

CONSULTATION ON THE
AMALGAMATION OF
COLVESTONE PRIMARY
SCHOOL WITH PRINCESS MAY
PRIMARY SCHOOL FROM
SEPTEMBER 2024



Visit: bit.ly/hackney-schools-consultation
to share your views by **16 July 2023**

Overview

Hackney Council is consulting on a proposal to amalgamate ('merge') Colvestone Primary School with Princess May Primary School. If agreed, the amalgamation will result in a single primary school being established on one site for 60 pupils in each year group.

The amalgamation is being proposed due to a fall in pupil numbers across primary schools in London. Fewer children in schools means less government funding for schools to operate, which over time, creates significant financial pressure on schools.

While our schools have achieved excellent results for their students, this income loss will make it increasingly challenging to maintain them in the long run.

The Council has the duty to provide high quality school places for all school aged children in the borough. Unless we act now, in time, the quality of education in the schools with falling rolls will be affected due to diminished access to resources and funding.

This document is part of a six-week public consultation, setting out the reasons for the proposal and seeking your views and comments about it. There are a number of ways you can respond to the consultation - these are set out at the end of this document. The closing date for responses is **Sunday, 16 July 2023**. At the end of this consultation period, a decision to issue a statutory notice on the proposal will be taken by Hackney Council. This is likely to be in September or October of this year.

Why is an amalgamation being proposed?

There has been a significant fall in the number of primary age children in many parts of London, including Hackney. The reasons behind this are thought to include falling birth rates, lack of affordable housing for families, as well as Brexit and the recent pandemic. The fall in numbers together with reduced funding from central government, means some of our schools are facing major challenges. If we continue to allow schools to remain open with significant levels of surplus places, it will put schools at financial risk which could lead to sudden unplanned school closures or changes.

The Council has been monitoring schools that have been most affected by falling pupil numbers and budget pressures, to see which of them would benefit most from an amalgamation with another school nearby.

What is an amalgamation?

An amalgamation can only be achieved by closing one or more schools and providing spaces for displaced children in another ‘host’ school. This option would involve the host school retaining its original DfE school number as it is not technically considered a new school. However, following the amalgamation process, governors have the option to rename the school to create a new identity for the merged schools.

If this proposal is agreed, Colvestone Primary School would close on 31 August 2024, and children on roll would transfer to Princess May Primary School if this is what the parents prefer for their children. The schools are 0.3 miles apart (a 6-minute walk). There is sufficient space on the Princess May site for all children from Colvestone.

Colvestone has been affected by a fall in pupil numbers and a loss of funding. The school can admit 30 children each year and has places for 210 pupils when full. The following table shows the number of unfilled places in the last 5 years.

	Spring 19 census	Spring 20 census	Spring 21 census	Spring 22 census	Spring 23 census
No. of unfilled Reception places	7	2	1	4	12
% of unfilled Reception places	23 %	7 %	3 %	13 %	40 %
No. of unfilled places Rec-Y6	20	26	41	66	80
% of unfilled places Rec-Yr6	10 %	12 %	20 %	31 %	38 %
PAN	210	210	210	210	210

For entry to the school this September (2023), 12 reception offers have been made. There are 30 places available.

School Funding

Schools are funded by the government on a formula basis. Schools with unfilled places lose £6,484 per place, every year. The number of pupils attending a school drives the level of funding received. This means that schools with unfilled places are under increased financial pressure and, over time, are less able to function efficiently. We know that smaller schools like Colvestone are more vulnerable to falling rolls and have seen the impact that this has had on the school’s budget. The Council must ensure that Hackney schools are full or nearly full so that they can cope with ongoing financial pressures. Regrettably, this is no longer the case for Colvestone Primary School and it is for this reason that an amalgamation with Princess May Primary School is being proposed.

We know that a potential amalgamation of the two schools will be a difficult and

upsetting process for many, particularly the children, staff and community of Colvestone Primary School and Princess May Primary School. We will provide support for the education choices and wellbeing of all children and staff.

Is my child guaranteed a place at Princess May Primary School? How will that process be managed?

Yes, all children at Colvestone Primary School will be transferred to Princess May Primary School if that is what families prefer. We will support families who do not want their children to attend the merged school to explore other options. We will work closely with the schools to support the transition of pupils, taking into consideration any issues and concerns raised by families.

Are there any other school changes being proposed in Hackney?

We are also consulting on the proposed closure of Randal Cremer Primary School and De Beauvoir Primary School, and the amalgamation of Baden Powell Primary School with Nightingale Primary School. A link to these consultation documents can be found here: bit.ly/hackney-schools-consultation. This proposal forms a part of our longer term strategy for managing falling rolls.

What will happen next?

We have been engaging with our schools and the community about school organisation changes since the beginning of this year. Comments, questions and feedback provided by parents and staff in engagement sessions at schools were recorded.

This stage of the process (the 'informal' consultation), will run from 5 June to 16 July 2023. The Council will consider all the views put forward during this consultation period and the engagement sessions before any decisions are made on the proposal. Responses to some of the most frequently asked questions during the engagement sessions are available online, at bit.ly/school-proposals. This page will be updated as more information becomes available.

Meetings

Information sessions will be offered at Colvestone and Princess May schools. This will be an opportunity for you to learn more about the proposal or to raise any concerns that you have regarding your child's education before or after the amalgamation. Your school will advise you of the date for this/these session(s).

Where can I find more information?

You can find out more about the project and regular updates from the Hackney Education website, here: bit.ly/school-proposals.

The table below outlines the full timeline for this proposal. Dates may be subject to change.

Timeline for this proposal and next steps

Date	Event
5 June -16 July 2023	Informal consultation
September/October 2023	Results of the informal consultation are considered by Hackney Cabinet. A decision is made whether to publish a statutory notice for the amalgamation of Colvestone Primary School with Princess May Primary School.
September/October 2023	Statutory notice published for a 4-week period.
December 2023	The outcome of the statutory notice period and any objections are considered by the Cabinet and a final decision on the amalgamation proposal is made.
January - August 2024	School amalgamation arrangements are carried out (subject to Cabinet’s decision in December 2023).
31 August 2024	Colvestone Primary School officially closes.
September 2024	Colvestone children start at the merged school on the Princess May Primary School site.

Summary

- Hackney has experienced a fall in primary aged children requiring places. This means that schools’ funding from central government has reduced.
- Colvestone Primary School has been affected by falling rolls and has a high number of surplus places and significant financial loss.
- This proposal is to close Colvestone Primary School as a legal entity and merge it with Princess May Primary School from September 2024.
- Children currently on roll at Colvestone Primary School will be offered a place at the merged school.

How do I respond to this consultation?

You can state your views on this proposed school amalgamation by completing the consultation response form attached to this consultation document or online by clicking on the following link: bit.ly/hackney-schools-consultation or visit consultation.hackney.gov.uk

If you choose to fill in a paper response form, please hand it into the office at either Colvestone Primary School or Princess May Primary School, or send it via post to:

Hackney Council
Education Services
School Place Planning
Hackney Service Centre, 3rd Floor
1 Hillman Street
London, E8 1DY

The deadline for consultation responses is **Sunday, 16 July 2023**.

If you have any questions about this proposal, please email school.sufficiency@hackney.gov.uk. If you require this document in a different format please contact us and we will get back to you in the next five working days.

This consultation document is being sent to:

- All parents/carers, governors, teachers and support staff of Colvestone Primary School and Princess May Primary School
- All Hackney schools
- Trade unions representing teachers and other staff at the schools
- Ward councillors and MPs
- Church Dioceses
- Community groups
- SEND groups