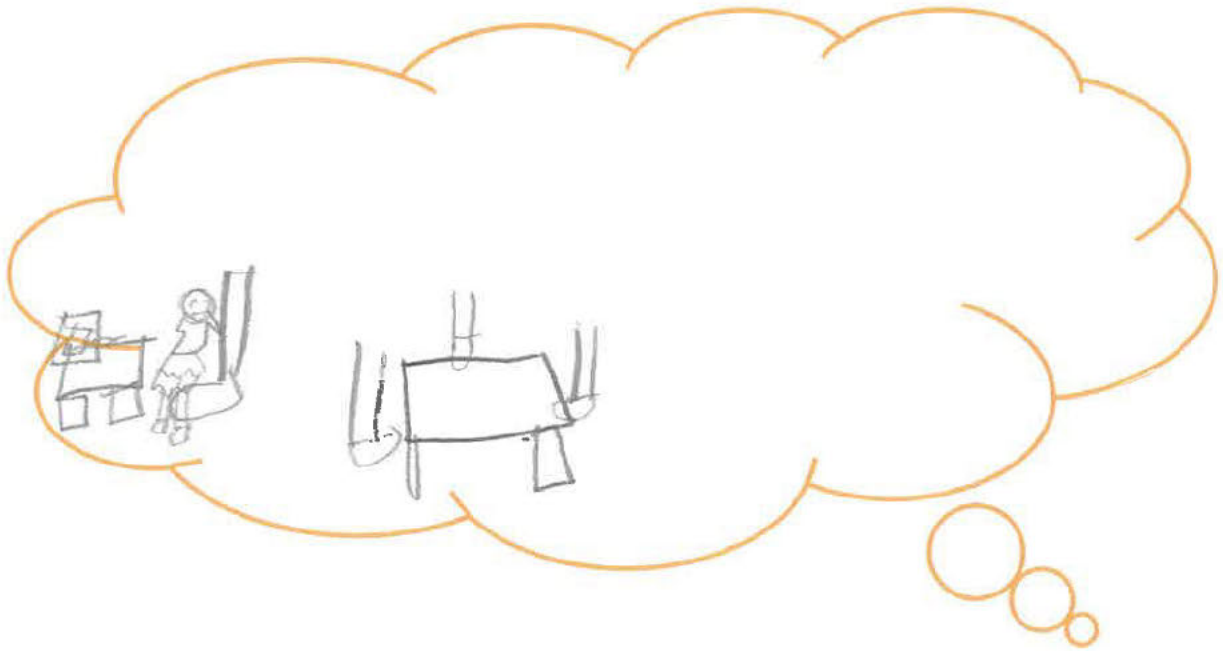
How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

Year 1



What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

Please don't let our school close

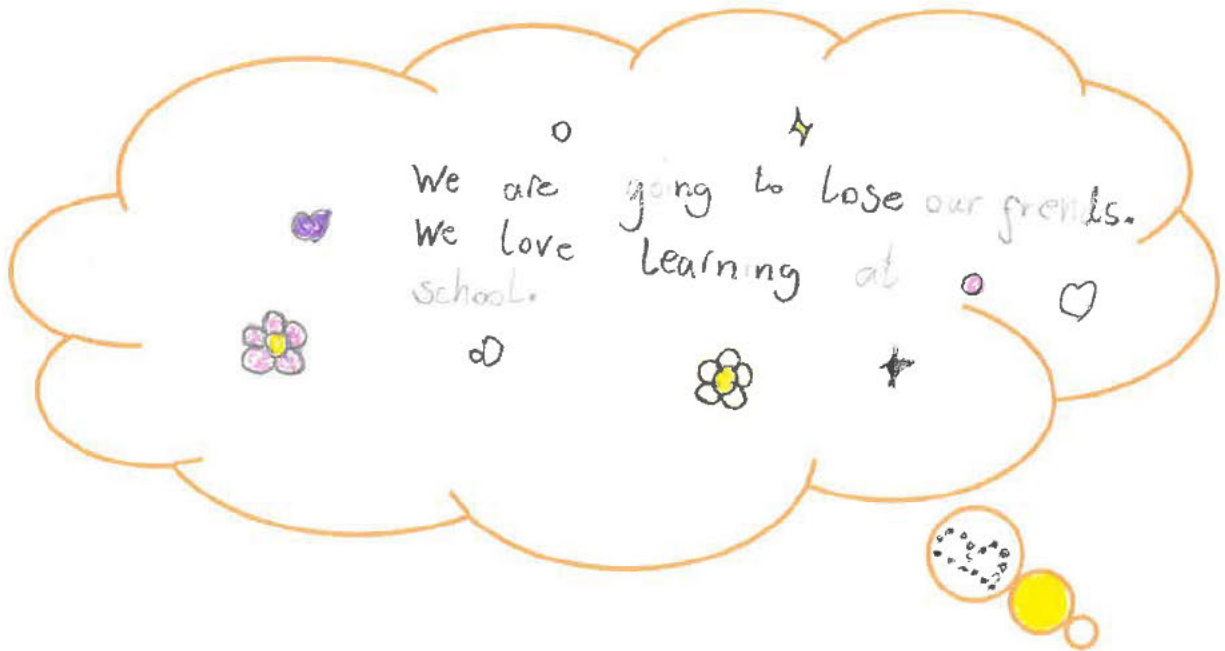


How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

year 1

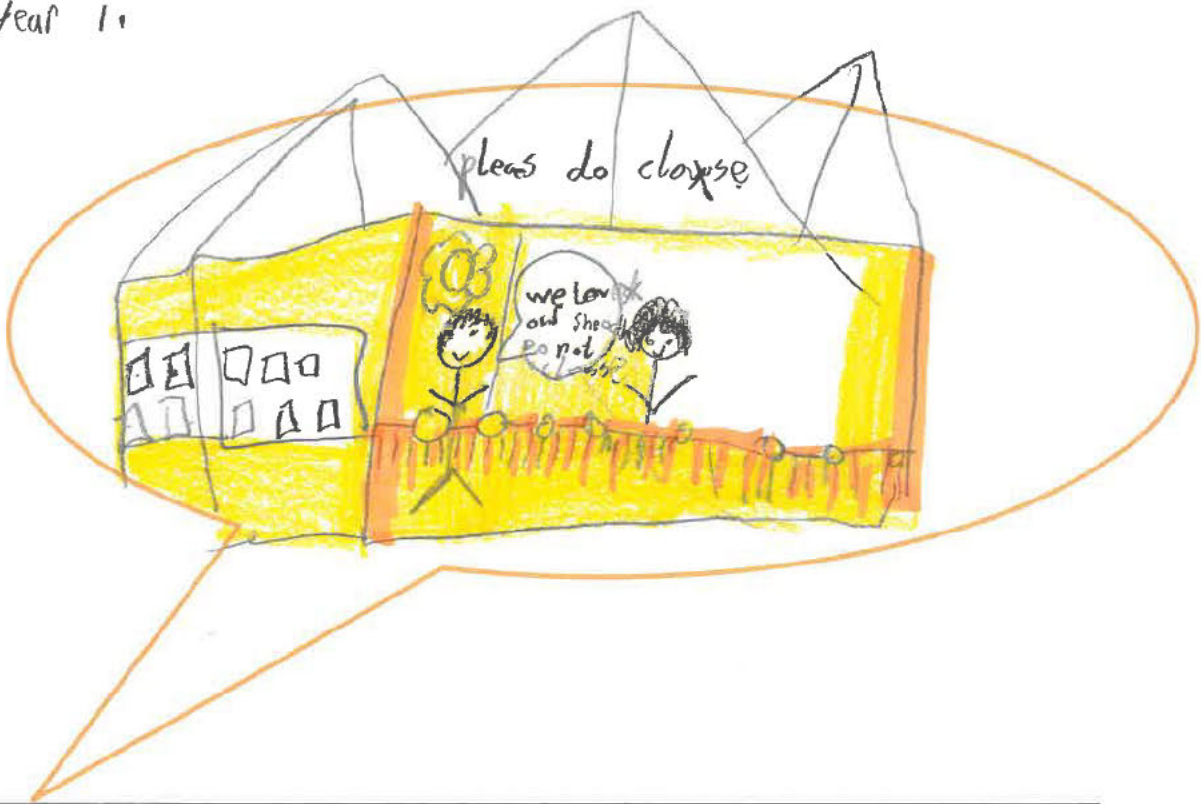


What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

Year 1.

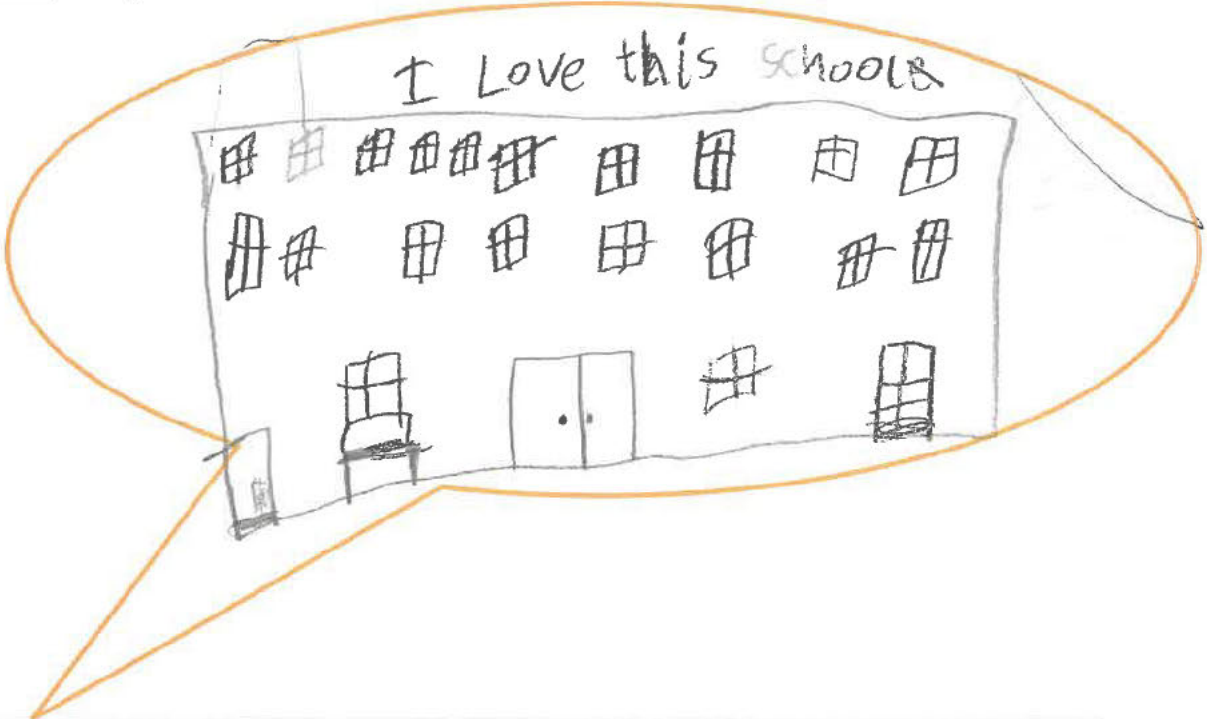


What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

Year 1



What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?




How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

year 1

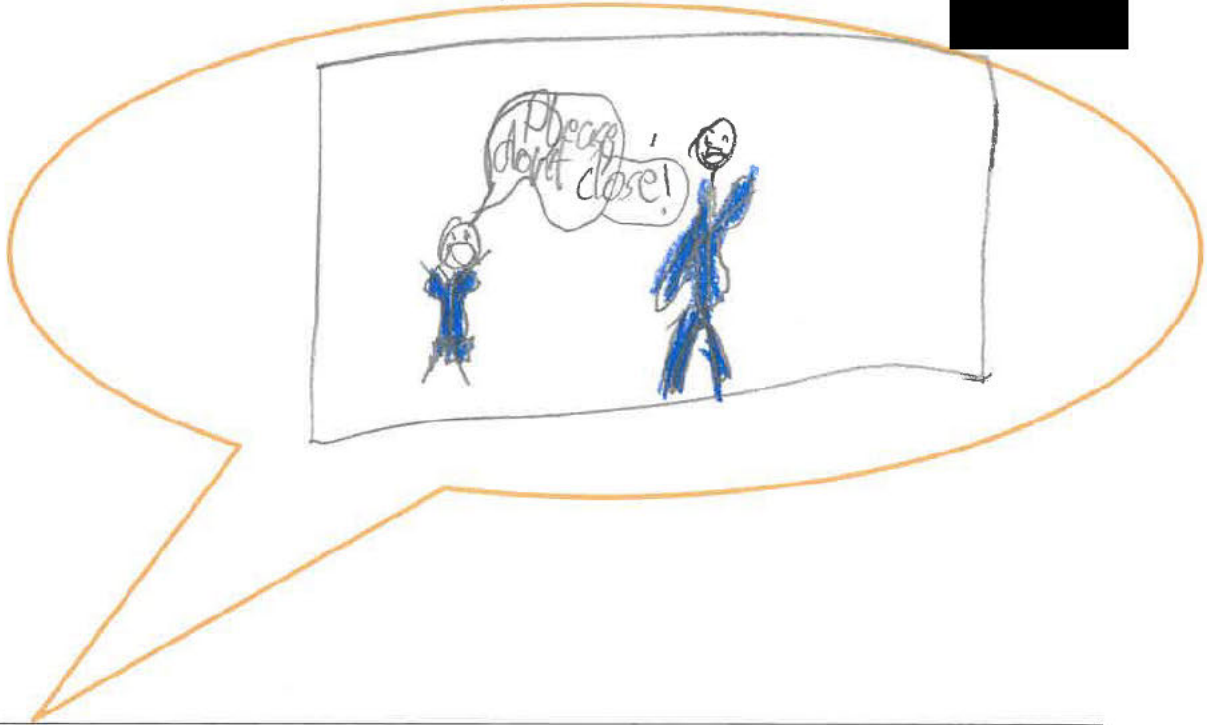
~~Please Peases~~ ~~Peases~~ ~~& can~~
I ~~like~~ the ~~school~~ Peases dot can
the ~~school~~ School.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

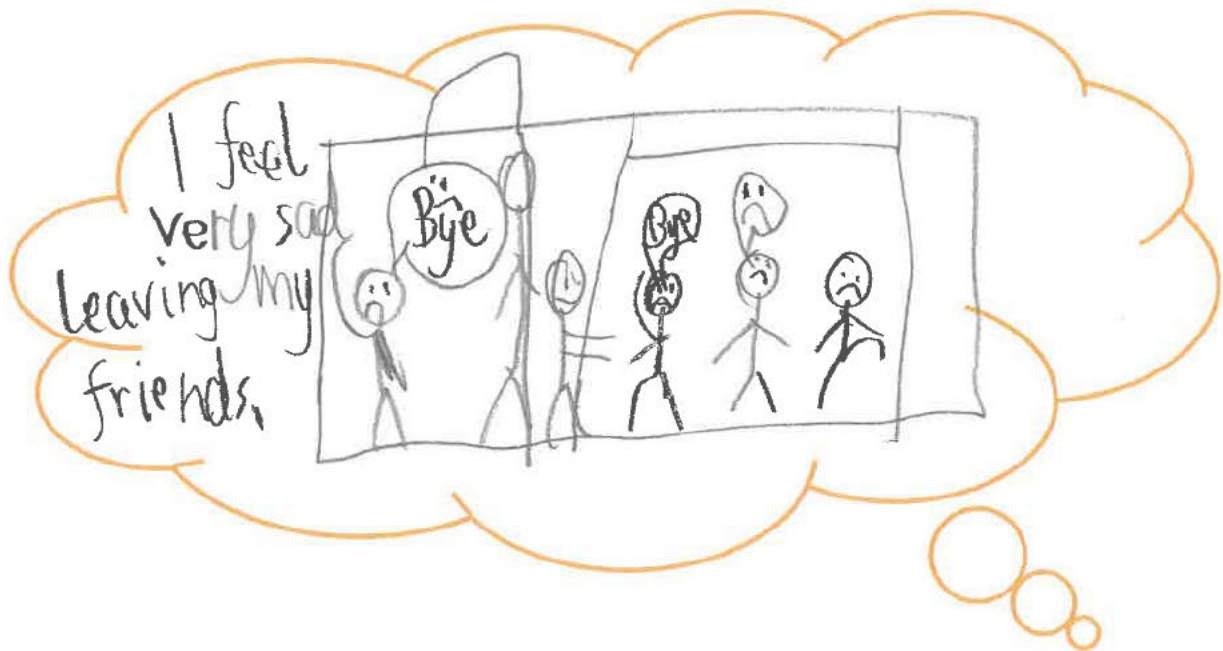
 ~~me and my friend~~ We play
football in the playground.
I'll sad

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

Year 1



What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

please don't lose
our school. I love
it here.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel a bit
because I will
be with my friends

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

Why would you
close the school?

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I would feel
sad because I will
miss all my friends
and teachers.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

Please don't
close our school.
it's amazing w teachers
work very hard. and
try to teach us?

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel very
unhappy because
my friends are
leaving.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

Year

2

Why are you closing our school?
Please don't close the school please

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel worried and anxious.
I Love the school.


How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

please don't close our School because
We don't have ~~enough~~ enough AA
money - can you ~~give~~ give us more
money to help with our education.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel upset because the school is
going to close.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



OUR School is the
World to us. Why are
you closing our School.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel worried because
I'm going to SebVight
and it makes me
worried.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I don't want
you to close the
school please. I love the
size of the school and
how fancy it is
I never

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I will feel
left if my best
friend leaves. So I will
just hang out alone

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I don't want you to close the school please. I'll never leave. I love the size of the school and how fancy it is.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I will feel alone if my best ^{neighbour} ~~neighbours~~ left. So I will just hang out alone.

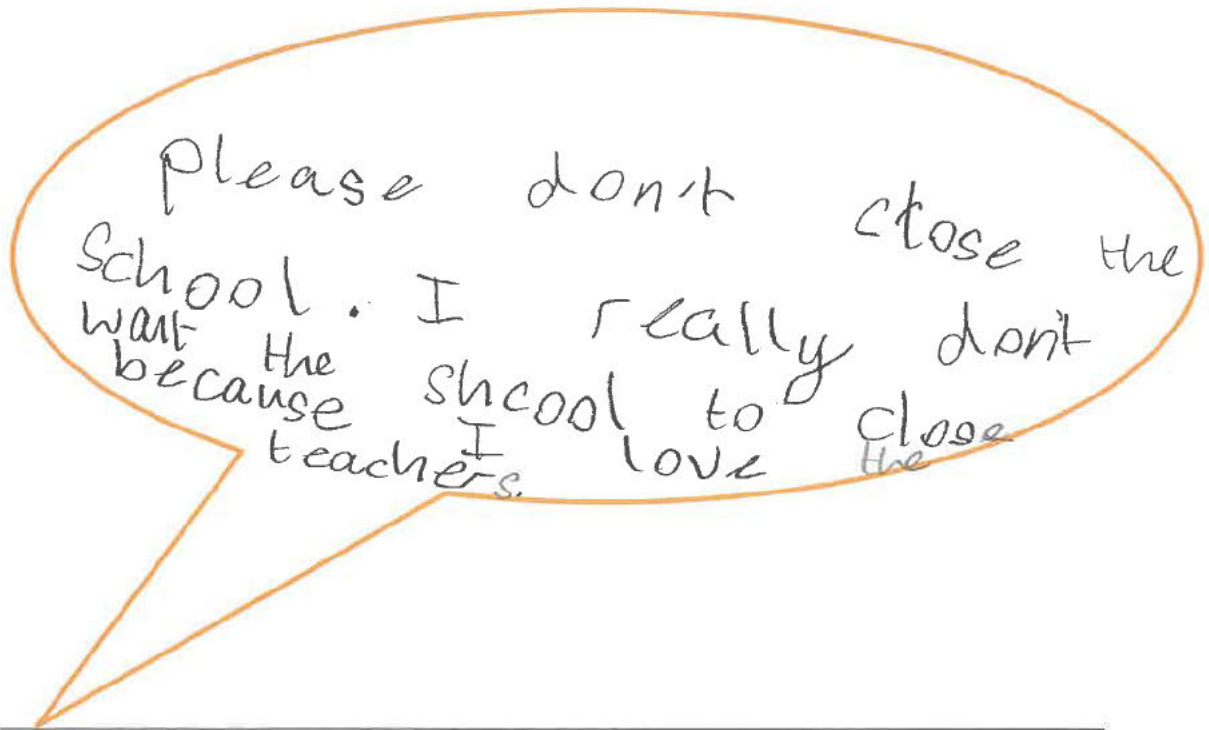
How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

The The School is a
very nice place.
Please ~~don't~~^{don't}
close the school.

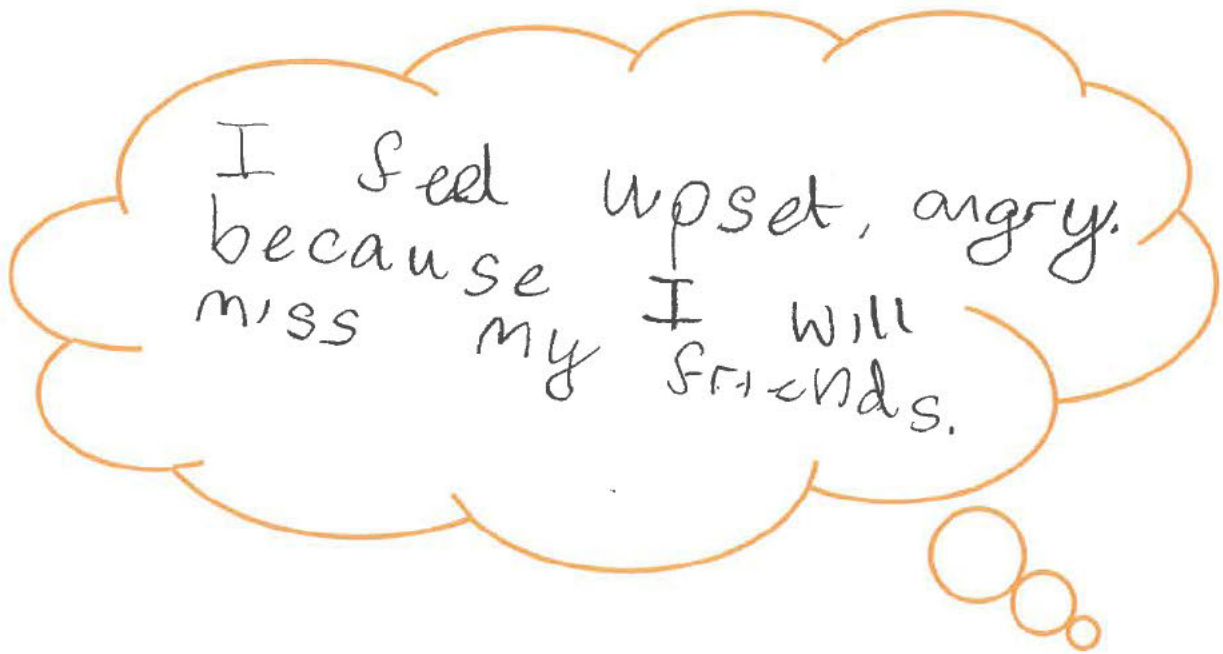
What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel upset
~~because~~^{because} I will miss
the school.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

Please don't close our school.
We like our school is amazing.
and ~~the~~ our school is
why ~~for~~ friends will miss our teacher
are you closing our school?

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel upset
because my friends are
leaving the school.

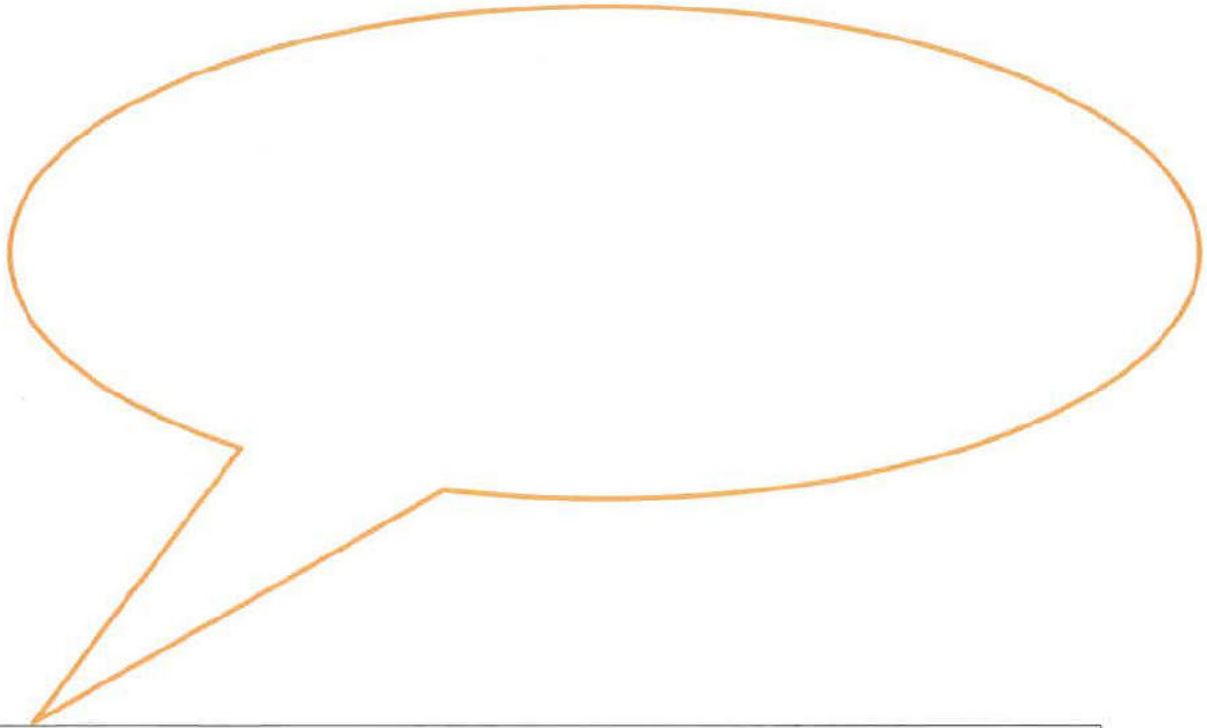
How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

The school is amazing
Please don't close the
school.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I ~~am~~ feel & bad
because it is hard to
make friends.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

Please don't close our school because we
don't have enough ~~money~~ money. Can you give
us more money to help with our education.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel lonely because a lot of my friends has
left the school.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

please don't close
our school I love
it here.

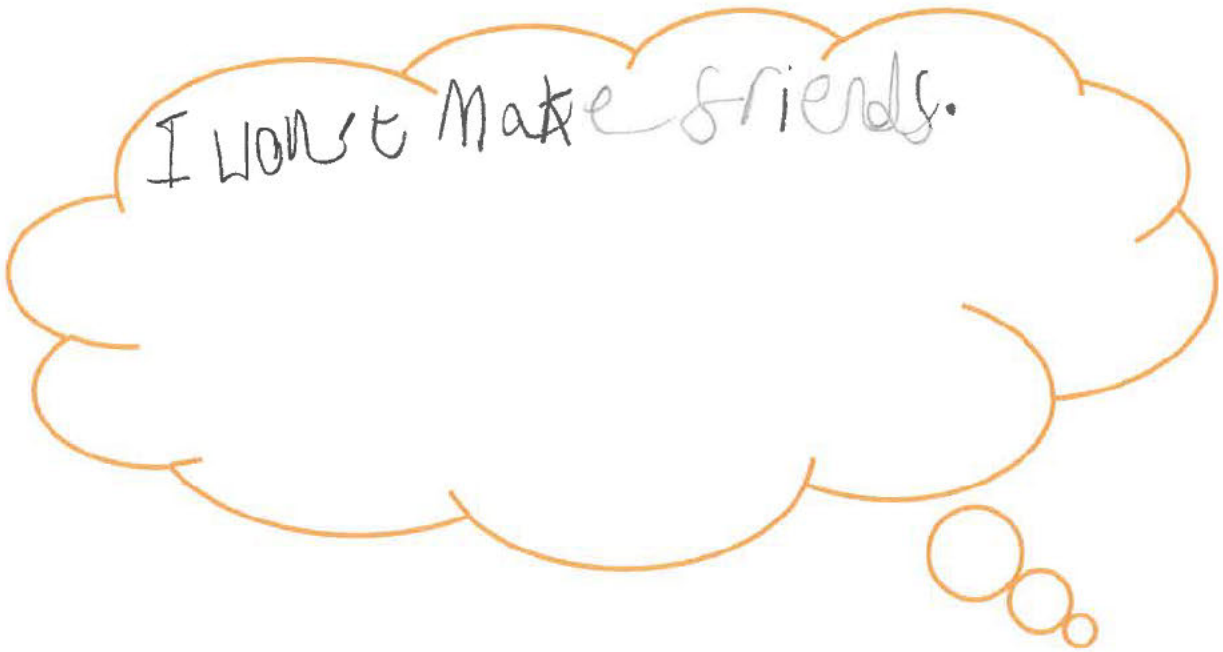
What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel upset
because I want to
be with my friends.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

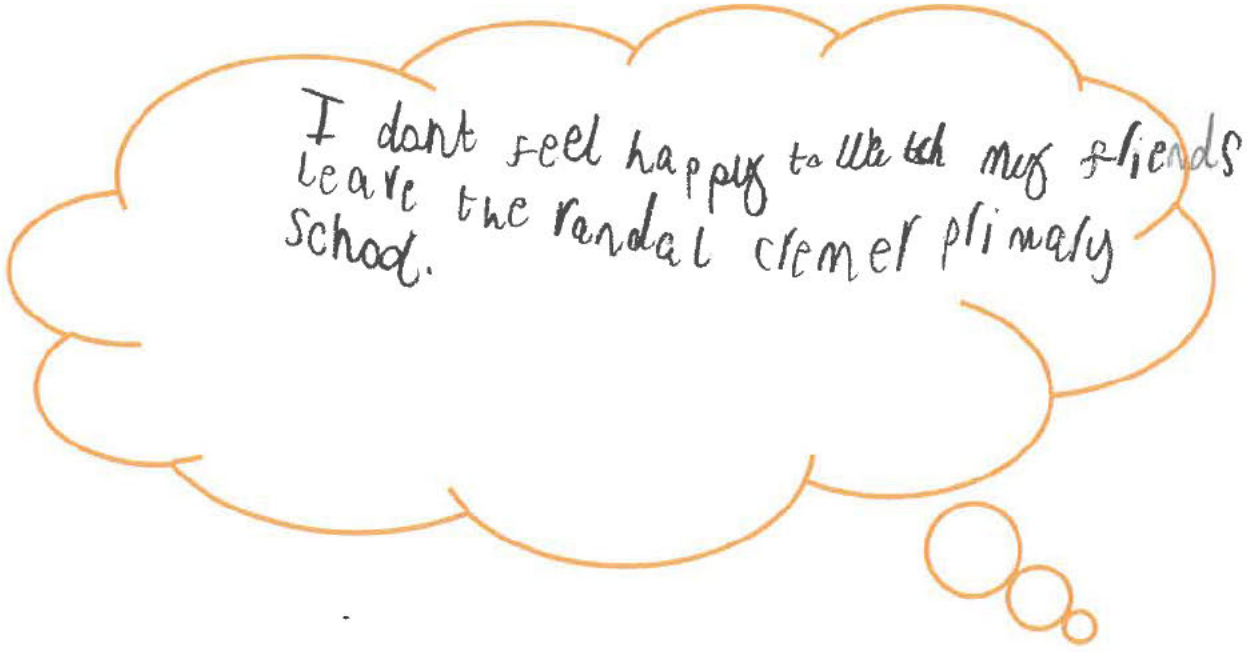


How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



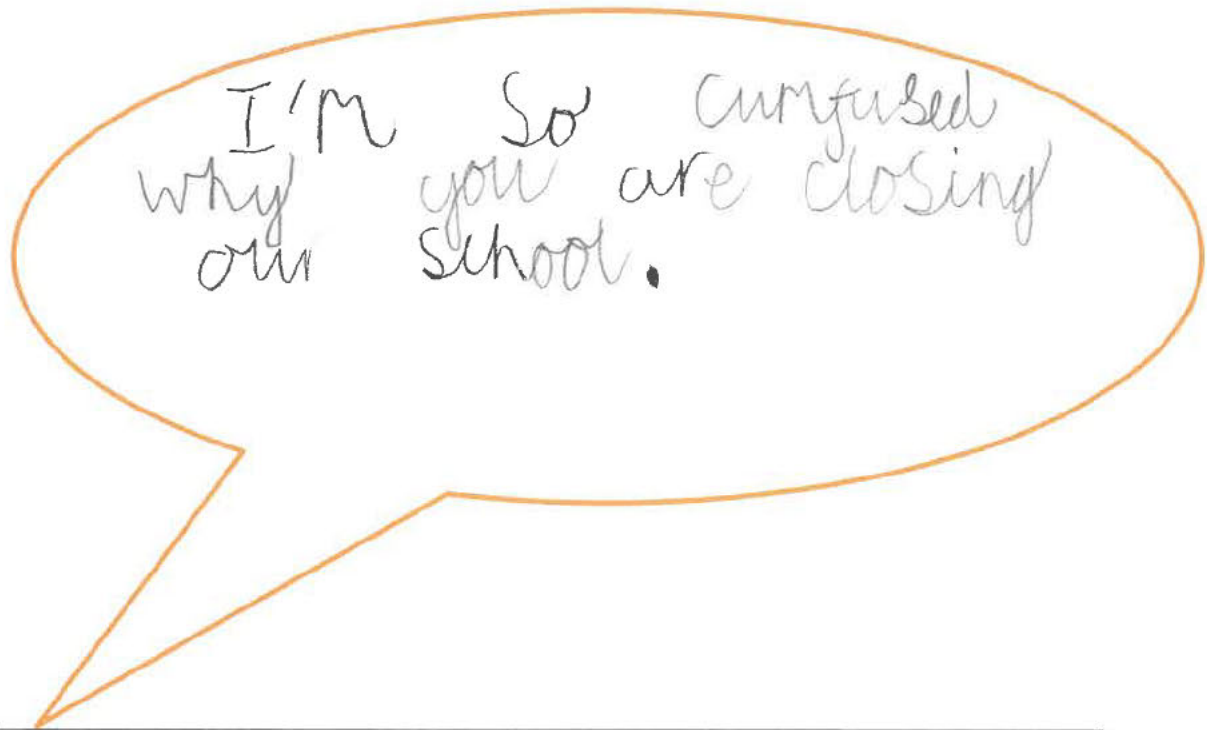
I dont like the plan o f getting rid
o f a lovely school its making the children
Sad our school has no reason to be get
rid o f our school.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



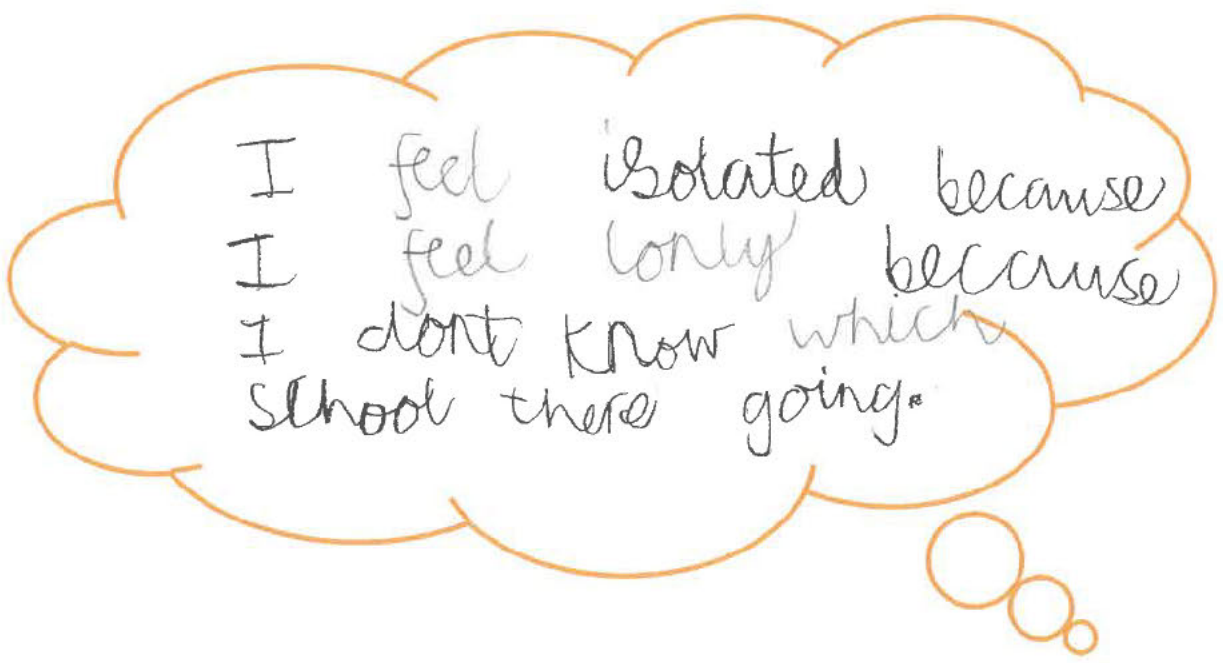
I dont feel happy to watch my friends
leave the Randal Cremer primary
school.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



I'm so confused
why you are closing
our school.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



I feel isolated because
I feel lonely because
I don't know which
school there going.

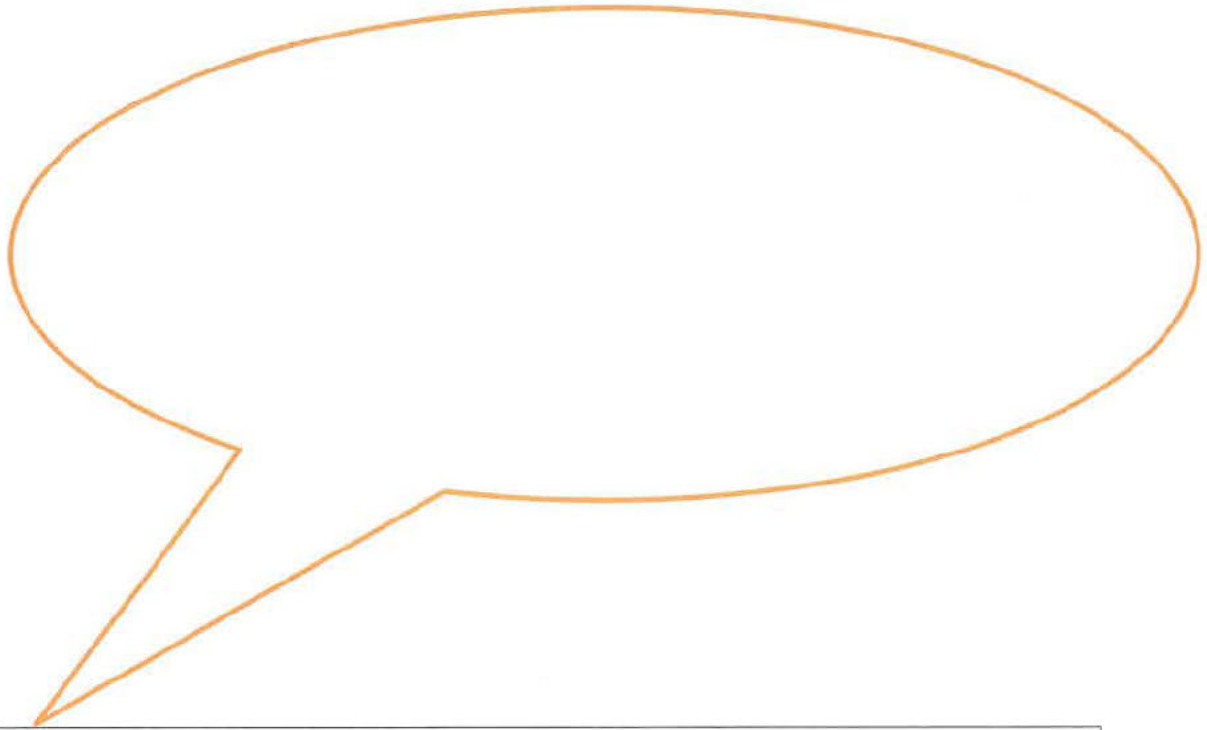
How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I feel unhappy, anxious, and
scared.

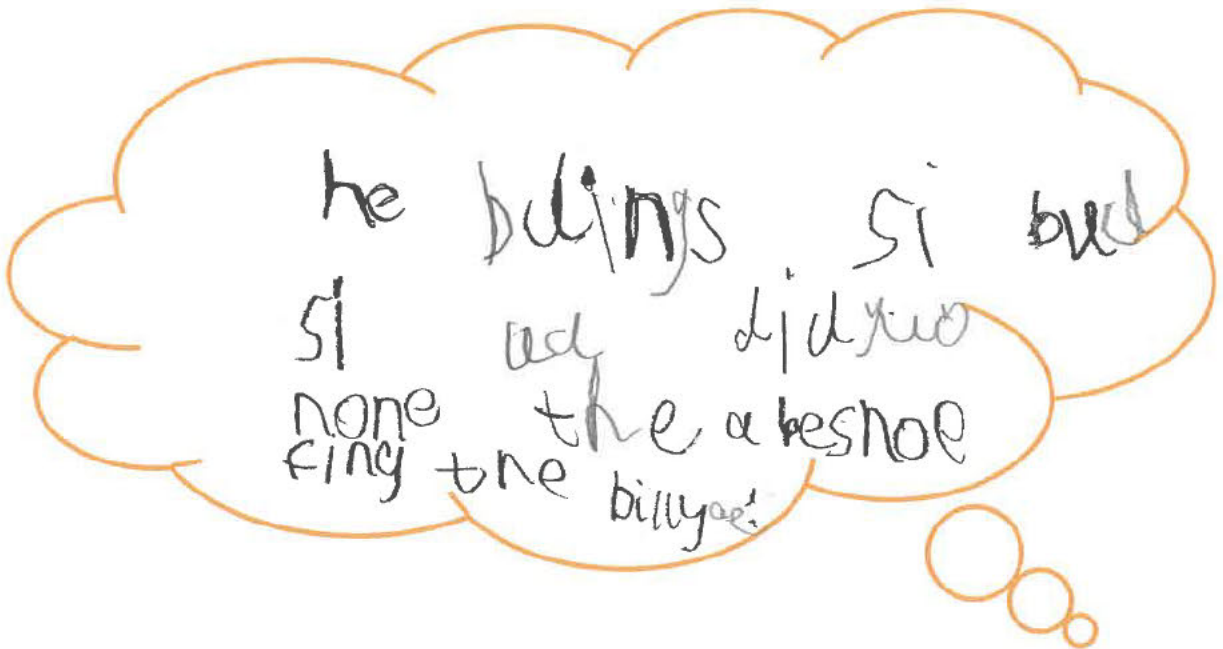
What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

Sad unhappy and scared.
I will miss my teachers
and friends

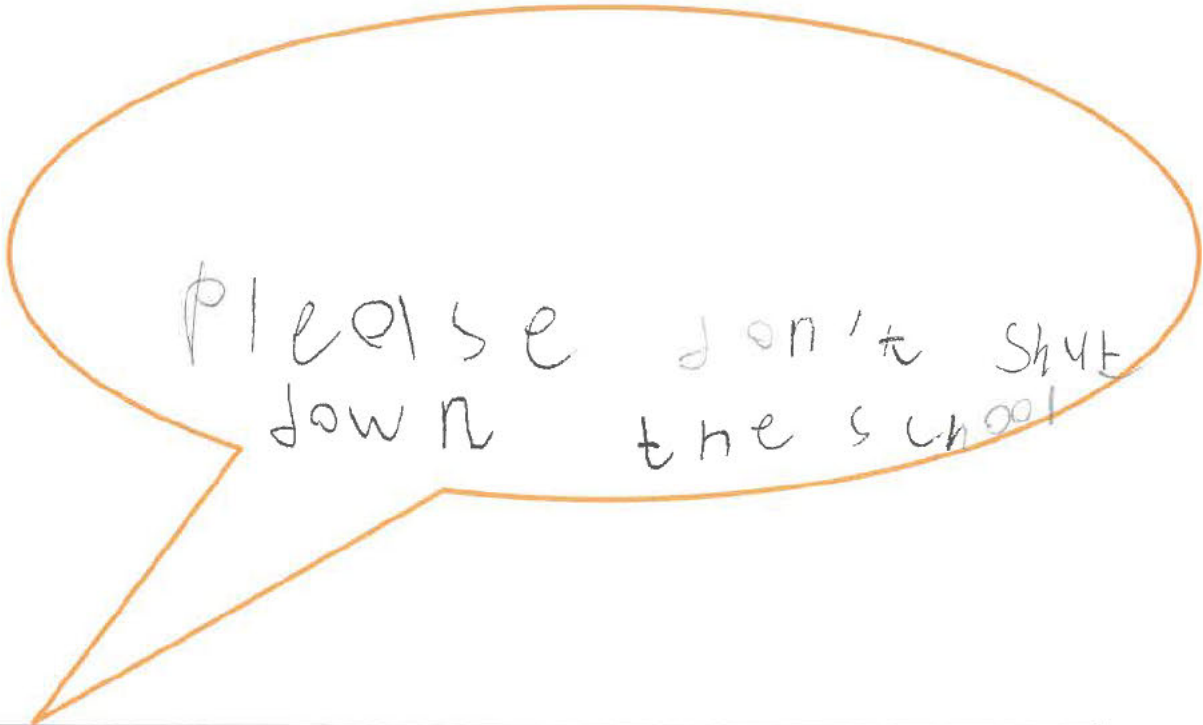
How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

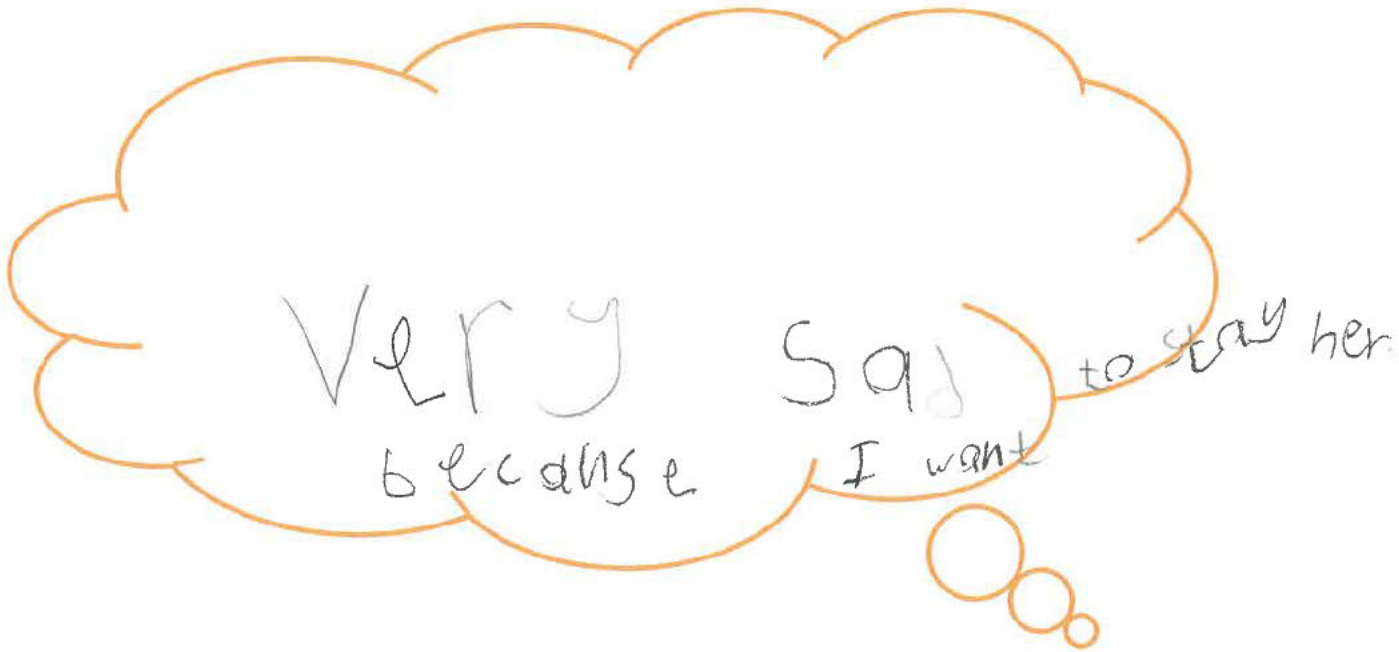


How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



Please don't shut
down the school

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



Very sad because I want to stay here

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I am so shock
and really really
Angry because and
don't choose the
School!
and really upset about
you. 😞

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I am Angriessve because
and I going to beat
you up next time
and i'm so so
Angriessve For no
reson 😡

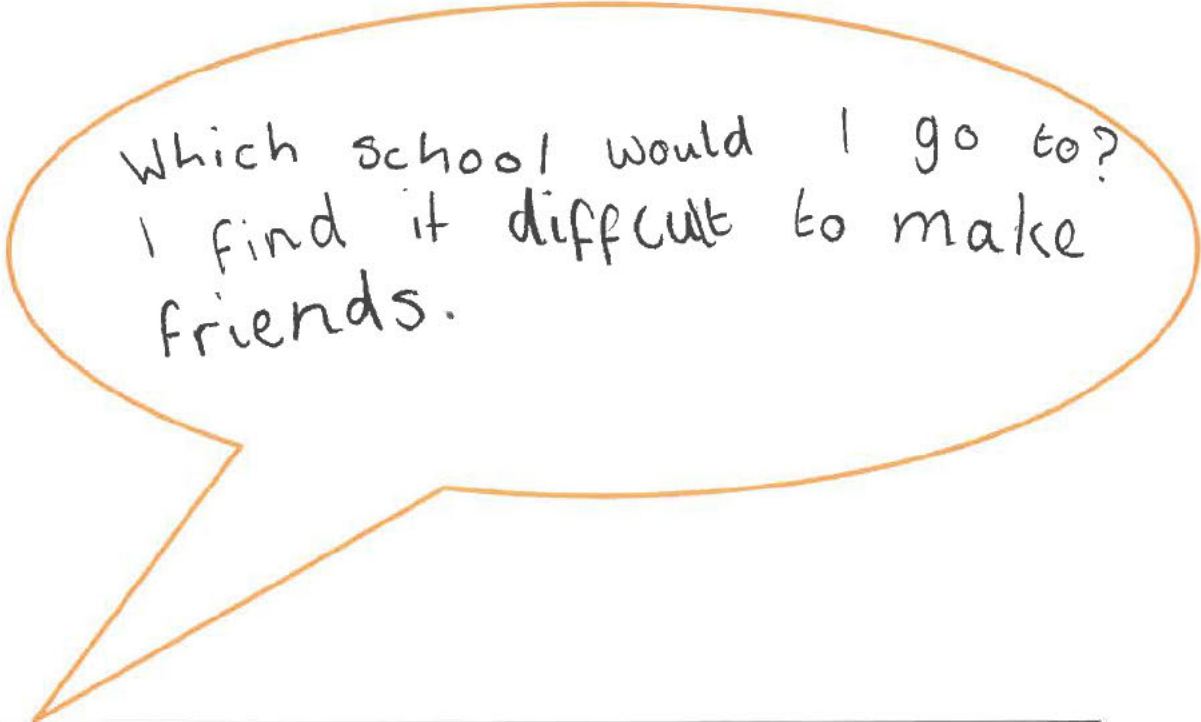
How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I'm upset because
you're not making it fair
I don't want to leave
my friends behind.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

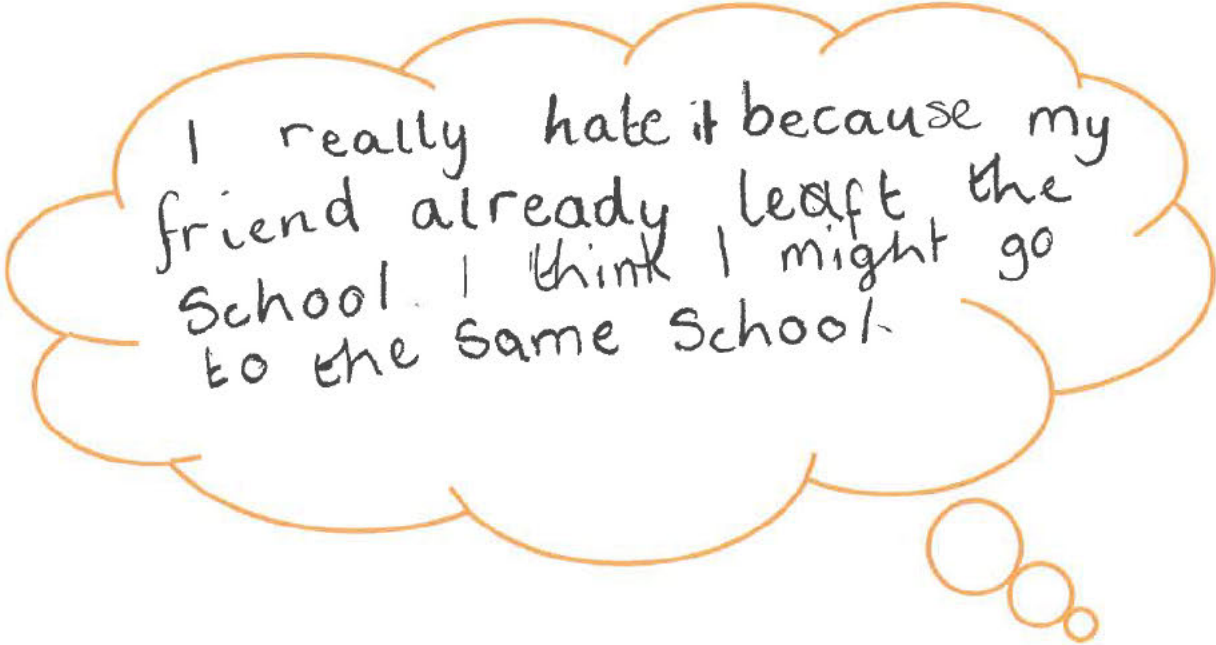
You can't just do this
because I have to go
to a new school
now I'm nervous.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



Which school would I go to?
I find it difficult to make
friends.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



I really hate it because my
friend already left the
school. I think I might go
to the same school.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

Why are you closing
my school?

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

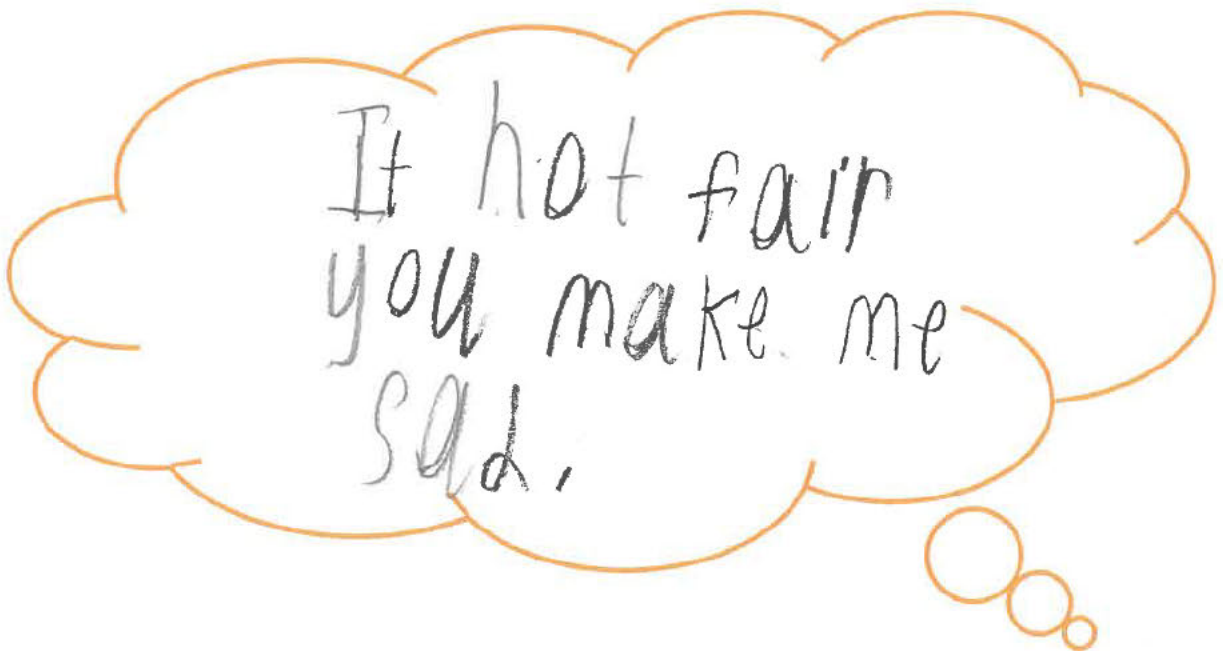
heart broken
I feel isolated because
you are closing my
school and I don't know
where my friends are
going.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



Don't do this Please.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



It not fair
you make me
sad.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I don't want you guys to shut down the school because I don't know which school to go to and I'm afraid that I will not go to the same school as my friends.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I will feel to isolated because I will miss my best friends and I think I'll not go to the same school as my friends and I love them so I don't want to receive.

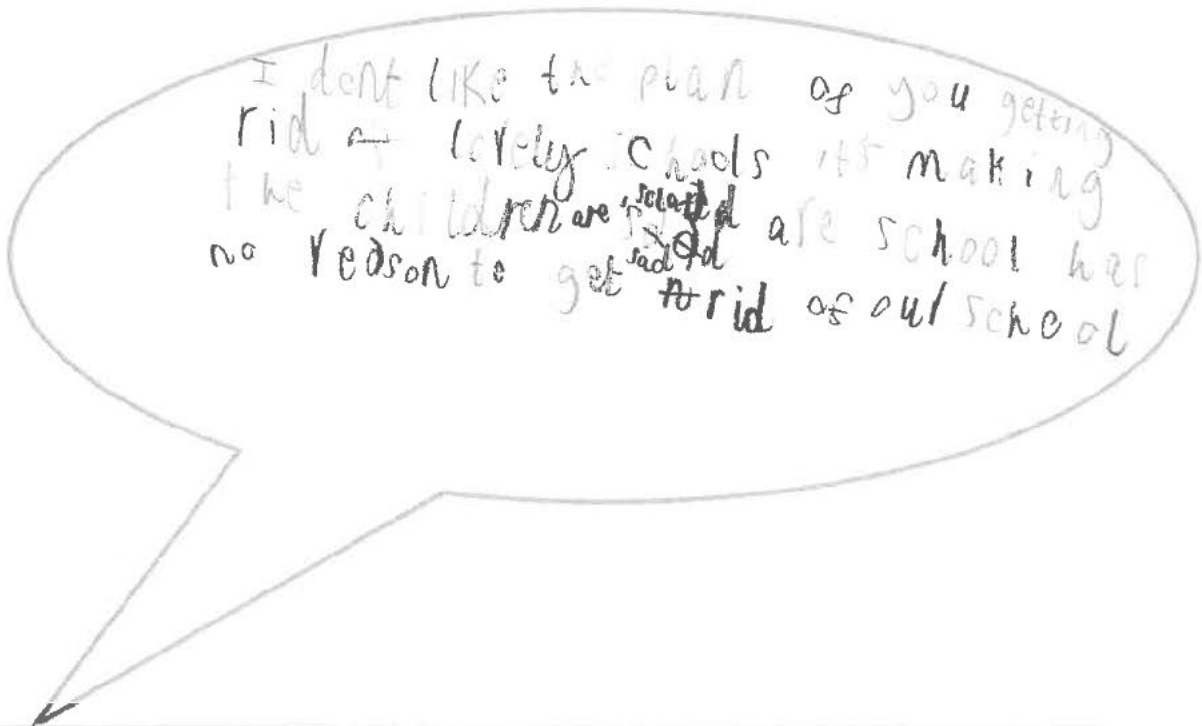
How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

Why are you closing my school? I am feeling heartbroken because only two friends are coming and I am feeling very, very upset.

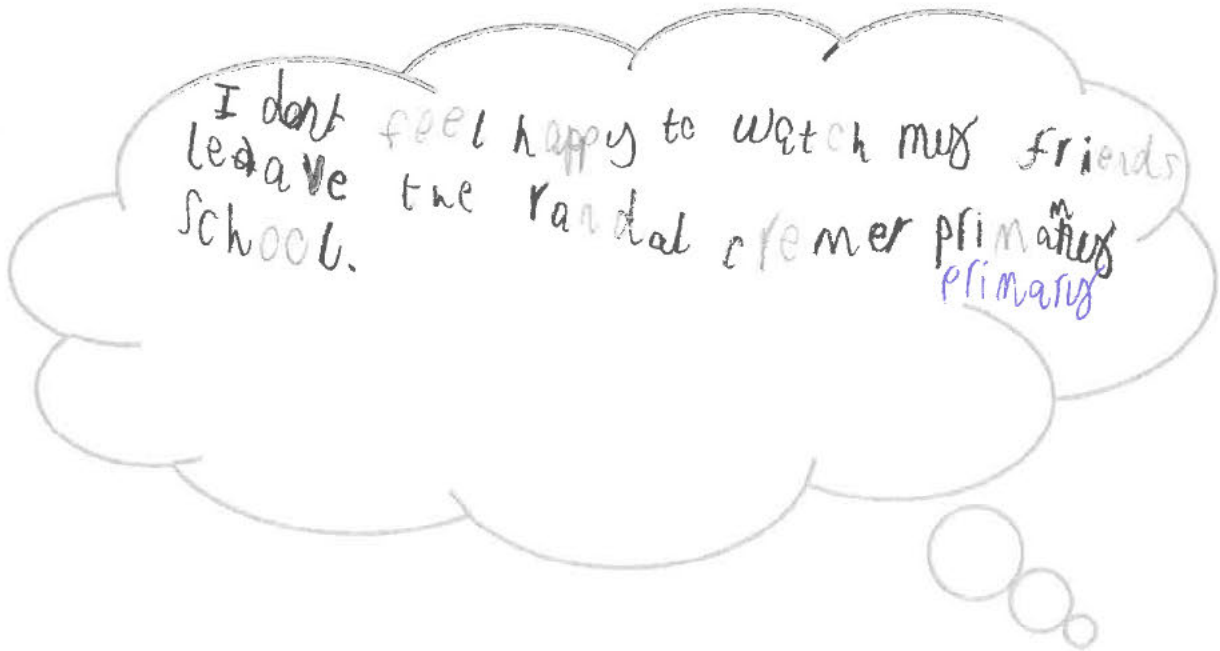
What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I am feeling tearful because I am very, very, very, very sad.

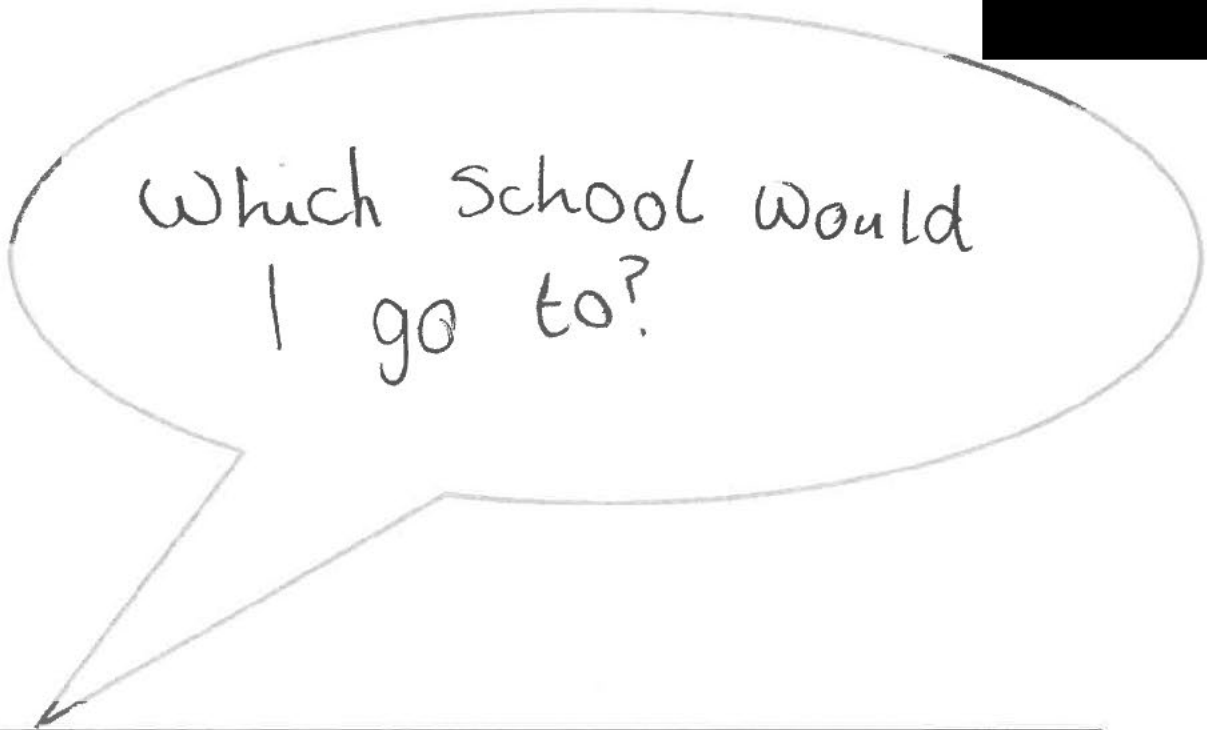
How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



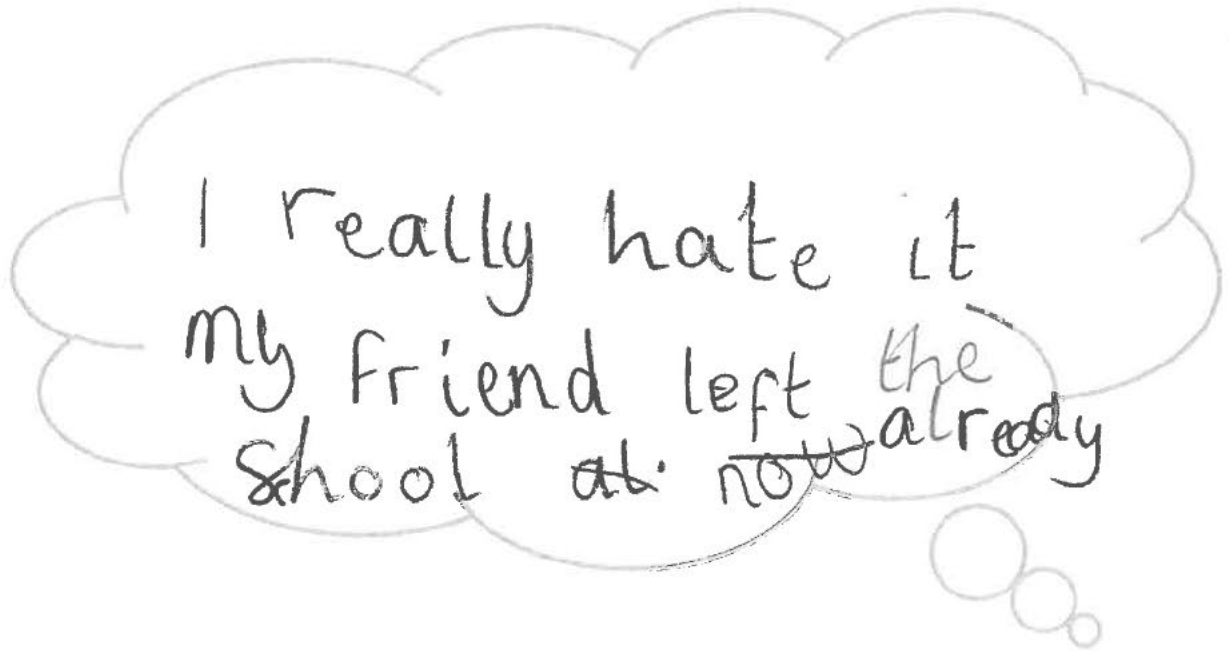
What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I would not want the school closing down because my friends to have learn want to learn. please don't close down the school

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

If my friend leave the school who will I play with because of who? oh! The school council!

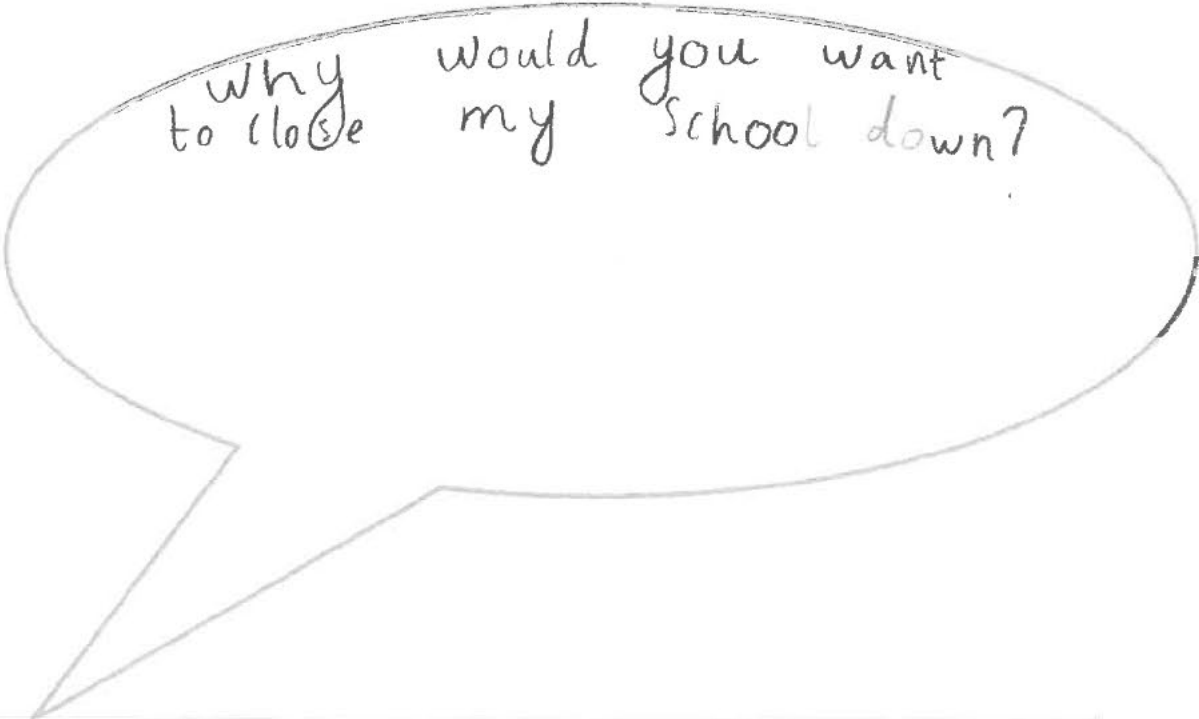
How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

Why are you closing
our School how would
you feel if someone
done that to your
childs school.

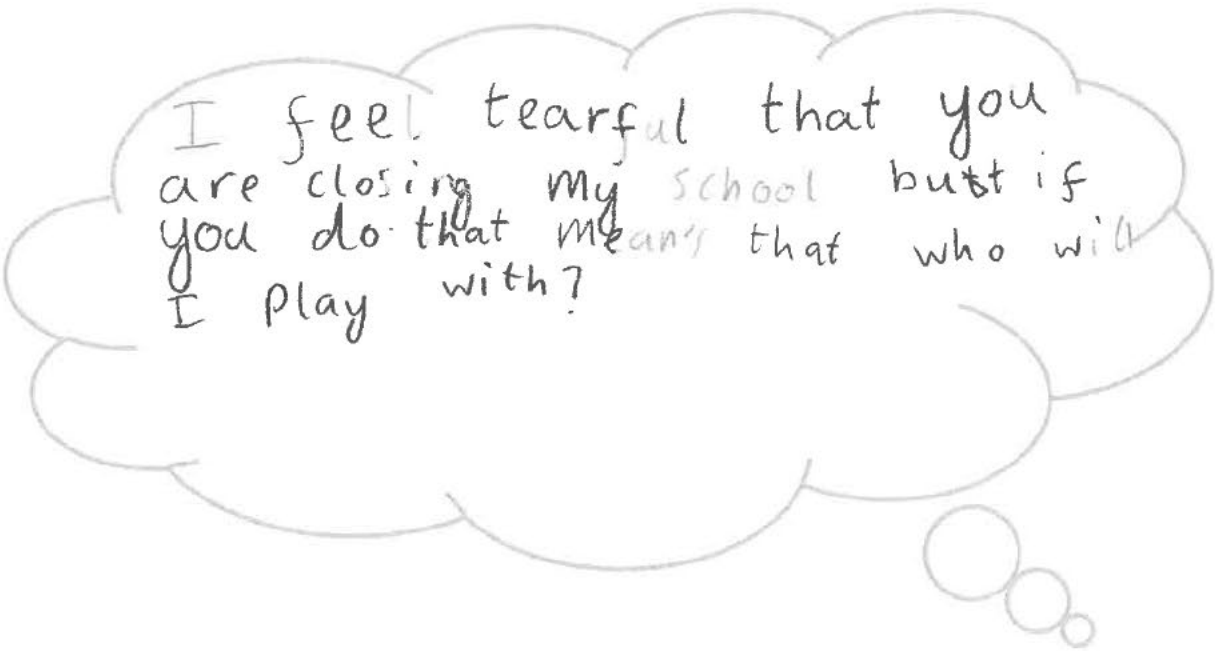
What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

am feeling so
sad cause of
you and why
are you closing
are school.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

Why are you closing our school
it is so for children because
I will miss my friends and
teachers.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel verry sad and anxous
leaving my school. I will
miss my friends and my
teachers.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

Year

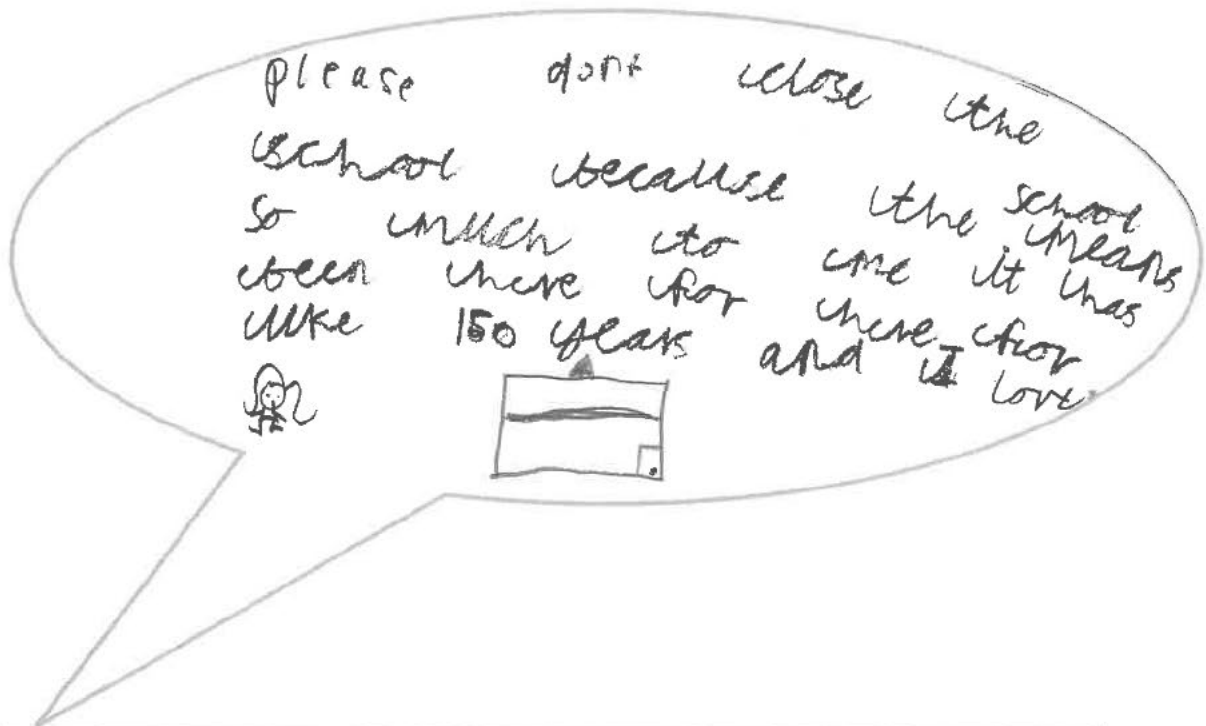
3 / 4

Please Hackney Council don't close our parents have to buy a new cloths and in the school that we are going it mybe the school don't treat us like this School because in celebration and in our birdays they sing us and give us presents.

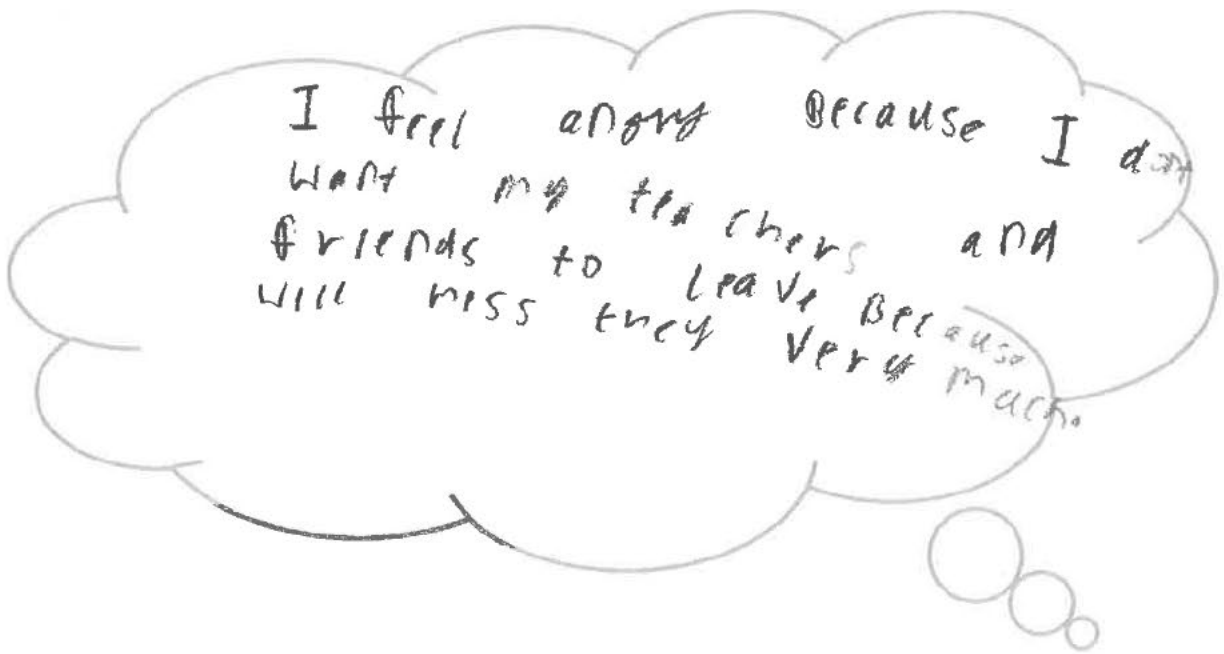
What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

When I watch my friends leave I will feel heart broken because when we go to a new school we won't know our new friends well like we do now.

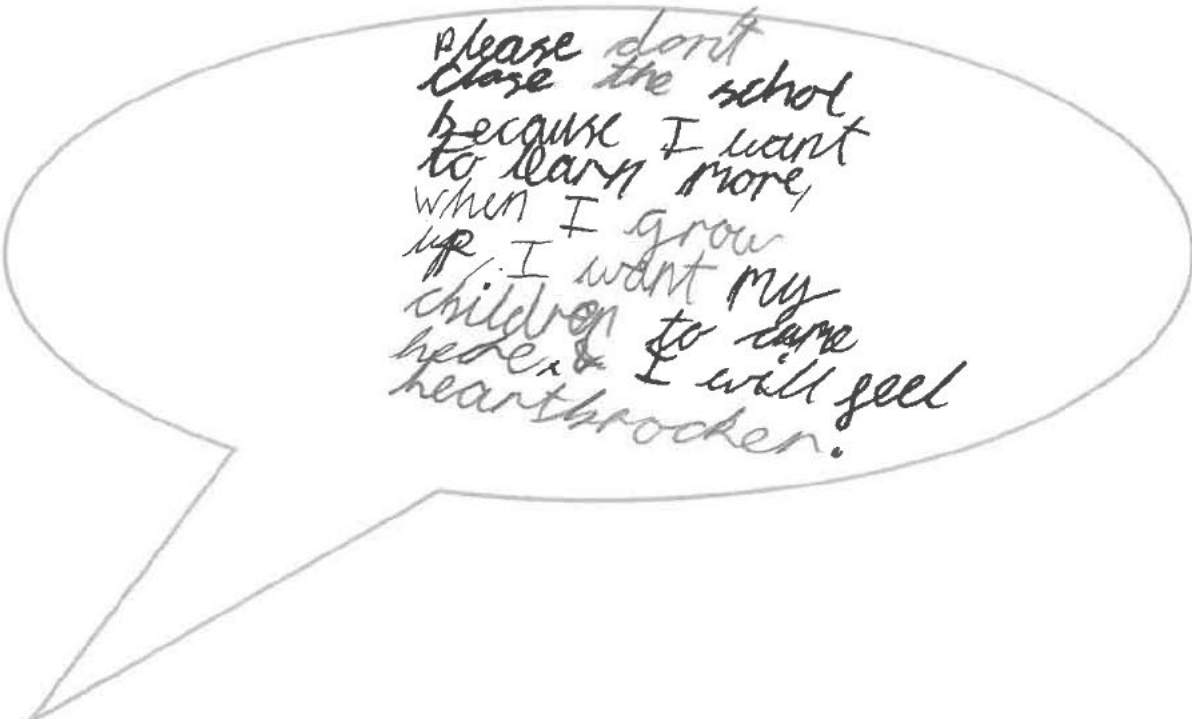
How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

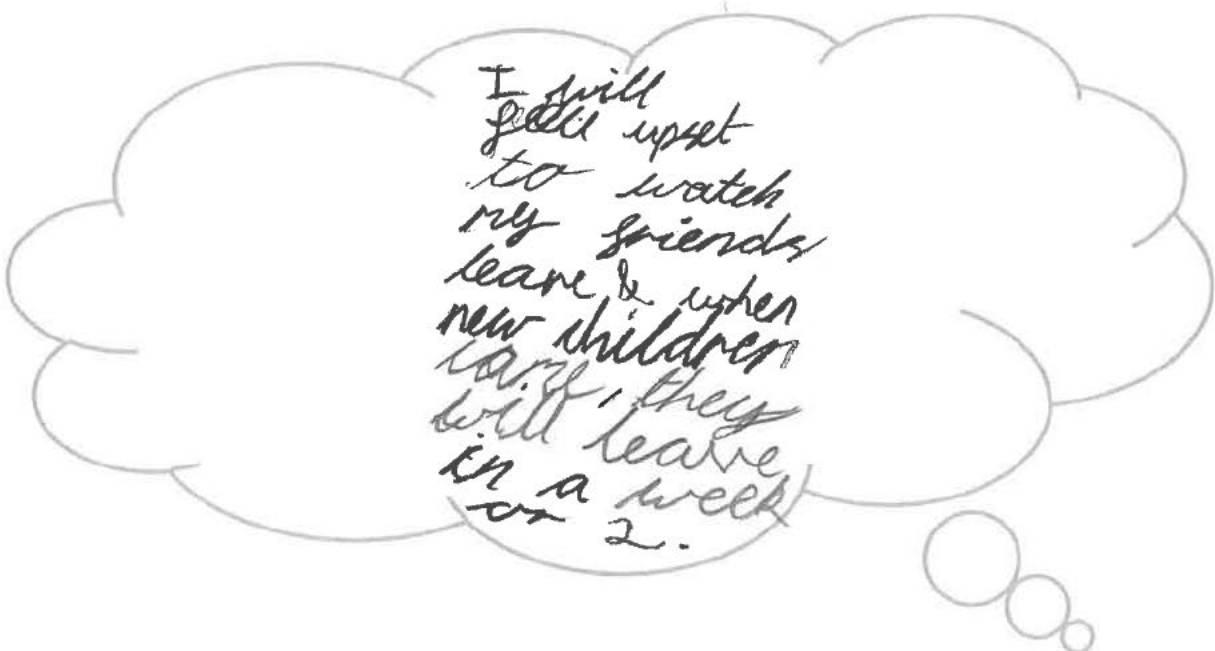


How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



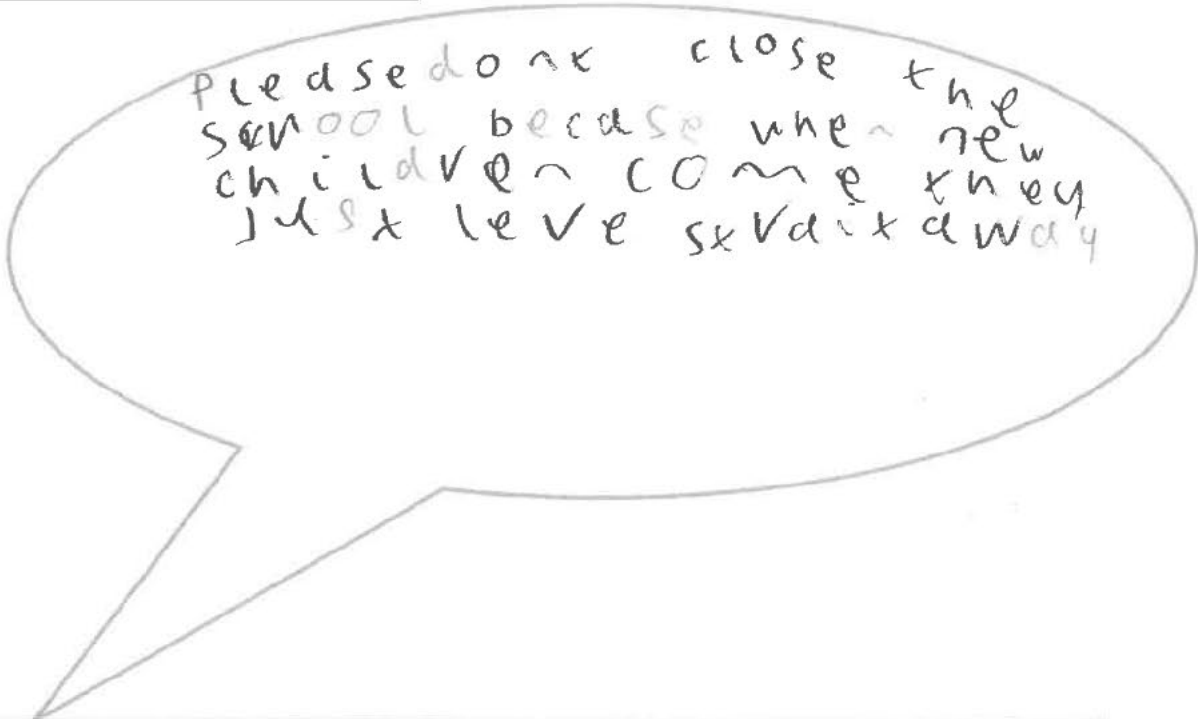

please don't
close the school
because I want
to learn more,
when I grow
up. I want my
children to come
here & I will feel
heartbroken.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



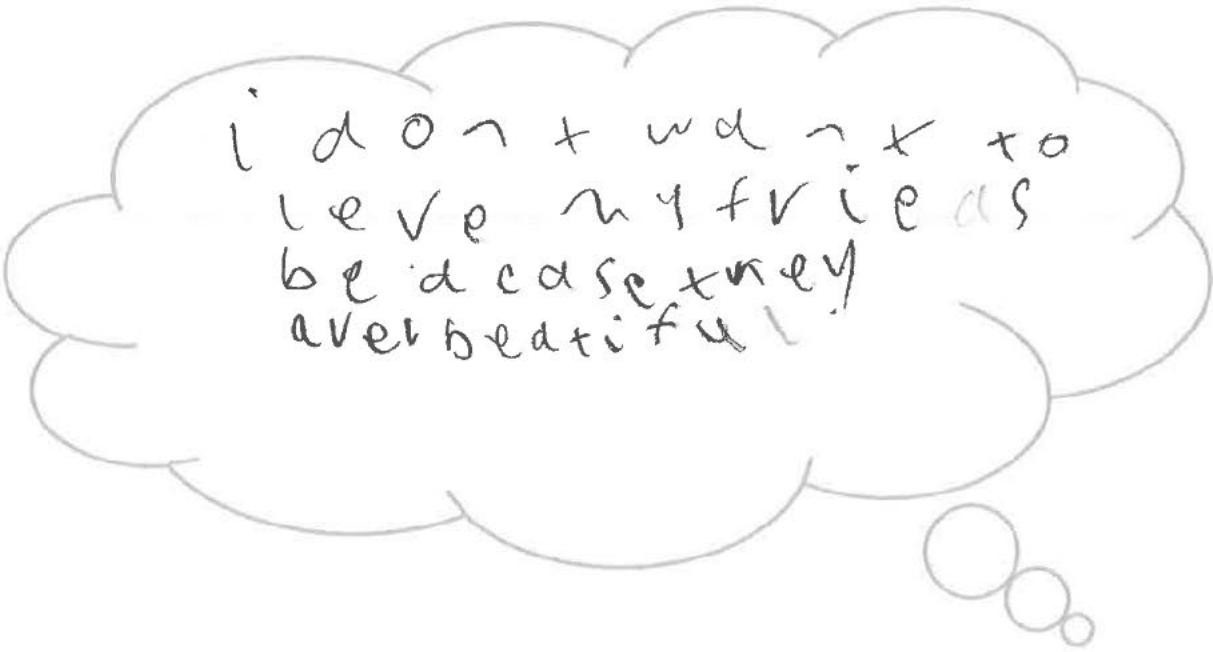
I will
feel upset
to watch
my friends
leave & when
new children
come, they
will leave
in a week
or 2.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



pleas don't close the
school because when new
children come they
just leave school away

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



i don't want to
leave my friends
because they
are beautiful

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

Angry School
is closing too
and I feel angry

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

Angry because
I miss [redacted]!

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

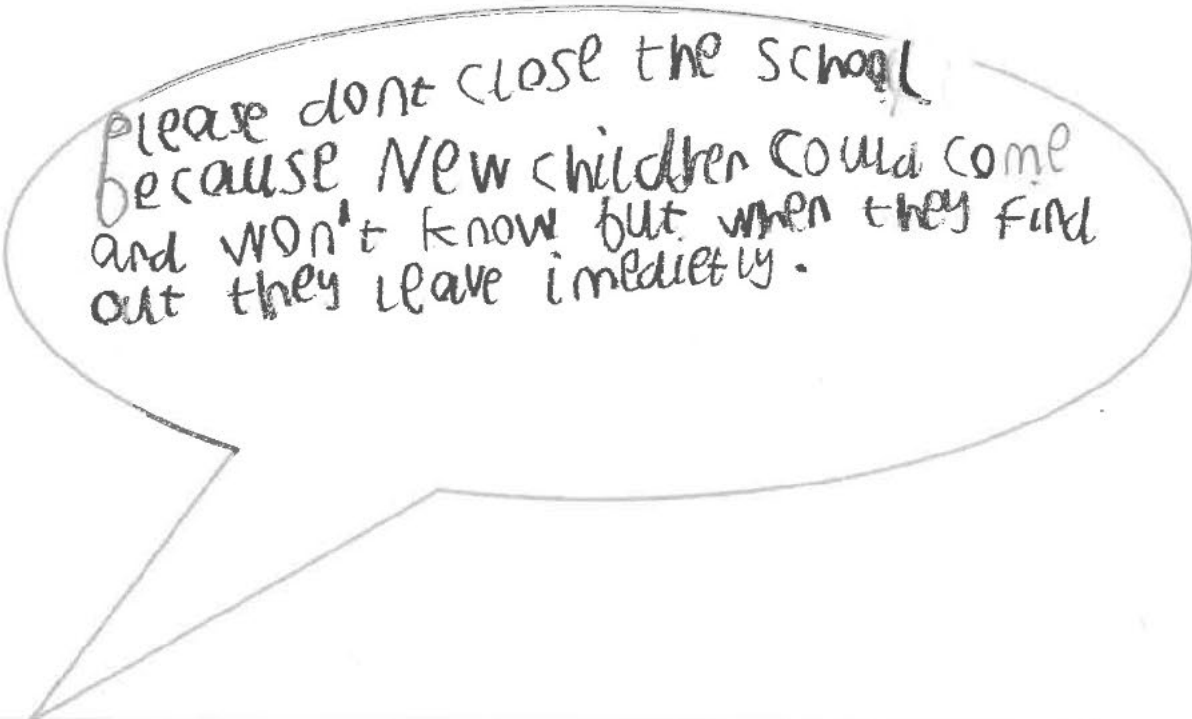
Please do not close our school because the teacher let us have fun and when it our birthday the teacher will let us do fun thing and I fell very upset and lonely. please do not close our school. I love my school so much. 😍 😞

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel upset because my friend are leaving the school and I fell upset, lonely and unhappy. 😞

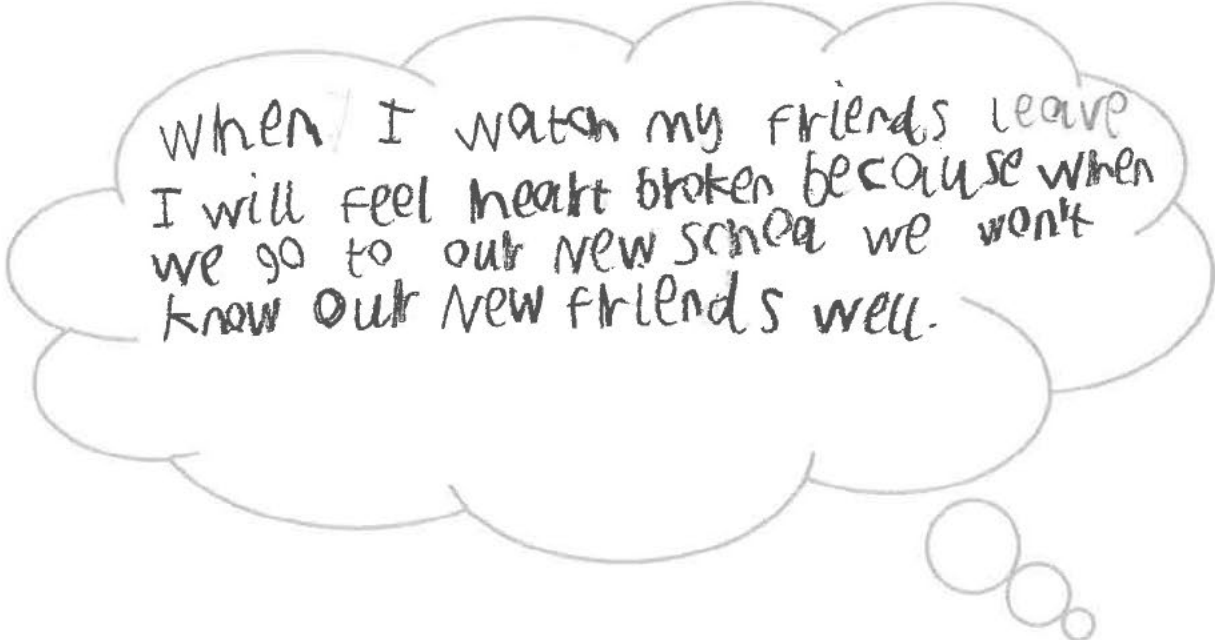
please please do not close our school. 😍

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



please dont close the school
because New children could come
and won't know but when they find
out they leave immediately.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



When I watch my friends leave
I will feel heart broken because when
we go to our new school we won't
know our new friends well.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

Don't close our school because
I am going to be upstep because maths, handwriting
is Good, nice, beautiful.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

Upstep because friends and teachers
are going, friends are going to a new
school and teachers are getting
a new job.



How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

Please do not close
 this school the school
 is valuable to people in
 this school and is you
 close this school down because
 parking has to
 pay for
 no MS.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I will see that do not leave
 do not leave and it
 will be what I will
 back to Randal Cremer
 shut down.

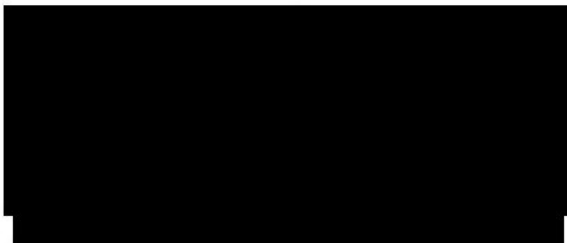
How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

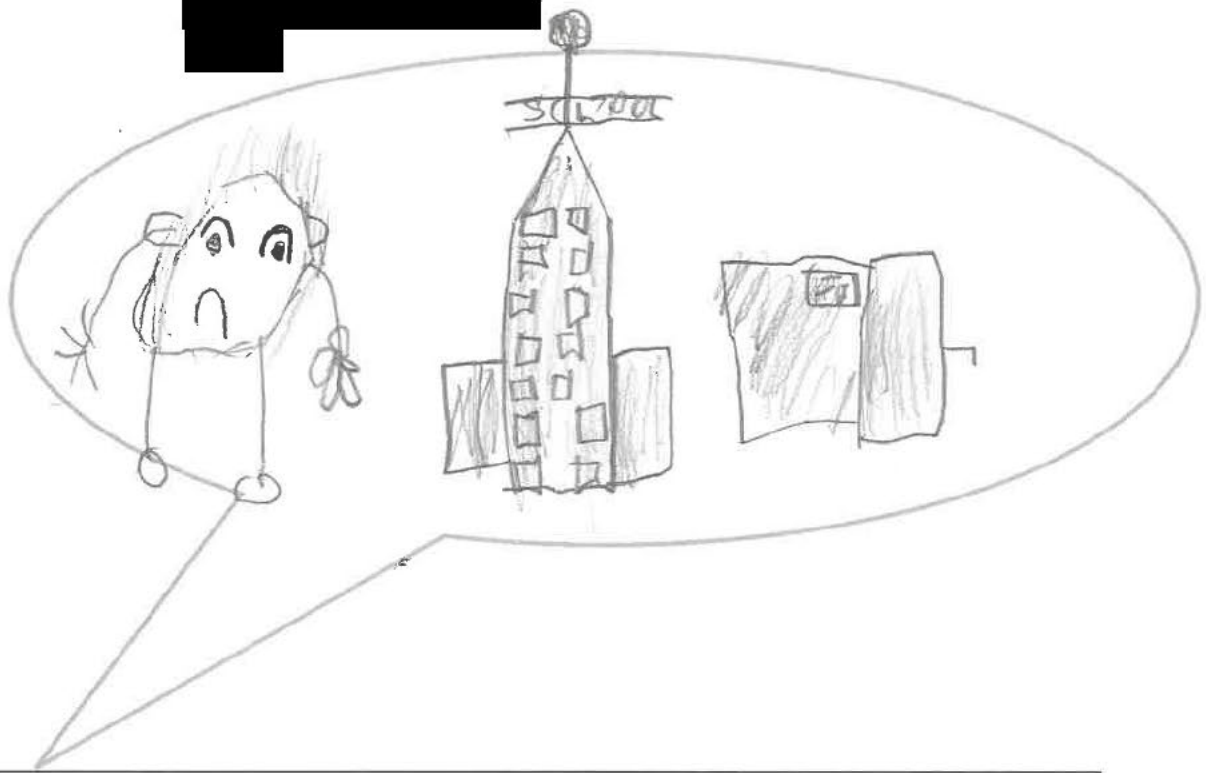


To not close the school
 because there's nice teachers and friends
 not many schools in Hackney way and there should
 you close this school.

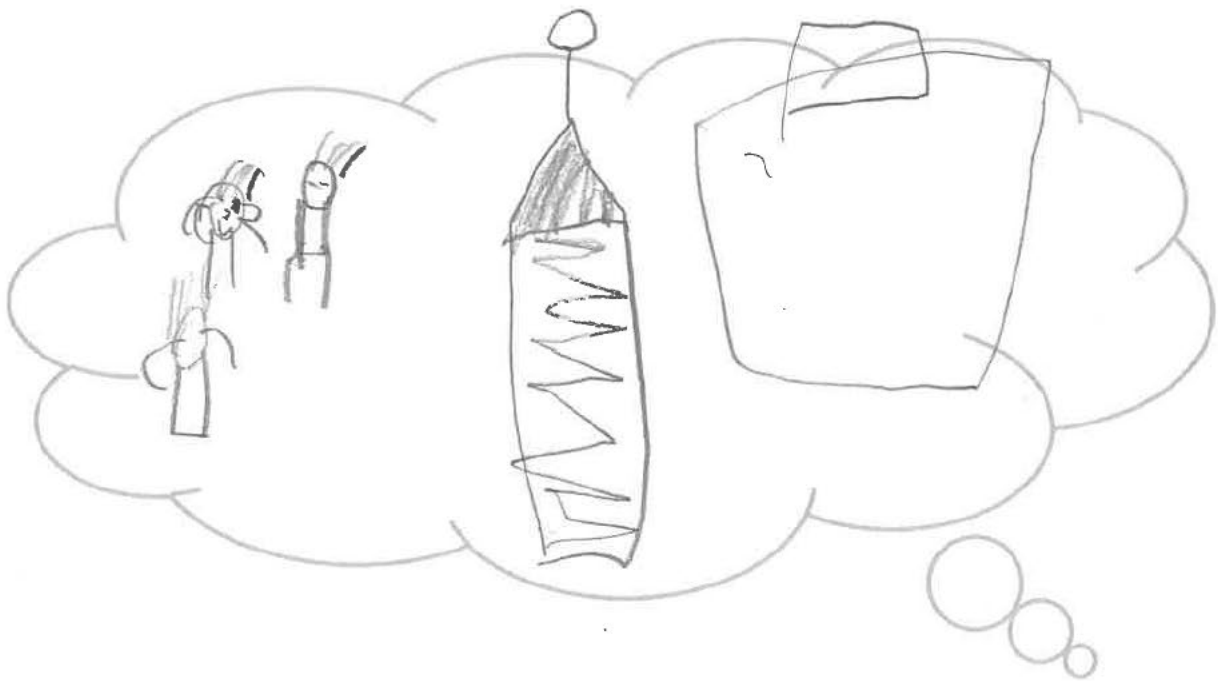
What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

very sad and emotional
 and heart broken because I don't
 want the school to close and
 after I will feel very emotional

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I will say don't close the school
because the school is so big and there are
so much and the people are so kind is well.



What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I will feel very, very upset because
if I see my friends and my teachers
leaving I will cry.

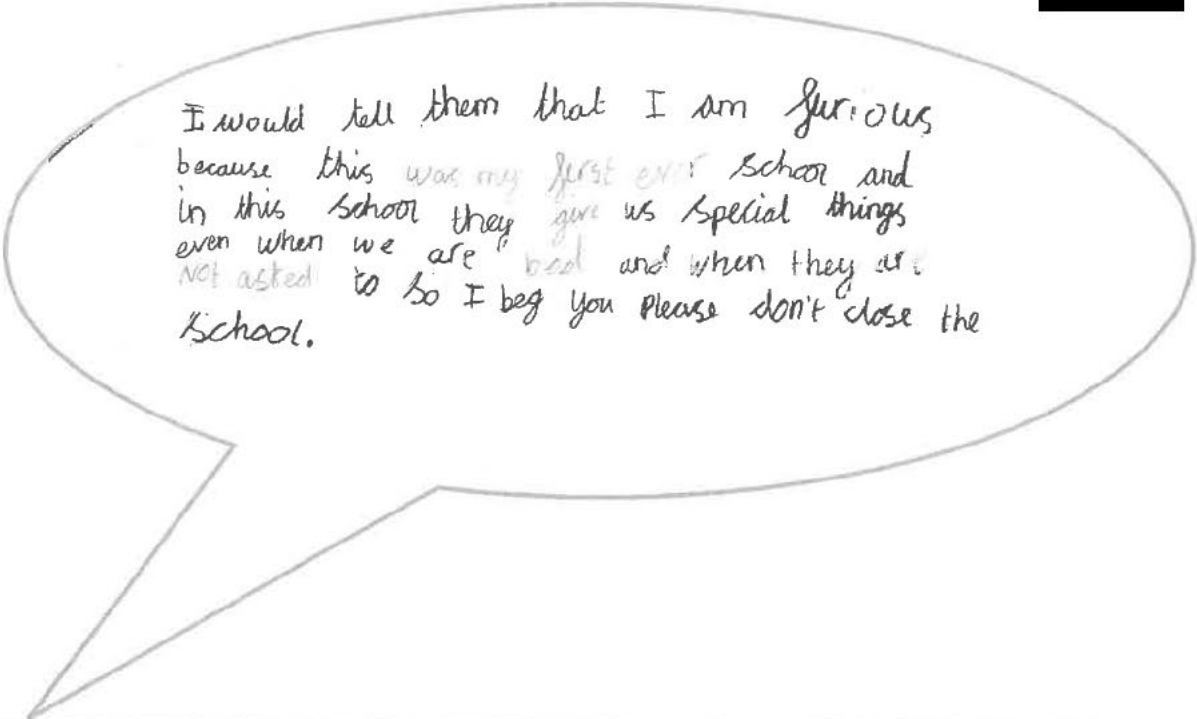
Bye!



Bye!

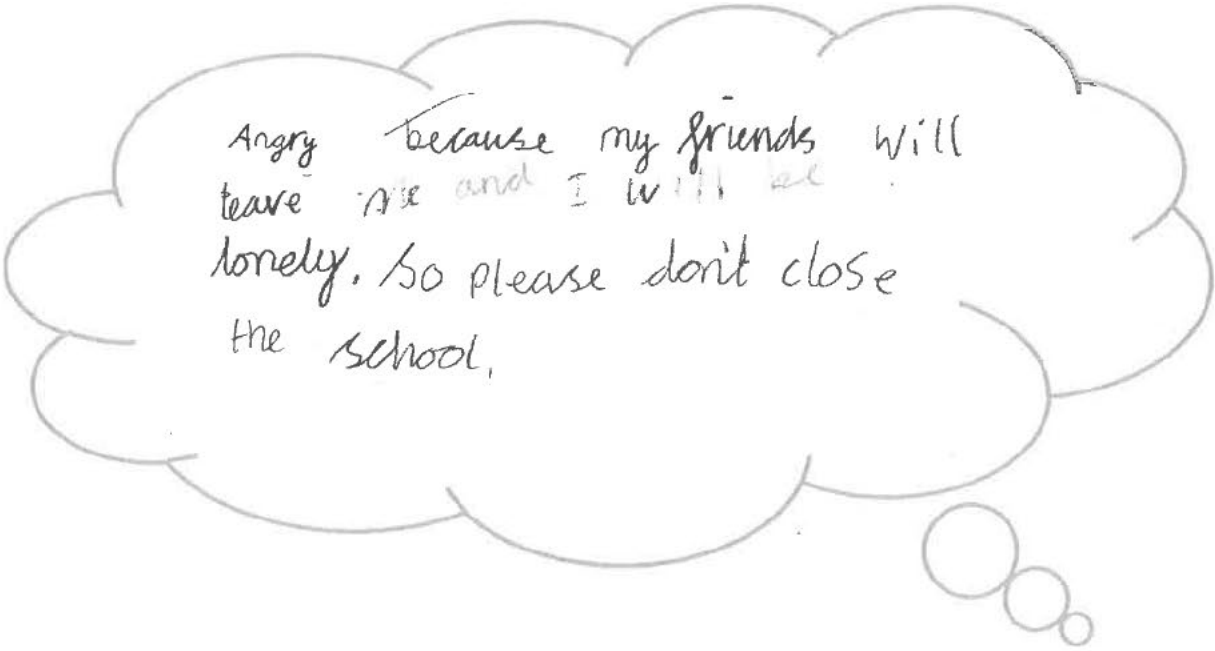


How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



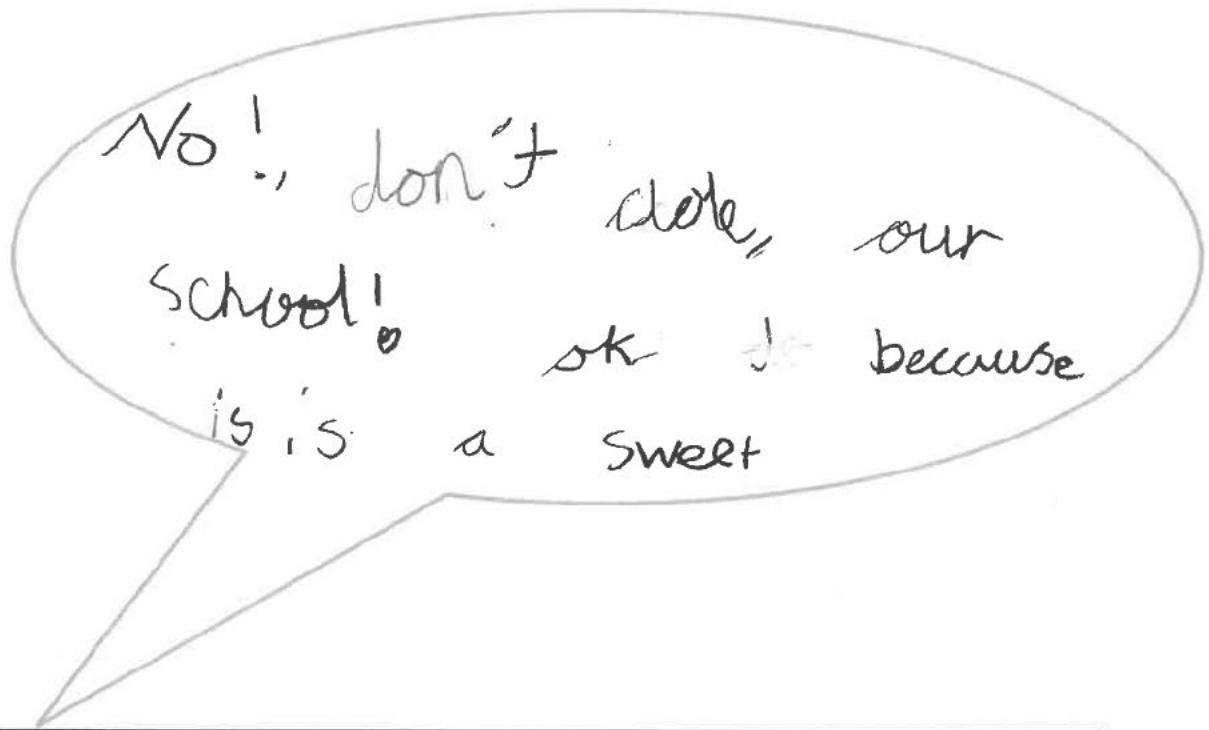
I would tell them that I am furious because this was my first ever school and in this school they give us special things even when we are bad and when they are not asked to so I beg you please don't close the school.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



Angry because my friends will leave me and I will be lonely. So please don't close the school.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



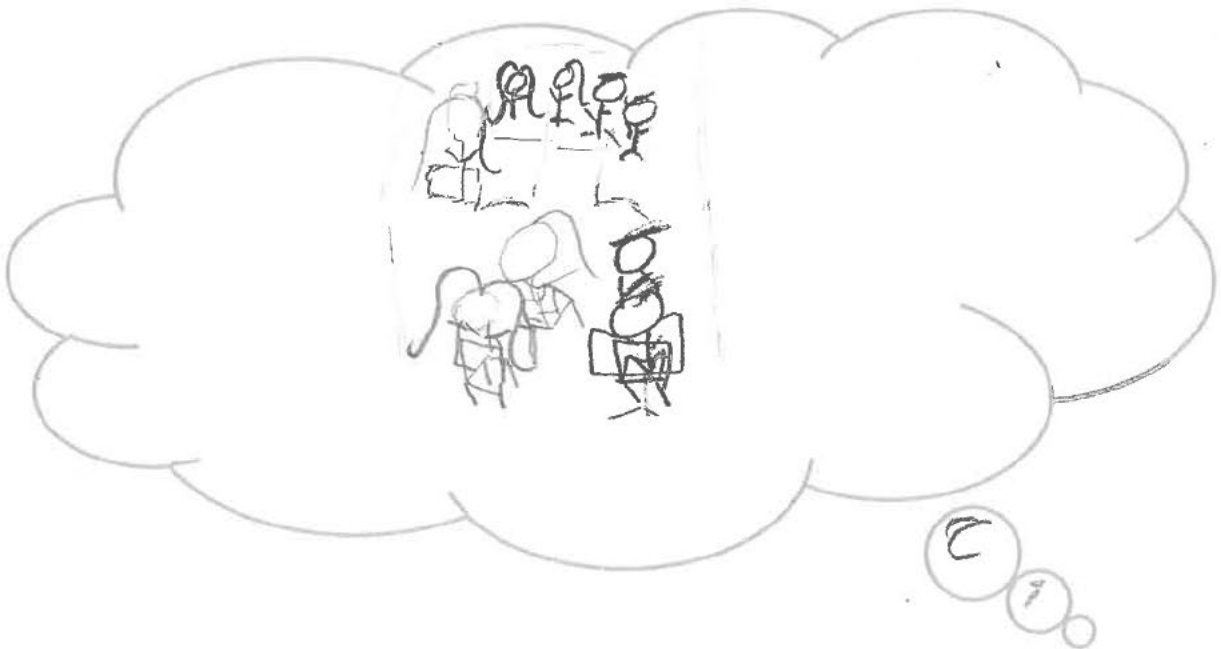
What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



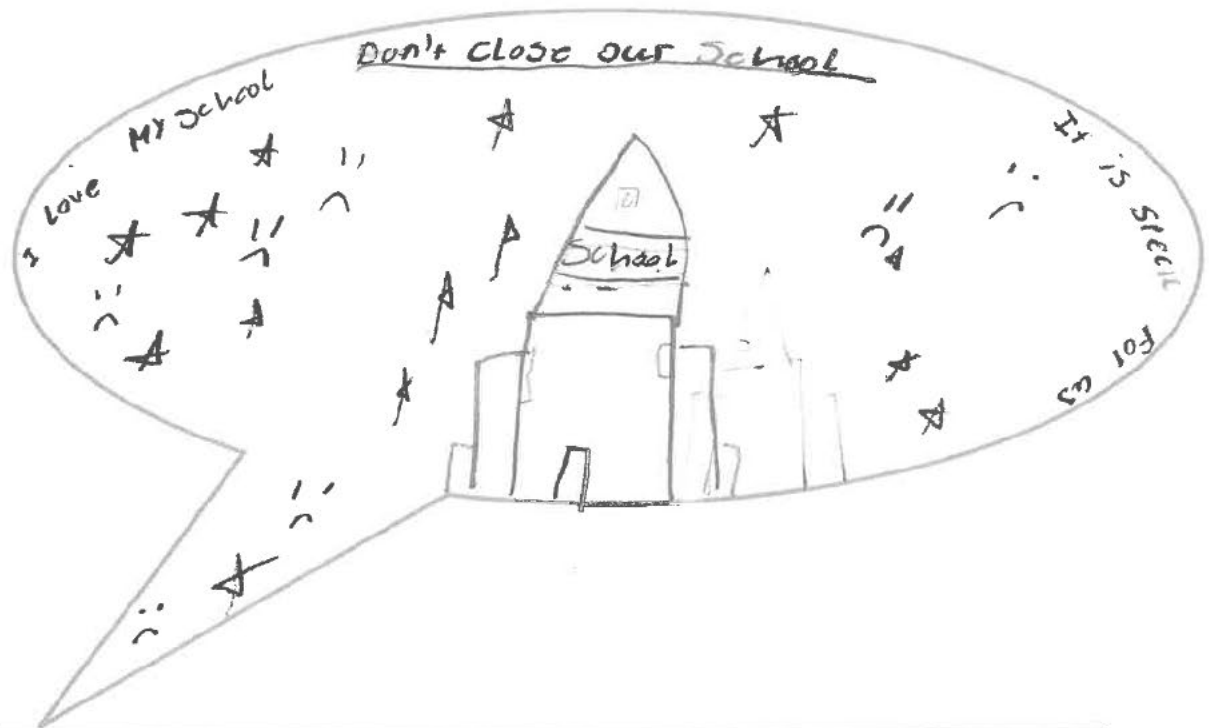
How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



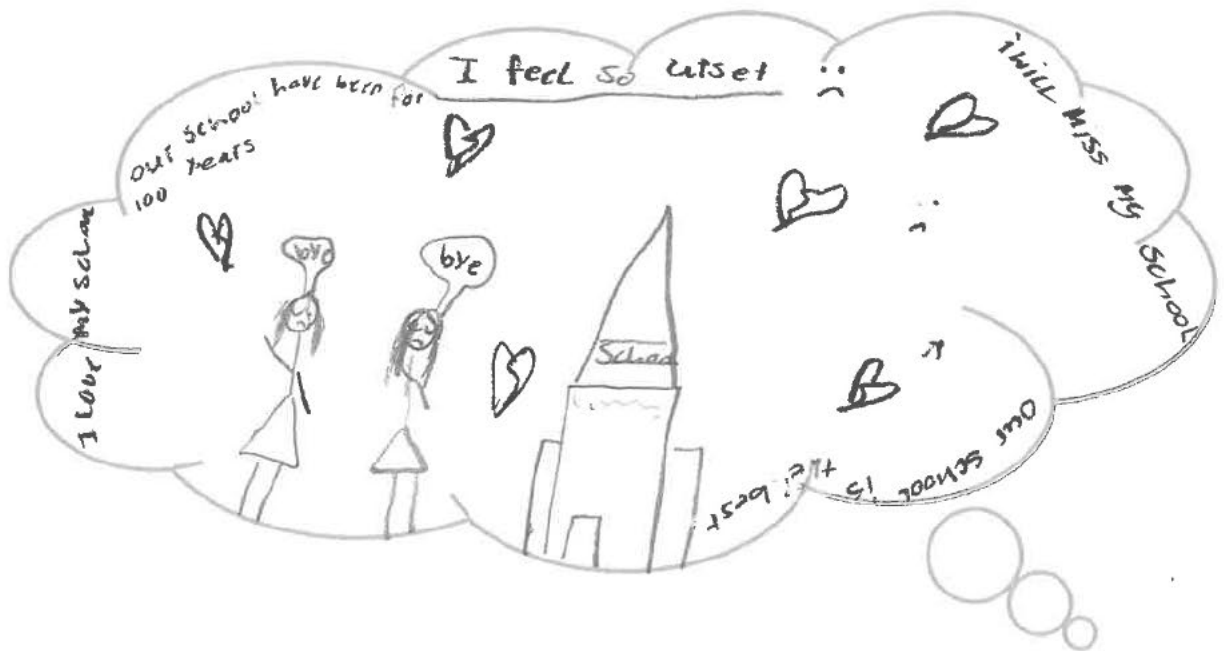
What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I don't close
because i love
teacher and friend.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel sad
to please it
will lost.

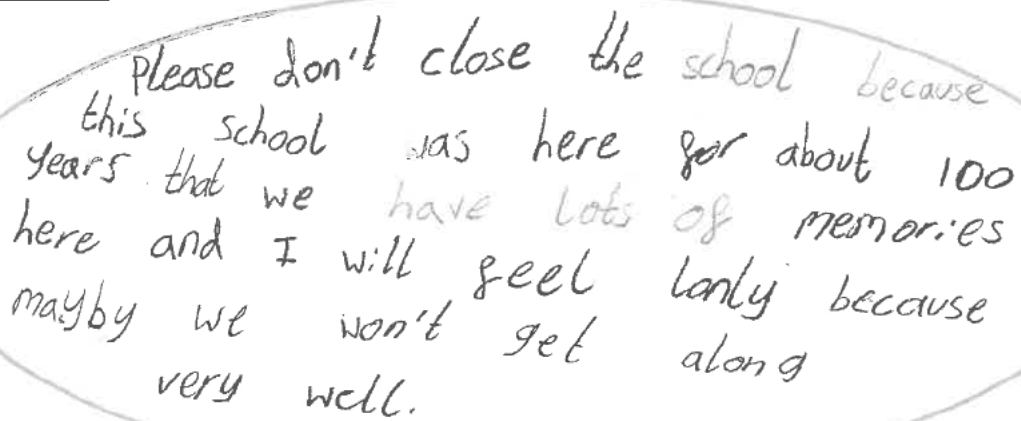

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

Please don't close
it's ~~the~~ ^{our} school because
it's special and they
& celebrate ~~the~~ ^{our} Birthday
other school don't
have that.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

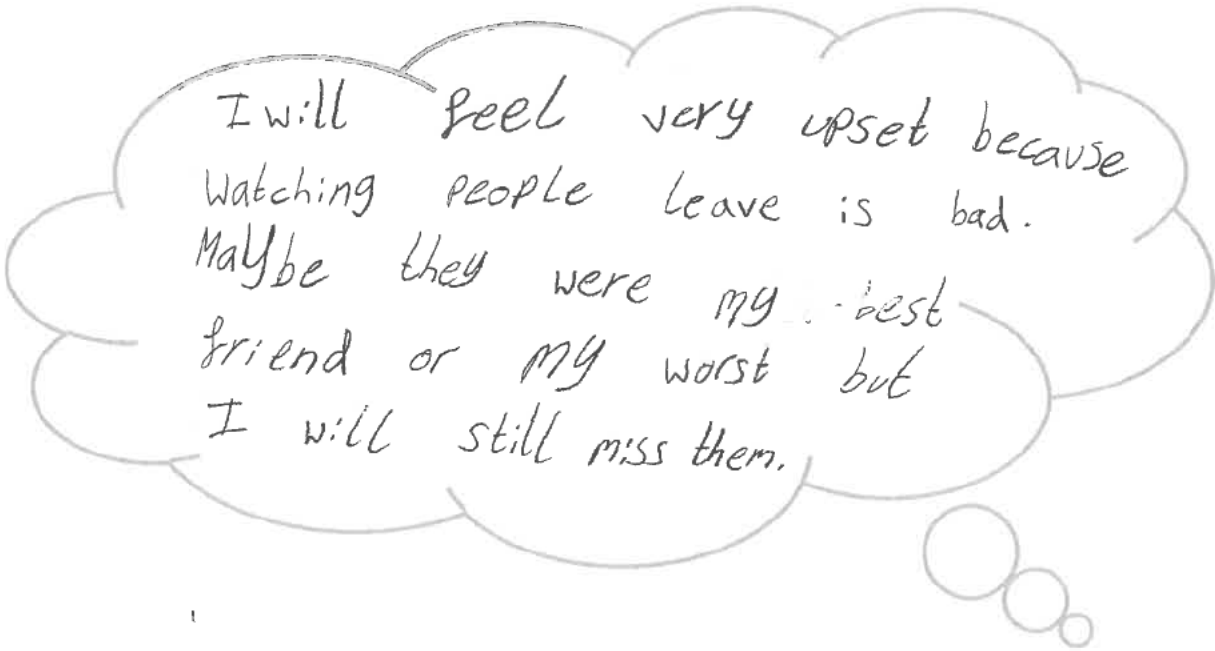


How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



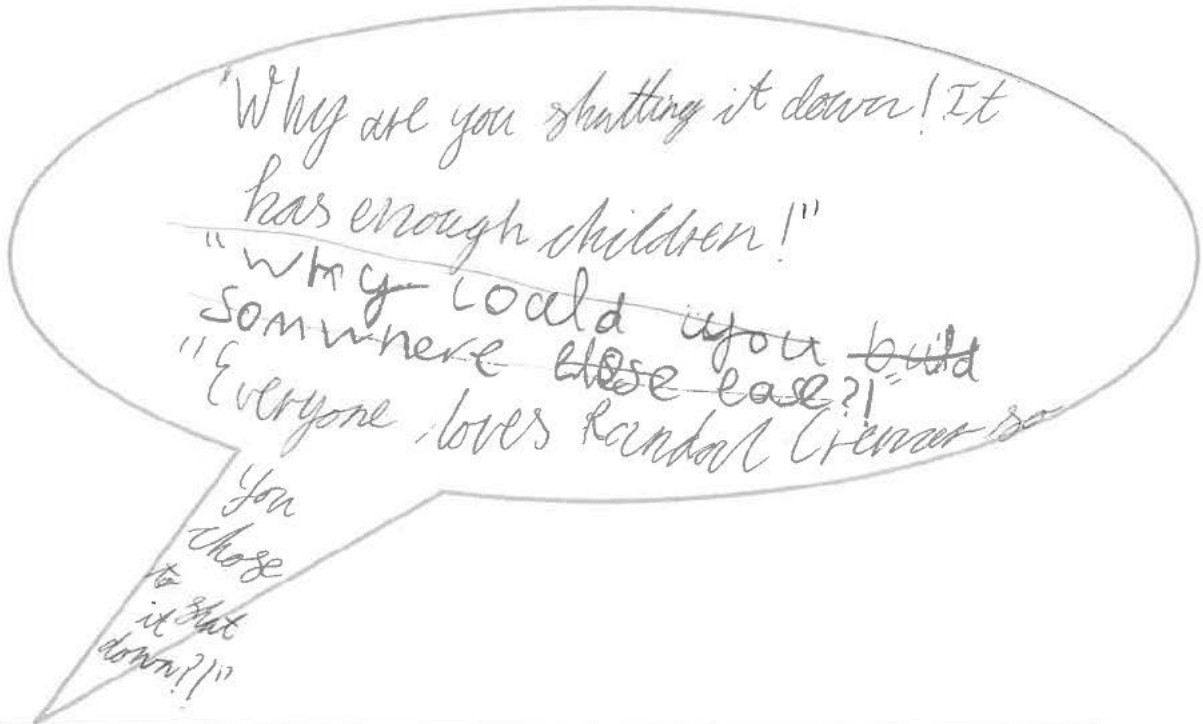
Please don't close the school because this school was here for about 100 years that we have lots of memories here and I will feel lonely because maybe we won't get along very well.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

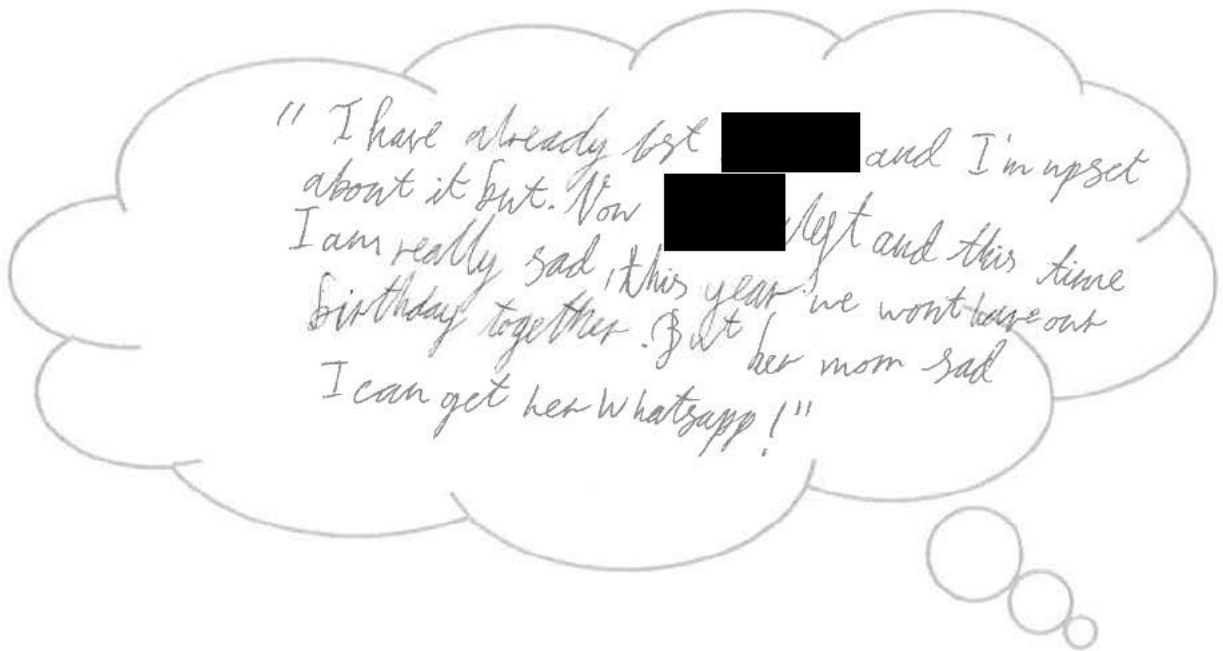


I will feel very upset because watching people leave is bad. Maybe they were my best friend or my worst but I will still miss them.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I would say ~~go~~ good
~~bye~~ bye & I will always remember
this school and I will miss
this school & you all.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I would feel sad
and nervous because it's the
only school I recognised and
loved and I will feel kind
of new if I left and I
will feel kind of sad
and let it be my friend's best.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

"Why could you build
somewhere else?"
"People's friends want to
be in same school but you
put them in one of the worst
schools!"

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I will feel upset and also
a bit happy for them.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I would say that you need to stop ^{we need} ~~the school~~ ^{it is an} ~~home~~ ^{home} ~~that~~ ^{we love it}
do not do this to us

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I want to say because my ~~bffs~~ ^{they} ~~left~~ ^{me} ~~me~~ ^{they} ~~was~~ ^{like} ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~me~~ ^{me} ~~I~~ ^I ~~just~~ ^{can} ~~not~~ ^{live} ~~with~~ ^{with} ~~depression~~ ^{depression} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~I~~ ^I ~~am~~ ^{am} ~~going~~ ^{going} ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~leave~~ ^{leave} ~~my~~ ^{my} ~~bff~~ ^{bff} ~~so~~ ^{so} ~~do~~ ^{do} ~~not~~ ^{not} ~~do~~ ^{do} ~~that~~ ^{that}

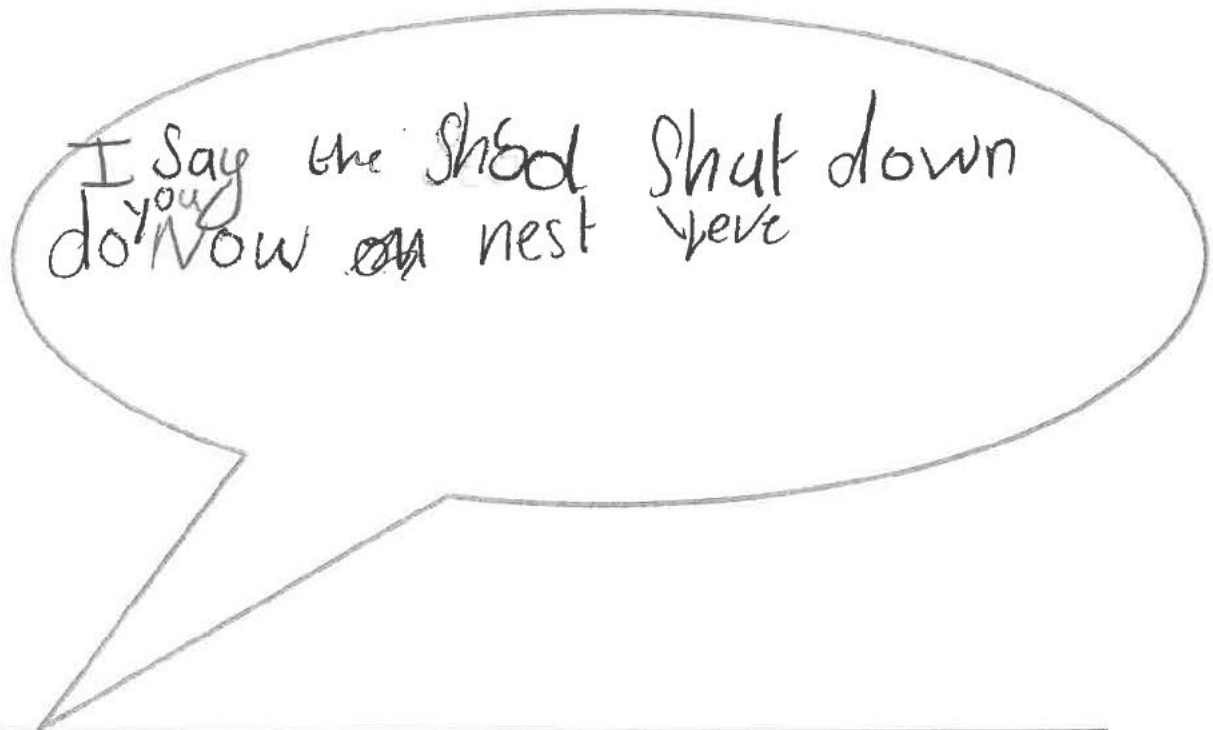
How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I would say this school
helped me with learning and
move so please don't
close Randal Cremer.

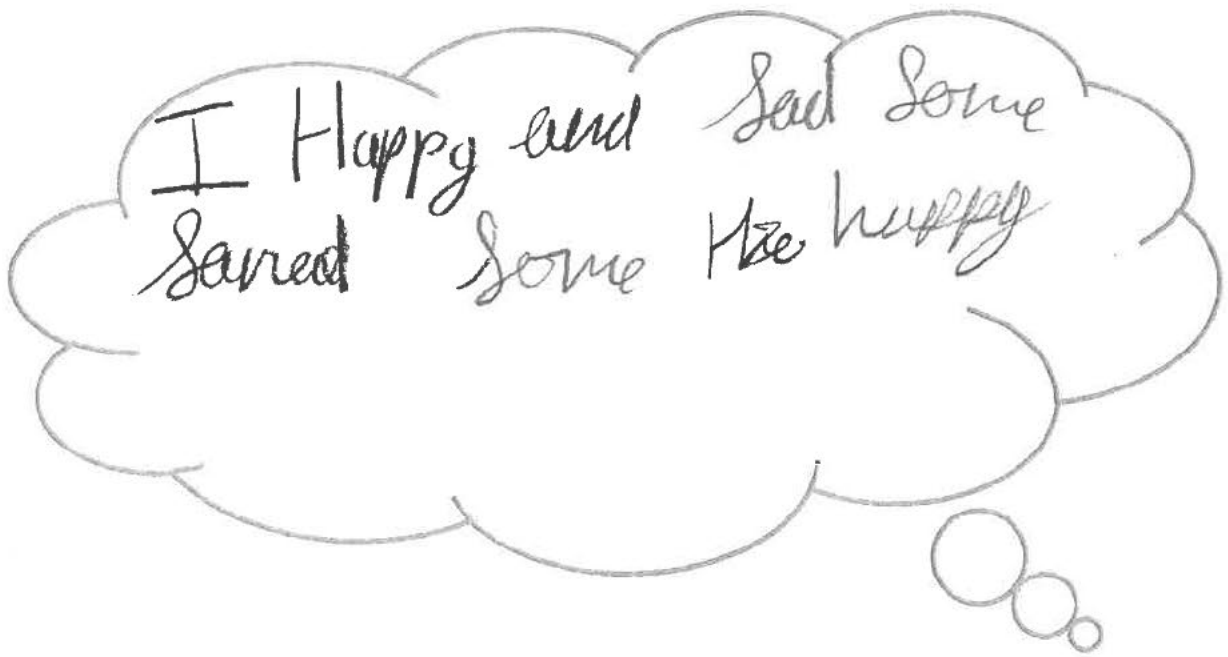
What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I would not like leaving
Randal Cremer because
they helped me and the
teacher my friends leave I wait
have friends.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



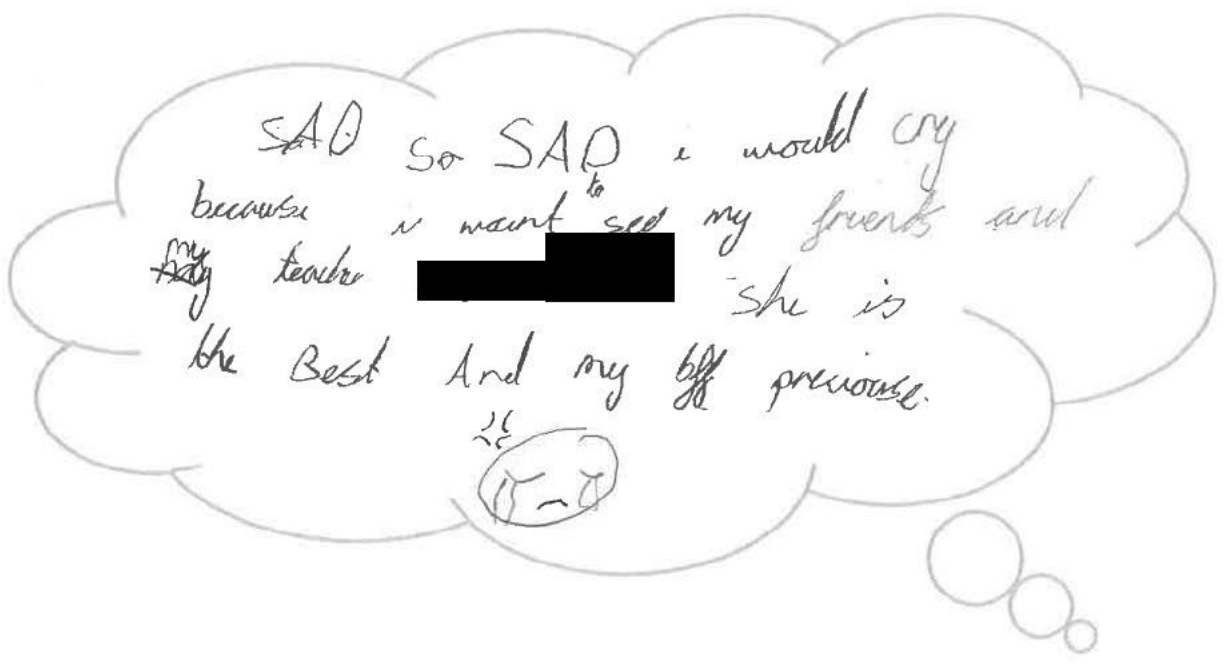
What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

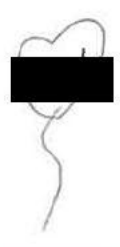
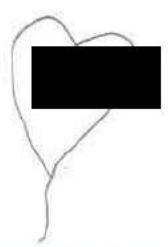


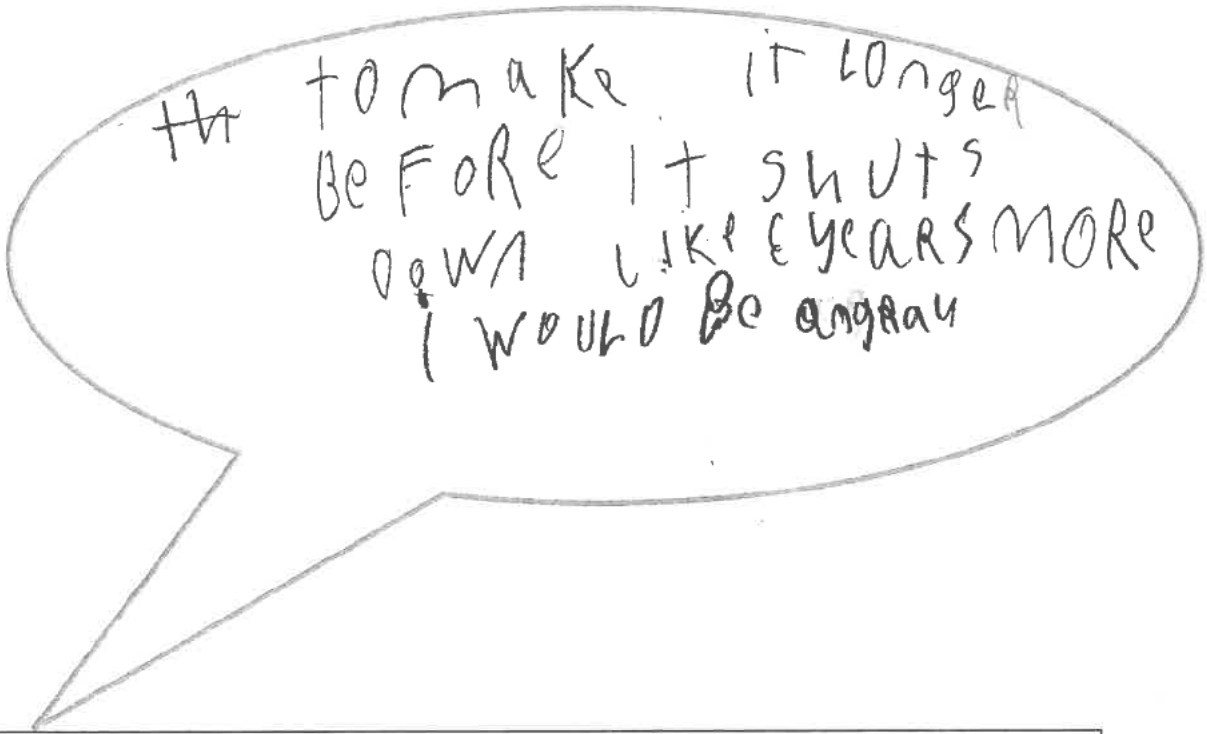
What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



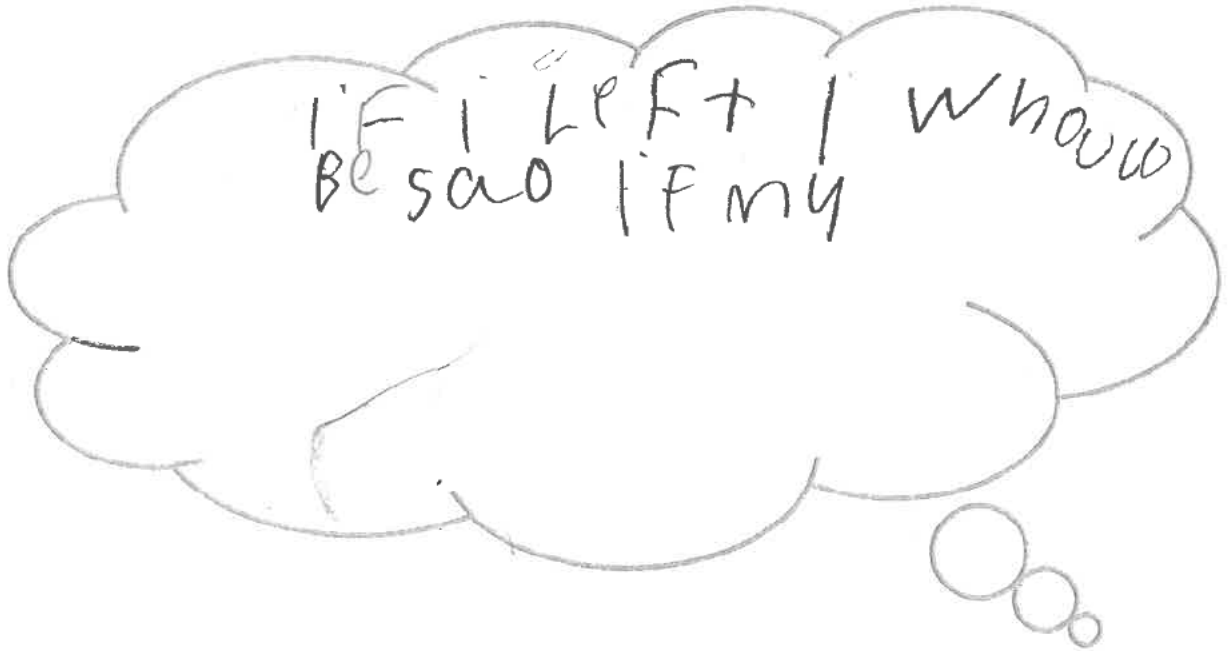
How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

[redacted] dont leave us please
is just so hart breaking!





What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I would say ~~does~~ ^{close} why ~~my school~~ have to close
I am so upset and would always think about my school and friends.
~~to~~ But I understand why my school has to close.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel more sad watching my friends leave. When I leave I would cry but at least I made so many ~~meet~~ friend.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I will say please do not close are ~~the~~ school
I really love this school I don't want you to
close this school I want to see how ~~at~~ meet
people like it.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

if I saw my friend leave the school
I mite even cri for 25 days or 20
when ~~the~~ my best friend left the school
I was sad but I ~~se~~ didnt want
to cri.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I would say ~~agree~~ why close the school
you have a ~~apple~~ big park right next to
it and this place has been here for so long
why not let other children experience this
Covely lovely school this is my message
From [REDACTED]

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I would
I feel really sad especially
because im leaving to and my
best friends but if i go to the same
school as them then it will be fine

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

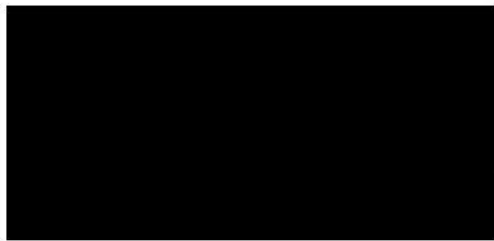
I love this school I ~~never~~ want to leave I ~~will~~ never leave!

I would say "THIS is such a nice school why would you want to shut it down! This is the most ~~best~~ nice and wonderful school you ~~could~~ ^{could} ever imagine!"

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I would feel so sad! and miserable and ~~heart~~ ^{heart} broken if my Best friends leave and I ~~love~~ ^{love} Randal Cremer. This is the best school I ~~will~~ want to leave this school is my favourite school

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



~~Handwritten signature~~

I would say to
to build another ^{to} Randal
School so we don't move
School.

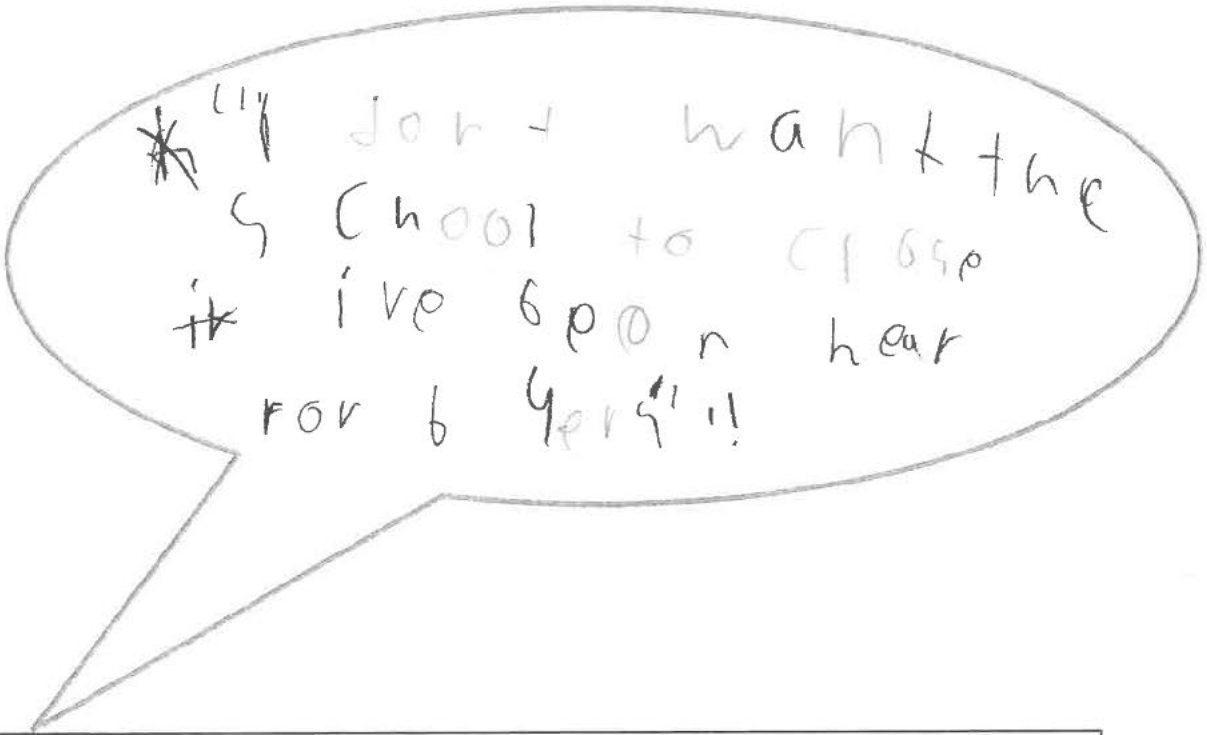
What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I would tell said KOTL
i wont see one of my friends
for the rest of my life. ☹️ ☹️ ☹️

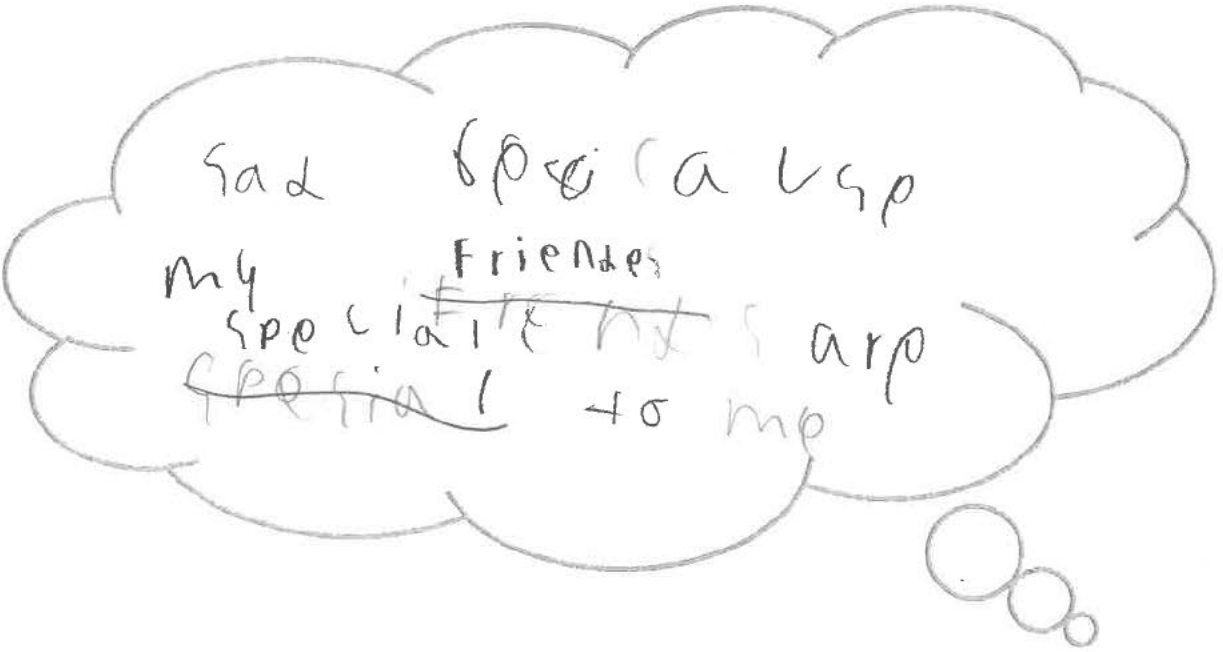
How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

From





What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I will say to the Hackney Council "we need more money but we're not getting the amount we need."

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel like i broke down and see devastated because they would always stand by your side.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I will say to the
Hackney council "We
need to shut down
for more money."

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel sad for my
friends for leaving the
school.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I will say please do not
shut down Randal Cremer
if Randal Cremer still
shuts down I will make them
make another Randal Cremer
called Candal Cremer

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel devastated and
emotional cause if my
friend or best friend does not
come to the same school
as me I will never
see them ~~again~~ again.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I would say why shut down this school
it is the best school ever and I love
this school and I'm sure everyone
else does too.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel really sad, two of my
best friends have left
already and I don't like the
feeling ~~of~~ of knowing that
they left.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I would say "why do you have to change
School its the best School I have ever went to
in my life please dont please

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I would feel miserable
and depressed that we are
going away.

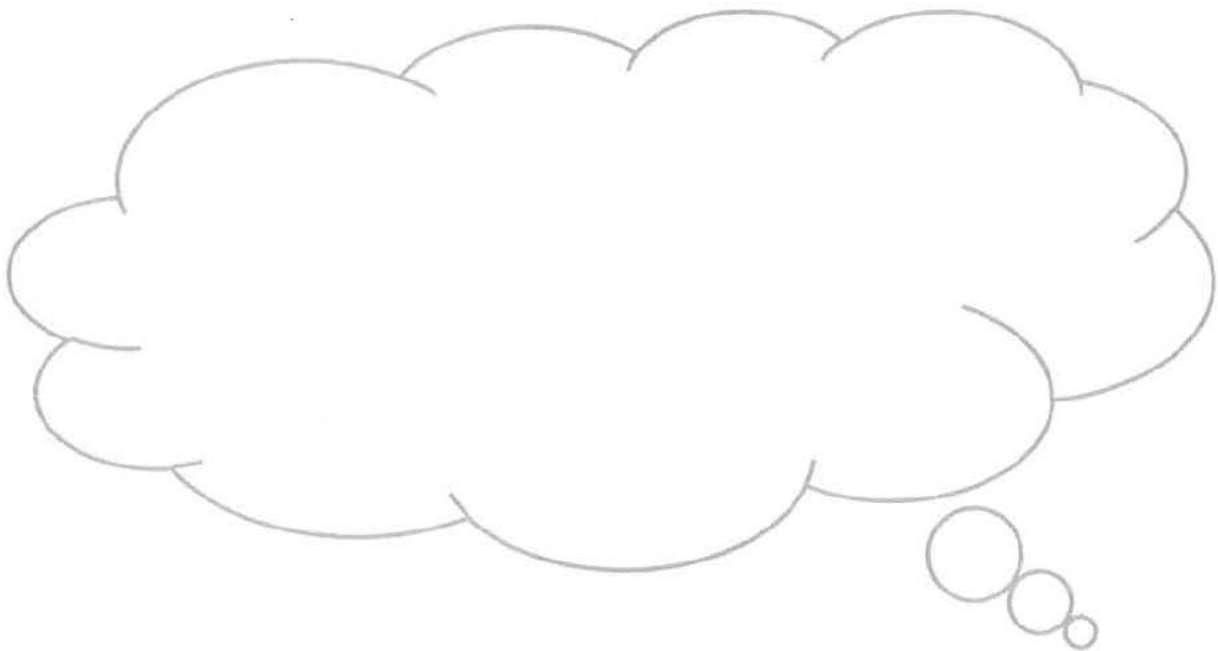
How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

>

''''''''

I will miss this school so much
because I will go to a other
school and school will be closing
down

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

wife ~~close~~ ^{does} the school ^{wife} have to close
DON'T AND WHO DO YOU
HAVE TO CLOSE DOWN THE
CLOSE SCHOOL

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I would ^{be} ~~be~~ ^{be} sad and dispirited
AND MISS ALL OF THE TEACHERS
SO MUCH

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I would like to tell Hackney council that they shouldn't close the school because we all have so many friends and we have strong bonds with them. So we would be sad about and it will be awful to separate us so we have to leave our friends behind.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I would not like it if one of my friends left before me because it will feel different without them. I would not like to watch them leave the school before me because I won't be able to play the games that I played with them.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

year 4

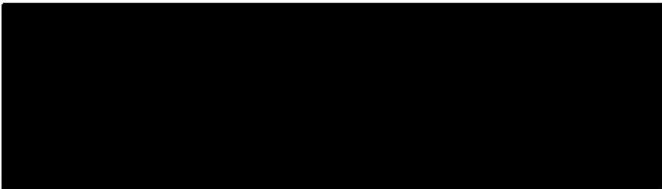
I would not like Hackney Council to close the school because we have made bonds for them to break? Secondly, we just effort and care into our environment! we put find comfort in this place... we have grown up with these people

Last but not least, it will take a long time to heal.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel horrible because we have a strong bond. If I leave, I feel like, I'm forced on kicked out! Why me? Does Hackney Council dare about my education?

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



Year 4

I would like to tell Hackney Council that they should not close down the school because people have made many memories and it's hard to let that go as much as children, try to fit into new schools and adults will struggle

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I would feel terrible because the friendships and bonds we made will fall apart and it's hard to let that bond go.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I would like to tell Hackney Council ^{not} to ~~not~~ close this school because everyone is happy with their friends and teachers, so it will be very hard for them to make new friends and settle in their new schools.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel unhappy about leaving Randal Cremer because I will miss all my friends and teachers, I have many memories here.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



I would like to tell Hackney council that this school should not close because we had memories in 6 years like trips, friends and staff that we love and we don't want to leave our lovely memories if we will be end like this we will be so lonely.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I would go be sad leaving my lovely friends and teachers and it would make me so sad and alone. ~~I~~ If my friends go one by one, my memories would go one by one.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I would like to tell
Hackney Council not to close
Our School because we all have
Great memories with each other and when
We leave it's going to be hard to keep
those memories in our head. If we move to
a new school most of us would be shy and we
won't want to join in on loads of activities

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel sad
because I'm
going to a new school
and maybe none of my friends
will go to that school. If my friends
leave I would feel even more because they
might go really quickly then would
be a few people left and no
time to say goodbye

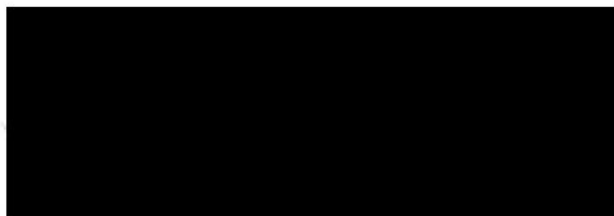
How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I would like to tell Hackney Council that my school should not close because I made very good relationships with best friends and teachers.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel devastated at the thought of leaving my friends. I would like to stay until I have to go to secondary school. I have many memories with my friends.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



y4

I would like to tell Hackney Council that my school and I don't want it to close. when I was little it was really hard to make new friends. so im telling Hackney Council that this school can't. close, because there are so many memories for me.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

It is so sad that i'm going to leave Randal cremer and watching my friends leave is heart - breaking because they have always supported me.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I would like to tell Hackney Hackney Council
that
that we are not just going to accept this, people will
find it hard to get new jobs children will find it hard to fit in with
new people we all want to stay ~~at~~ till the end we are nice to each
other ~~and~~ and even if you won't listen we will never forget the
memories that we made here because we love our
school!

year 4

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

watching my friend group leave and my friends
is heartbreaking we have been friends for so long
~~but~~ its hard to let go of that friendship
we have so much memories even if you read
this and still want to close our school we will
remember the memories we made

year 4

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

year 4

I would like to tell Hackney Council that you should not close Randal Cremer School because it is the best school that I have been to and the staff are very kind and caring.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I would feel sad if I left the school or if one of my friends left the school because I love my friends and I wouldn't want to leave my friends. Compared to other schools I have been to, I feel safest here.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



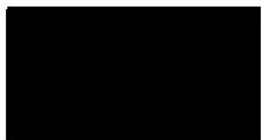
year 4

I would like to
tell Hackney Council
are school should not
close the school because
I enjoy school
and my friendship

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

It would feel sad because
one of my best friends
left and more people
left this is not fair
because your making
people heart broken and
depress

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



YH

I would like to tell Hackney
Council that if it closes our school
we would lose their jobs and we might
struggle with their bills. Also I have
got many memories of this beautiful
school.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I would feel heartbroken if my friends leave
because they have been my friend for 5 years.
If I had to leave I would feel a bit sad
I would be shy and nervous about going to a new
school. I am scared that they might not
like me because my class love me
for who I am.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

Year 4



I would like to tell Hackney Council that our school should not close because we are one of the best schools in Hackney. This would be heart breaking to a lot of people in different schools as well.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel devastated about watching my friends leave because we have built a community like never before. We never want to let go of each other, because we've known each other for years.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



Year 4

I would like to
tell Hackney Council close the school
because it has been here
for a very long time and it will
take a long time to heal.
If it closes many people
will be heart-broken.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I will be i kshil sad
if my friends leave because
I will be lonely and if I
left the school
I will be so sad because
I will not see [redacted]
again. :(

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I would like to tell Hackney Council that they shouldn't close Randal Cremer because it would be hard to catch up with the different topics my class have learnt before I got there. It would also be hard to make friends in the - at new school. This is why I think Randal - Cremer shouldn't be closed.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel blue about seeing my friends leaving the school because all the good memories are disappearing. I would also think about the times they helped me when I was stuck. - If I would be depressed because I might never see them again. I would be forced to make new friendships when I am happy with the ones I have.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

Y4

15/6/2023

I would like to tell you Hackney Council that [redacted] is really helpful. When parents are in trouble, she solves it.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel terrible because we won't see each other at school unless we go to the same school. It will be hard because it won't be easy for us all to go to the same school.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

[redacted]

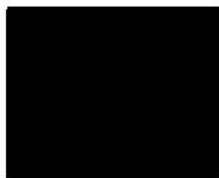
year 4

I would like to tell Hackney Council that they shouldn't close the School because I would not be able to learn the things I am learning and I would forget what I am learning already.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

Seeing my friends leave is sad because IF Randal Cremer closes, then I still would not want to leave. It makes me heart-broken to see my friends leave, we are being torn apart.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



Y4

I would like to tell Hackney council that the school should not close because we need education to go to secondary school because and I have built relationships with my classmate and it was very hard to find friends and I don't want to start again.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I don't want to have to leave this school because I see my friends leaving one by one. Soon enough we will be gone it is very sad, I will have to leave my childhood and I don't want to.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

Year 4

I would like to tell Hackney Council that they shouldn't close our school because children and adults will have to break up, and it will take a long time to find new schools and new work places to settle in.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel heart-broken because we will have to make new friends and we might miss some learning while trying to find new schools.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

Year 9

Year

5

I would like Hackney Council to know that I feel very upset because Randal cremer is like a family to me and now that is closing down for good, I feel lost.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel so upset watching my friends leave.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I feel a little bit sad because Randal Cremer offers a very good standard of education and they offer great sports clubs.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel sad about my friends leaving the school because they make me feel happier and I don't feel lonely.


How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I would like you to persuade parents to enroll their children at our school. Please wait a while or make the homes near our school less expensive. I would like you to persuade parents to allow their children to join our school.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

It makes me feel emotional. I have been at this school for seven years. It makes me feel very sad.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



I would say that I don't want the school to close because I won't be able to see my teacher that I'm close too.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel anxious watching my friends leave as I won't be able to play with them at break.

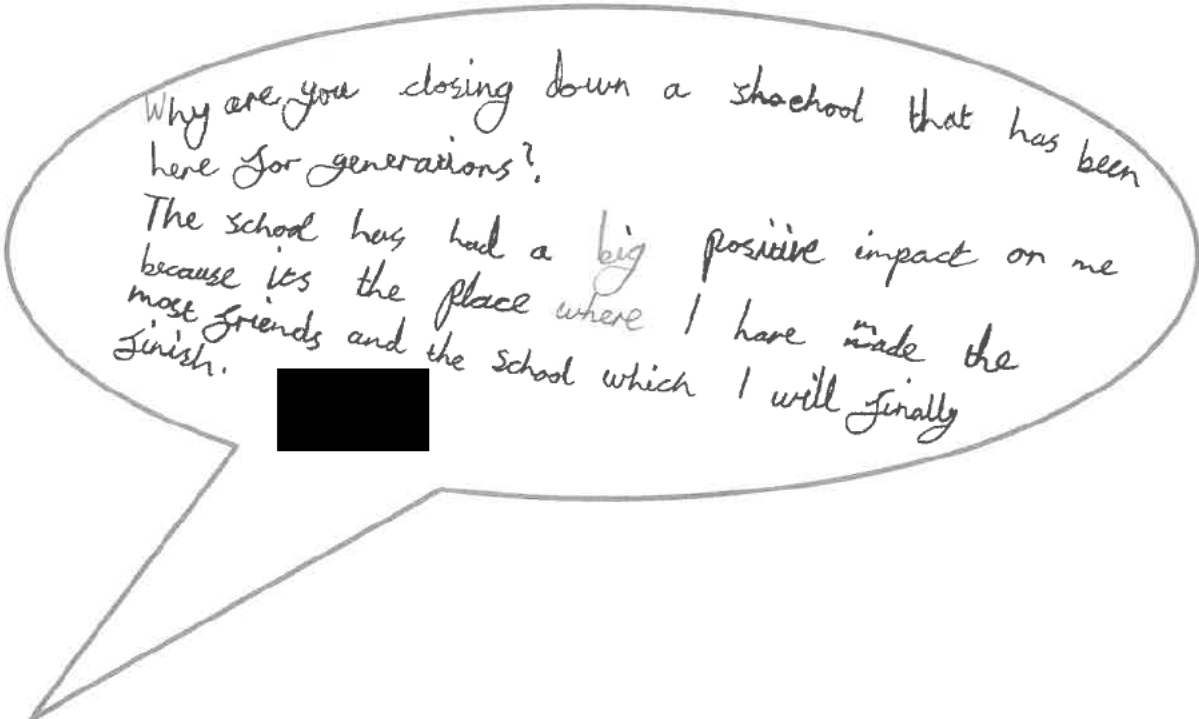
How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I do not want the school to be shutdown because it will split everyone up. I have made great friends here.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel sad because I've been in this school for a long time.

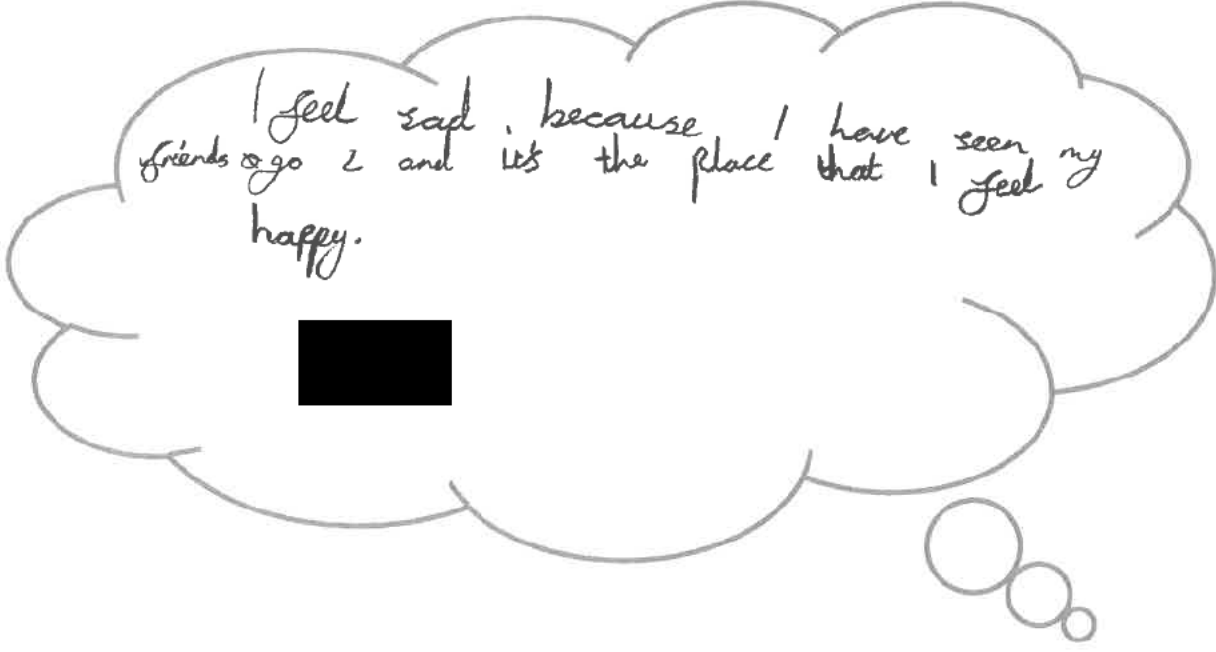
How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



Why are you closing down a school that has been here for generations?

The school has had a big positive impact on me because it's the place where I have made the most friends and the school which I will finally finish.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



I feel sad, because I have seen my friends go 2 and it's the place that I feel my happy.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

Year

6

~~From~~ From my perspective if they are going to close it in ~~the~~ ~~the~~ July 2024 they should ~~least~~ increase the time to at least September 2024.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I wouldn't feel that bad because I am meant to leave for secondary but as for my friends it might be quite ~~at~~ sad but still they are also meant to go to secondary school so it doesn't hurt that much.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I am very sad about the school closing down because all of the teachers and L.S.As will have to find a new job also because I have been going to this school for most of my life so to watch it close down is really sad.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel really bad for all the younger children leave also I do have friends in the younger years so I ~~do~~ probably cry when a lot of the children leave.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

What are you gonna do when the school closes down? and you gonna destroy it/ I wish that the teachers' get a new good job ^{are}

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel not too worried because im going to Secondary School but I wish them luck!

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I'd say that if they really
wanna close the school its their
choice but its sad cause some
people have good memories here.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel kinda a bit upset
cause I grew up in
the school for a long
time.

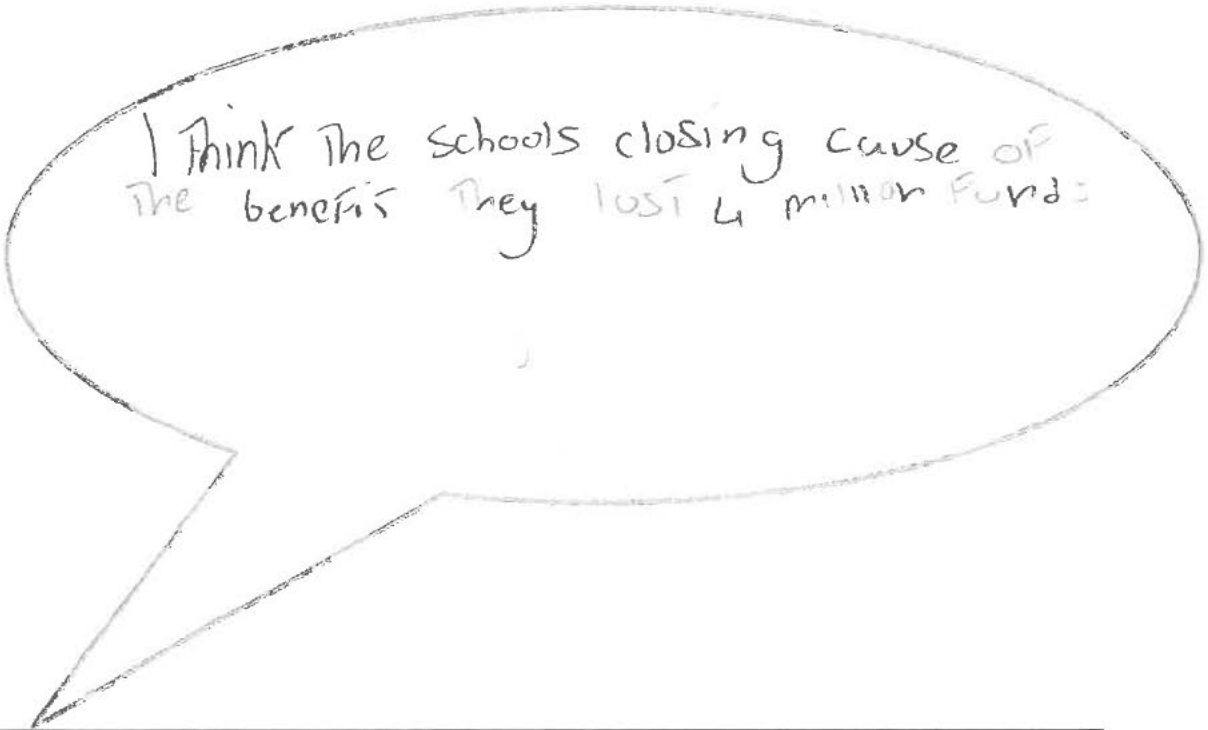
How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

You heard all those parents at that meeting and their sad stories, but if you're breaking our school for flats, and flats are expensive, No one will buy them anyway so they are closing the school for nothing.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

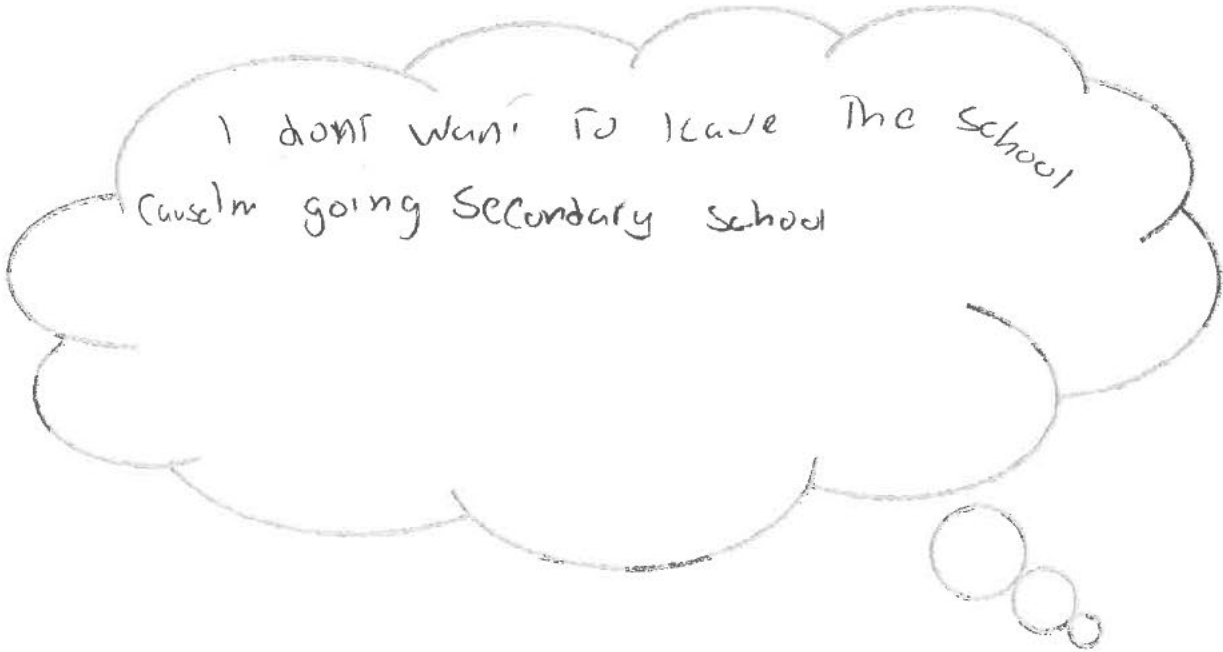
Unfair because children are our future

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



I think the schools closing cause of
the benefits they lost 4 million Pounds

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



I don't want to leave the school
cause I'm going secondary school

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I say that it is unfair, the reason for this is because the pupils in year 4 to nursery will have to find new schools which may be hard for them and their children will have to adapt to that school,

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

Well since I am in year 6 I am ~~great~~ already going to ~~soon~~ secondary school I will be leaving Randal Cremer in a few weeks so it won't affect me as much even though I will miss my friends other's may find it hard to leave the school,

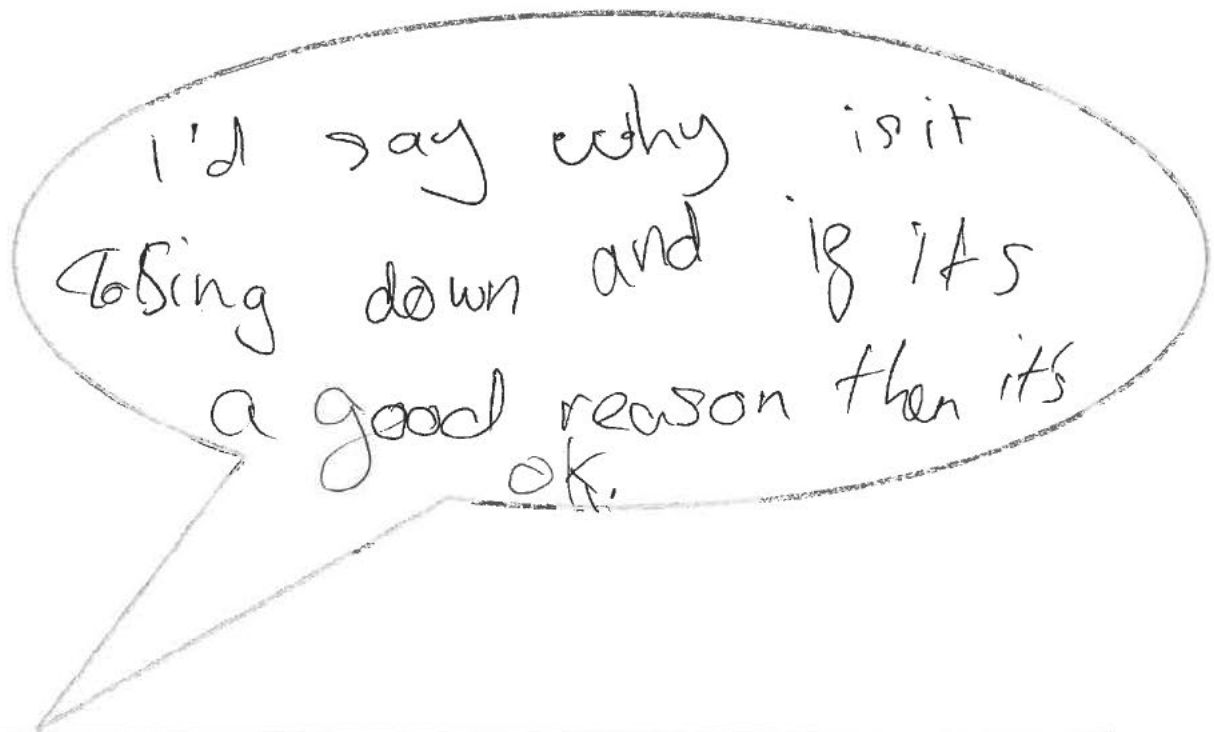
How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

They Should Wait until all of the kids
leave from year 6 to year 7

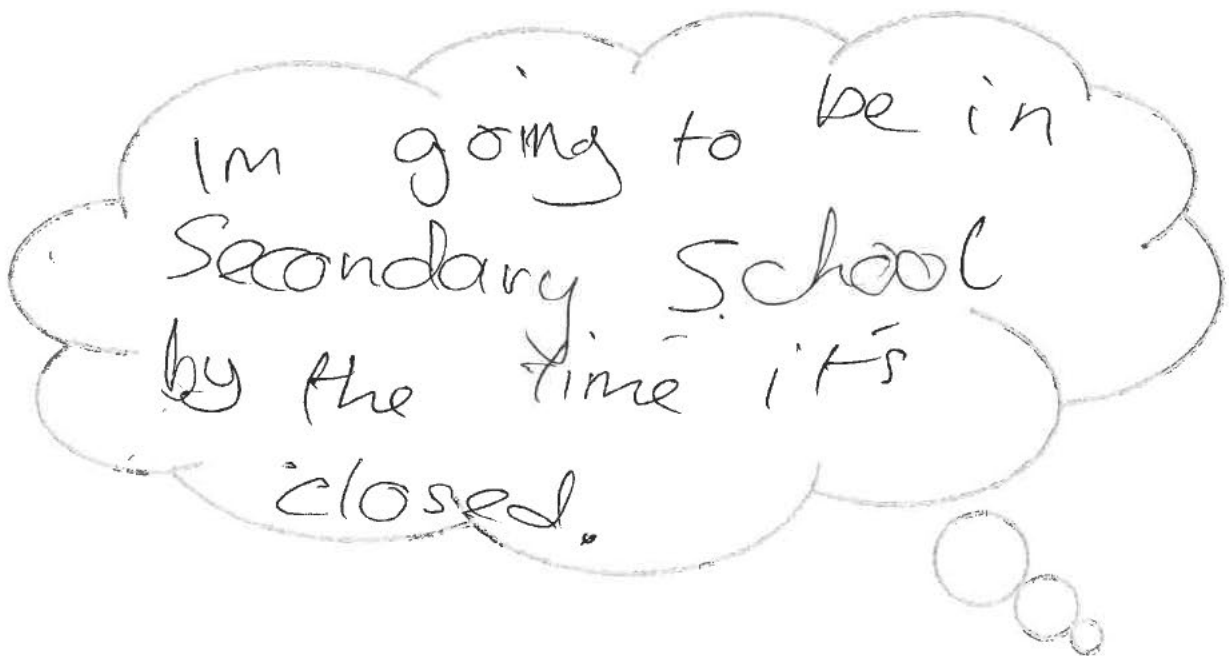
What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

Angry! 😡
because the kids that leave are very sad!

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



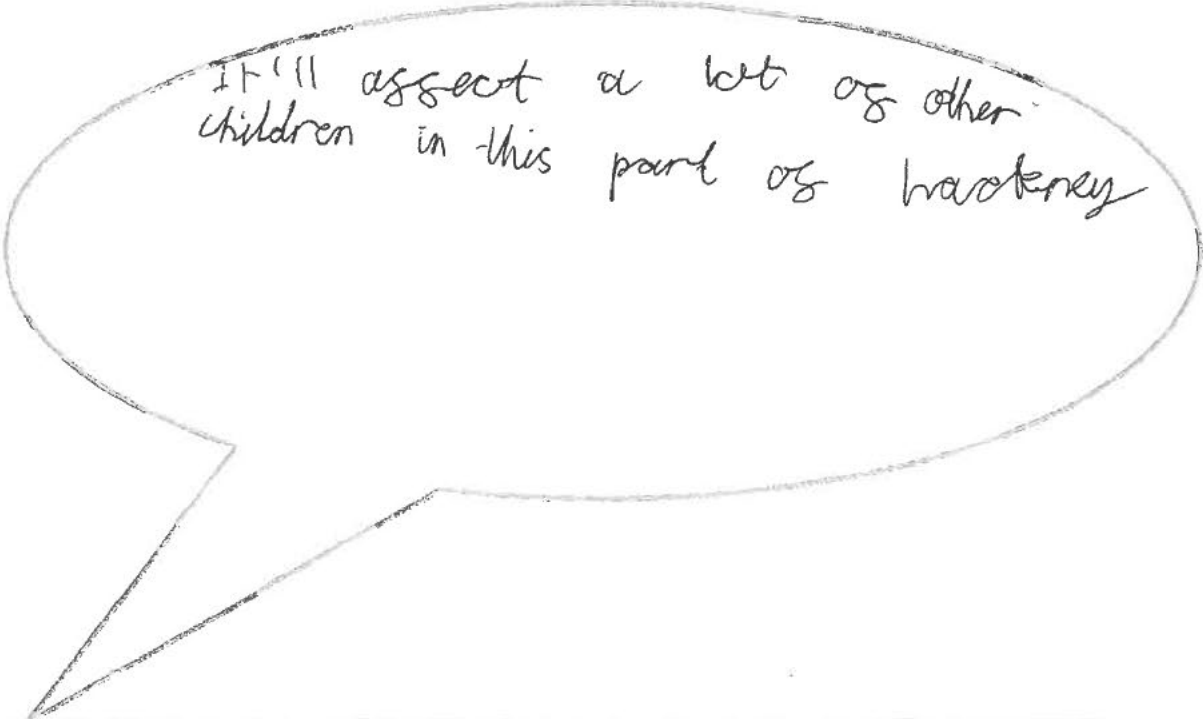
How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

why? Just why like I get the school has ups and downs but its going to be weird knowing that the fact this school has been around for about 150yrs

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

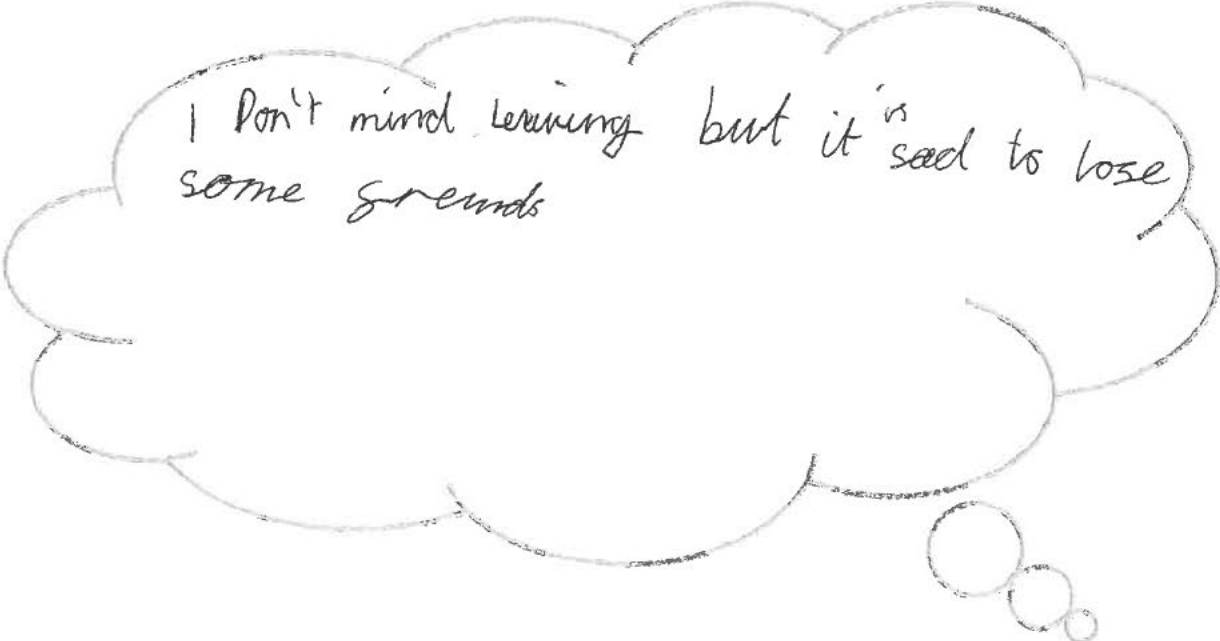
Its kind of sad like they are annoying goosballs but they are really fun like Ive known them for about 8yrs almost a decade

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



It'll affect a lot of other children in this part of Hackney

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



I don't mind leaving but it's sad to lose some grounds

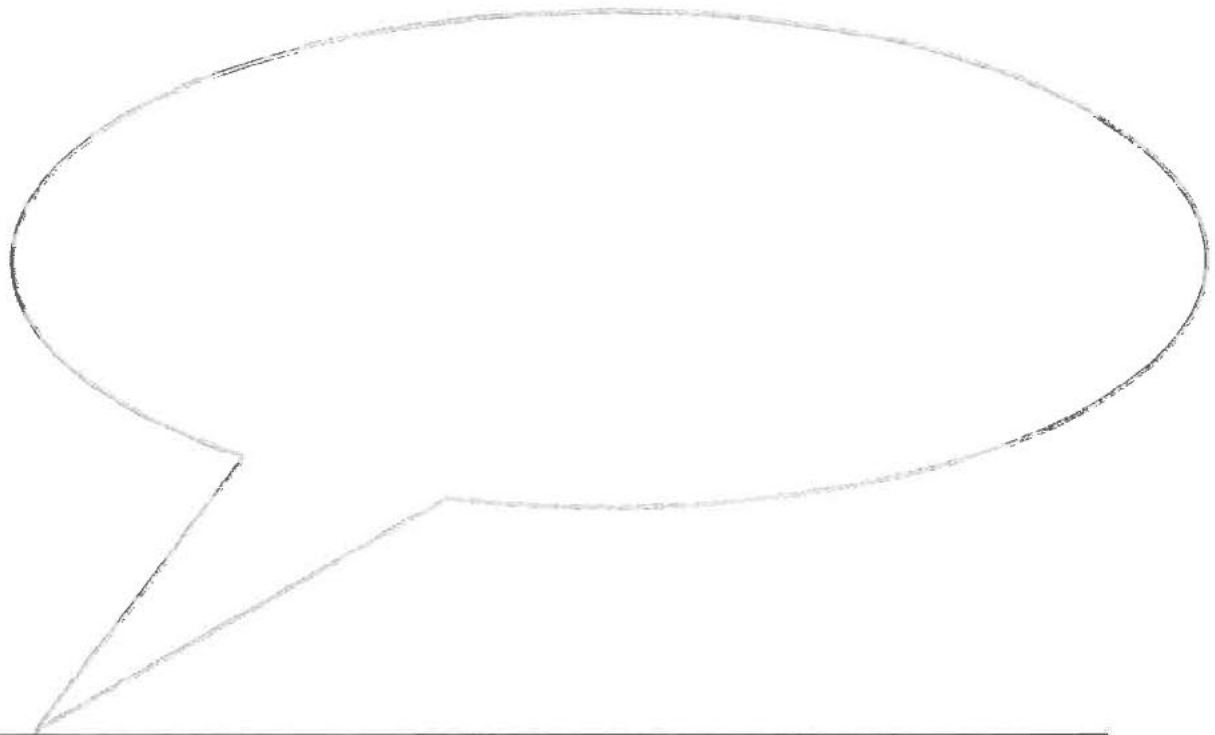
How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

That they are making it hard for many parents as they have to get new things ~~and~~ for their child and having to find a new school for them.

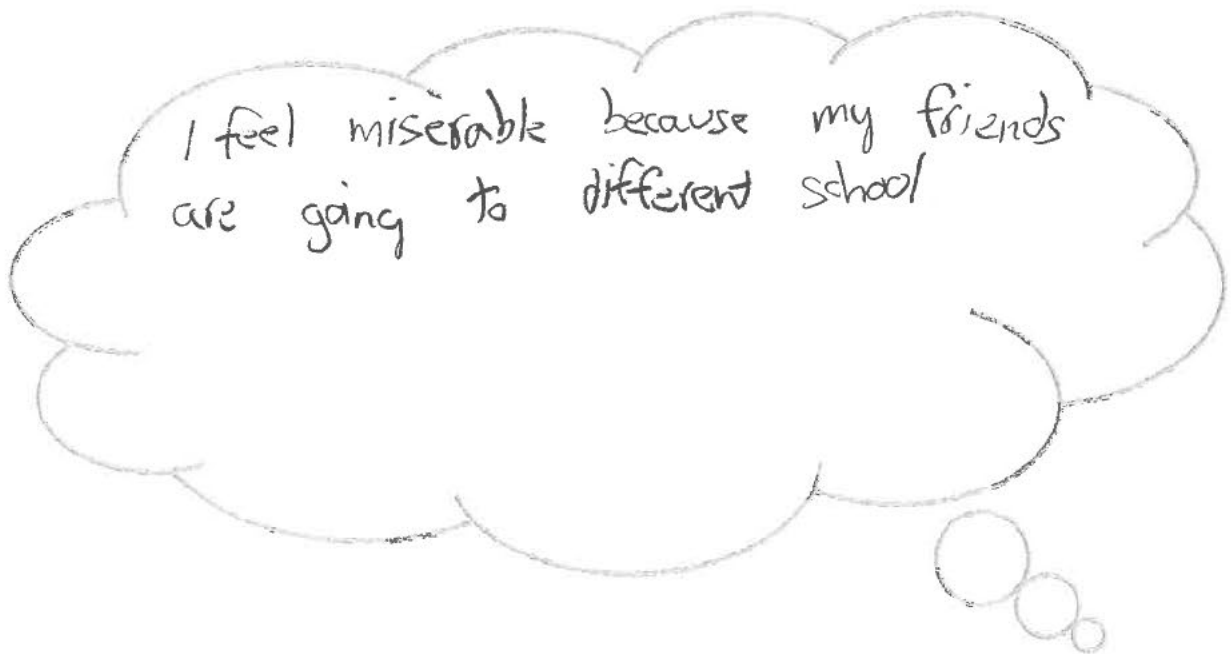
What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

It feels weird seeing the place I spent most of my time in being destroyed. No longer being able to see it nothing left.

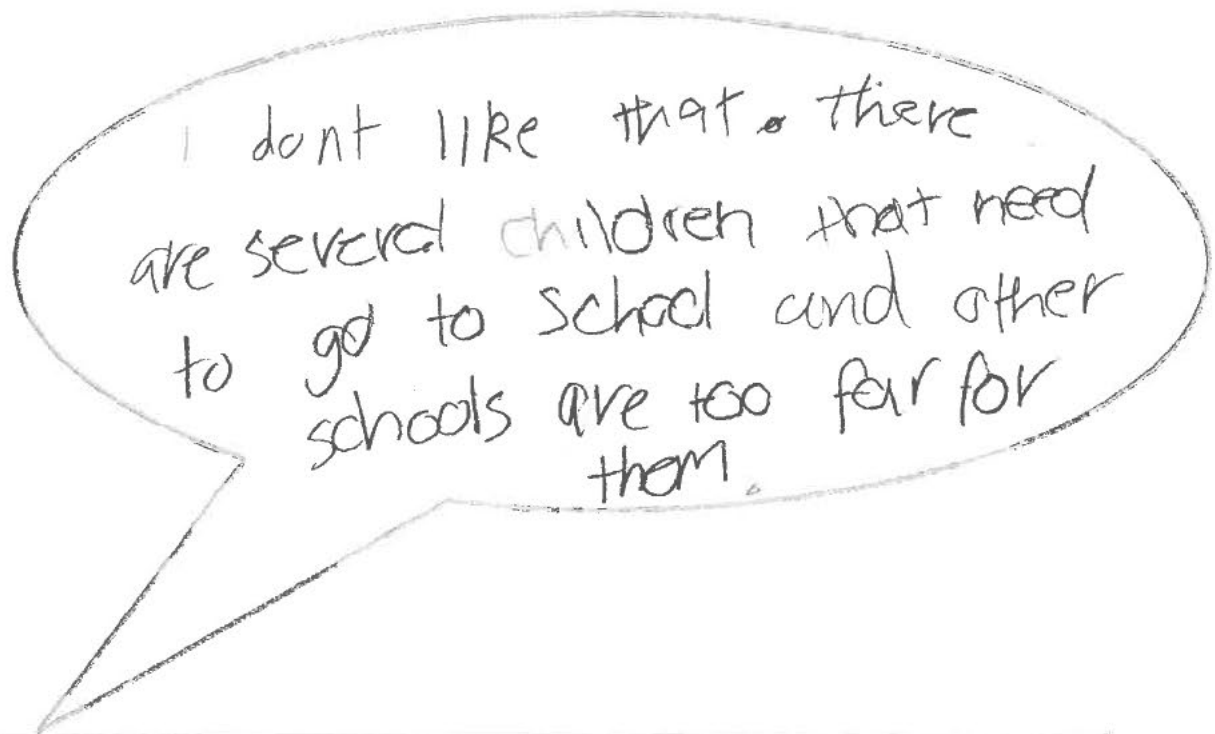
How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



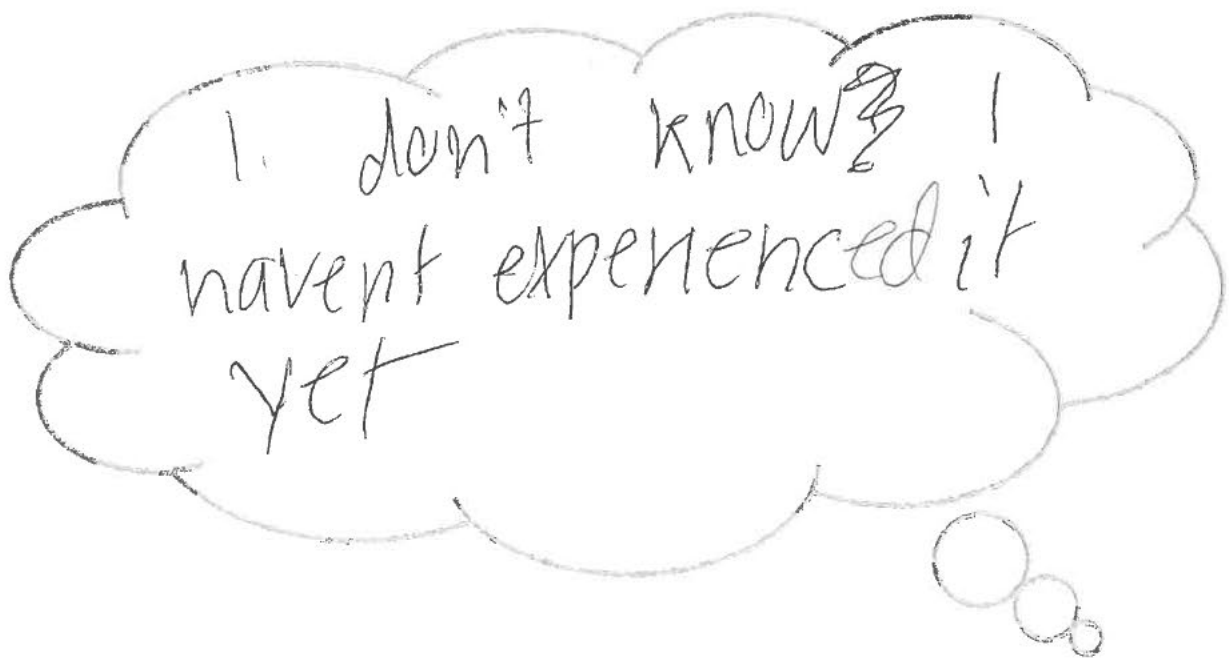
What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I think it is bad because first lots of teachers will lose their jobs and if you lost your job you would not like it secondly, lots of children will be looking for schools and when they can't find one what will you do that causes more problems.

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

very sad because children should not have to leave their friends and you would not like the council to close your favourite school.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

What's the point. A school is a school and what if people don't get accepted to another. There are lots of schools in Hackney and if our school closes then other schools will need more space.

This means
lots of
people won't
be

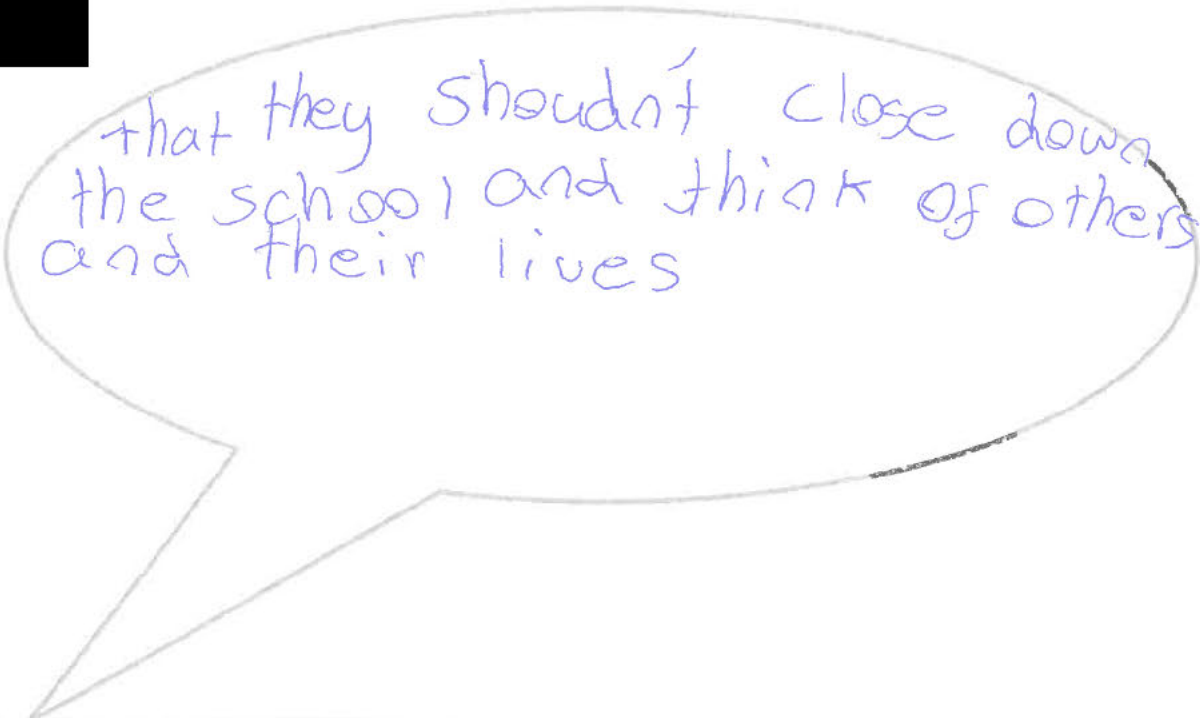

accepted into other schools and some siblings may not be in the same school meaning it ~~not~~ would be harder

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

for parents to take one here and take one there.

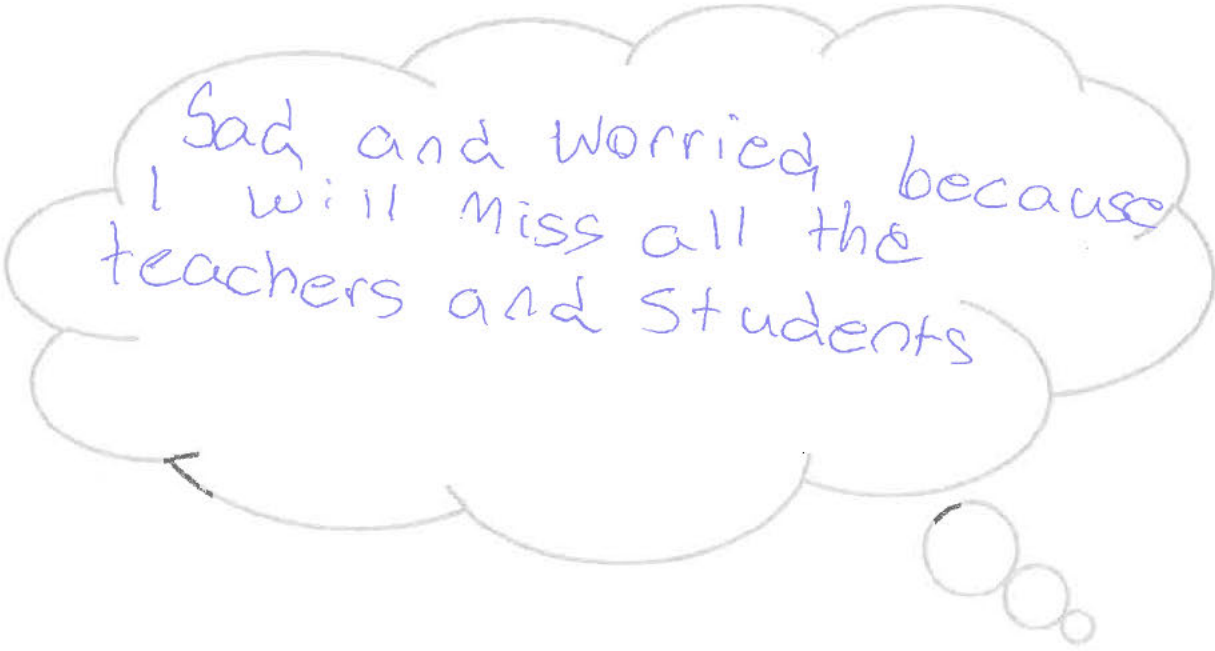
~~For me~~ I feel bad for others as they will still need to go to primary school and won't see as many people they are comfortable with.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?



that they shouldn't close down
the school and think of others
and their lives

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?



Sad and worried because
I will miss all the
teachers and students

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I don't want the school to close because it ~~was~~ would give my mum a lot of stress and make my teacher have stress finding a job and ever

been i through to a my in this school for a short couple of months I have loved every

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

minute of it

I wouldn't be happy because my sister has made so many friends and she was to bullied at and it's nice to see her happy that. and I don't want her to lose

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

I don't think
the school should close
because it would be hard for all
the children to lose and remake
friends. The teachers will also ~~lose~~
lose the job and for a while

they
might
no
have a new one

What would you say to Hackney Council about the plan to close our school in July 2024?

I feel sad because I will
never see the people I've been
friends with for eight years
~~again~~ again.

How do you feel about either leaving Randal Cremer or watching your friends leave the school?

**Appendix 2: Objections to the Informal Consultation
by Hackney Council to 'merge' Colvestone Primary
School, authored by the Governing Body of
Colvestone Primary School, July 2023**

Objections to the Informal Consultation by Hackney Council to ‘merge’ Colvestone Primary School on the Princess May site, authored by the Governing Body of Colvestone Primary School, July 2023

Below are the objections and concerns over the proposed closure of Colvestone. It is referred to as a closure because that is what is happening. The ‘merger’/‘amalgamation’ of Colvestone to Princess May only means that parents/families are offered a place there. There is no merger/amalgamation of staff/quality of education etc. The governors feel that the use of the terms “merger’/‘amalgamation’ are purely used so that the metrics of closing 2 schools instead of 4 look better for the council.

Part 1 is the objections and concerns against the ‘factors considered by the council’

Part 2 is a response to the statement relating to the benefits of merging schools stated on the website.

<p>Part 1: The objections are taken point by point from the website https://education.hackney.gov.uk/content/primary-schools-potential-changes and the Councils: <i>Factors considered by the Council when considering possible alternatives and solutions include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Schools most financially at-risk</i> ● <i>Number of vacant places</i> ● <i>Physical size of schools and suitability of sites to host a merger</i> ● <i>Geographic partnership options (such as the existence of other schools within walking distance)</i> ● <i>Whether new neighbourhoods and new-build estates will create significantly more need for school places in the future</i> ● <i>Current Ofsted grading and projected outcomes for pupils</i> ● <i>Community impact</i> 		
Point	Objections	Concerns
School at financial risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The school has indicated that it would be financially viable for the next academic year and pre the decision to close would be financially viable for 23/24 ● The school has been proactive in making decision to ensure financial viability ● The partnership means that there is shared resourcing in both staff and resources making financial savings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The SMRA data was in draft form and the final report seems not to have been taken into account, which indicated huge cost savings . ● The schools commissioned the SMRA report in good faith to explore and take all avenues available to get

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This partnership is continuing for the next academic year and has the potential to continue - meaning that cost savings would continue • There is an in year surplus this year and also the financial management of the school is accurate meaning the any projections are also accurate - this was not the case at the end of 21/22 • There has been a surplus for 2 years running. • The last financial year has seen significant investment in capital costs: building repairs and refurbishment, security and IT investment. These costs will not be required for future years. 	<p>a more accurate picture and to make cost saving.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By using this data as a way of supporting the argument to close Colvestone, which would not have been available otherwise and also was not available for all schools in Hackney, is unfair. • Financial viability of schools is addressed in regards to a school's capacity to deal with repair and maintenance costs (3.4.3). Colvestone has made substantial capital investments over the last year to ensure that its site is fit for purpose and resilient for future years This future-proofing is not accounted for.
<p>Number of vacant places</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the initial conversation the projections for Colvestone Reception were 7. After questioning at the meetings the SLT and governing body was told that this projection was unlikely to change. However when we received the Reception offers (the first time) the number was 12. We believe that with one of the nearest schools (Shacklewell at 0.4 miles, the same distance as Princess May), being oversubscribed and with the proposed closure of Debeauvoir, (0.5 miles distance from Colvestone) Colvestone would have had more children attending the initial offers. In fact there has been a parent who was not on the list who has subsequently applied to come. • Having 40 parents tours indicates that there is interest. The context of Colvestone's change in leadership, state of the building (there was scaffolding around it, lack of care and a 	<p>The projections were changed from 7 to an actual figure of 12 indicating that modelling data was not accurate There seems to be no account taken of changing circumstances for other schools such as the other proposed closures and also how this would affect nearby schools - this was modelling that the governors asked for at the initial meetings with HackneyEd. (minuted by Hackney Ed)</p>

	<p>hall that was out of action due to Hackney's errors) and resourcing of the school meant it was less desirable than the nearby school. This situation has been remedied and the stability of the partnership would have meant that this year it would have been a preferred choice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is also 'easier' to fill a 1 form entry school than a 2 form entry school. Other schools in the local area (Princess May being one of them) are operating as a 1 form entry school even though the capacity is for 2 or 3 form entry. ● There have been in year admissions this year and less movement compared to the pandemic years. ● The fact that there is not a mass exodus after the announcement shows the desire for a 1-form community school with Colvestone's uniqueness is needed. 	
Physical size of school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Colvestone is a 1-form entry school which would not be able to grow into a 2 form entry school. However, Colvestone uses all the space creatively. As a 1-form entry school it has a dedicated art, music and computing space and has more than enough capacity to be a full 1-form entry school with additional space to provide high quality of education. In Colvestone's case the concern around having large schools that are a financial drain does not apply as it is an appropriately sized site. In the cabinet meeting 22nd May: <i>'Schools with excess physical space and large sites Reduced budgets impact on schools' ability to set aside sufficient budget to deal with day to day repair and maintenance issues as resources must be prioritised to deal with staffing and delivery of education. This can have a significant impact on larger school buildings and sites with fewer pupils which will have higher premises costs. Underinvestment in the premises will create longer term issues and increased need for capital funding to deal with a lack of maintenance.</i> As pointed out in previous objections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There has been no risk assessment or costs of the size of schools and ongoing costs done in any financial modelling. Comparisons of schools and cost have not been made.

	<p>this was not the case for Colvestone which is a 1-form entry school with appropriate physical space. It is not a 3 or 4 storey Victorian building. Currently all parts of the school are utilised and used. There are no larger areas not in use yet still having to be heated and maintained. In addition investment into capital works such as the school hall, the roof etc. mean that the school premises are in a manageable state for the near future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In addition there is a school keeper's house that could be used more creatively to support children at Colvestone and across the borough as an ARP at a future date as Hackney have secured more SEND funding. Historically at other schools, school keeper's houses were looked at and developed to provide such places. There is precedent. In addition, in the Estates Strategy doc it states that schools should be supported to repurpose school property to support them economically (1) and specifically to expand SEND provision (2). 	
<p>Geographic partnership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Choosing Princess May as the 'merger/amalgamation' school was done on distance. There seems to have been no other consideration that Debeauvoir, which is also less than a mile away (0.5miles) would be closing. Their nearest schools are church schools (1 RC) and the closest non-denominational schools would be Queensbridge - a large 2-form entry school with limited space and a full ARP) and Colvestone - a 1-form entry school with space and a good reputation for supporting children with SEND. It seems logical that Colvestone would have been a choice for some of those families. ● No planning of the overlap of schools closing and their proximity to each other. With De Beauvoir and Randal Cremer closing there is more movement to other local schools, which then are full (apparently the case now). By 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There has been no pollution consideration of commuting to school in scope. ● There have been no surveys done for parents/carers about what type of school they would like their children to attend. The ratio of community schools to faith schools and their proximity to other schools has not been analysed.

	<p>closing Colvestone - the next nearest non-denominational school near De Beauvoir (0.5 miles) - further diminishes local provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Princess May is geographically near Colvestone (0.4 miles), however travelling there involves a walk along the A10, which is a large and busy road. For young families, children with SEND and older children who cycle/scoot/walk to school, this is an additional concern. (In addition the playground is on the A10) There are no ways of walking to Princess May without a walk along this road compared to the walk from De Beauvoir to Colvestone, for which families can walk alongside it and then come out at the pedestrian crossing to Ridley Road market. Currently children living nearby to Colvestone can walk on a school street and quiet roads avoiding heavily congested and polluted areas like the A10. ● Geographical distance is a factor, however for many families who live on the east side of Colvestone, Princess May would not be geographically closer and will have a longer commute. 	
<p>New neighbourhoods and new builds will create significantly more need for school places in the future</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There are plans for 600 new homes in Dalston, of which there are family homes. Colvestone would be their nearest school. ● There has been no strategy between Education and Planning. It was apparently clear in the council's Dalston Plan walk yesterday that those working for the planning department view Colvestone as key infrastructure / provision for the project yet this has not been considered by the school estates strategy. ● Colvestone Crescent, as part of the Dalston plan, is to be a 21st century street which has been agreed. The school is an integral part of the plan. According to the councils website: <i>As a part of our broad vision for this scheme, we</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There has been no discussion of the centrality of Colvestone Primary School to the Dalston Plan in any of the conversations or information put to cabinet. It is only mentioned through objections by the families of Colvestone. Again the decisions seem to not have looked at all factors involved and there is a failure to consider other plans developed by other council departments. Further, the council's committed spending on Colvestone

	<p><i>intend to deliver a new, green space, cycle parking, electric vehicle charging, a School Street, and an increase of tree canopy cover to 40% along Colvestone Crescent. How is this street going to work with no school on it?!</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In addition part of the aim of the 21st Century street would be to attract people to live there. This again brings families in and Colvestone is their nearest school. 	<p>Crescent's 21st Century Street has not been considered when choosing to consult on closing Colvestone.</p>
<p>Current OFSTED grades and predicted outcomes for children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Colvestone is a 'good' school and all indications from SIP visits and one day reviews indicate that it will continue to be a good school. ● Outcomes are good and there has been a significant improvement in EYFS data this year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This as a metric is irrelevant as we keep being told that there are hardly any schools in Hackney that are not good or outstanding and Hackney is one of the top performing boroughs in KS1 and KS2 data in England.
<p>Community Impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Colvestone is by Ridley Road market - one of the most historic markets in London. The impact of a school being mothballed to this historic area is unimaginable (and also under researched by Hackney) ● It is the last surviving Birkbeck school - a historical and socially important part of London and Hackney's past 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There has been no consultation done on community impact by Hackney. ● There is no detail about what that even means! ● Again no consideration of the Dalston Plan and 21st Century Street which have been formed with the community.

Part 2: The points below demonstrate why the 'merger/amalgamation' with Princess May in terms of benefits to Colvestone are null and void - even though as Colvestone would be closed all of these points stated by the consultation documents are irrelevant such as school improvement, resourcing etc.

Merging schools that have seen large decreases in pupil numbers brings significant benefits, including:

- ***Creation of one new, stronger school community, maximising the funding available to it***
- ***Increased specialist expertise from a wider teaching and pupil support team***

- **Stronger finances, with consistent resources and stable staff workforce**
- **Increased potential for school improvement and targeted support in response to local needs**

Context:

The Blossom federation has only been supporting Colvestone since September 2022. Hackney Education insisted on a partnership for the academic year 22-23 after the resignation of both the exec head and head of school after May half term. This left only the assistant head as a SLT member in place. Hackney Education organised applications and interviews and were adamant with the governing body that this was the only solution. The governing body interviewed 2 potential partners and chose Blossom federation for the following reasons:

- Strong, secure and a wealth of experience in financial management. They had a federation business manager who would be able to support the school. The other applicant had no business manager for their own school and therefore no capacity to take on a school with the financial. An understanding of the situation and the difficult restructuring of support staff. The school emphasised creative ways and more understanding of how the school could make cost savings and explore other avenues as well.
- A potential head of school who had experience with EYFS and wellbeing - ensuring that staff and children would feel safe, secure and be able to achieve their potential. The wellbeing of staff and children was a concern as there had been te defederation, restructuring of support staff and the Executive head leaving at short notice with the resignation of the head of school.
- An experienced executive head who led 3 other schools which also continued to thrive with their own unique identity.
- The potential to receive support through resourcing and expertise from a wider group of schools in all areas e.g. premises, finance, resourcing and teaching and learning.
- The federation had identified areas for development which would attract new families including a better website, more social media output and also cosmetic and infrastructure changes. These have all been actioned without time to see the impact.

The partnership was agreed to be extended for the academic year 23/24 by the Colvestone governing body in December. This was going to be put to all stakeholders in the first half of the Spring term and to the Blossom Federation governing body. There were preliminary discussions of federation although it was felt that the school needed to continue with the partnership before any discussions for this would take place. After the Soaring Skies federation, which did not bring many of the above benefits of school partnership stated in the consultation benefits, there was an understandable objection to partnership and federation. The deficit, the restructuring of support staff and the lack of infrastructure in the school to support teaching learning was a direct result of the previous federation. The partnership with Blossom has been positive and impactful in all areas. This is seen not only through SIP visits, ODR and Tags meetings with Hackney Ed but also through the SMRA report.

	<p>In preliminary meetings the SLT and chair of governors asked for partnership to be given time to build on the short successes that had been achieved within a term of the partnership. The successes and achievement of being with Blossom Federation can be seen below:</p>	
Point	Objection	Concern
<p>Creation of one new, stronger school community, maximising the funding available to it</p>	<p>With the Blossom partnership a stronger school community has been built. In parents, staff and childrens surveys taken 100% surveyed said that the Blossom partnership has had a positive impact. The Blossom partnership has also led to a larger and more stable governing body with 3 new governors recruited with a wider base of knowledge resulting in wider and more targeted scrutiny.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There has been no consideration of this when putting forward the proposal to Cabinet even though there has been extremely positive feedback through Hackney Education scrutiny. ● In addition the governors were told that if it wasn't for the Blossom Federation then the school would be considered for closure rather than amalgamation. When asked why this would be the case there was no answer.

<p>Increased specialist expertise from a wider teaching and pupil support team</p> <p>Increased potential for school improvement and targeted support in response to local needs</p>	<p>This is already in place through the Blossom Federation. There have been leadership visits in the key school development priorities to other schools in the federation: phonics, science, maths, literacy, art and SEND. This has resulted in an improved teaching profile moving from good to outstanding and progress in core areas. Phonics provision has been identified as a strength within a term due to the support and development in place from the Blossom federation.</p> <p>Staffing structure: The development of middle leaders has meant that there has been an improvement in teaching and learning. This has been supported by an experienced exec head and a dedicated head of school. Support from leaders across the federation has also supported this development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In thinking about school support there has been no consideration of the partnership in place. The council does not seem to have taken in consideration any of the reports by Hackney Education on the successful impact on teaching and learning of the partnership. ● Hackney Education's processes and structure to ensure that a school does not have a deficit of this level is called into question. The fact that a remote audit was carried out and did not flag that there were no systems in place for purchase ordering, HR files were not up to date and other key areas were missing is a concern.
<p>Stronger finances, with consistent resources and stable staff workforce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An in-year surplus has been identified this year. When speaking to the C of G at a governors conference it was stated by the director of education that many schools would go into deficit. Colevstone has done this with the strong and secure financial stability brought in by the federation business manager and a dedicated 1x week finance officer from another federated school. ● There have been suggestions made at meetings that the surplus has been down to investment by Hackney Education. The school received funding from the Schools Contingency Fund, the de-delegated fund to which all schools contribute and to which all are eligible to apply. This money was applied to help improve the school building and in particular ensure that it was statutorily safe and compliant. The school had a right to apply and were eligible for this funding and are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There has been a comparison on schools budgets for this year - have any schools gone into deficit within a year and if so by how much? Colevstone has - even in difficult circumstances and with money being spent on the schools infrastructure and teaching and learning have been in surplus. ●

	<p>entitled to the finding. The fact that the school had not accessed this fund previous to this leadership could be attributed to the deficiencies in the state of the building and resourcing. One might suggest that the Management Team would have been remiss not to have applied for it - as in the case for all monies that the school applies for and receives from the Council and other funds - and to imply that this an emergency intervention by the Council, or the only reason for running a surplus, is highly subjective and contestable at best. Many schools (both in frame of this consultation and outside) apply for and receive this funding, as they are entitled to do.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Financial accuracy: budgets set are achievable and reflective of the situation Colvestone is in. There are systems in place to ensure that spending can be carefully monitored through secure purchase ordering systems. There has been an SMRA process which has identified key ways the school can make cost cuts when contracts end e.g. catering/energy. There are clear systems in place to chase debts which have historically been allowed to grow.● The school has achieved a surplus even though there have been debts/invoices that should have been paid or accrued from the previous year. The in year surplus would have been considerably higher had these been properly accrued. The lack of oversight by Hackney Education and the fact that an audit - which was done remotely - did not pick up on these financial discrepancies raises questions.● Computing and IT support is delivered through the federation● PE support is delivered through links with the federation	
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Appendix 3: Save Colvestone

Save Colvestone Primary School



Submission to Informal Consultation

16 July 2023

Should you have any
queries, please email:
colvestonesos@gmail.com

Written and
prepared by
Colvestone
parents and
carers

The following report refers to the following documents in these abbreviated forms:

Statutory Guidance for opening and closing maintained schools (Central Government, published January 2023) - referred to here as 'Statutory Guidance'

Education Sufficiency and Estate Strategy 2021-2031 (Hackney Council, adopted February 2022) - referred to as 'Estate Strategy'

"Education Sufficiency and Estate Strategy - falling rolls" Briefing Report (Hackney Education / Deputy Mayor Bramble, May 2023) - referred to as the 'Briefing Report'

A vision for the future

We believe Colvestone Primary School has a bright future in Hackney. The school has been an important part of this community for 161 years and with the Council's support it can continue to thrive as a key pillar of the community.

Key benefits of Colvestone remaining open

- Ensures the provision of an academically strong, non-denominational, one-form entry community school for families. The impact of the consultation process has meant that many other local schools that are not in consultation are filling up. If Colvestone stays open, it is more likely that Dalston families will have a highly attractive, local community school they can walk to at the heart of the new 21st Century Street.
- Enables Hackney to recover Colvestone's budget deficit by allowing the school to pay it down over time.
- Supports the future development of Hackney, attracting families to the new housing in the Dalston Plan and anchoring the borough's first 21st Century Street on Colvestone Crescent.
- Preserves provision that reflects desires of Hackney residents, 84% of whom want non-faith education.
- Provides strong SEND provision that can be expanded to meet the urgent need in the borough.
- Saves the taxpayer the enormous cost of closing the school and of paying off the deficit, which, given the school's potential for financial viability, does not make sense.
- Sends the message that the Council listens and does genuinely take the feedback of residents into consideration. It increases faith in the authenticity of the Council's consultation processes.

The Estate Strategy document that frames this consultation details and encourages proactive measures the Council can take to protect schools under its control. The protection of schools and their education provision is the purpose of the Strategy. Colvestone has shown itself to be financially viable, educationally strong, and with a long-term future in the community that it serves - and which it plays a key role in holding together.

While Colvestone did accrue significant deficit in the past under the Soaring Skies federation (a problem, it should be noted, for which Hackney Education bears some responsibility due to lack of appropriate oversight), a new governing body constituted after Soaring Skies defederated worked closely with Hackney Education to address this problem and the problem of falling roll. They brought in a strong new leadership team and formed a partnership with the Blossom Federation that has been very successful. Because of these changes the school is being closely monitored and its strong academic performance continues to improve.

The new Senior Leadership Team produced a three-year projected budget and commissioned an independent SMRA report, which affirmed the projections and identified further highly achievable savings on operating costs. These two reports confirmed both the financial viability of the school and its capacity to pay down the deficit. Hackney Education should be proud of its contribution to establishing the new partnership and leadership and should give them time to continue to succeed.

Curricular improvements, increased social media presence, additional resources, and improvements to security and IT infrastructure have made Colvestone more competitive in the short term. Colvestone is also just finishing a period of substantial works (exterior and interior) that have restored the Grade 2 listed buildings to their historical splendor whilst incorporating new security and technology investments externally, in communal spaces and in the classrooms. In the medium term, the housing created by the Dalston Plan coupled with the attractiveness of Hackney's first 21st Century tree lined pedestrianized street should provide an influx of new families to the area and to the school.

Colvestone is central to Hackney Council's ambitious plans for Dalston (the Dalston Plan / Hackney Local Plan, adopted July 2020). The Plan promises to bring 200 new, genuinely affordable 3-bedroom homes for families to the area. Colvestone is the closest school to all of the major sites and is essential to helping attract new families to the area. Colvestone is also a key component of the fully-funded (and Hackney's first) 21st Century Street that forms part of the Colvestone Crescent masterplan: a community-led project that will make the space directly in front of the school a permanent school play street as part of an ambitious greening / pedestrian-focussed landscaping project around the school.

The school is praised by Ofsted (2018) for building "a strong [knowledge of and] sense of identity and connection to where [pupils] live". Small community schools like Colvestone operate as social binders. Colvestone Primary School is central to preserving the genuinely diverse nature of central Dalston against forces that drive people away - cost of living, Brexit, escalating rent and property prices etc. If you take the social binders away then the community will be gone - and will never return. This consultation gets to the heart of the kind of place the Labour Council and Mayor want Dalston to be - one with a sense of history, solidarity and strength through difference, or the next soulless and transitory zone of 'regeneration'.

The strength of this community is clear from the campaign to save the school that has seen ex-students or friends of the school from age 8-80 campaigning against its closure. Why would a local Council want to destroy that? Hackney Council recognised the centrality of the local Ridley Road market to the Dalston community by the resistance to plans to remove traders' storage and access, focussing instead on new landscaping and branding to support this asset. To remove the children from this community would further diminish the social relations that bind generations, and communities, together. Why would Hackney close a financially viable, academically strong community school at great expense when it could be championing it as an asset?

Keeping the school open provides a solution to the SEND provision issues Hackney that are clearly identified in the Estate Strategy. One-form entry schools have become more rare, and the small, village-school environment of Colvestone offers a great setting for SEND students allowing them to access integrated education. As such, Colvestone has great success as a gateway school for neurodiverse pupils and those with Social Emotional and Mental Health needs. This integrated provision and current surplus capacity also has the potential to save the council money otherwise spent sending SEND children to independent / private schools outside of the borough at a cost of between £35-70,000 per pupil per year.

The Estate Strategy recommends the expansion of SEN provision in current schools with capacity (p.13), and Colvestone has a track record of excellent provision. Additionally, the Estate Strategy supports the repurposing of underused school infrastructure both for revenue generation and specifically to respond to the strategic need for expanded SEN provision in the Borough (p.14). Independent advice has suggested the currently vacant yet teaching-adapted caretakers house on the school site be used as a viable ARP unit in future funding rounds. This would represent a substantial saving on current arrangements for out of borough provision and promises to be far more successful.

In addition, Colvestone offers a strong option for the remaining De Beauvoir School families as their closest non-denominational school. The consultation process has driven families out of both De Beauvoir and Randal Cremer, who have left in such large numbers that they have filled up local places in the schools that are not under consultation. The families remaining in both those schools are now struggling to find places within walking distance where they can send their children, particularly families with more than one child. Despite the consultation, Colvestone has retained most of its students. Colvestone is similar to De Beauvoir in that it is a small school on a quiet road, and it has space to accommodate groups of classmates and family groups, enabling them to stay together.

Keeping Colvestone open is also a win for the Council, showing the entire Hackney community that the Council does genuinely listen to residents, is carefully considering which schools to close and was telling the truth when it said a decision had not been made. It restores faith in the democratic process, increasing the likelihood that the community will engage in future consultation processes.

Risks of Closure

Key risks of closing Colvestone

- Colvestone students who go to Princess May will increase their exposure to air pollution and run the risk of having their school closed twice due to an already low enrollment at Princess May.
- Unlike other London boroughs, Hackney is closing a lot of schools at once, but the consequences of closing a school is still untested. Closing such a large number means any mistakes in the process—academic, financial, social—are amplified. It's a high-cost, high-risk strategy that may accelerate the rate of families fleeing to free schools, academies or private schools or leaving the borough altogether, while costing the taxpayer millions of pounds.
- Closing schools is expensive and the costs could skyrocket. The Estates Strategy report estimates closing and merging these six schools will cost £3.5 million in the first year alone, but warns that the actual cost could be much higher, and Colvestone is a particularly expensive school to close.
- The Dalston Plan promises to bring hundreds of new family homes to Dalston, but the closure of Colvestone, the closest school to that development, removes key infrastructure from that project - Nursery and Primary School provision.
- By removing local primary school provision the developments themselves become less attractive to potential families and would be expected to negatively impact on developers' ability to sell those homes to families.
- The threatened closure of Debeauvoir and Randal Cremer has meant that local school places are already becoming more scarce and families may be forced to attend school out of the area.
- Should Colvestone need to reopen in the medium term due to insufficient places in the area, there is significant risk the borough would be forced to reopen it as a free school, meaning the borough would lose another local authority school (both the leasehold and education provision would be surrendered by the local authority to a private, for-profit business under 'free school presumption').
- There is a significant increased cost to the council for SEND if Colvestone closes as a result of having to send children out of the borough to private schools.
- Continuity in SEND support is extremely important, relationships that will be lost if Colvestone is closed
- Long term damage to student engagement (after already enduring Covid), increased Emotionally Based School Avoidance, and associated problems could result from breaking hard to establish close-knit communities both internally to the school and with the surrounding area
- Hackney Council risk making further errors by acting rashly in relation to GLA population projections - catastrophically wrong as recently as 2017
- Loss of faith in the Council and in the Labour Party.

The closure of Colvestone poses a lot of risks for Hackney.

Hackney Education has put forward a high-risk plan to send Colvestone students to Princess May. The Briefing Report projects that 120 children will move to Princess May. Two surveys of parents conducted at Colvestone, an exercise the Council has never bothered to do, showed that 95.7% of parents surveyed did not include Princess May in any of their six preferences when selecting a primary school. Further, 87% said they would not send their children to Princess May, with a further 6% undecided. Their reasons included distance, size and air pollution on the A10 (further details in the report that follows).

There is a significant risk that far fewer than 120 students transfer to Princess May and that the school remains at risk of closure. When the Interim Director of Education was asked at Colvestone's pre-consultation meeting whether Hackney Education could offer any assurances that Princess May would remain open, he said he could not, meaning students who do transfer to Princess May are at risk of having their school closed twice. Given the damage that this would cause to pupils undergoing successive closures, it is a further clear discouragement to making the move to Princess May in the first place.

Hackney has undertaken an unusually aggressive closure/merger plan, starting with six schools, in contrast to other inner London boroughs. The process is untested and the consequences unknown—it doesn't know where parents will go when schools are closed; it doesn't know how best to support staff, families and students and minimise damage to educational outcomes; it can't predict what all the costs will be or how to design the process to minimise them. For example, the timing and length of this process means schools will need to pay staff retention bonuses (£100k at Colvestone alone), which may have been avoided had the process been different.

The Estate Strategy predicts that closing and amalgamating all six schools will cost £3.5 million in the first year alone. It warns that those costs are likely to go up, and in fact they already have, as the report fails to account for £100k in retention bonuses for Colvestone alone. It fails to account for the possibility of increased out-of-borough SEN provision (£35/50-70,000 per student per year) if SEND students in Colvestone are not able to make the transition or thrive in a larger environment. While Hackney Education did estimate redundancy costs at £1.6 million, it has not reached out to the schools to get HR data, so the accuracy of the estimate is questionable (carrying 'significant risks of being higher...', p.43, Briefing Report). It also does not account for loss of revenue to the borough if families leave the borough or go to free schools, academies or private schools. Colvestone's deficit and restrictive covenants on the building make it a particularly expensive school to close, one that could cost the borough for years to come (moth-balling a school site is estimated at between £250-300,000).

Colvestone provides strong SEND support and is well situated on a quiet street for SEND children. By losing this school, SEN Children who struggle with the transition to Princess May (a much larger school on a busy main road) and may have to be sent out of the borough to private schools (at cost of £35-70,000 per pupil per year) and some will be at risk of being lost to education provision altogether.

In discussions with Planning officials at recent Dalston Plan engagement events it was clear that Colvestone, as the closest primary school provision, was central to the infrastructure for these major homebuilding sites. Why have Planning not been more actively engaged by the Education department in the drawing up of these proposals - specifically as they relate to Colvestone?

It is not clear in either the Briefing Report or the risk assessment why absolute faith is being placed in GLA projections population figures when in 2017 the projections were wrong. Predictions of a shortfall of provision that led to the disastrous greenlighting of free schools in the Borough largely produced the current problem. Shouldn't, following Estate Strategy, viable schools be supported through this period to see what actually happens particularly, in Colvestone's case, given the scale of housebuilding projected in central Dalston?

If the consultation process demonstrates strong objections to the Council's plans, but those plans go forward without change, it will appear the Council was lying when it said repeatedly, publicly, that no decision had been made. People will see that the Council consultation was phony because the Council never had any intention of listening to the community, which could significantly erode people's faith in democratic process generally and in this Council and in the Labour Party in particular.

Finally, there is the damage that closing Colvestone would do to the community. The impact of this is hard to quantify, but in a time of continual loss and stress—COVID, the deterioration of public services, the threat of climate change and the associated weather extremes—closing institutions that function as social binders will further exacerbate exactly the kind of social atomisation and flight of families from the Borough that the closures are meant to address. It threatens the mental well being of children in particular, driving phenomena such as Emotionally Based School Avoidance.

Dalston is in the eye of this storm, and closing one of the institutions that is integral to people's connection to the area for generations proposes to initiate a death spiral of lost identification, lost provision and further flight. Small local schools and the generations with attachments to them are key to holding communities together. If the Labour Council moves to destroy this alongside the closure of nearby De Beauvoir,, it commits to generations of damage to Dalston - and to the Council's persistent claims to be a Council and Mayoralty that listens to its residents and acts in their best interests.

Flaws in the consultation process

There are multiple instances where the consultation process has failed to follow or deliberately misrepresents both the Statutory Guidance (Statutory Guidance for opening and closing maintained schools, published January 2023) and the Council's own Estate Strategy (Education Sufficiency and Estate Strategy 2021-2031, adopted February 2022) under which the consultation is held. Many of these errors have been repeated in the public forums where the consultation has been discussed by elected officials and representatives of Hackney Education. In addition, the informal consultation process has been inaccessible and ineffective as well as financially and emotionally damaging to the schools. Examples of these flaws are detailed below.

Key flaws in the process

- The consultation failed follow the statutory guidance and estate strategy
- The Briefing Report prepared for Cabinet was ill informed and lacking detail
- We were told the consultation was intended to help the Council determine whether to close the schools, but its design made it ineffective for that purpose
- The consultation was inaccessible to some of the groups that should have been included
- The consultation process itself damaged the financial viability of the schools in scope

Failure to follow Statutory Guidance and / or the Education Sufficiency and Estate Strategy 2021-2031 under which this consultation is proposed

The "Education Sufficiency and Estate Strategy - falling rolls" Briefing Report (subsequently referred to here as the "Briefing Report") produced by Hackney Education / Deputy Mayor Bramble describes, frames and justifies the current consultation to both the public and to the key officials in Cabinet who voted to enter into the current 'informal consultation' phase. Instances where it fails to follow the Statutory Guidance or the adopted Estate Strategy that empowers the consultation are therefore highly problematic. It should also be noted that these misrepresentations and/or failures have not been corrected when challenged and frame the 'informal consultation'.

In the Briefing Report prepared for Cabinet members prior to the vote to proceed to informal consultation, clause 3.5 addresses the need to consider "school place demand in the short to medium term"; however both the Statutory Guidance (p.23) and the Council's own Strategy document that incorporates it (p.16, also quoted in our own submission during the pre-informal consultation) state that potential demand for places must be considered in the "mid- to long-term". The Briefing Report prepared by Hackney Education misrepresents the terms of reference required when considering potential demand for places to both elected officials charged with decision-making and the public, and subsequently fails to include any mid- to long-term modeling in its report contrary to the demands of both Statutory Guidance and its own Estates Strategy.

When considering this future demand for places the Briefing Report fails to account for the specific impacts of local development (the Dalston Plan) for Colvestone Primary School - the closest primary school provision for all the main sites (p.16). Both because the Briefing Report (p.16, 3.5) identifies the wrong time frame and fails to address the specific proximity of Colvestone to the development sites, an accurate assessment is not made to the mid- to long-term impacts of these major homebuilding projects.

The Briefing Report also fails to account for financial opportunities provided for by Section 106 / CIL investment levies from major local developments (Estate Strategy - p.19). As the local primary school provision for all of the major Dalston Plan sites, Colvestone would reasonably be expected to benefit financially from this significant infrastructural investment. By failing to address the centrality of Colvestone Primary School to the Dalston Plan and both the financial and demographic benefits of that proximity, the Briefing Report therefore fails to address significant future benefits to the school (identified in the Estates Strategy, p.19) in it's summary of the effect of new housing / regeneration.

The Estates Strategy states that all proposals will “consider land ownership and potential restrictions or impact on future opportunities and any additional land requirements and approvals or consents needed.” (p.14) The Council and Hackney Education have been persistently warned that there are educational use covenants on the Colvestone site. These have been confirmed by campaigners who worked on a previous campaign to save the school (1980) when, in addition to these protections, Hackney Council was shown to be deliberately diverting pupils to other schools to suppress student numbers. Despite being warned about these protections, the Council continues to rely on Land Registry documents based on registration documents from 1912 when the school site was expanded through purchase of additional land at the north of the site (then known as ‘Birkbeck Works’) and not the original deeds (1906) that detail the restrictions on the site - a consequence of the school being acquired from a still-existing educational trust under license from the Charities Commission. It has been confirmed with Land Registry that the Title Registration for the school site does not list the precise nature of the restrictions and covenants on the site, only that they exist. Whilst research is ongoing to locate secondary copies of these documents, Hackney Council (through a detailed FOI request) and Strategic Property Services (through direct approach) have failed to provide copies of the original deeds that transferred to the London Borough of Hackney from the ILEA through the London Residuary Body in 1990. Both have been sent the receipt for the documents (including relevant filing references) produced in 1990 to expedite this search, but no commitment to do so has been received in return.

There is clear precedent that establishes the jeopardy that the Estates Strategy is attempting to guard against. In 1995 Hackney Downs School was closed at great expense to the London Borough of Hackney - local campaigners have told us an estimated £3m was paid in redundancy payments) and the Borough's intention was to sell the land.

When the original deeds were addressed however the educational use covenants that protect the school site were discovered (not at that point recorded on the Land Registry Title documents which were subsequently amended) and the Council forced to embark on the project that would become Mossbourne Academy. To embark on a similar project represents a catastrophic waste of public funds. This jeopardy is increased by 'Free School Presumption' (see Estates Strategy p.15) which dictates that any new school would automatically be a Free School, outside of Local Authority control, which has "key implications for the educational property assets as the building and site would be handed over to the Academy Trust of Free School under a lease agreement." The Council would also be responsible for delivering the capital programme for the new school, incurring yet further costs. In addition to the waste of public money and the loss of one of the area's major heritage sites, the Estates Strategy explicitly advises to support alternate options to this path to avoid "the delivery of a free school" (p.16).

In addition, the Grade 2 listed status of the building, which makes repurposing difficult, the protections against disposal (if possible) that would require Secretary of State approval (Estates, p.19) are similarly unaccounted for in the Briefing Document as required.

Contrary to Statutory Guidance (p.29) the consultation proposals were made public two days before a school holiday (the Easter break), deliberately limiting stakeholder response.

The consultation continues to use the terms 'merger' and 'amalgamation', implying a new school with a new school name, number and continuity of staff and senior leadership from both schools. This impression was also explicitly given in SLT / Governor meetings with the school before the consultation was made public. Both the Briefing Report (p.17) and Estate Strategy ('free school presumption', p.15/16) make clear that this is not possible - the proposals in the consultation are to close four schools as all staff in those schools will lose their jobs and sites will be closed. There would be no continuity of staff, ethos or curriculum. This has led to much confusion publicly as to the ramification of the proposals. To be genuine, consultations should clearly state the ramifications of the proposals being consulted upon. Here this has not been the case.

Briefing Report ill-informed and lacking in detail

Whilst the school satisfied some of the broad determinants for inclusion in the consultation, it fails to satisfy the qualitative determinants and the narrative description of schools considered to be most at risk. In the Briefing Report prepared for Cabinet the intention given was to identify schools under "serious financial pressure" where options to reduce expenditure had already been exhausted and where "efficiency", "financial stability and education outcomes" have begun to deteriorate (p.11). None of these criteria have been met in the case of Colvestone.

The financial modeling used to assess the financial health and projected finances of Colvestone Primary School was a draft SMRA report commissioned by the school business manager of the Blossom Federation and Senior Leadership team of the school to test the school's 3-year budget projections (submitted to Hackney Education in November 2022) and to identify further reasonable savings. This budget projection (and in year surplus guarantee for the subsequent two years) remains unchallenged. Indeed, the full independent SMRA report commissioned by the school identifies over £614,000 of 'high achievability' savings (and a further £167,00 in 'medium achievability' savings) over the next three years. Not only does the complete version of the independent report, used as the Council's only financial modeling for Colvestone Primary School, suggest financial viability, it proposes a full deficit reduction plan to break-even over five years. Even if this independently-produced data is taken to be optimistic (though it constitutes the only financial projection data the Council has for the school for the purpose of this consultation) it clearly states financial viability with the projection to pay down the deficit accumulated under previous management over time.

The consultation failed to establish a holistic approach to the challenge of maintaining optimal education provision appropriate to the stated desire of the population of the Borough. Why isn't the whole of an area's Primary provision being considered at the same time - including Faith / voluntary-aided schools? The Briefing Report goes to great lengths (by using inappropriate metrics to suggest they are at capacity) to mask the fact that vacancy rates are much worse in the borough's faith schools (local authority 80% capacity, faith/VA schools 60%) and that Hackney data shows that 84% of residents want non-religious educational settings. When other boroughs, Lambeth and Southwark for example, have closed faith schools, why is the Council not taking a more holistic approach that consults on all settings as decisions about local provision mutually affect one another. In responses given to the Scrutiny Committee it was stated that, as opposed to local authority schools, VA / faith schools are being afforded a more holistic set of criteria in relation to their evaluation - not simply financial viability (or pupil numbers). Why is there a difference in evaluation metrics for faith schools - particularly when there is clearly overprovision (and accordingly low occupancy) in the borough and specifically, as it applies to Colvestone, around central Dalston? By consulting only on local authority provision, faith / voluntary-aided schools are being given preferential treatment.

The target of surplus capacity of 5-10% is an advisory figure. Why is the council pursuing this for all schools regardless of financial viability, academic achievement, specific character / social make-up of the school and the well-known and tangible benefits of smaller class sizes (for all pupils, with particular advantages for SEN children accessing integrated teaching)? Staff-pupil ratios vary with need already through TA and support staff provision, and these variations are not reflected in the data provided in the Briefing Report. In addition the consultation fails to make any distinction between large and small schools and their relative merits, or indeed the difference between non-faith and faith schools in regards to available local provision (despite the overwhelming majority of Hackney residents desiring non-faith education). As such the consultation attempts no modeling or research that would identify the significant role of parental choice in pupil movement.

Ineffective

It is not clear how the consultation document will inform the decision. At the May Cabinet meeting Cllr Bramble said that financial viability was key to determining if a school can stay open. But there were no questions on the document related to the financial viability, nor is there underlying data in the consultation documents that address viability on a school by school basis - data presented relates only to 'lost revenue' and figures are presented without context (for example: lost revenue is not discussed in relation to overall budget, or in relation to school/site-specific operating costs). Because these questions went unanswered in 'engagement events', it has been impossible for stakeholders to understand, let alone scrutinise the Council's logic or proposals. Councilors and council staff have not been able to explain to us (or the Scrutiny Committee) how the consultation will inform a decision whether to close a school. If, as stated, this is a consultation on *whether* to close schools, not *how* to close schools, why has the Council thus far done no work with schools to develop alternatives to closure? Failure to allow for alternatives or modification within the consultation process - that is, meaningful consultation - the framing of the consultation denies any meaningful learning process or capacity for optimisation. A simple yes-no decision has been presented with scant underlying data.

Key decision makers did not participate in the consultation. Repeated attempts by parents and governors to meet with the Mayor and/or Cllr Bramble to discuss alternatives to closure were rebuffed or ignored. The school engagement meeting offered a repetition of information shared (and previously challenged) at the pre-consultation phase, but did not engage in discussion about alternatives to closure or challenges related to adherence to the Council's own strategy documents, the contents of the presentation or to specific questions concerning underlying data.

Headteachers were not asked for their advice or expertise about how a process to address low enrollment might work. Headteachers were informed of the school closure consultation plan in advance of a public announcement, but never asked about potential consequences, leading to a process that was more damaging than it needed to be.

The staff at Colvestone Primary are Hackney Education employees. There has been no consideration of them in the decision to 'merge/amalgamate'. At the initial meetings, even though questions were asked, there were no answers or reassurances given to what the proposal would mean for staff.

It is now clear that staff would have to apply *if* there were vacancies at Princess May and have no guarantee that they would be employed. It is also probable that Princess May, which has recently gone through a staffing restructure, would employ support staff or teachers who are more experienced with UPS or TLRs as they would already have these positions in school and also by employing support staff and teachers in higher pay scales and with TLR's they would be increasing their staffing costs. Colvestone staff are dedicated and experienced professionals which makes them on a higher pay scale therefore at a disadvantage for a school who has restructured recently. There is also no consideration of office staff, cleaners, premises managers and catering staff. These positions will also be in place at the proposed site for merger and there will be no deployment of these positions.

In addition, with three other schools closing and many schools restructuring, there will be a glut of staff on the market, meaning there is no guarantee of any job vacancies for staff.

There were no separate consultation documents for staff and there was no communication made that the consultation documents and websites were for them.

The consultation documents had no mention of staff in them at all. The fact that the words 'merger and amalgamation' were used has led to confusion. Would their jobs be safe? Were they being moved to Princess May? Would they have to reapply for jobs? None of these questions were considered or answered until the second HR meeting and none of these factors were considered in the initial proposal to Cabinet.

The timeline has also been challenging for teaching staff; the resignation date was the end of May - the cabinet decision was not published until the end of that week therefore staff had no time to find a job or resign.

There is also no consideration of the children at Colvestone who have built relationships with the staff at Colvestone. They will move (if they choose too) to a school that has no familiar staff. For children with SEND there are no guarantees or reassurance that their 1:1 LSA will be moving with them, a stressful and concerning issue for both families and the school.

Parents were not consulted about their preferences with regards to potential school mergers. Colvestone parents were never surveyed about the likelihood that they would attend Princess May in the event of a merger. Parents at De Beauvoir asked about the possibility of a merger during their pre-consultation meeting, but they were never surveyed about their preferences. With approx. 70 pupils still on roll at De Beauvoir, this is now a viable merger on the Colvestone site that would accommodate all pupils (maintaining family and friendship groups as intended).

Inaccessible

All published documents up to and including that voted upon and the Decision Paper published after the Cabinet vote to proceed to the 'informal consultation' stage has a clear list of stakeholders to be consulted in this phase of the consultation. This list consistently contains 'all residents. When the printed Consultation document was circulated 'all residents' had been removed as a group being consulted.

The Briefing Report says that local residents are a key group to consult, but the document was not sent to local residents. The Council made token efforts to publicize the consultation—a page on the website and a couple of tweets—but did not send materials to houses in the vicinity of the school.

Although Colvestone's consultation meeting was interpreted into different languages at the school's request, the consultation document was not provided in any language other than English even though multiple languages represented in the school community were requested.

There was no attempt to get feedback from local organisations that may be impacted by school closures, nor was there any tangible attempt to engage with clear stakeholders in education provision, for example: families and staff at local nurseries, childrens' centres, childminders, playgroups, drop-in play centres, the family sections of the local libraries etc.

Damaging

We warned the Council before the Cabinet voted to move all six schools to the information consultation stage that the consultation itself would damage the financial viability of the schools and asked what mitigating measures were being put into place. The consultation is supposed to determine whether a school should be closed, which means it should be possible for schools to survive consultation. However, no measures were established and as a result, two of the schools have lost so many they are probably financially unsustainable. In essence the consultation, which was meant to determine whether they should close, has created a situation where they are forced to close.

Because Colvestone is under the consultation, it is not picking up pupils it would normally expect to from families who did not receive offers from the first preference(s), in-year transfers and parents considering leaving local schools undergoing structural turmoil because also in frame (De Beauvoir), about to enter a phase of massive staff turnover (Halley House) or experiencing highly disruptive staffing issues (Shacklewell for example, where one Reception class has had 8 teachers in a year). This damage is particularly acute when Colvestone has recently resolved many of the temporary issues that had made the school less attractive (at the time of visits and application).

We have also recently been made aware of at least one parent attempting to apply for a place at Colvestone since the announcement of the consultation being advised by officials on the Hackney Council Admissions and Pupil Benefits Team Helpline explicitly that the school was closing. This suggests further artificial suppression of pupil numbers, the extent of which is hard to quantify.

The consultation process has been hugely damaging to school finances because of pupil movement (albeit limited in the case of Colvestone) and potential staff retention payments for 23/24 that have been designated to come from school budgets rather than central funding. There has been a complete absence of mitigation planning or financial support put in place to protect schools damaged by the consultation process itself.

The consultation has been hugely destabilising for SEN / EHCP parents and pupils for whom promised individual advice and support has been entirely lacking.

These damages are particularly galling at a time where Hackney Council, in partnership with Blossom Foundation and a new senior management team at the school have worked hard to formulate and commence a plan that was working (in the 6 months it was given) to increase financial health (income, savings, structure, oversight and projections), parental offer addressing recent falling rolls and staff and parental satisfaction. The Labour Council should be owning and celebrating their part in this success story that would be given a chance to continue if the school was pulled out of scope.

Because the Council cannot close free schools and academies, there is a possibility that this aggressive schedule of local authority closures and the knowledge that there are more closures to come will scare people away from local authority schools in general and into free schools and academies, which they may view as safe from closure.

As raised in the Scrutiny Commission, schools with higher free school meal uptake, proportion of SEND pupils and greater diversity will overwhelmingly fall into scope of the proposed closures under the current metrics. How can the framework for considering scope of this and future consultations be adjusted such that it will not always be these children whose lives (and access to education, which is often already difficult) are constantly disrupted?

This report and the analysis which follows paint a compelling picture of a 'constantly improving' (Ofsted) and genuinely diverse village school in the heart of Hackney's vision for a vibrant Dalston: the meeting of the affordable, family-focussed new homebuilding of the Daston Plan with the area's historic, academically progressive past in the setting of the Borough's first 21st Century Street - the vision of a greener, more inclusive public space that connects the youth of the community with the vibrant market and bustle of contemporary Dalston. All of this future planning, to which the school is its academic provision (the Dalston Plan) or direct inspiration (21st Century Street), would be undermined by the closure of the school that is the beating heart of this community.

Reports and underlying data

What follows is the full report prepared for the 'pre-informal' stage of the consultation but which was not considered in the preparation of the Briefing Report produced by Hackney Education for the Cabinet Meeting that followed these proposals being made public and the vote to proceed to this 'informal' stage of the consultation. This report expands considerably on many of the issues outlined above. We expect its findings and underlying data to be considered fully at this stage, as we have been assured that it will be.

Positive:

- Strong improvements made by the school since Federation with Blossom
- Positive financial outlook
- Continual academic success
- Specific advantages to Colvestone of the Dalston Plan and the 21st Century Street on Colvestone Crescent

In addition the report shows:

- that the Council fails to follow the Statutory Guidance and their own Strategic Plan when planning for future demand for places
- Data showing that parents won't move to Princess May and which identifies key determinants of parental choice for Colvestone families
- Specific SEND impacts of the proposal
- Impacts on local developments
- the Council's briefing report deliberately masks the far worse problems in voluntary aided / faith schools, where capacity is at 60% compared to 80% in local authority schools
- Fails to account for significant increase in pollution (+40%) at the proposed merger site
- Identifies a range of historical protections on the site (and its use) that make re-purposing extremely difficult and risky
- Identifies a failure to follow the Strategic Plan when proposing to close and open school sites rather than to support and protect local authority provision (check clear in report)
- Strongly evidences community support for the school and its protection



Save Colvestone Primary School



Submission to
Hackney Councillors

May 2023

Should you have any
queries, please email:
colvestonesos@gmail.com

Written and
prepared by
Colvestone
parents and
carers

Introduction

Following the Colvestone engagement meeting, the parent community prepared a report making the case to Save Colvestone in response to the criteria outlined by the Council. It draws on school financial data, Council-produced statistics and projections, Council planning and policy documents, parent surveys and testimony and a wide range of historical and contemporary primary and secondary reference materials with the intention of clearly establishing the financial, political and academic case for removing Colvestone Primary School from the next phase of consultation on mergers and closures of Hackney Primary Schools. The uncertainty produced by further consultation is both unnecessary and potentially hugely damaging to the operation of a successful school.

We are extremely disappointed that the main Education Sufficient and Estates Strategy - falling rolls report fails to address a number of our issues. Our report has been added as a non-public document in the appendices - Exempt Appendix O. Therefore we are sending you a full copy via email and this short summary of the key arguments and responses to the recently published Council report. We refer to the relevant sections of our report in *italics* if you would like more detail.

Hackney Council repeatedly said that no decision has been made about the six schools in scope. However, if the Council pushes Colvestone through this process by failing to address the evidence put to it and ultimately closes/merges all six schools, it will damage the credibility of the Council and the Hackney Labour Party. It will look like this decision was a foregone conclusion and this “consultation” process with the community was a sham.

The campaign to Save Colvestone has revealed the extent of feeling across the Colvestone community and beyond, galvanising support and endorsements from school families, ex-pupils, local residents and the wider Dalston community, including both Dalston ward councillors. Online and paper petitions have so far gathered more than 1800 signatures. The campaign has garnered local political support and extensive press coverage with features on ITV News, the Evening Standard, Hackney Gazette, and Hackney Citizen. The public consultation meeting was full and social media campaigns continue to gather support and traction. (*See Campaign Summary*)

We are passionate about our school and will continue to campaign and object to any proposal to close or merge Colvestone school **as we believe that COLVESTONE CAN BE SAVED.**

The case for Colvestone Primary School

While we understand that Hackney Council, like the rest of London, has to respond to falling rolls, we don't believe closing Colvestone at this time is the right solution.

ADDRESSING FALLING ROLL

The proposal to merge/close Colvestone has come after a period of turbulence including defederation and two staff restructures in three years; the latter led to the loss of Exec Head and Head of School who had both been at the school for twelve years. Not surprisingly, these changes had an impact on roll, as families chose to leave the school. The preceding period (2015-2019) Colvestone had a stable pupil population with only a small decrease in numbers (8%). Whereas, the other nearby schools were already seeing significant reductions in pupil roll - 38% at De Beauvoir, 19% at Princess May and 22% at Randall Cremer. We conclude that the recent drop in enrollment was not primarily a consequence of larger demographic trends, but staff and structural transitions that have now been rectified.

We recognise that Colvestone experienced a significant drop in the number of new reception students this year, but **we believe this is a temporary blip** caused by the unproven new leadership and substantial restoration and infrastructure building works taking place during the period when prospective parents were visiting the school (scaffolding around the building and the beautiful Hall was not in use). (see *Context for Colvestone*)

POSITIVE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Colvestone has a historic deficit. In 2022 Colvestone and Hackney Education worked together to establish what has become a very successful partnership with the Blossom Federation. The new senior leadership team has improved the financial position so there was a surplus in the 22/23 financial year, building on the surplus in the previous 21/22 year despite the reductions in roll. The School Business Manager has identified several strategies for cost savings and additional income. Blossom Partnership should be given a chance to continue their skilled financial transformation to implement the deficit recovery plan and attract more pupils (see conclusion below and *Financial Viability*). **If Colvestone closes, then Hackney Council would have to take on the historic deficit with no chance of recovery.**

STRONG ACADEMIC RECORD

Education standards at Colvestone are consistently high – performing above both Hackney and national averages. Ofsted reports are consistently 'Good'. Colvestone is also commended as a school that centres diversity effectively in its curriculum, a strength that mirrors Hackney's commitment to Anti-Racism and community cohesion. (See *Academic Record*)

CORRECTING FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

The draft Dalston Plan contains ambitious plans for Dalston and recognises its importance in the projected population increase across Hackney. This would be harmed by the closure of Colvestone school which is in the centre of Dalston.

The plan includes building 600 new homes in Dalston, with nearly 200 being affordable 3 bedroom family homes plus others at market prices. The overwhelming majority of these will be built at Kingsland Shopping Centre, with a number of smaller development sites nearby. For almost all the new developments, Colvestone would be the closest school. Clause 3.5 of the report discusses the Plan, but addresses “school place demand in the short to medium term”: **both the Statutory Guidance and the Strategy document (p.99) state however that potential demand should be considered in the “mid- to long-term”. It under-estimates the impact on demand for places at Colvestone.**

The plan also has a pioneering proposal to turn Colvestone Crescent into 21st Century Street, Hackney’s first permanent play street. A long tree-lined pedestrian walkway with lots of new plantings, ecology gardens, spaces for congregating and innovative play spaces. A key tenet of the 21st Century Street is that it is located next to a primary school. **Explicitly, without Colvestone school, that plan makes less sense.** (See *Impact on Local Development*)

AIR POLLUTION THREAT

Air pollution is a major health issue that disproportionately affects the young, exposure to which permanently limits health and life expectancy and the capacity to learn. However 2021 figures show pollution levels 40% higher at the Princess May site than Colvestone. Whilst Hackney might be able to mitigate some of this exposure at Princess May, the site will always be on the main road (the A10). Whilst Colvestone is in a quiet back street, a key part of a fully funded re-greening project which will further improve air quality. (See *Air Pollution*)

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND SITE PROTECTIONS

Colvestone is a unique and beautiful Grade 2 listed building situated in St Marks Conservation Area and to which it forms a protected architectural gateway. It was purpose-built by William Ellis in 1862 as one of six ‘Birkbeck Schools’ to reflect his radical ideas about education, and is the last surviving example still functioning as a school. It was originally known as Kingsland Birkbeck School and offered a secular education for girls as well as boys. It is approx 20-30 years older than most of the other Victorian-built Hackney schools, which were built after the 1870 Free Education Act. It has functioned as a school for 161 years and a recent heritage assessment concluded that its optimum use is to continue as a school.

Closing it as a school would be a significant historical loss to Hackney, and leave a dead building in the centre of the Dalston community. The building carries multiple site protections that would make it very challenging to use in other ways. (See *Historical Significance and Protections*)

RISKS OF CURRENT PROPOSAL: PARENTAL CHOICE

The proposed merger Colvestone with Princess May and the closure of De Beauvoir would affect and be affected by parental choice in two different ways:

- It would severely reduce the choices all local parents have for educating their children.
- Parental choice means that Colvestone families are unlikely to move to Princess May

Reduction of choice for local families

If the proposal to close both Colvestone and nearby De Beauvoir Primary School goes ahead, it would mean there would be no non-faith, one-form entry local authority schools within a mile of the Colvestone building as the preferred alternative.

Our local area has four religious schools, including St Jude and St Paul's in Islington, but this is not what most people want - a 2017 report found **84% of respondents agreed that they would like Hackney's schools to be non-denominational**. The area also has an academy, (Mossbourne Parkside) and a free school (Halley House). The only nearby local authority options would be Shacklewel, which is currently full, and Princess May which is unpopular.

Positive parental choice

Hackney Education is proposing merging two schools that are very different. Princess May is a two-form entry school in an imposing Victorian building that sits on a busy main road. Colvestone is a one-form entry school in a small, intimate building that sits on a quiet street.

A recent poll of Colvestone parents, showed that 95.7% of respondents (2/3 of school families) did not include Princess May as one of their top 6 choices when they originally chose a primary school. Out of 70 households, only 3 had it on their list. A second survey was completed by a similar number of households to find out more about parental choice. The first question asked if parents would send their child(ren) to Princess May if the merger went ahead **and 87% said they would not!** A further four households were unsure at this point and only two households agreed to send their child(ren) to Princess May. This consultation shows that the '120 pupils [that] would move to the Princess May site' (Briefing Report, p.49) is an extreme over-estimation.

The main reasons people gave for not wanting to send their children to Princess May were: Location on a main road (81%); Pollution levels (77%); Not liking the school itself (66%); Not wanting to send their children to a bigger school (63%). The poll also asked what factors they took into consideration when choosing a school and what were the specific appeals of Colvestone. We also asked which schools parents are actually interested in should Colvestone be closed: preferred choices were an oversubscribed school (Shacklewel, 35%), a move out of the centre of the borough (16%) or out of the borough entirely (22%). Less popular than this was the in-effect forced migration into the for-profit Academy/Free school system. **It is clear that Colvestone is a positive choice, particularly SEND families** - see *Parental Choice* and *Impact on SEN* sections and *full results of surveys* in the *Appendix*.

The consequences of this proposed merger have not been fully considered. In a choice system, the Council has limited control over where parents send their children and this is hard to predict. **What happens if a minority of parents send their children to Princess May? That school will be in a similar vulnerable position with low pupil roll.** It is possible those who send their child(ren) to Princess May run the risk of having their school closed twice.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

As a one-form entry school, even a small increase in pupil numbers (from other schools or demand from development) would make a significant impact towards financial viability and it is easier to reach full capacity. It is clear from parental feedback at all of the schools affected by the proposal that they really value a small one-form entry school as an alternative to many of the bigger schools in the borough.

Why wasn't Colvestone considered as the site for a merger with De Beauvoir? Those parents could be asked if they are interested in coming to Colvestone. It's closer and shares more similar characteristics than the suggested schools for those parents.

Will there be another round of proposed mergers/closures that includes faith schools?

The Council report minimises the falling roll problem at faith schools by pointing out that there were more applications than places at faith schools for September 2023 (p10-11). However, that is also true for local authority schools, including Colvestone. But if you look at the number of reception offers, the gap between offers and PAN is far greater in faith schools, which are only at 60% capacity for reception while local authority schools are at 80%. Overall, in 2021/22 faith schools were running at 77% capacity, academy/free 86% and local authority schools at 88%. In Hackney the biggest enrollment crisis is within the faith schools. Why is this not being addressed and it is only community schools that are being closed? Other boroughs have closed voluntary aided schools.

CONCLUSION

Colvestone - a friendly village school in the heart of Hackney

We have demonstrated that there is demand for a small, one-form inclusive community school with a strong reputation for supporting SEND families, as demand for SEND support and places is increasing. The dynamic new leadership will ensure financial viability and continue to deliver strong academic performance. There is a much-improved parental/pupil offer for future years with new equipment, improved communication and social media presence, internal redecoration and the newly renovated historical building, and the promise of a pioneering pedestrian streetscape creating a very attractive local environment in the centre of Dalston. These assets will make us competitive against the free/academy schools in our area and enable us to offer a strong alternative to those who don't want faith-based education.

If Colvestone is to survive, it is critical that the Cabinet vote to remove it from the process on 22 May, as the longer it remains in the consultation process, the harder it will be to attract and retain families to the school.



Save Colvestone Primary School



**Submission to the
School Sufficiency team
at Hackney Council**

**For inclusion in the Cabinet report ahead of
the meeting on Monday 22 May 2023**

Should you have any
queries, please email:
colvestonesos@gmail.com

Written and
prepared by
Colvestone
parents and
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The case for Colvestone Primary School

This document has been collated and written by parents at Colvestone Primary School. While we understand that Hackney Council, like the rest of London, has to respond to falling rolls, we don't believe closing Colvestone at this time is the right solution.

The Council has put forward this proposal in order to sustain academic excellence and ensure the schools are financially healthy. This report makes the case that those causes are better served by keeping the school open.

The school is academically strong, and we believe it is financially viable. It offers a learning environment that is unique in Dalston and its immediate surroundings. Closing Colvestone would have a devastating impact not only on its students, but the entire local community and would represent the loss of one of Hackney's stronger local authority schools. It would have a negative impact on the academic success of current SEN students, reduce choice for Dalston families, jeopardise plans for Dalston's development and leave a dead building in the heart of Dalston.

Colvestone has been a critical part of Dalston's past and is critical to its future. We request that Hackney Education recommend to the Council that Colvestone **should not** move to the informal consultation phase.

Colvestone: A village school in the heart of Hackney

Colvestone Primary School offers a unique opportunity to showcase the future for Hackney Council's ambition for education. The current vibrant, buzzing community – rich in history and local association – has relevance to all the borough's needs for families now, and the future.

Financial viability

Following more turbulence than many other schools have battled over the last 3-4 years, the new school leadership team and partnership with Blossom Federation has turned around the financial position and viability of Colvestone. That transformation is *not solely* as a result of any 'additional investment' made above statutory funding from Hackney Council, but can be attributed to some excellent planning, prudent financial acumen and skilled resource management.

This efficient use of resources – and in some areas – a budget surplus, are a solid commercial reason for Colvestone to remain open. Blossom partnership should be given a chance to continue their skilled and committed financial transformation implementing the deficit recovery plan, taking the school to 'break even' by 2027/28 [1].

Vacant places

Well-documented falling pupil numbers across the borough, and vacancies at schools like Colvestone, can impact the efficient running of a school. But it has *not impacted* the quality of education – and contrary to predictions, Colvestone is proud of its newly found financial stability. These unexpected, but positive outcomes, are because a small school like Colvestone can be nimble, it can be flexible, and it can be quick to adapt and change when needed.

When is a merger a closure?

When planning any proposed merger, many factors clearly need to be considered – this is an exercise in efficient use of public money and Council resources, so due diligence is a critical part of the process. However, regardless of the size of either Princess May or Colvestone, and regardless of the suitability of either site to host the merger – if 87% of those parents (who responded) from one school in the merger, refuse to send their child(ren) to the other site – what happens then? The main reasons people gave for not wanting to send their child(ren) to Princess May were due to its location on a main road (81.5%). So rather than a proposed merger, this plan will effectively close down Colvestone Primary School without necessarily improving the situation at Princess May.

The need for Colvestone

Part of Hackney Council can actually see how special, unique and essential Colvestone is to the development of Dalston, as the school forms part of the planning of a new-build neighbourhood proposed over the road. The Dalston Development Plan includes building more than 600 new homes in the area around the school with around 30% of the housing being family sized units. This could bring 200+ families into the immediate area.

Offering real parental choice and an attractive proposition for families in these ambitious plans for ‘genuinely affordable’ new homes in Dalston *have to be supported by local infrastructure*, such as a successful primary school like Colvestone. A school that will suffer less from pollution and that can be safely walked to. So it does come across as somewhat short-sighted, to shut down a well-performing school that could form the heart of a family-focussed, community-led Dalston vision.

Ofsted rating and projected outcomes

Colvestone is academically strong. This is due to the excellent and effective staff and leadership team, the closeness and individual attention of a one-form entry environment and the high standards and expectations across the school.

The last Ofsted inspection paid tribute to the school’s excellent community focus, in addition to the effective teaching: “You have a relentless focus on improving the quality of the curriculum. You are providing the pupils with a creative and diverse curriculum which broadens their minds and helps them think critically. The curriculum often focuses pupils’ learning on the community around them. This provides pupils not only with good subject knowledge, such as the geography and history of the area, but also with a strong sense of identity and connection to where they live.” What parent would not want that rich and diverse learning environment for their child(ren)?

Summary

Colvestone Primary School brings together the best of Hackney in a non-denominational, local authority school – and it shows the way forward, by putting a small, well-run financially viable school at the heart of the borough’s future.

Colvestone is a village school, at the heart of a 21st Century Street, in the centre of Hackney. It’s a school where every child matters, and we implore Hackney Council to take Colvestone off the list of schools to merge or close.

Footnotes

[1] School Resource Management Adviser Comprehensive Report for Colvestone Primary School 2042120 Hackney. Education and Skills Funding Agency. 16.03.2023

1. Context for Colvestone

After a period of instability Colvestone has entered into a successful partnership with Blossom Federation, which is seeing rapid impact on all areas: quality of education, finances, premises, leadership and have kept the community at the forefront of the changes they make. The dynamic and proactive approach has resulted in positive changes that will only continue. The governors have recommended that this partnership continues for the next 1-2 years and a decision about Colvestone's future after that would be made swiftly to ensure stability, continuity and success.

A successful partnership with Blossom Federation

Colvestone has had three years of instability alongside the pandemic. There has been a challenging restructure of support staff, defederation of Soaring Skies and the restructuring of the Senior Leadership Team which led to the unexpected resignation of the Executive Head and resignation of the Head of school in May/June 2022. As a result, Hackney Education asked the governors to seek partnerships with other schools to support Colvestone rather than externally recruiting a Headteacher. At a meeting with parents in May 2022, the then Director of Education Annie Gammon explained this approach and talked about the process. During the meeting, she was asked about the future of Colvestone and she confirmed that there was no intention to close the school.

Altogether 5 partnerships were proposed, which included a proposal from the Princess May leadership team, and 3 were selected for interview – 1 pulled out because of capacity and the other 2 were interviewed. Blossom was selected for many reasons:

- Successful partnership with other schools before their schools joined the federation
- Capacity and experience of Executive Headteacher
- Capacity to have a dedicated and experienced Head of School with a focus on teaching and learning and wellbeing
- An experienced federation school Business Leader which was paramount for the financial management of the school.

This successful partnership is in place and from the start Blossom have bought clear direction both with regards to finance and resources and also the teaching and learning. They have managed to keep the stability of a highly dedicated staff with minimal change to the school and the community.

Building on the success

The Partnership with Blossom Federation only started in September 2022 so it is still very much in its infancy. By proposing the amalgamation (closure) for Colvestone there has been no opportunity to continue to build the successful partnership and see the impact.

With hard work, there have been rapid changes and developments with impact already being seen in only 6 months most notably in:

- Finance: There is an improved financial picture and the team are on their way to bringing the school back to financial health. The school has a clear understanding of the finances with an in year surplus achieved in the school budget.
- Safeguarding: Safety and safeguarding within the school has dramatically improved. The building is compliant and has seen significant cosmetic and structural improvements
- Marketing and Communication: New website and increased use of social media to raise the profile of the school.

Despite the uncertainty around the change of leadership, the staff and parent community are largely stable and overwhelmingly supportive of the partnership and the school development.

Prior to the Council's announcement, the governors had decided to continue to partner with Blossom Federation for another year to continue building a stable and successful school.

Footnotes – Context for Colvestone

Soaring Skies Federation Governing Board minutes September 2020 – July 2021

Colvestone Primary School Governing Board minutes September 2021 – April 2023

2. Financial viability

Through the successful partnership with the Blossom Federation, in only 6 months the new Senior Leadership Team have demonstrated that they can return the school to financial health despite the reduced pupil numbers. We believe there is a strong case for the financial viability of Colvestone for the following reasons:

- New strong financial leadership led by Senior Leadership Team with experienced Senior Business Manager with proven track record of successfully returning schools to financial health.
- The new SLT have delivered a surplus school budget for Colvestone for the year ending 2022/23 and projects an in-year surplus for the years ending 2023/24 and 2024/25. This financial modelling has been submitted to Hackney Education by the school.
- The new SLT have worked closely with the Local Authority over the last 6 months to identify detailed cost savings and provided a viable budget deficit recovery plan based on detailed forecasted pupil numbers, evidenced efficiencies and cost saving measures.
- Hackney Funding: whilst significant investment has already gone into the building over the last 12 months, Mr Senior implied at the Colvestone engagement meeting on 24 April that the surplus in the school budget was a result of that investment, but we don't agree with Mr Senior's assumption. The Council invested £50k last year as part of the Schools Contingency Fund and £25k as part of the Supported Schools Programme. Firstly, Colvestone is entitled to de-delegated school contingency funding as much as any other school in financial need so implying that it is only funding from Hackney that has kept Colvestone in surplus is not a fair point. This could also be said of other schools in the borough and historically. Colvestone had received contingency funds from Hackney last year yet were not in further deficit.
- The deficit situation of Colvestone should have been more closely managed by Hackney Council over the last 6 years. Colvestone's cumulative school deficit has **not** been added to in the last 2 years (School financial years 2021/22 and 2022/23). The deficit has not entirely been caused by falling roll of pupil numbers over the last 2 years so the deficit narrative as a result of the falling roll is inaccurate.
- Low reception numbers for Sept 2023: we think the unusually low reception preference numbers were a blip, the result of a building that was under extensive repair during the time when school tours were taking place, a leadership team that was new and unproven in the eyes of a prospective parent, and a reputation that may have taken a hit due to the turbulence of defederation and restructure. We believe the improvements to the physical building and the new equipment, the increased social media presence, the strong academic performance, the embedding of successful leadership, and the construction of the 21st Century Street will restore sustainable numbers to the school. In addition, an

independent report has been commissioned by the Education & Skills Funding Agency titled the School Resource Management Adviser Comprehensive Report for Colvestone Primary School written in March 2023 working with the Local Authority and SLT in which pupil numbers are forecast to rise by 15% [1] from now until 2025.

- Partnering with the Blossom Federation (that includes Daubeney, Sebright and Lauriston) allows Colvestone to share some costs and deliver cross-federation financial efficiencies. Only incremental costs are being charged to Colvestone by the Blossom Federation for cross-federation support to help the school financially and also realise the benefits of economies of scale through this type of collaboration/structure.
- In the case of closing/amalgamating Colvestone, the historical debt would have to be swallowed by Hackney, making Colvestone an extremely expensive school to close. There may be less risk-taking to first see if the school can be financially viable and run down its own debt fairly rapidly.
- Through proactive marketing measures including social media the new leadership has increased Colvestone's profile and with the recent upgrades in the premises and new hall, we believe Colvestone will further prove it's financial viability by attracting new pupils cementing it's position in the community and establishing new revenue streams through lettings and community events.

Footnotes – Financial viability

[1] School Resource Management Adviser Comprehensive Report for Colvestone Primary School 2042120 Hackney. Education and Skills Funding Agency. 16.03.2023

Soaring Skies Federation Governing Board minutes September 2020 – July 2021

Colvestone Primary School Governing Board minutes September 2021 – April 2023

3. Academic record

Education standards at Colvestone have been consistently high. This is a successful school with children receiving a high quality of education.

Colvestone has a 'Good' Ofsted rating and this has been in place for the last 15 years. There have been three Full Inspections (2008, 2011 and 2014) and a Short Inspection in 2018 that confirmed the on-going rating.

Colvestone achieved excellent KS2 SATs results in 2022 that were well above the national average AND the Hackney average. For instance, 81% of children at Colvestone achieved expected attainment in all three subjects – this is 12% points above the Hackney average of 69% of children.

The attached attainment data for the last three years shows that Colvestone has been improving its outcomes for children, despite challenges at the national level.

RWM	2018	2019	2022 *
	EXS	EXS	EXS
Colvestone	71%	76%	81%
Hackney	71%	66%	69%
National	65%	65%	59%

Reading	2018	2019	2022 *
	EXS	EXS	EXS
Colvestone	71%	79%	88%
Hackney	78%	72%	80%
National	76%	73%	75%

Writing	2018	2019	2022 *
	EXS	EXS	EXS
Colvestone	89%	83%	81%
Hackney	84%	84%	79%
National	79%	78%	70%

Maths	2018	2019	2022 *
	EXS	EXS	EXS
Colvestone	86%	79%	81%
Hackney	79%	78%	78%
National	76%	79%	72%

Colvestone has been noted as a school that centres diversity effectively in its curriculum and that this is a strength which is important in the current climate and Hackney's dedication to Anti-Racism.

A letter of support to keep Colvestone Primary School open has been sent by Hackney National Education Union (see [Appendix](#)).

Summary

In its statement announcing the potential closures and mergers, Hackney Education states that part of the purpose is "to ensure all our schools continue to provide excellent education for our children, with the very best resources and facilities." If the intent of closing schools is to ensure educational excellence, **it doesn't make sense to close a school that is consistently delivering above average performance in the borough.**

4. Parent choice

The merger of Colvestone with Princess May and the closure of De Beauvoir would erode parent choice in two ways:

- It would directly undermine the choices Colvestone parents have made for their children
- It would severely reduce the choices local parents have for educating their children

Impact on current Colvestone families

Hackney Education is proposing merging two schools that are very different. Princess May is a two-form entry school in an imposing Victorian building that sits on a busy main road.

Colvestone is a one-form entry school in a small, intimate building that sits on a quiet side street.

A recent poll of Colvestone parents, in which $\frac{2}{3}$ of households responded, **showed that 95.7 % of respondents did not list Princess May as one of their top 6 choices** when they originally selected a primary school. Out of 70 households, only 3 had originally placed Princess May on their elective list, with only 2 having it in their top 3.

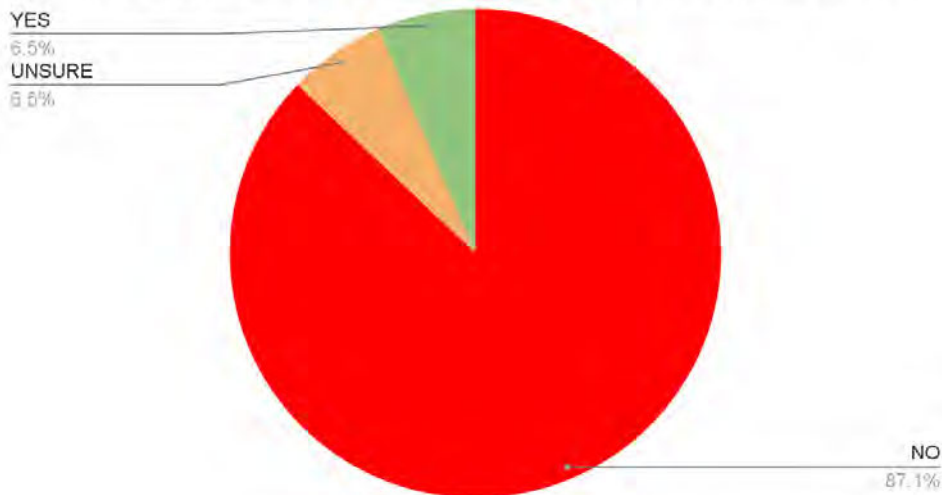
When parents questioned Paul Senior very directly at the Colvestone engagement meeting on 24 April as to what would happen if the Council went ahead with this decision to merge the schools and a majority of parents **chose not** to send their children to Princess May, no clear answer was provided. It doesn't seem Hackney Education has prepared for this scenario.

Colvestone parents then conducted a second survey of our parent and carer community, to provide Hackney Education with some more detailed insight about parental school choices. In our second survey, we reached again approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ of Colvestone households. We were very careful to ask for only one response per household so that we were not doubling up on opinions. **There are 104 households with children at Colvestone and 73 took part in the survey.**

Our first question was very simple: "If the Council were to go ahead with the proposed merger of Colvestone Primary School with Princess May in September 2024, **would you agree to sending your child(ren) to the Princess May Site.** (Please answer as honestly as possible – Please don't answer (this question only) if you only have a child in year 5 or 6.)"

Out of 73 answers, 62 have children who would be affected by the proposed merger in 2024. Of these 62 households, 54 answered **NO, they will not agree to send their child to Princess May. This is 87%.** A further 4 households were unsure at this point. Only 4 households said they would agree to sending their children to Princess May.

WILL YOU SEND YOUR CHILD(REN) TO PRINCESS MAY?



The main reasons people gave for not wanting to send their children to Princess May were around:

- Location on a main road (81.5%)
- Pollution levels (77.8%)
- Not liking the school itself (66.7%)
- Not wanting to send their children to a bigger school (63%)

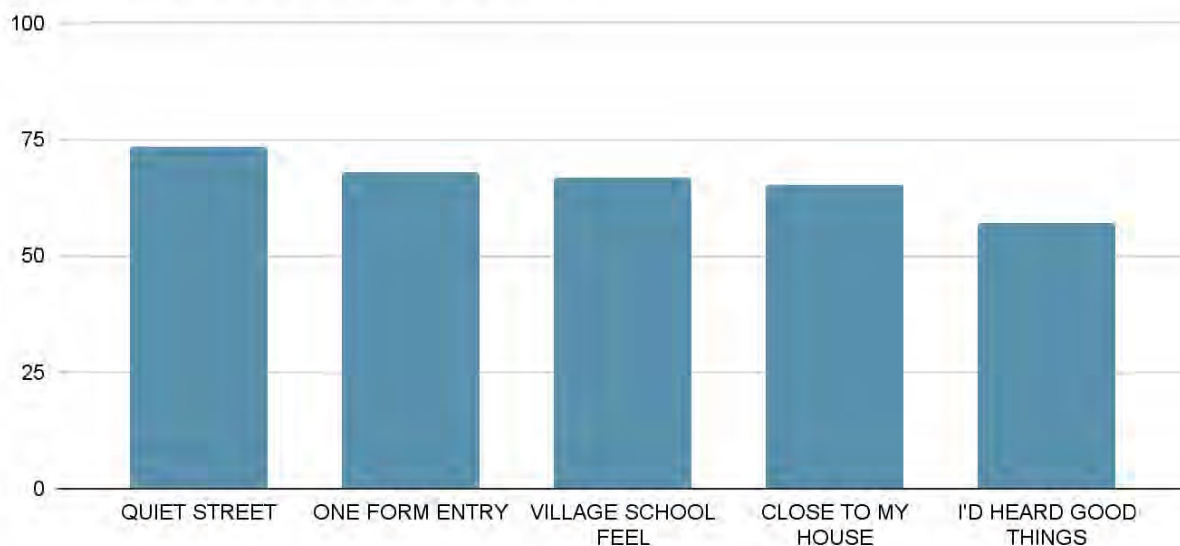
We also asked our families what the principal factors were that they took into consideration when choosing a primary school for their children. **Distance from home** was overwhelmingly the most important (chosen by 70.8% of families). A close second were **pollution levels around the school** (65.3%) and the **size of the school** (63.9%), coming in at **more important** than **academic performance and Ofsted ratings** (58.3%). The **quiet location of the school** was also considered important by over 50% of the parents. Another very important factor for many parents (40.3%) was being able to choose a **non-faith** school. **SEN** support and community feel of school were also repeated themes (22.5% of respondents to our survey have a child with SEN). Most of these categories, such as quiet street, distance and one-form entry, are not qualities that can be fulfilled at Princess May, hence Princess May barely featured on families' radars when they were making their initial choices.

Comments from the survey:

"I sent my eldest son to Princess May 8 years ago and had to change schools after a few months because we were really unhappy with the standards of the school. We visited the school again a couple of years ago, whilst going through the selection process for my youngest child, who currently attends Colvestone and we were disappointed to discover that Princess May is still not a viable option for us to send our children. We would not send our child to Princess May, our child is very happy at Colvestone and we're it to close we would look at finding a similar school to Colvestone probably outside the borough."

We proceeded to ask parents and carers, what were the **specific appeals of Colvestone itself**. See the graph below:

WHY WE CHOSE COLVESTONE



Other important reasons were of course the wonderful staff, and the architecture and layout of buildings, the SEN support, the experience of older siblings, and the strong community feel.

We thought it would also be useful for the Council to know **which schools parents are actually interested in**, should they no longer be able to send their children to Colvestone. Here are the responses, ranked in order of preference:

- 1) Shacklewell Primary (35.3%) – yet this school is oversubscribed
- 2) Out of borough (22.1%) – a clear risk of losing even more school funding for the borough
- 3) None of the closest schools but staying in borough (16.2%)
- 4) Halley House / Queensbridge / Mossbourne Parkside (all 14.7%)

The local faith schools all attracted much lower numbers. The remaining survey results are in the [Appendix](#).

When reviewing what Colvestone Primary School has to offer, it is clear from the factors listed above that parents are choosing it very deliberately. **It is simply not acceptable to ignore all of the factors that go into making this choice.**

Also, please note that at the 24 April meeting, parents asked Paul Senior if they were to send their children to Princess May what guarantees they would have that Princess May, which is

also struggling with under enrollment, would not be closed in the next 5 to 6 years. Mr. Senior replied that he could make no such assurances.

If a minority of parents send their children to Princess May, the merger could do little to improve the enrollment problem at Princess May. In addition, Colvestone children who move there could have the deeply traumatic experience of having their school closed twice. **If the Council can't ensure the stability of the Princess May/Colvestone merger, it should not be undertaking this plan.**

Reduction of choice for local families

The closure of Colvestone and nearby De Beauvoir Primary School would mean there would be no non-faith, one-form entry local authority schools within a mile of the Colvestone building.



Our local area would have three religious schools, Holy Trinity, St Matthias, and Our Lady and St. Joseph. According to a 2017 consultation report, **84% of respondents agreed that they would like Hackney's schools to be non-denominational.**[1] But the closure of Colvestone and De Beauvoir could force parents to choose between sending their child to a religious school or travelling further for school. And the further they are from a school, the less likely they are to get in.

The area also has an academy, Mossbourne Parkside Academy, and a free school, Halley House.

Halley House has deeply troubling ownership. It is run by the Bellevue Place Education Trust, (BPET) which operates 10 primary schools mostly in London and which is a joint venture of the Bellevue Education Trust and a company called the Place Group. Bellevue Education Trust is owned by GEMS Education, the largest operator of private kindergarten to grade 12 schools in the world, whose founder and chairman is based in the UAE. A consortium led by the private equity firm CVC Capital Partners owns a 30 percent share of GEMS Education including its stake in Bellevue Education Trust. BPET and its related companies have been the subject of several newspaper articles questioning their ownership and business practices. The articles include:

- Trustees of BPET own substantial shares in companies, including the Place Group, to which BPET has awarded large contracts. [2]
- In 2016 the Sunday Times revealed that a Saudi oil tycoon was the largest investor, via a British Virgin Island's company, in Bellevue Education. [3]
- The Good Law Project threatened to issue legal proceedings after the Place Group won a contract to run tender competitions on behalf of public sector bodies to procure services to reach their net zero goals. The framework was valued at £70 billion and the Place Group was the only bidder. The agreement was withdrawn after the Good Law Project exposed this shoddy procurement deal. [4]

It should be noted that although Hackney Council says now it was against the establishment of free schools, in fact BPET says it was fully supported by the Council to open up Halley House.[5] A 2014 article in the Hackney Citizen about the opening of free schools in Hackney states, "Hackney Council's newly-appointed Cabinet Member for Children's Service, Councillor Antoinette Bramble said: 'We've always been very open to innovation within education, and the phenomenal improvements seen in our schools over the last decade are testament to that.'

'We work closely with all of the schools in Hackney and *we look forward to supporting any free schools which open in our borough*. They join a family of schools with high aspirations for all of Hackney's young people.'" (emphasis added) [6]

It appears rich people are using schools, including Halley House, to become richer. Parents in the area should not feel forced to send their children there due to limited options in the area.

The only nearby local authority options would be Shacklewell, which is currently full, and Princess May. Hackney Council is proposing sending students from Colvestone to Princess May. However, as indicated above, Princess May is a very unpopular choice for Colvestone families.

The reduction of choice in the Dalston area also threatens to jeopardise the Council's ambitions for the new development in Dalston Plan (see [Impact on local development](#)). While the Council claims that it wants to attract families to the new flats, **those flats may not be attractive to**

families if the only choices in the area are three religious schools, a free school owned by remote and global corporations, an academy, a school on the busy A10 and a school that is oversubscribed.

The Hackney Labour Party 2022-26 Manifesto states, “We will continue to oppose the forced academisation of schools... and campaign for an education system that is democratic and inclusive.”[7] However, the current proposal could lead to academisation via the back door. **If Hackney closes local authority schools and later demand requires new schools to be built or reopened, the government’s Free School Presumption policy means the Council will be under pressure to reopen them as free schools/academies, further reducing the proportion of local authority schools.** [8]

Hackney Education has already been disproportionately allocating students to free schools, academies and faith schools. In 2022 although academy, faith and free schools represent 33 percent of schools, they received 40 percent of allocations and in 2021 received 46 percent of allocations.[9] Using current per pupil funding figure (£6,484), that means that in 2022, Hackney gave more than £162,000 per year to academy, faith and free schools and in 2021 more than £233,000 per year that might have gone to local authority schools.[10]

In the 24 April Council engagement meeting with Colvestone parents/carers, Hackney Education said that students are allocated to their closest school. In a time of dropping enrollment Hackney Education is allocating students and hundreds of thousands of pounds to schools that it says it has no or limited authority to close. That practice undermines local authority schools, and is based on a presumption that academy, faith and free schools are the same as local authority provision, which this current situation has clearly demonstrated is not the case. **If Hackney were genuinely committed to ensuring local authority schools can survive this period of decreasing enrollment and remain a viable choice for parents now and in the future, it would allocate students to their closest local authority school.**

Summary

The consequences of this proposed merger have not been fully considered. In merging Colvestone and Princess May, the Council is attempting to send families to a very different education environment and our evidence suggests a majority of parents do not want to go to Princess May. In a choice system the Council has limited control over where parents send their children and the question of which school parents will choose is hard to predict. Parents may go to free schools or academies, which doesn’t help the Council’s finances. They may leave the borough altogether.

The Council appears to have no plan in the event that only a minority of parents send their children to Princess May, which seems likely therefore leaving Princess May in a similar vulnerable position. In the absence of a plan, those who do send their child(ren) to Princess May, run the risk of having their school closed twice.

The proposed merger and closure plan also severely reduces choice for all local parents and prospective parents and increases the proportion of faith, academy and free schools both now and in the future.

Colvestone offers families of this area a choice that should continue to be available. This community deserves to have a non-denominational, local authority school they can walk to, one that has a strong academic record and that offers the closeness and individual attention of a one-form entry environment.

Footnotes – Parent choice section

- [1] Hackney: schools for everyone, Consultation Report, Dec. 2017, page 30. See: https://consultation.hackney.gov.uk/communications-engagement/hackney-schools-for-everyone/user_uploads/hackney-schools-for-everyone-survey-report.pdf
- [2] “Will government plans lead to 1,000 academy chiefs paid £150,000+?,” The Guardian, 26 Apr. 2016 <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2016/apr/26/academy-chiefs-pay-bromley-schools-rachel-de-souza>
- [3] Saudi oil tycoon revealed as investor in schools company, The Sunday Times, 10 April 2016. See: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/f53a9274-fe97-11e5-b5b9-5f40d4ddd6f6?shareToken=06209c7b9c1b19f09b17eec896f6d00b>
- [4] Transparency has prevailed this time, the Good Law Project, 11 November, 2022. See: <https://goodlawproject.org/update/transparency-has-prevailed-this-time/>
- [5] Bellevue Place Education Trust—the free school group you’ve never heard of, Schools Week, 22 Apr. 2016 See: <https://schoolsworld.co.uk/bellevue-place-education-trust-who-are-they/>
- [6] Three new free schools approved for Hackney, Hackney Citizen, 19 June 2014 See: <https://www.hackneycitizen.co.uk/2014/06/19/three-new-free-schools-approved-hackney/>
- [7] Hackney Labour Party 2022-26 Manifesto, page 26. See: <https://www.hackney-labour.org.uk/hackney-labour-2022-26-manifesto/>
- [8] The free school presumption, Jan. 2023. See: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/113056/5/Free_school_presumption_guidance.pdf
- [9] Applications and Offers at Hackney Primary Schools 2018-22, See: <https://education.hackney.gov.uk/sites/default/files/document/Applications%20and%20Offers%20at%20Hackney%20Primary%20Schools%202018-22.pdf>
- [10] Primary schools potential closure / merger plans, See: <https://education.hackney.gov.uk/content/primary-schools-potential-changes#:~:text=Hackney%20Council%20is%20considering%20consulting,September%202024%20at%20the%20earliest.>

5. Impact on children with special educational needs

Colvestone has a high proportion of children who are on the SEND register (25%).

Seven percent of Colvestone students have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), above the 4.3% average across the borough and significantly above the national average of 2.2%. This is 10 individual children with a range of identified needs.

In addition, there are another 25 children who have identified as needing additional support due to their special educational needs. This 17% is similar to the Hackney average but much higher than the national average.

This proposal will affect the majority of children on the SEND register as they are concentrated in the lower year groups (rather than Year 5 and Year 6 who will not be directly affected).[1]

Year Group	EHCP	SEN Support
Reception	0	6
Year 1	3	6
Year 2	2	2
Year 3	1	2
Year 4	1	1
Year 5	1	4
Year 6	2	4
Total	10	25

There were 16 SEND families who responded to the second parental survey about parental choice. ALL of those families affected (14 families) stated that they would NOT send their child(ren) to Princess May.

For SEND families the main reasons people gave for not wanting to send their children to Princess May were around:

- Not wanting to send their children to a bigger school (71%)
- Pollution levels (64%)

We also asked our families what the principal factors were that they took into consideration when choosing a primary school for their children. For SEND families, the **size of the school** was significantly more important (chosen by 81%) than **distance from home** (chosen by 38% of SEND families but 71% of all families). In second place were **pollution levels around the school** (63%).

“Colvestone is the ideal school for my 6-year-old autistic son,” said one parent. “As a one-form entry school, tucked away from busy roads, it provides a calmer, less overwhelming environment, which is of utmost importance to children that are autistic and struggle to process overstimulating surroundings. I could never imagine him settling into a two-form entry school and being as happy as he is at Colvestone. Losing this school would be devastating for him.”

We also asked SEND parents which schools they are interested in. Again there are very broad responses:

- Queensbridge (25%)
- Out of borough (25%)
- Shacklewell Primary (19%) – yet this school is oversubscribed
- None of the closest schools but staying in borough (19%)
- Halley House / Mossbourne Parkside (both 13%)

The local faith schools were not chosen by faith schools at all. Two SEND families stated that they would not choose another school and would consider home-educating instead. The remaining survey results are in the [Appendix](#).

Once again, it is clear from the factors listed above that parents are choosing Colvestone very deliberately. At the public meeting, a parent talked about how they travel from Newham with their SEND child because it is a small, friendly, inclusive school where her son is supported and encouraged rather than feeling excluded from the other pupils. We are aware of another family who travels from Islington for similar reasons.

This informal proposal to close/amalgamate Colvestone, places these SEND children in a very vulnerable situation as they would have to move to another school. The parents are particularly concerned about potential transitions as these children need stability and routine.

Two example letters from parents of children with special education needs can be found in the [Appendix](#).

The Council should understand that Colvestone is a positive choice for many SEND families, and this is a strength to build on for the future as there is increasing demand for SEND places.

Footnotes – Impact on children with special educational needs

[1] Colvestone SENCO presentation to SEND parents in October 2022

6. Impact on local development

Impact on the Dalston Development Plan

The Draft Dalston Plan has ambitious plans for Dalston with Hackney's population set to increase by 16% [1], which, as the Mayor stated, was created so that "Residents' priorities will be put at the heart of the Council's work in Dalston". This would be harmed by the closure of Colvestone Primary School. Those plans include:

- [Building more than 600 new homes in Dalston](#) [2]. For almost all of the new developments, Colvestone would be the closest school. There is no similar development plan near Princess May.
- Turning Colvestone Crescent into the [first 21st Century Street](#) [3], the borough's first permanent play street.

Most of the development would be concentrated at the [Kingsland Shopping Centre](#) [4] (see reference image below) with around 30% of the proposed housing being 3 bedroom family sized units and the aim of 50% of the development to be affordable housing (as well as smaller residential developments at surrounding sites) [5]. This could bring 200+ new families into the immediate area. If Colvestone and De Beauvoir schools were closed, parents in that development would have to travel almost half a mile to get to a non-denominational school. And even the closest one, Princess May, sits next to the A10 (see map in [Air pollution](#)).



Reference image: Hackney Local Development Plan 2033 – opportunity site D5 – Kingsland Shopping Centre

[Government guidance](#) [6] on school closures advises that local authorities can close schools when “there are surplus places elsewhere in the local area which can accommodate displaced pupils and there is no predicted demand for the school in the medium to long term”. The Dalston Plan makes it clear that there is demand for Colvestone’s school places in the medium to long term, because of the large number of new housing which the SPD will encourage in the immediate vicinity, and for which Colvestone will be the nearest primary school.

Closing Colvestone could impede the success of the development by making it hard for developers to sell those apartments to families, given the limited schooling options. The closure of so many local authority schools, and particularly one close to a new development, threatens to lock Hackney into a death spiral when it comes to families living in the area--a reduction in families leads to the closure of schools and reduction of choice, which makes the area unappealing to families, which leads to more closed. If Hackney wants to get out of that pattern, it has to fight to keep as many schools afloat as possible during these difficult times, especially ones near new family-friendly developments, in order to make it possible to bring families back to the area.

Impact on Hackney’s first 21st Century Street

Colvestone Crescent is slated to become the first 21st Century Street, a long tree-lined pedestrian walkway with lots of new plantings, ecology gardens, spaces for congregating and a small playing field. A key tenet of the 21st Century Street is that it is located next to a primary school. Explicitly, without the school, that plan makes less sense.

[The plan](#) [7][8] says “The first phase – positioned directly next to Colvestone Crescent Primary School presents an opportunity to create a permanent school street. It will expand the existing school playground into the street, creating a safe space for children to play on the street itself”

(see more about 21st Century Street in [Colvestone Crescent 21st Century Street](#)).

Summary

The proposed closure of Colvestone could be potentially damaging to Hackney’s plans for Dalston’s future, making the new developments a harder sell to parents and ripping out the heart of the first 21st Century Street.

Footnotes – Impact on local development section

[1] 16% Hackney’s population to increase by 2033, LP33 Supplementary Planning Document – Draft Dalston Plan – Summary Doc – Buildings 2021.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WNNYPAJPzAIDtg3nOnJDWtwbQOtyl8LI/view>

[2] Hackney Local Plan 2033 – Development Plan – Dalston Opportunity Sites.

<https://dalstonplan.commonplace.is/en-GB/proposals/opportunity-sites-in-dalston/step1>

[3] Hackney’s 21st Century Street consultation – Colvestone Crescent, Dec 2020.

<https://consultation.hackney.gov.uk/streetscene/21cstreets2/>

[4] Hackney Local Plan 2033 – Opportunity Site D5 – Kingsland Shopping Centre.
<https://dalstonplan.commonplace.is/proposals/opportunity-sites-in-dalston/step6>

[5] DfE paper on Opening and closing maintained schools – Statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers, Jan 2023,
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1131568/Opening_and_closing_maintained_schools_Jan_2023.pdf

[6] LP33 Supplementary Planning Document – Draft Dalston Plan, Hackney, 2021.
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ARhuxFDHuwAC8_sYfs7LhSkdgbJFgYk/view

[7] LP33 Supplementary Planning Document – Hackney Draft Dalston Plan - Implementation Strategy May v13, 2021. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GDFSBDiMkl5cz5g-XMebwQxjYvvzhqIF/view>

[8] Colvestone Crescent Engagement Pack prepared by 00SW for London Borough of Hackney, Nov 202.
https://consultation.hackney.gov.uk/streetscene/21cstreets2/user_uploads/266_221129_cc_consulationpres.pdf

7. Air pollution

This section details London-wide and London Borough of Hackney policy commitments regarding pollution generally and specifically in relationship to schools, the problems inherent to proposals to merge Colvestone Primary School with Princess May School on the Princess May site, and landmark planning commitments to make Colvestone Crescent the first London Borough of Hackney 21st Century Street.

Background

The Mayor of London and the London Borough of Hackney have both made commitments to reducing pollution generally and the Mayor of London has made reducing pollution specifically around schools a key policy focus. As identified by the Mayor of London: ‘There are two main air pollutants of concern in London, based on their impact on human health: nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). Poor air quality stunts the growth of children’s lungs and worsens chronic illness, such as asthma, lung and heart disease. There is also emerging evidence of impacts on mental health and an increased vulnerability to the most severe impacts of COVID-19. For particulate matter the challenge is even greater still. All schools in London still exceed the World Health Organization guideline for PM_{2.5}.’[1]

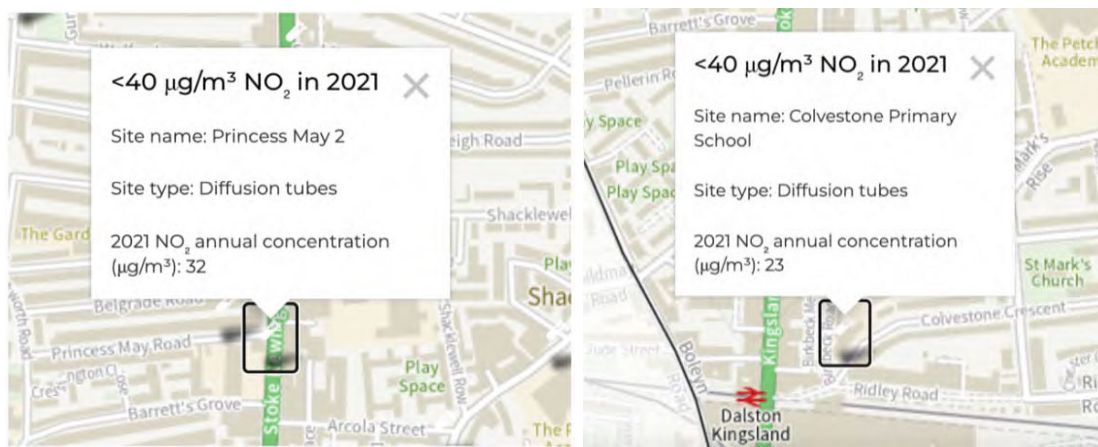
Each year, ‘the capital’s poor air quality contributes to around 1,000 emergency hospital admissions for children with asthma and other respiratory conditions.’[2] Furthermore, ‘children growing up in polluted areas in London showed significantly smaller lung volume, with a loss of approximately five per cent in lung capacity – equivalent to two large eggs – compared to their peers in the rest of England...[and] research shows that *those exposed to the worst air pollution are more likely to be deprived Londoners and from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities*.’[3] Furthermore, pollution has been shown to ‘also affect [children’s] working memory and hence their ability to learn’ [4]

In 2018 the Mayor of London launched the School Air Quality Audit, a scheme in which the London Borough of Hackney took part and committed to further measures across the Borough[5] – a pledge to expand these schemes borough-wide is an explicit commitment to funding received under the Mayor of London’s Clean Air for Schools Audit. As part of these initiatives, a greater number of pollution monitoring sites have been installed enabling us to see clear disparities between sites across the borough.

Hackney’s own Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2025 identifies school communities as amongst the most susceptible groups to the serious health impacts of air pollution within its strategy to improve air quality throughout the borough.[6]

Proposed merger of Colvestone Primary School with Princess May School on the Princess May site

The Council is proposing to send students from Colvestone Primary School to Princess May Primary, whose playground is right next to the A10. To get to and from Princess May many Colvestone students would be forced to walk along the A10.[7] As [Hackney's Local Plan 2033](#) states, "Kingsland High Street (A10) is the main route through this area and is heavily traffic dominated. As a result of this, it suffers from high noise and air pollution levels." [8] The Council's [air quality monitoring system](#) shows that the Princess May site had 40 percent higher levels of Nitrogen Oxide (NO₂) in 2021 than the Colvestone Primary School site.

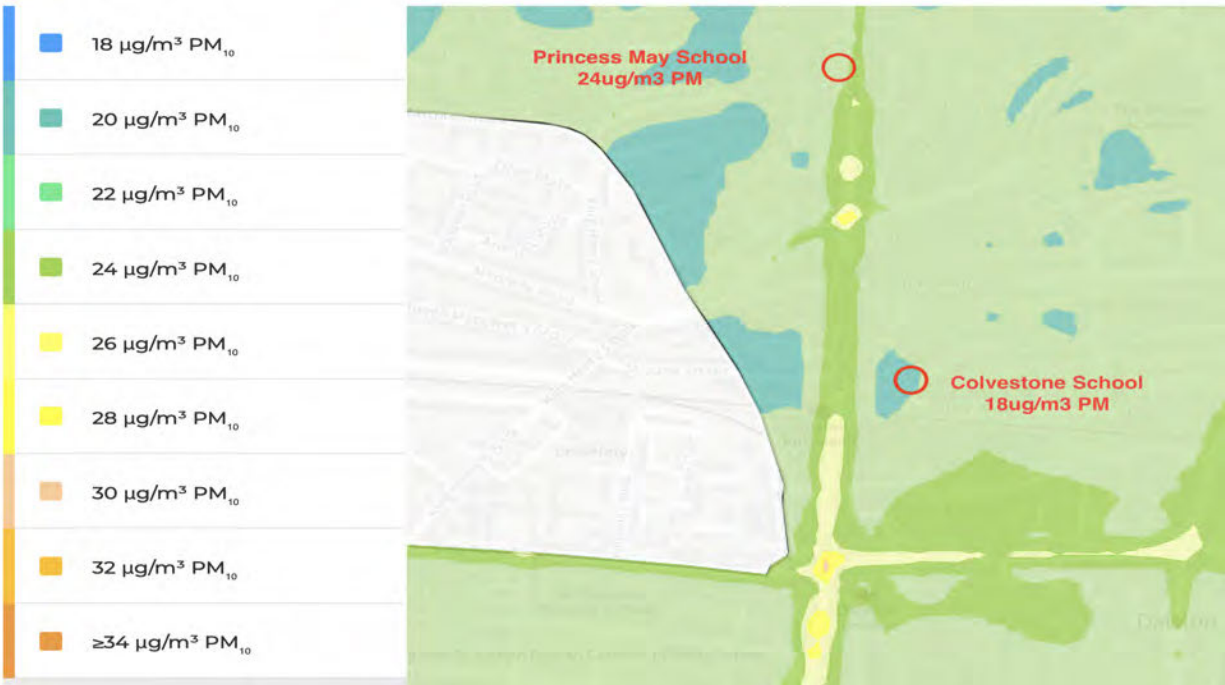
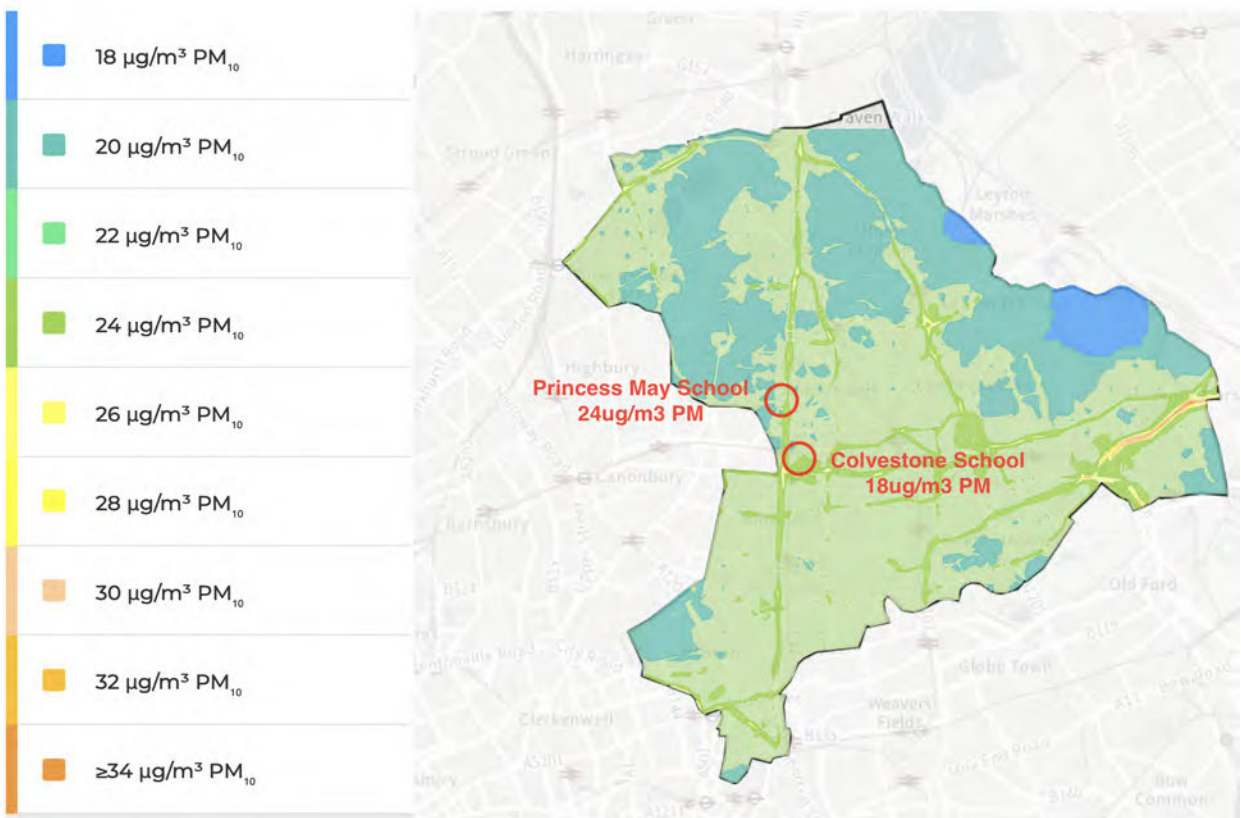


Key: Hackney Council air quality monitoring figures from 2021 showing that the Princess May site has 40% higher concentrations of NO₂ compared to the Colvestone Primary School site. It is reasonable to assume that the completion of the Colvestone Crescent 21st Century School Street with 40% tree canopy and other pollution-mitigating measures will reduce it further around Colvestone Primary School, whilst Princess May will remain on the A10, further increasing this disparity.

Ref: <https://hackney.gov.uk/air-quality>

[Note the WHO annual mean air quality guideline is 10 µg/m³ for NO₂.]

In addition to Breathe London air quality monitoring project figures that show 'almost 40 per cent of the NO_x pollution at schools comes from road transport, with diesel cars being the single biggest local contributor to NO_x pollution at London primary schools...' [9] the borough is also recording dangerously high levels of particulate matter (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀). Whilst more dangerous PM_{2.5} levels are not currently available on the London Borough of Hackney website [10], it is reasonable to assume that these figures track (if not exceed, owing to the types of vehicles on main roads) PM₁₀ concentration comparisons between the Princess May site and that of Colvestone Primary School. These comparisons, using London Borough of Hackney data, show particulate pollution at least 20% higher at the Princess May site compared to those at Colvestone.



Reference images: Hackney Council air pollution mapping (2018, prior to LTNs and removal of parking / School Street at southern end of Colvestone Crescent) shows PM₁₀ levels at least 20% higher at the Princess May Site.

Ref: <https://map2.hackney.gov.uk/maps/air-quality-pm10/index.html>

[Note that the WHO annual mean air quality guideline for PM10 is 15 µg/m³]

At the Princess May site approximately half of all available outdoor space sits next to the A10 with a bus route and a traffic-light-controlled pedestrian crossing immediately adjacent that serves to further concentrate congestion and idling traffic. As noted above, these stark differences in levels of pollution are likely to increase both with recently completed and future plans at both sites: the greening of Colvestone Crescent as it becomes the borough's model 21st Century Street (see below) contrasting with LTNs that entrench Princess May's position on the main road traffic route through the local area.[11]

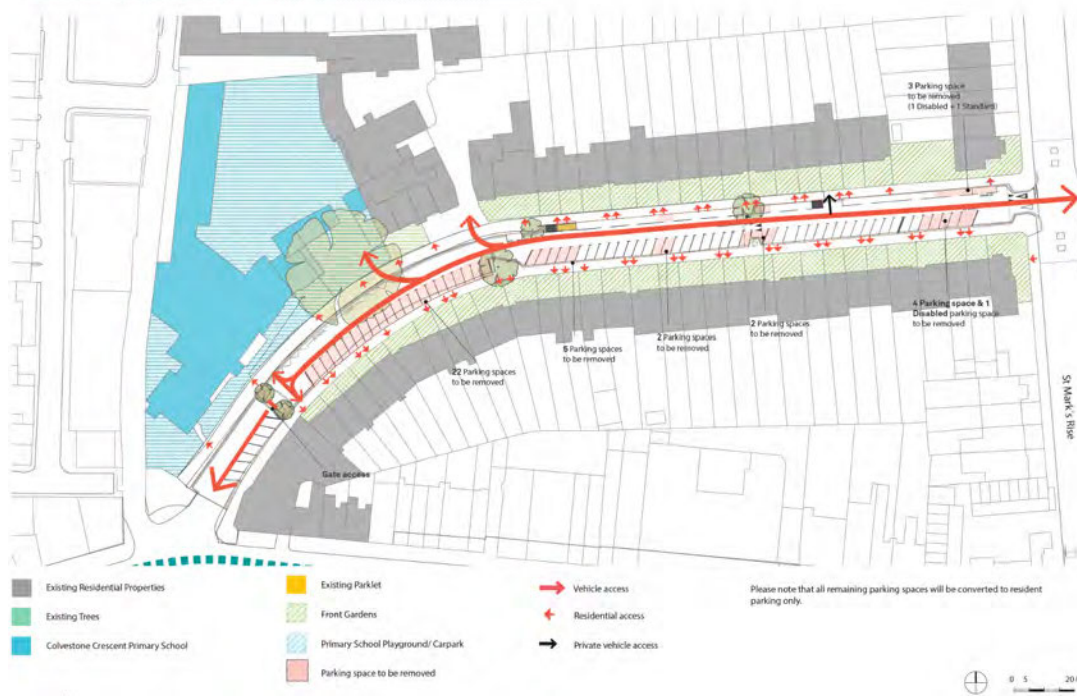
Colvestone Crescent 21st Century Street

Adjoining the £1m Ridley Road Market scheme that incorporates local landscaping (portions of which are already completed at junction of Colvestone Crescent and Ridley Road) the Colvestone Crescent 21st Century Street forms part of the Colvestone Crescent masterplan.

The Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and School Streets the Council have established to improve air quality in the borough could drive even more traffic to the A10. By contrast, Hackney Council already has an intelligently-designed and fully-funded plan to reduce air pollution around Colvestone Primary School. Colvestone Crescent, the road on which the school is located, is already a [School Street](#)[12], closed to traffic during the school run. The next fully-funded[13] stage is to develop it into the borough's first 21st Century School Street, the initial phase of which, 'positioned directly next to Colvestone Crescent primary school – presents an opportunity to create a permanent school street. It will expand the existing school playground into the street, creating a safe space for children to play on the street itself.'[14]

The consultation documents notes that the project, with the school at its heart, builds on 'a highly successful parklet project on Colvestone Crescent, instigated in 2019 by an active and passionate group of residents' and has 'been developed in collaboration with residents to ensure that the proposed green space will serve as an extension of an active and passionate local community.'[15] The Colvestone Crescent 21st Century Street is a community project formed around a community school, and a bold and forward-looking plan that promises both to draw and retain families in the heart of Dalston.

Existing Site & Proposed Parking Removal



The Colvestone Crescent 21st Century School Street reinvents Colvestone Crescent into a long tree-lined pedestrian walkway with lots of new plantings, ecology gardens, spaces for congregating, 'wobble walks' and informal play structures.

Proposed_Overall Masterplan



① School Street/ Parklet

② New trees/ kerb build out

③ Entrance Zone with greening, cluster seating & cycle stands



Paving enhancements & greening replace car parking at intervals along the street.

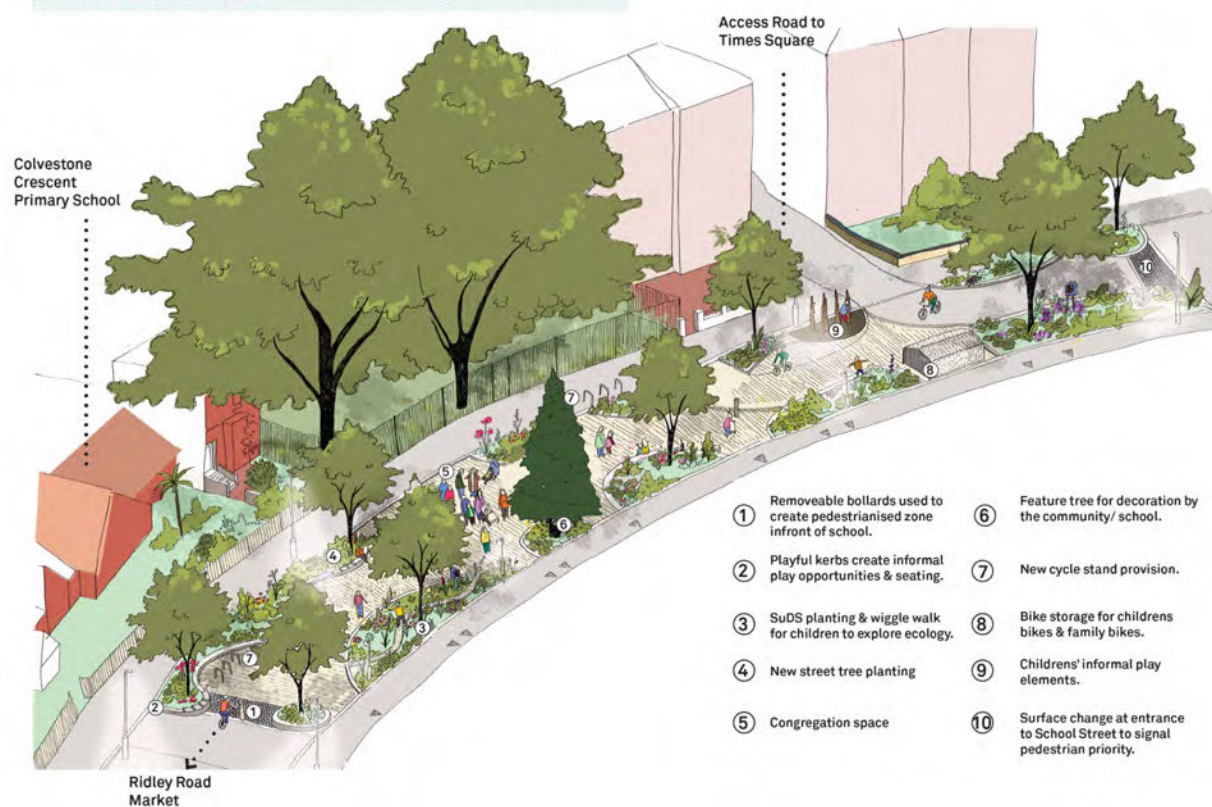


Clustered seating along the whole length of the western stretch of the street.





Illustrative Axonometric



Whilst remaining accessible, the scheme incorporates an ambitious tree-planting strategy, significantly increasing the tree canopy of the street, active travel infrastructure and an innovative play strategy.[16] It could be assumed that further funding for the expansion of this

plan, if desired, would reasonably be derived from Community Infrastructure Levies on the Hackney Local Plan (LP33) / the Dalston Plan – CILs having the intention of ‘ensuring that a new development contributes to the cost of the infrastructure that the development will rely on, such as schools and roads.’[17]

The Colvestone Crescent 21st Century Street will be the London Borough of Hackney’s first demonstration of how ‘streets can adapt to help tackle the climate crisis’.[18] Oliver Lord, Head of policy and campaigns at Environmental Defense Fund Europe has said: ‘The health burden of air pollution is not equal. Whether kids attend school on a main road or in a leafy suburb should not determine the quality of air they breathe, which will affect them for the rest of their lives. Our schools should become a catalyst for safer, quieter and less polluted roads.’[19] Colvestone Primary School is a shining example of exactly this catalyst: an historic school, imbedded in its local community, directly inspiring the model 21st Century Street project – a progressive prototype of which the London Borough of Hackney should be extremely proud.

It is impossible to see how a proposal to move children, one of the most vulnerable groups in the borough to the ruinous effects of pollution[20], to a site with higher levels of pollution is either defensible on duty of care terms or commensurate with Hackney Council’s public pledge to ‘no increases in pollution at schools in Hackney’[21]. Indeed the site at Colvestone – embedded as it is in the landmark 21st Century Street project, adheres to bolder commitments to *lower* pollution specifically around schools, in accordance with the Mayor of London’s strategy to improve the air quality around all London schools.

Summary

As identified by the Mayor of London and Hackney Council there is a clean air crisis in London. Children are amongst the most vulnerable groups to the damaging long-term effects of pollution: it determines future quality of life (in terms of health, attainment and other vectors of inequality). The pollution at Princes May Primary School, the proposed site for a merger with Colvestone Primary School, is drastically higher than at the Colvestone Primary School site (as demonstrated by London Borough of Hackney figures). The Council has an innovative, fully funded plan to continue to further reduce air pollution near Colvestone. No such plan yet exists for Princess May. While it is incumbent on the Council to protect the children who attend school there currently, it makes no sense in the meantime to move children from a school with lower pollution and a plan for further reductions to a school with higher pollution and with limited scope for further reductions.

The landmark London Borough of Hackney Colvestone Crescent 21st Century Street is a signature demonstration of how our streets and our communities can adapt to rise to the challenge of the climate crisis, and it has Colvestone Primary School at its heart. To remove the vulnerable group for whom, in the first instance, the project has been designed would be perverse: moving students from a school where there is a clear plan for improving air quality to a school whose playground and buildings are close to a high traffic, high pollution street simply doesn’t make sense – either for a proposed merger or for prospective parents. On the contrary,

the position of Colvestone Primary School at the heart of the model 21st Century Street greatly enhances its offer to families, the retention of whom in the heart of Dalston is a priority concern for Hackney Council with ramifications across education, planning and community cohesion. Further, given concerns for falling roll numbers (challenged in ‘Financial Viability’ and ‘Impact on the Dalston Development Plan’ earlier in this document), the Colvestone Primary School site is a more viable and attractive destination site for pupils affected by any proposed mergers or closures of primary schools in the borough.[22]

Footnotes – Air pollution section

[1] Press Release / Policy Announcement, Mayor of London, 1 November 2020. See:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-unveils-plans-to-reduce-toxic-air-at-schools>

[2] Harriet Edwards, Senior Policy and Projects Manager, Air Quality, at Asthma UK and the British Lung Foundation, quoted in Press release, Mayor of London, 6th Aug 2021:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/31m-kids-going-to-schools-in-areas-with-toxic-air>

[3] Emphasis added. Press release, Mayor of London, 6th Aug 2021:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/31m-kids-going-to-schools-in-areas-with-toxic-air>

[4] Larissa Lockwood, Director of Clean Air at Global Action Plan, quoted in Press Release / Policy Announcement, Mayor of London, 1 November 2020. See:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-unveils-plans-to-reduce-toxic-air-at-schools>

[5] Mayor of London School Air Quality Audit (2018), re: Local Implementation Plan (funding that could be applied for, for work 2019/2020), p.46/7, quoting from the bid guidelines: ‘2.34 In the short- to medium-term, there must be a particular focus on action to reduce air, pollution, reducing exposure to it and tackling pollution hotspots, which boroughs should support through their LIP. Locations that have large numbers of vulnerable Londoners, such as schools, should be prioritised for action. In particular, the boroughs have an important role in ensuring recommendations from the Mayor’s school air quality audit programme are implemented, and LIP funding can be directed at both the audits and the delivery of measures.’ Accessed here:

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/saq_report_-_de_beauparc_hackney_final_draft_-_inc_appendices.pdf

[6] London Borough Hackney Clean Air Plan 2021-25, section 3.8 (p.35). Accessed here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1g2gQvKM71Fto95rw0rdYo8sPtJAM1kjo/view>

[7] See the Mayor of London’s School Air Quality Audit documents on the importance of considering travel to and from school in the overall consideration of a site’s pollution impact / potential for mitigation.

Accessed here:

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/saq_report_-_de_beauparc_hackney_final_draft_-_inc_appendices.pdf

[8] Hackney Local Plan 2033, adopted July 2020, p.22. Accessed here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HRu0A_fdoWUi3OBfzUT03TT4S9gYwHDq/view

[9] Press Release / Policy Announcement, Mayor of London, 1 November 2020. See:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-unveils-plans-to-reduce-toxic-air-at-schools>

[10] The link from <https://hackney.gov.uk/air-quality> is a dead link and no other published monitoring data for PM2.5 from the London Borough of Hackney can currently be found.

[11] Even if, as is hoped, LTNs bring down overall traffic volumes in the borough, the relative positions of the two sites in regards to road infrastructure / traffic, the surrounding buildings, vegetation and use are

so manifestly different that this stark difference in levels of pollution between the two sites is long set to remain.

[12] <https://hackney.gov.uk/school-streets>

[13] Confirmed by Cllr Woodley, Colvestone Primary School public consultation meeting, 24th April 2023

[14] Colvestone Crescent / 21st Century Street, London Borough of Hackney, November 2021. Accessed here: file:///Users/mc/Downloads/266_221129_CC_ConsulationPres.pdf

[15] Colvestone Crescent / 21st Century Street, London Borough of Hackney, November 2021. Accessed here: file:///Users/mc/Downloads/266_221129_CC_ConsulationPres.pdf

[16] Colvestone Crescent / 21st Century Street, London Borough of Hackney, November 2021. Accessed here: file:///Users/mc/Downloads/266_221129_CC_ConsulationPres.pdf

[17] Community Infrastructure Levies (Planning Act 2008) are due on local developments and here specifically the developments committed to in the Hackney Local Plan (LP33 / 'Dalston Plan', adopted July 2020). See Mayor of London School Air Quality Audit (2018), section 5.8.10. See also 'Financial Viability' and 'Historical Significance and Protections' (this document).

[18] Colvestone Crescent / 21st Century Street, London Borough of Hackney, November 2021. Accessed here: file:///Users/mc/Downloads/266_221129_CC_ConsulationPres.pdf

[19] Quoted in Press Release / Policy Announcement, Mayor of London, 1 November 2020. See:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-unveils-plans-to-reduce-toxic-air-at-schools>

[20] In addition to impeding brain function, 'primary school children are amongst the most vulnerable of the at-risk groups, as their lungs are still developing, and toxic air can stunt their growth, causing significant health problems in later life.' Mayor of London School Air Quality Audit (2018), accessed here: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/saq_report_-_de_beauparc_hackney_final_draft_-_inc_appendices.pdf

[21] Mayor Philip Glanville, quoted 2018, accessed here: <https://www.cleanair4schools.co.uk/about>

[22] It might also be assumed that the Princess May site also offers the Borough greater asset value for repurposing without the listing and local protections that apply to the Grade II listed / Asset of Community Value / potentially covenanted Colvestone Primary School site in Colvestone Crescent (see [Historical significance and protections](#)).

8. Historical significance and protections

This section details the history of the building, its continuous operation as a school for the past 161 years, the existing protections on the building and site, and research relating to a possible covenant(s) on the building stipulating its educational function.

Built in 1862, Colvestone Primary School is a Grade II listed building[1] designed by TE Knightley in a Gothic Revival Style, which is situated in the St Mark's Conservation Area and to which it forms a protected architectural gateway[2]. It was one of six Birkbeck Schools founded by businessman and educational philosopher and philanthropist William Ellis. The schools were named after George Birkbeck, founder of Birkbeck, University of London, and pioneer in adult education.

The Colvestone building (formerly known as the 'Kingsland Birkbeck School') was purpose-built to reflect Ellis' radical ideas about education. Richard Clarke (Birkbeck / University of Westminster) writes: 'The Birkbeck Schools were secular, often for girls as well as boys, emphasised teaching through dialogue, rejecting rote learning (as well as corporal punishment)' with an emphasis on "'social economy" and "useful knowledge"'[3]. Ellis' schools and social focus to learning were explicitly aimed at widening access to education.[4]

'Its premises, which today remain nearly intact as Colvestone Primary School, reflect in their architecture some of the most progressive elements of Ellis' philosophy', Clarke continues. 'Two aspects of the Kingsland School's design stand out...: the presence of individual classrooms and good lighting and ventilation' – here in contrast to the heavier, more overbearing and larger-scale architecture of the London Board schools which were built from 1870 onwards (for example, Princess May School, built 1899 and which is not a listed building). The small scale of the school building is particularly appealing to children – both in establishing a proximity with their peers in a school community in which familiarity is the rule, but also in the way that this nurturing environment is reflected through the architectural detailing – for instance, the low-level eaves and the decorative elements of the building. These features, combined with the overall layout of the school – including the main hall which is central to the plan form – is both comforting for SEN children and helps them to navigate the building.

The Council has recently invested in sensitive refurbishment works to the listed school building, undertaking long-awaited and significant repairs to the external envelope including to the brickwork and stonework, as well as to the tiled roof and leadwork. The separately Grade II listed front railings have been also been carefully restored. The works have noticeably enhanced the school's appearance as a landmark building in Colvestone Crescent, marking the western gateway to the conservation area. The children's internal learning environment has also been brightened up by the decoration of classrooms, communal teaching spaces and corridors.[5] Whilst the building was shrouded in scaffolding and subject to both internal and external renovation over the last year (sadly also through the Reception open days) the wonderful benefits of these sensitive works are now being enjoyed as they reach completion and manifestly improve Colvestone's offer to prospective parents and pupils.

In addition to the light, airy nature of the purpose-built teaching, study and recreation spaces, the school benefits from two separate playgrounds: one for the Nursery and Early Years provision and one for the main school. The larger of its two playgrounds is calm, well-landscaped and proportioned, and insulated further from the road network by the enclosing school buildings and surrounding houses, together with the drop in land levels away from Colvestone Crescent. **The smaller of the two playgrounds, appearing on Council-produced pollution 'heat maps'[6] as having one of the lowest levels of pollution in the local area, is an outdoor classroom for Nursery and Early Years pupils and as such is designated an Asset of Community Value (2021).**

Most significantly, the Heritage Statement prepared in 2020 for the school refurbishment works writes in glowing terms of the contemporary condition of Colvestone Primary School, noting that 'in heritage terms, the original use is synonymous with the optimum viable use.'^[7]

A note on ownership

The Kingsland Birkbeck / Colvestone Primary School building was independently financed by William Ellis to house the school he founded in 1852, the building being completed in 1862. Initially built on leasehold land, the freehold was acquired 20 years later.^[8] It remained unaffiliated with the School Board (founded 1870) but, in 1904, motivated by a shortage of secondary school provision in the area its foundational trust (The Birkbeck and William Ellis Schools Trust) entered into negotiations with the LCC initially for a grant to support the change to secondary use (and specifically the installation of a science laboratory).^[9] By early 1905 however LCC demand in Hackney was specifically for girls secondary provision, and the trustees of the Birkbeck and William Ellis Schools Trust were under financial pressure relating to a second school (the William Ellis School, then in Gospel Oak).

In January 1905 a proposal was made to sell the Kingsland Birkbeck School (and site) to the LCC directly.^[10] It was initially thought that the Trust could 'sell the freewill outright to the Council... free of all restrictions under the Endowed Schools or Charitable Trusts Acts'^[11] though subsequent legal advice received in July 1905 advised that the Trust was determined an 'educational (as opposed charitable) trust' and therefore could not sell off educational assets, without condition and agreement by the Charity Commission, unless the Trust was wound up.^[12] The Trust however continued to operate (not least with regards to the William Ellis School) and agreement of terms was not reached until November 1905^[13] and the purchase completed in 1906.^[14] Such was the pressure on provision the LCC committed to the conversion works on the site and the first new pupils began at the school in October 1905 prior to the LCC taking ownership.

Given the time taken to find an equitable solution for the Trust, LCC and Charities Commission it is suspected that a covenant exists on the building pertaining to its ongoing function as a school as a condition of its purchase. This is the subject of ongoing research, not limited to a request made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to the London Borough of Hackney (ref: 16591453), further research in the archived papers of the LCC (London Metropolitan Archive)

including legal advice received around the purchase of the school buildings in 1906, the archives of the Charities Commission (held in the National Archives at Kew) and the Land Registry.

The Birkbeck and William Ellis Schools Trust is still extant as a charitable foundation (and still appoints governors to the William Ellis School, in Highgate Road, Kentish Town).

Summary

Colvestone Primary School is the last remaining Birkbeck School building and has functioned as a school for 161 years. Its architectural design and scale explicitly reflects the socially-minded and community-focus ideals of its founders – ideals specifically focussed on increasing access to education. As a purpose-built grade II listed school building, its best use is its optimum viable use as a fully-operational school educating local children. Recent restoration works on the building and internal modifications manifestly improve the school's appeal and parental offer.

Closing it as a school would be a significant historical loss to Dalston, one named in its listing, but would also remove the social heart from the St Marks Conservation Area and the community of Dalston. The school carries multiple site protections: two separate Grade II listings; its position as integral and planning-protected 'gateway' to the St Marks Conservation Area; an outdoor classroom designated an Asset of Community Value; with a potential covenant on the site protecting its educational function.

Footnotes – Historical significance and protections section

- [1] 'Colvestone Primary School was added to the National Heritage List for England in February 1975 at Grade II and is of special heritage interest on account of its architectural and historical value.' Heritage Statement (prepared for London Borough of Hackney Planning), *Heritage Collective*, 2020, p.9. Listed building entry (Historic England): 1265832. Separate Grade 2 entry for railings: 1226422. Accessed: historicengland.org.uk
- [2] For the identification of the Grade II listed Colvestone Primary School as a protected / locally important view see Draft Dalston Plan Supplementary Planning Document, May 2021, p.99, and recent planning applications on Colvestone Crescent. DDP SPD accessed here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JKYYxGAtynP0NsumGUAq_tR70Lg90_a/view
- [3] 'Self-Help and the London Mechanics' Institution – Birkbeck After (George) Birkbeck', Richard Clarke, Birkbeck College, University of London, 2009
- [4] 'Social Economy in the Classroom: The London Birkbeck Schools', Richard Clarke, in *The London Journal*, 2023
- [5] It is suggested that these and potential future (unforeseen) works that benefit the school (for example the expansion of the (funded) 21st Century Street) could be financed by the Community Infrastructure Levy (Planning Act 2008) due on local developments and specifically the developments committed to in the Hackney Local Plan (LP33 / 'Dalston Plan', adopted July 2020). The intention of CILs: 'a means of ensuring that a new development contributes to the cost of the infrastructure that the development will rely on, such as schools and roads.' See Mayor of London School Air Quality Audit (2018), section 5.8.10. See also 'Financial Viability' and 'Pollution' (this document).
- [6] See 'Pollution', this document. Images: <https://map2.hackney.gov.uk/maps/air-quality-no2/index.html>
- [7] Heritage Statement (prepared for Hackney Planning), *Heritage Collective*, 2020, p.39
- [8] 'Social Economy in the Classroom: The London Birkbeck Schools', Richard Clarke, in *The London Journal*, 2023
- [9] Educational Committee Report, 1st November 1904, LCC Minutes, London Metropolitan Archive, p.2363
- [10] Higher Education and Scholarships Sub Committee: Agenda Papers, LCC Archive, London Metropolitan Archive, 27th Jan 1905
- [11] Higher Education and Scholarships Sub Committee: Agenda Papers, LCC Archive, London Metropolitan Archive, 5th May 1905
- [12] Higher Education and Scholarships Sub Committee: Agenda Papers, LCC Archive, London Metropolitan Archive, 21st July 1905
- [13] Higher Education and Scholarships Sub Committee: Agenda Papers, LCC Archive, London Metropolitan Archive, 17th November 1905
- [14] Educational Committee Report, 8th May 1906, LCC Minutes, London Metropolitan Archive, p.1169

9. Campaign summary

Colvestone Primary School's campaign to be taken off the list for merger has captured people's attention locally, regionally, nationally – and even internationally.

The strength of feeling across the Colvestone community has been remarkable.

In a short period of time, we have rallied support and endorsements from school families, ex-pupils, local residents and the wider Dalston community.

Petition

Since the launch of our petition at the start of April, we have amassed 1,701 signatures each putting their name to: *...remove Colvestone from the potential closure list, thereby ensuring security and stability for staff, pupils and parents.*



The screenshot shows the Change.org petition page for "Save Colvestone Primary School in Dalston". The page features a green and yellow banner with the text "SAVE COLVESTONE PRIMARY SCHOOL". A progress bar indicates that 1,697 signatures have been collected, with a goal of 2,500. A message states: "At 2,500 signatures, this petition is more likely to get picked up by local news!". The petition is signed by "Colvestone FSA" and includes a description: "In response to falling enrolment across the borough, Hackney Council has made an initial proposal to merge Colvestone Primary School with Princess May Primary School at the Princess May site from September 2024, which means the closure of Colvestone school." There are input fields for "First name" and "Last name" to sign the petition.

The petition is still gaining signatures and supporters every day:

www.change.org/p/savecolvestone-fsa-colvestone

Some people who signed the petition also added their thoughts about the Council's proposal:

"This school is a vital part of Dalston's community, as a parent of a child who attended Colvestone it was brilliantly placed with no other schools nearby. He went on to study chemistry at Oxford, as did another of his classmates. I cannot imagine this school no longer existing, it must not close."

Former parent

“Colvestone Primary School is an essential part of the Ridley Road area community.”
Local resident

“Colvestone is a valuable part of the Dalston community, our children benefited from a fantastic educational experience that is as open and diverse as the local area. It is really important for future generations of children.”
Former parent

Local support

Our cause has caught the attention of Dalston’s local Councillor including Zoe Garbett – and the campaign made the neighbourhood update mailed to every household in the ward.



Hackney Council wants to close Colvestone Primary School, leaving parents and staff in shock. The council wants to move the school’s students to Princess May Primary School, due to falling pupil numbers across Hackney.

Colvestone is Dalston’s only non-denominational school. It is a tight-knit community with one-

form entry. The council has recently spent more than £200,000 to help the school improve.

Zoë Garbett, Dalston’s Green councillor, is backing local parents who want Colvestone to stay open. Parents are also worried about air pollution in the playground at Princess May.

Zoë said: “This announcement

has shaken parents, staff and the whole school community. Parents tell me that they want Colvestone to stay open and have time to keep improving.”

Want to help support Colvestone Primary? Visit: www.change.org/SaveColvestone or contact: zoe.garbett@hackney.gov.uk

Press coverage

Our story was featured in the Hackney Gazette and Hackney Citizen:

www.hackneygazette.co.uk/news/23469925.author-michael-rosen-joins-bid-stop-hackney-school-merger/

<https://www.hackneycitizen.co.uk/2023/04/20/parents-dalston-primary-school-merger-council-boosts-rethink/>

Hackney Gazette

Author Michael Rosen joins bid to stop Hackney school merger

20th April

HACKNEY COUNCIL

MICHAEL ROSEN

EDUCATION

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

PEOPLE

HACKNEY



By Julia Gregory

Children's author Michael Rosen has added his name to a campaign to save a Hackney primary school at risk of closure because of falling school rolls.

‘It’s not a commodity’: Parents from Dalston primary school at risk of a merger urge council bosses to rethink plans

By [Julia Gregory](#), Local Democracy Reporter | Thursday 20 April 2023 at 17:32



Protest outside Colvestone Primary School. Photograph: Julia Gregory

A group of Hackney parents have launched a campaign to save their children's primary school.

Colvestone is one of four primaries that could merge under plans that also include the potential closures of De Beauvoir and Randal Cremer schools in September 2024.



Parents Corine and Brandon Bishop at Colvestone Primary School, Hackney. Their child has special needs. Because of falling school rolls Colvestone primary could merge with Princess May School. Photo: Julia Gregory

We were also featured on ITV News:

<https://www.itv.com/news/london/2023-04-24/school-closing-as-young-families-are-driven-out-by-spiraling-london-costs>

itvX

School closing as young families are 'driven out' by spiraling London cost of living

LONDON | EDUCATION | POLITICS | Monday 24 April 2023 at 6:27pm



And we are in conversation with German broadcaster ADR who would like to feature Colvestone's story in an extended report later in May "to look at the bigger picture and what these developments mean for a city like London and what possible solutions would be to keep a city attractive for families".

Social media

Our campaign on social media (Facebook and Twitter) has seen tweets, posts and the petition shared by our supporters to help us reach thousands of people, including previous Colvestone parent, the renowned poet and activist Michael Rosen.

Public meeting

On Monday 24th April, 135 people attended the public meeting at the school. The session ran for 1 hour and 45 minutes, as parents, teaching and support staff and the local community voiced their deep concern for the plans.

10. Appendix

Appendix 1: Full Results of survey conducted during 26 – 28th April, after the April 24th meeting.

Colvestone Parents Choice Factor Survey

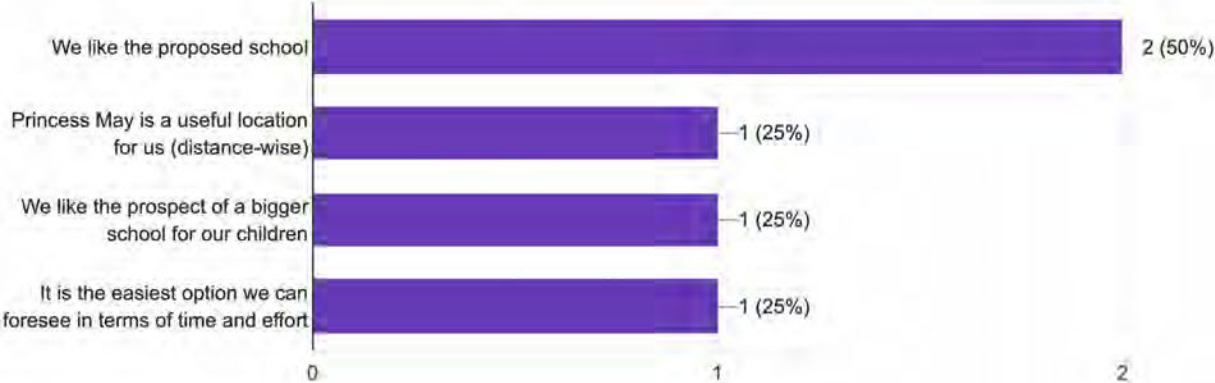
If the council were to go ahead with the proposed merger of Colvestone Primary School with Princess May in September 2024, will you agree to sen...tion only!) if you only have a child in year 5 or 6.

73 responses



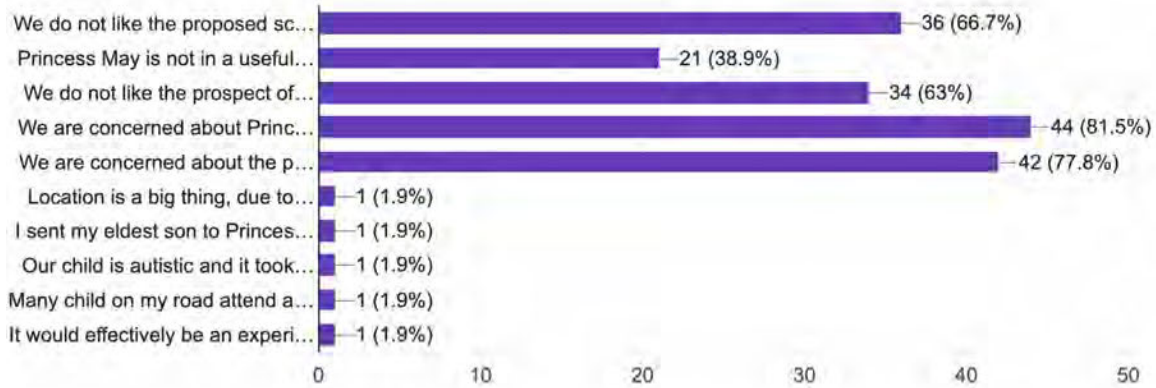
If you are happy to send your child to Princess May in September 2024, please help us understand the main reasons - please check all that apply

4 responses



If you have no intention of sending your child to Princess May in September 2024, please help us understand the main reasons - please check all that apply

54 responses



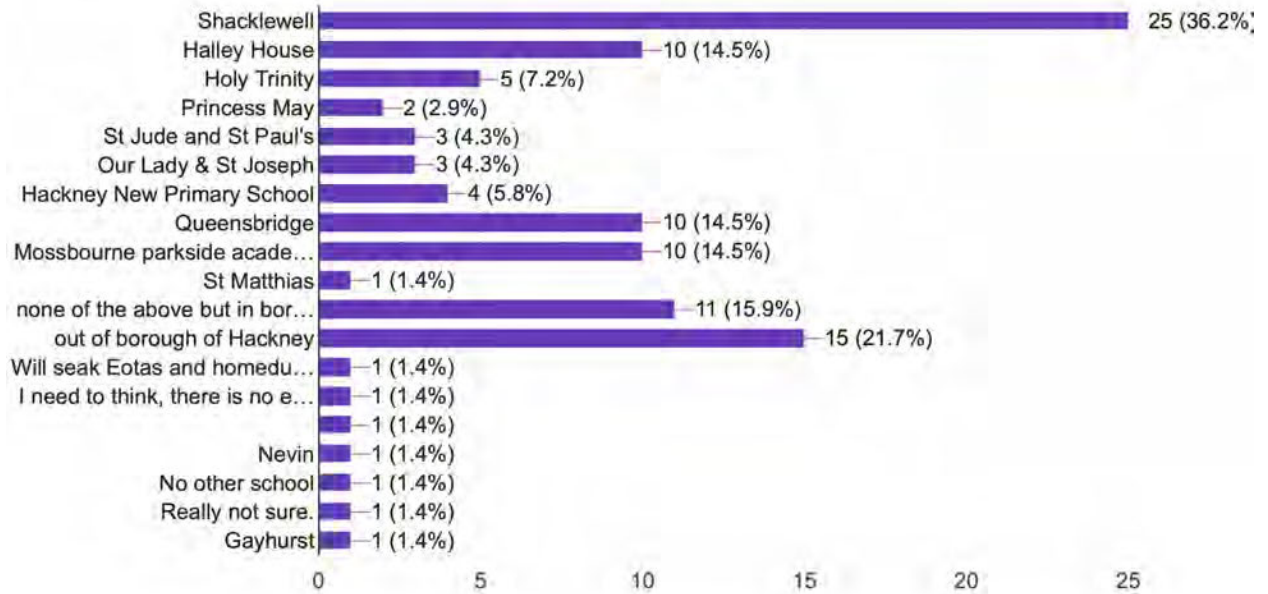
If you are unsure about whether you would send your child to Princess May, what factors will affect your decision? - please check all that apply

4 responses



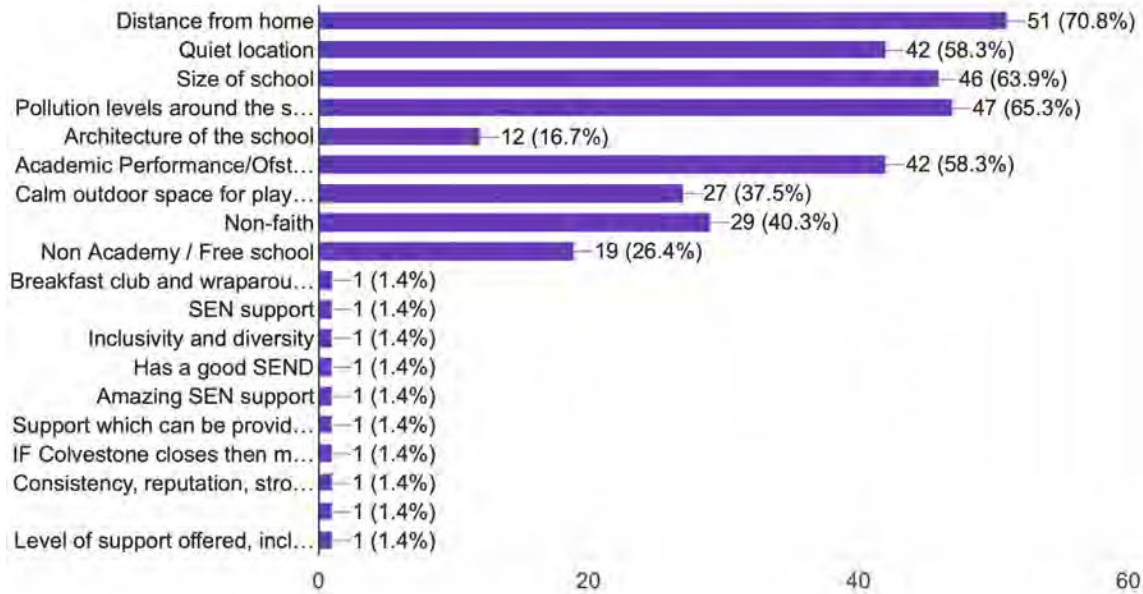
If Colvestone were to merge, what would be your preferred choices of school for your child - please answer this question whether or not you answered yes or no above (and please check all that apply)

69 responses



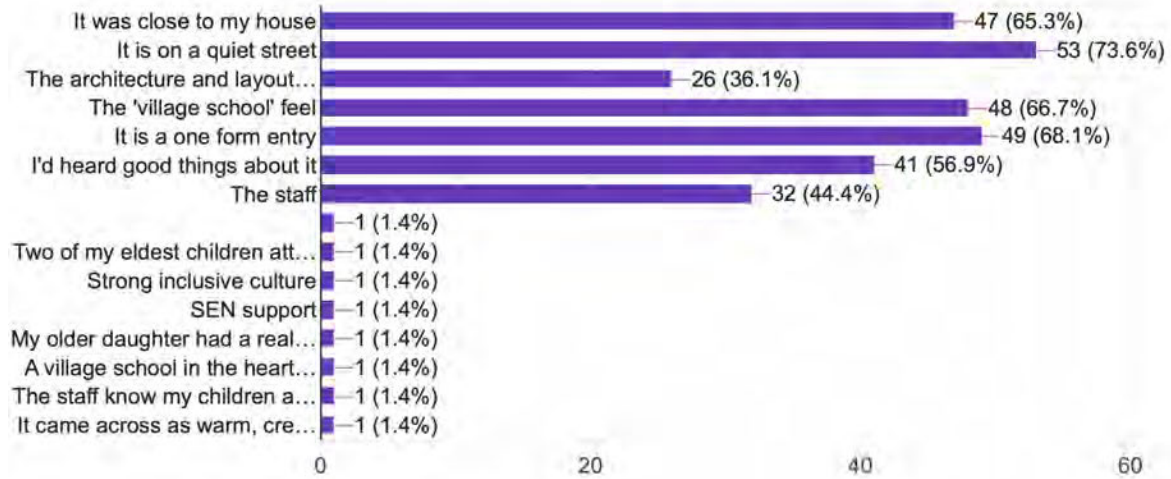
What are the main factors you take into account when choosing schools for your child(ren) - please check all that apply

72 responses



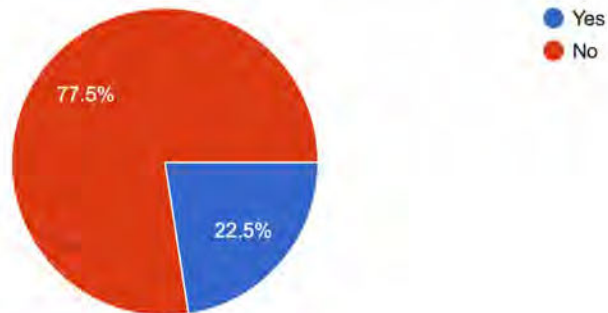
Why did you choose Colvestone - please check all that apply

72 responses



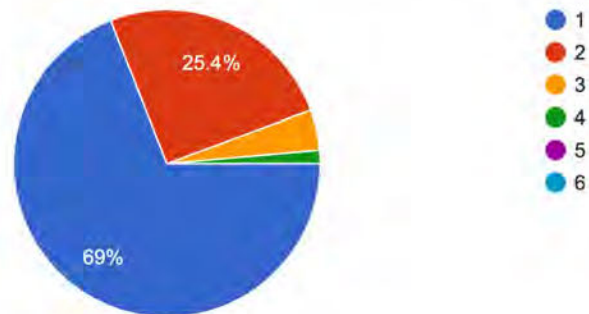
Does your child(ren) have Special Educational Needs

71 responses



How many children do you have /care for who attend this school?

71 responses



Final survey question: Anything else you think the Council should know:

“Our child is autistic and it took us a long time to settle her and be happy at Colvestone. It will be extremely difficult and impossible to move her to another school at this stage.”

“Many children on our road attend [Princess May] and both parents and children are not happy”

“I sent my eldest son to Princess May 8 years ago and had to change schools after a few months because we were really unhappy with the standards of the school. We visited the school again a couple of years ago, whilst going through the selection process for my youngest child, who currently attends Colvestone and we were disappointed to discover that Princess May is still not a viable option for us to send our children. We would not send our child to Princess May, our child is very happy at Colvestone and we’re it to close we would look at finding a similar school to Colvestone probably outside the borough”

Some powerful statements from families about Colvestone and the proposed merger:

“A village school in the heart of the city. A place the children could ‘own’ and know ALL their peers.”

“It came across as warm, creative, fostering community feel, inclusive of parents”

“The Staff take the ethos of the school very seriously”

“[Colvestone has a] Strong, inclusive culture”

“Closing Colvestone would push us as parents away from the centre of Dalston and potentially out of the Borough. It’s an academically strong and inclusive school with an excellent community whose non-faith, non-academy/free status, and single form intake gives it a village feel in the centre of bustling Dalston and is unique to the area.”

“A big school is not suited to every child's need and therefore the reason why Colvestone was chosen even though it was a bit of a distance.”

“The new leadership team have worked hard to create a viable school going forward – with a little support (and at least not being shot in the foot by our own education authority) I believe we are the model for Hackney’s future. A 21st century school on a 21st century street.”

“My daughter has additional needs and I would be looking for an out of borough move to find something similar to Colvestone”

“I don’t know a single parent that would consider sending their child to Princess May. I think it would be a shame for Hackney Council to have to close both schools as I’m almost certain that Princess May will close after Colvestone because it will not get the pupil numbers. I don’t see why Princess May couldn’t close if it was needed and pupils transfer to Colvestone. Colvestone is flourishing currently and I’m sure with the new management structure it will continue to do so.”

“No other school we looked at had the small, family feel that Colvestone had.”

“The emotional impact on children’s well-being will be the biggest issue if the merger happens, not the finance element.”

“I’d prefer to not go to a faith or free school; however I feel this is all I’ll be left unless I accept a school on the A10 that is twice the distance from my current school”

“We believe that Colvestone primary school is a unique offering in the area, we are adamant that we will not be sending our children to Princess May”

“Please save Colvestone for future generations. This school is unique.”

“[Please tell Hackney] That my daughter loves Colvestone Primary School and the teachers that teach there and closing a community primary school will send out a very negative and lasting message to young families looking to live in Hackney.”

“Colvestone and Princess May schools are the worst match for merger, they are completely different.”

“Princess May has been an unpopular school for a long time. For the Council to decide that a good plan/good offer would be to shut Colvestone and move all the children to Princess May shows a massive lack of understanding of the Dalston community and/or a flippant attitude to families at Colvestone.”

“If Colvestone Primary School closes the wider community will become impoverished.”

“This will not only affect school age children and their families but the wider community too. Don’t do it”

“I am very worried about the outcome of this proposal as there doesn't seem to be any real choice here -there is no nearby one form non religious option – other than keeping Colvestone open.”

“It is discrimination against non-religious people to only close non-faith schools in this proposal. I would like to speak with a legal team to understand if we have a discrimination case. The Councillors have a legal responsibility to provide quality education for our children so why is the Council not closing the academically worst performing schools and sending those pupils to better schools? If the worst academic schools have a chance to improve then Colvestone should be afforded equal rights to improve pupil numbers.”

“If The school was to close, this would have a knock on effect with my job and being able to get to work on time.”

Appendix 2: Emails sent by parent of children with special educational needs

Email from [parent A] sent 25.4.2023

Dear [councillor]

I hope you are well.

Thank you for attending the meeting at Colvestone on Monday, and thank you for giving me your email address so I could write.

My name is [parent A] and I delivered my rather emotional speech advocating for the SEN children and families of Colvestone.

I wished to write and further express to you what this school means for my [child] in particular.

[child] is a wonderful little [child].

[They are] pure joy and sunshine.

[They] owns any room he walks in.

[They are] creative and unique.

[Their] greatest superpower is that despite being autistic, [they] has and is able to show great empathy and a strong ability to express and discuss [their] emotions.

Despite all the struggles [they have] had to face due to [their] neurodiversity, [they remain] self-confident in all aspects of [their] life.

The biggest challenge [they are] facing is school and access to education, which is due to the fact [they] struggles with visual and auditory stimuli processing by [their] environment and has learning difficulties.

Attending a school even like Colvestone that is a one form entry is already a hard mission for my [child].

[Their] first year at reception (Sep 2020) was pretty much a write off, as [they] needed time to climatise and adapt to the new environment.

Despite the fact that [their] then teachers took things really slow with [them], [they] found the demands of school extremely challenging and cried every morning when I was dropping [them] off.

At the end of the reception year we could see that academically [they were] more than a year behind [their] peers, so we decided to have [them] repeat reception. This decision was taken in the August before the school year started and the school supported us fully in our decision to keep [child] back. There was no argument or discussion, they just listened to what [our child] needed and what [their] parents advocated for [them] and gave [our child] that.

My husband and I have no words for how grateful we are that [their] needs were respected in such an immediate and supportive way.

Reception the second time round (Sep 2021) was hard again, [they] cried a lot at drop offs, but gradually became more accustomed to the school environment.

[Their] writing improved and [child] started writing [their] name and being able to copy letters. [Their] recognition of letters was much slower, and by the end of the second year at reception [they] still had not mastered the letters or numbers, however [they] seemed more comfortable with the school setting and started to make friends.

Forming friendships is one of the things we always worried about, so to see [them] play with other children, request their company and to be included was a wonderful development.

When we started year one in (Sep 2022) [our child] was almost fully adapted to the school environment and would only have the occasional cry in the mornings.

However the educational challenges of year 1 were too much for [them].

[They] became withdrawn and anxious, [their] sleep got affected and overall [they] seemed lacklustre and sad.

When we spoke to [them] about [their] sadness, [our child] would say things like

“I hate my brain”

“ I want to kill my brain”

“ I don’t understand and I don’t want to go to school”

“numbers and letters are moving in my head, I don’t know what to do with this mama”

As you can imagine it was heart breaking for myself and my husband to realise that [our child] has these feelings of sadness, frustration and unworthiness.

So we discussed this with the school, who listened to our concerns, and adapted [our child]’s learning environment and curriculum so that [they] would learn **in [their] way and [their] pace.**

Moving forward to this week, I can tell you that with the love and investment of his teacher, [name removed], his TA, [name removed], [name removed] our Headteacher and the school Senco [name removed], [they are] able to count to multiples of 10! And [our child] has started to be able to read a few words!

This week [our child] is also **receiving an achievement award** from [the] school for all the progress [they have] made.

[Our child] gave me the letter inviting me to the ceremony with such pride.

[Our child] now skips to school most mornings and only ever asks to stay at home towards the end of the week when [they are] tired.

[Our child] is finally able to access education in [their] terms in an environment [they are] happy in

Both my husband and I are amazed by the progress and the happiness we see in our little [child]. We believe that moving [them] to a different setting would devastate [them] and settling [our child] will most likely take another two years, by which time we will be looking at the end of Primary.

We will most likely have to apply for EOTAS and homeeducate.

You must understand after our meeting this evening the significance of Colvestone for the SEN families of Dalston.

All be it emotional, I believe I made my point loud and clear.

Colvestone is not an accident, it is not a postcode lottery, it is our choice, our **ONLY CHOICE**.

There is no other school in the area that can ensure that our SEN children get the **access to education they have a right to.**

Closing this setting would mean the removal of that right to access education for **35 SEN kids** that are currently on the register for Colvestone.

Another point that I would like to visit that I did not have time to elaborate on during my speech was the recent announcement that Hackney will be investing FIVE MILLION pounds across the borough to support SEN kids and services.

What about these 35 kids that will loose their school?

Their little family in which they feel **comfortable to access education?**

Might I ask what does it take so that the Council will consider making Colvestone an autism provision school?

Or an autism and SEND friendly school?

I mean it is well on its way there, as 24% of the children that attend have some sort of special education needs.

Double the national average which is 13.2%.

Please do note that the only two schools in the area that have autism provision are both two form, and they only have 10 places each in their units.

So not only they are two form and therefore **tragically unsuitable for autistics** due to the overwhelming and noisy environment, but they also **only offer 10 places**.

It is my understanding that there is to be additional autism provision units established in more schools in Hackney, however all the proposed schools like Nightingale, are two form schools.

I implore you to consider Colvestone as the perfect school to create an autism friendly environment.

Below, I am including the main points of my speech from Monday the 24th of April.

The Cull de sac nature of Colvestone facilitates a safe access to school.

SEN children get overwhelmed when they are walking through busy streets and can often run into traffic. This has happened to us a few times when walking the Dalston high street. You can imagine how scary this is for us but also for [our child], first to be overwhelmed and then to have [their] parents grab [them] to save [them] from traffic. Once a week when we go shopping on the high street is bad enough, but to have to deal with this twice a day on our school run, would bring so much danger and anxiety in our daily routine.

The neutral tones of this grade 2 listed building are ideal for SEN children as they offer a calm and unintrusive environment in which to play, so rather than being overwhelmed, autistic children can be free and comfortable and able to access PLAY.

Being a one form entry Colvestone is naturally a calmer and less overwhelming environment. A busy assembly in the morning stays with SEN children for the whole day, and that overwhelm makes their access to education impossible.

SEN children thrive in caring and loving environments that are willing to listen and really “SEE” them and their additional needs.

A home from home family that is willing to support them in ways that allow them to access education and realise their potential.

The Colvestone team operating as a close knit and caring family, achieves just that.

This school is a rare gem because of the wonderful humans that work there.

The small community of Colvestone gives SEN children much needed access to friendship and inclusivity. Attending a school with a smaller community provides fertile ground for **inclusive friendships to grow**. It is often the case that neurodiverse children struggle to create relationships as a rule and that becomes even harder in large, two form settings.

Finally, please do take note that for my [child], and for most of the SEN children of our school, adapting to new environments and routines is a herculean task and a big change such as their school environment will be detrimental to their education, well being and happiness.

Please listen and take note to the Sen parents and the School community, please show us that our choice matters. That we have the right for a non faith, local **one form** school.

And that our children will be given the **fair and suitable access to education they have a right to**.

Note that the majority of the families WILL NOT BE SENDING THEIR CHILDREN TO PRINCESS MAY.

So that will continue to be an empty school as it will not be brought to capacity by Colvestone students. If we wished for our kids to attend that school, we would have made it so already.

I do hope that during the Monday evening meeting you could see the passion demonstrated by the parents and wider community, but also that you have taken note of how organised and clearheaded we are.

This is not going to be another school closure that will go unnoticed.

In the three weeks since this proposal has been announced, we have come together to fight for our school.

We have researched and pulled together our historical, scientific and personal evidence and created a website for our cause :

<https://www.savecolvestone.com>

We have run a very successful petition that keeps gaining traction:

<https://www.change.org/p/savecolvestone-fsa-colvestone>

Our cause has attracted local press:

<https://www.hackneygazette.co.uk/news/23469925.author-michael-rosen-joins-bid-stop-hackney-school-merger/>

We were also featured in ITV news:

<https://www.itv.com/news/london/2023-04-24/school-closing-as-young-families-are-driven-out-by-spiraling-london-costs>

And we have attracted international press, from a German TV channel, as they are working on a documentary about London and how “friendly” it is for families.

And we are only three weeks in.

We will keep fighting this, until the Council realises how important this ONE FORM ENTRY school is.

We have the strength of parents fighting for their children and the support of the local community.

Please take note, please fight alongside us.

Thank you for your time

With Respect

[parent A]
A SEN parents representative for Colvestone Primary School

Email from [parent B] and [parent C] sent 26.4.2023

Dear [councillor],

We are writing to express our disagreement regarding the recent proposal to include Colvestone Primary School in the consultation to close schools in Dalston (Hackney) by Hackney Council.

We are very disheartened by this proposal and in the worst case scenario that this is going ahead, in total honesty, this will have a tremendous effect on [our child]'s education and subsequently in [their] future academic life.

We believe this will be an ill-considered and damaging move for children especially for our SEN children, parents and carers and the community in this area. As one of the only non-religious, non-academy, non-free schools in Dalston, it should remain open to offer families the choice to be part of a small, close-knit community school – run by the local education authority.

We live [very local to the school] and have been part of the Dalston community for a long time, we love our diverse community. We have chosen Colvestone Primary school for our little [child], who is [age removed] years-old and autistic because it provides a required quick journey access to school (5 minutes), a safe and happy environment (that a small one form school offers) and a wonderful SEN support ([our child] has a experienced SEN one to one). These are the 3 fundamental poles for [our child] to access education. It has taken time and great effort for [our child] to be happy and settled in [their] school (3 years now) and changing school at this stage will have an incredible difficult impact on [them] and it will be practically impossible for [our child] to access education, and this also will have an enormous impact on [their] mental health.

Let me give you a brief history of [our child]'s life so that you have an insight of where [they are] coming from:

[Our child] was diagnosed at 2.5 years' old with Autism by Hackney Ark (with severe delays in communications, severe delays in social interactions and severe repetitive behaviour). [Our child] regressed from age 18 months, she was prior to that stage able to say 5 words: Maman, Daddy, cheese, hello and bye (I am [redacted] and Daddy [redacted] – I only spoke [redacted] to [our child] from note to 2) and literally became non-verbal and lost [their] sounds capacity A, E, I, O, U, [our child] was now only screaming, lost eyes contact and only presented with repetitive behaviours. With tremendous tenacity we managed to access straight away hackney services of Speech Therapy (once a week where Specs was implemented) and Portage ([our child] attended the later services for one year, at home and at the Guarden (in pre-school) once a week alternatively).

At this point when I thought I would get back to my career I realised that [our child] needed so much support and decided to stopped my career to support [our child] full time and at this point I went on a mission and to become my child's therapist and a nucleus that would utilise all services offered and my own therapies. I taught myself an american therapy which is called ESDM (Eearly Start Denver Model), taking my child everyday to Gymboree (a pre-school private center) and implementing ESDM at the same time, helped also [our child] to support [their] physical mobility as at this stage [our child's] upper-body and hands were going inwards (I used

daily a home a school bench at home, making [our child] copying me standing on one leg and other leg and also using a climbing wall we had at home). With all these combination of supports from hackney services and my own therapies, [our child] progressed, we retrieved her eye contacts and [their] body posture developed now to a straight posture.

At the end of the year, when [our child] turned 3, Portage Coordinator asked me what we foresee for [our child] academically and I expressed at this point that [our child] could go mainstream to a nursery, which was 7mns from home, Portage facilitated transition to nursery and [our child] entered nursery with an EHCP and worked hard at making sure [our child] has all support needed so that [they] attend nursery. The setting kept on using pecs for promoting speech and in 2019, when [our child] started to make the sound A, I, O, I found the Gemiini therapy programme and within a month [our child]'s perceptive communications improved tremendously. We have used this programme since then and [our child] is now talking more, single words and understand everything we are saying to her. [Our child] attended nursery for two years 3 days a week with allocated one to one.

We then chose Colvestone Primary School because it is a one form small school and just 5 mns from home. [Our child] remained in one corner of the Reception class for a term and half and by the end of that year [they] had ventured in all corners of the school with a phenomenal support of [their] allocated TA. [They] attended Reception (with of course the pandemic, and attended school during the second lock-down).

When [our child] was in year 1, after a week at school (Sept. 22) [they] refused to go to school and leave the house, it took us 7 months to bridge [our child] back to school and as you can imagine, it was a real isolated work for us as [our child] didn't want to go out anymore but with great effort, determination and tedious work we thankfully managed for [our child] to be happy going out and then managed to bridge [our child] back to school, with the School Senco we worked very hard collaboratively to get [our child] back and [they] did for the end of year one. [Teacher, name removed] has done a tremendous work. Now, we have complete faith in the school SEN support which as you may have heard from other families is not a given, [our child] has an EHCP and now a level 5 in funding which goes towards [their] SEN and [their] needs to be cared by someone all the time.

But even thought, we have all in place on paper, the tremendous work we have had to do with the school in order to secure [our child]'s support has been a real effort, as well as working hard to make sure that [our child] is happy attending Colvestone and this in view to attend [their] years at Colvestone to year 6.

To be honest I can't believe we have to write this and the idea of this plan going ahead is very difficult for us and we are trying not to think about it!

We know our child feels safe and happy at Colvestone, [our child] receives a wonderful SEN support with a fantastic experienced SEN one to one [name removed] and a brilliant teacher/senco [name removed]. Moving our child to another school will be strongly difficult and

disruptive in our child's education and have consequences on [them] achieving long term education goals. And it will take us years to get to where we are and by then, it will be the end of primary school. This will literally damage all the hard work we have put together for the past 5 years. I hope you realise the difficulty of what we have to do on a daily basis to get to where we are. We are working hard at [our child]'s school foundation so that [our child] can thrive in the future and become the astronaut [they] want to be (I asked lately [our child] what she wanted to be and [they] astonishingly responded to me: "Astronaut" and repeatedly saying: "Captain [our child], to the rescue").

I have added few pictures below so that you can see how amazing [our child] is doing at Colvestone. In January, [our child] was awarded a Colvestone's Achiever for:

"[Our child] enjoys the creative aspects of the curriculum. In art lessons and in Music, [child] shows good level of engagement. [Child] takes part in daily phonics lessons where [they are] exploring environmental sounds with [their] peers. [Child] enjoys drawing and will often draw pictures that are detailed in design. [Child] has drawn pictures linked to [their] favourite stories, such as "Class Two at the Zoo". Which [they enjoy] listening to and reading alongside the adult, some of the known phrases. [Child] takes part in PE lessons and will join the class line when [they] knows that it is time for PE. Well done [child]! – [our child] went to receive her award in front for Y1/Y2 asseemlee.

Last Friday [our child] was awarded 100% attendance Award, there again [our child] during full school assemble stood up when [their] name was called and went to receive [their] award and came back to sit with everyone else aside [teacher's name removed]. Yes 100% attendance! Incredible! What a journey, what an amazing achievement! And this done to the wonderful work of the school, one to one, Senco, staffs and the Leadership team, [Head of School], [Executive Headteacher] and team.

I also included a picture showing how [our child] is happy at school with [teacher's name removed] during Easter parade.

Colvestone is a unique primary school offering my child an opportunity to develop and thrive in a single-form entry, community-focussed environment, which we strongly beleive in and is required. We strongly hope that our wonderful Colvestone Primary School can stay open and all is done to support our school and for our [our child] to keep accessing education as well as all the SEN children and all the children.

Yours sincerely,

[parent B] & [parent C]

Parent of [name / year removed] at Colvestone Primary School

Appendix 3: Excerpt from an email sent by a local historic and town planning specialist

Uncertain Future of the School Building and Site

Our foremost concern is the potential loss of Colvestone Primary School, but we also wish to stress the negative impacts its closure would have on the school building and the surrounding area. I write here in my capacity as a historic buildings and town planning specialist.

The school building dates from 1862, and was designed by architect Thomas Knightly in a Gothic Revival style. As such, it is one of Hackney's oldest surviving school buildings. It is a grade II listed building, which means that there is a duty under the Planning Acts to preserve its special interest as a building of outstanding historic and architectural significance for future generations. The optimum use for a listed building is its original use, which in this case is as a school. It is also possible that there is a deed of covenant on the site stipulating that the building should be used solely for educational purposes. If the school is to close, the building will lose the vital use for which it was designed and built – most likely forever.

Closure will also see the building become redundant. There are suggestions locally that the Council intends to keep the building vacant for the foreseeable future. As such, it will be sealed up and rendered lifeless within the community. The recently completed refurbishment works will be wasted, as the building will become a target for vandalism and unlawful entry. Disused buildings deteriorate at a rapid rate, as they are more prone to water ingress, damp and a lack of ventilation. Only recently, thieves stole lead from the school roof, an unwelcome act which inevitably will increase if the building falls empty. If the school use ceases, the building is likely to feature on the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register, which identifies those historic sites that have an uncertain future and are most at risk of being lost as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development.

There are fears locally that the Council will sell the school site to a private developer, preventing it from ever returning to use as a Hackney-run primary school. Although the school is not currently an opportunity site in the Council's draft Dalston Plan, it lies midway between sites D6 (Ridley Road) and D7 (Birkbeck Mews). Undoubtedly it will be attractive to housing developers as it is located on the western side of St Mark's Conservation Area, a leafy sought-after Dalston residential neighbourhood made up of houses dating from the same period as the school building. The site is adjacent to Dalston Town Centre and excellent transport links, including two Overground stations and numerous bus routes; a Crossrail 2 station entrance is also proposed within metres of the site boundary.

The redevelopment of the site at minimum will require a change of use for the listed building, resulting in internal and external alterations detracting from its special historic and architectural interest. But the pressure for development and the developer's profit margins will inevitably result in the large-scale redevelopment of the site, which at best will harm the setting of the listed building and at worst destroy it.

There will also be a negative impact on the character and appearance of the St Mark's Conservation Area. Firstly, the character of the area will be severely affected by the loss to the community of an important primary school attended by many local children. The hustle and bustle of school life will disappear forever, including the noise of children in the playground, children walking to and from school, children singing and playing musical instruments, performing in plays and partaking in sport. There will be no more school fetes, no more Christmas concerts, jumble sales or sports days – activities shared with the wider community.

Secondly, the physical changes to the site, whether simply the deadening effect of closing up the school building or the more drastic visual harm arising from a major redevelopment, will have a negative impact on the appearance of the conservation area. This is particularly pertinent as Colvestone Primary School is not only a landmark building at the western entrance to the conservation area, but it is also one of a handful of buildings in the neighbourhood which have a community use, the loss of which would have an homogenizing effect on the conservation area and a reduction in the quality of life of its residents.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above, please review and reconsider the Council's plans to close Colvestone Primary School and merge it with Princess May Primary School in 2024. Nobody in the school or in the wider community wants to lose this very special school just to balance the Council's books. Nobody wants it to be subsumed into another much larger school with very different values, with which it has nothing in common. **To close Colvestone would be untimely, misguided and short-sighted. Please let Colvestone rise again, above all for the children of Dalston.**

Appendix 4: Hackney National Education Union letter of support Hackney NEU comments on the closure of Colvestone school

We have been asked by parents and NEU members of Colvestone school to briefly outline some of our concerns regarding the potential merger with Princess May.

Colvestone school is a small one form entry school that has served the local community in the heart of Hackney for over 170 years. It has historic significance as the last remaining of William Ellis's "Birkbeck" schools and is currently a Grade II listed building.

The proposal to close Colvestone school and merge it with Princess May is based on financial considerations rather than any social or educational benefit.

Hackney NEU believes that there are significant benefits in retaining small one form entry primary schools wherever possible. Whilst we understand the financial difficulties presented by years of government underfunding we believe that smaller schools and smaller class sizes are a desirable aim for our students.

As the recent Sutton Trust report has stated the UK has the largest class sizes in Europe* and all efforts should be made to arrest this trend. Research by the Education Endowment Federation suggests that *"The average impact for reducing class size is around 2 months additional progress over the course of an academic year."*

As well as improved academic progress we would argue that smaller schools and smaller class sizes have the following benefits.

Tailored learning

With small classes, teachers can more easily monitor every pupil's progress and tailor learning to each pupil. Teachers get to spend more individual time with each child, so they have a better idea of what they may need some extra support with. Pupils will also feel more confident talking to their teacher about any issues they are facing or areas of work they need some help with.

More social confidence

In smaller classes, pupils will usually feel more confident talking in front of a group. You also find with small schools, there is a greater sense of community and less cliques. The community spirit between pupils helps children to socially interact better and feel safe to try new things and discover new interests.

Teaching staff know their pupils better

At a school with a smaller community, teachers know more about their pupils, across their academic, emotional and even medical needs. Sometimes at larger schools, problems impacting a child's mental health or other aspects of their life can be missed.

More inclusive

At smaller schools, unique characteristics are embraced more, and students who are less outgoing can feel more relaxed about being around peers and have a better chance of enjoying their school experience.

Parents have a better relationship with the school

It is also easier for parents to be more involved in the school community, whether that is having a quick chat with their child's teacher about their progress or getting involved with school events and social events. Many parents make friends with other parents or getting involved with events related to their hobbies.

Colvestone school has consistently performed above the national and local average at both KS1 and KS2 with the last published SATs results showing 76% of children reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (compared with a 65% national average)

This speaks to the value of having a small local community school.

The transition to a new school, especially a larger one located further away (and the other side of one of the busiest roads in Hackney) would be very traumatic to the current pupils and the Council need to give serious consideration to this.

