

Statutory Notice

Proposal to discontinue (close) St Mary's Church of England (CofE) Primary School

Hackney Council publishes these proposals under section 15 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (as amended by the Education Act 2011) and the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013. This notice is published following a consultation which took place between 8 October and 19 November 2024.

Hackney Council is proposing to discontinue St Mary's CofE Primary School. The reason for publishing this proposal is the significant fall in pupil numbers across Hackney, and at St Mary's CofE Primary School, Barn Street, N16 0JT in particular. The Council, with the support of the London Diocesan Board for Schools (LDBS) therefore proposes to close St Mary's CofE Primary School on 31 August 2025.

This proposal was published on 6 February 2025. Within four weeks of the date of publication of this proposal, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by visiting consultation.hackney.gov.uk/children-education/stat-notice-closure-merger (scan the QR code below), by emailing: school.sufficiency@hackney.gov.uk, or by writing to:

School Sufficiency & Estates Team
Hackney Council
Hackney Service Centre
1 Hillman Street
London, E8 1DY

The closing date for receipt of responses to the representation period is 5 March 2025 at 5pm. The Council's Cabinet will meet after the end of the representation period, in April 2025, to take the final decision on whether to close St Mary's CofE Primary School.

This notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be viewed at: consultation.hackney.gov.uk/children-education/stat-notice-closure-merger

If you require a paper copy of this, please contact us via email at: school.sufficiency@hackney.gov.uk.

Terry Bryan

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Bryan'.

Assistant Director, Schools Estate Strategy

Publication date: 6 February 2025



Full Statutory Proposal to discontinue (close) St Mary's Church of England (CofE) Primary School

1. Contact details (name and address of the proposer):

Hackney Council
Hackney Service Centre
1 Hillman Street
London
E8 1DY
Tel: 020 8356 3000
Email: school.sufficiency@hackney.gov.uk

1a. Name, address and category of school proposed to be discontinued:

St Mary's Church of England Primary School (voluntary aided school)
Barn St
London
N16 0JT
Tel: 020 8800 2645
Email: admin-office@st-marys.hackney.sch.uk

2. Implementation

Date on which it is proposed to close the school: 31 August 2025

It is proposed to implement the closure as follows:

- No reception year pupils will be admitted for the 2025/26 school year. Parents and carers who have expressed a preference for this year have been informed of the proposal for closure in 2025, before the closing date for applications on 15 January 2025.
- Current reception, Years 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 pupils will be transferred to other nearby schools (parents will be invited to express a preference for these schools in accordance with the arrangements set out in Section 5 below.)
- Pupils in Year 6 will transfer to secondary school for the start of the 2025/26 school year.

3. Reasons for Closure

The proposal arises due to a fall in pupil numbers and the associated impact on the educational and financial viability of the school. The school is being proposed for closure due to underlying sustainability issues relating to its unrecoverable cumulative budget, which is projected to reach a deficit position of £336,856 by the end of the current financial year (2024/25), very low pupil numbers and admission patterns that have seen a substantial decline in its pupil roll over the previous six-year period:

Pupil Roll (Oct Census)	Roll	Capacity (R - Y6)	% Surplus
2019	178	210	15
2020	165	210	21
2021	154	210	27
2022	132	210	37
2023	98	210	53
2024	65	210	69

The current pupil roll numbers are now less than a third of its planned capacity for 210 pupils. The Council is proposing the closure of St Mary's CofE Primary School because the school is no longer sustainable.

The school's numbers are now so low that it is necessary to have mixed aged classes with pupils across two year groups. The curriculum has had to be narrowed so that children are missing out on opportunities that would normally be available at other local schools. The above changes have led to a reduction in teaching staff and the school now employs just four teachers. The school's after school club is no longer viable.

Having reviewed the school's financial position against its reducing pupil roll the Council has concluded that the budget position is very likely to further deteriorate. To reach a sustainable financial position it is likely to compromise the quality of education and standards at the school. This would also have a direct adverse impact on children with the highest level of need.

The leaders of St Mary's CofE Primary School recognise that its current good quality of education cannot be sustained. The London Diocesan Board for Schools (LDBS) recognises that the school is not sustainable.

Borough Position

At the January 2024 pupil census there were 2400 fewer children in the borough's primary schools when compared to January 2017, the year when numbers in our primary schools peaked. The number of children joining reception classes in Hackney's mainstream primary schools has, in fact, been falling since 2015. The reception numbers are predicted to continue falling over the coming years and could see the total primary pupil numbers in mainstream primary schools drop by a further 2700 or more by the mid-2030s.

At the October 2024 census there were 2065 children in reception in mainstream primary schools. This is well below the current reception capacity of 2675 places. This means that there were 610 (23%) unfilled reception places in Hackney. Across all year groups there were 4855 (24%) unfilled places in Hackney.

The Council has a statutory duty to ensure there are a sufficient number of school places for pupils and that places are planned effectively, and aims to reduce surplus places in the borough to a sustainable level.

The fall in numbers together with reduced funding from central government, means that some of our schools are facing major challenges. If we continue to allow schools to remain open with significant levels of surplus places, it may well put schools at severe financial risk.

4. Pupil numbers and admissions - numbers of pupils for whom provision is currently made

St Mary's CofE Primary School is a co-educational voluntary aided school for pupils aged 3-11. The school has a published admission number (PAN) of 30 in each year group, giving a total of 210 places. At the 2024 October pupil census the school had 65 pupils on its roll. No nursery provision is provided by the school.

	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
October 2024 census	8	8	6	5	14	9	15	65

The following table shows the number of unfilled places in each year group at the October 2024 pupil census.

Published Admission Number, roll and unfilled places (October 2024 census)

	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
PAN 2024/25	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	210
October 2024 census	8	8	6	5	14	9	15	65
No. of unfilled places	22	22	24	25	16	21	15	145
% of unfilled places	73%	73%	80%	83%	53%	70%	50%	69%

SEND characteristics of children at St Mary's CofE Primary School are included in section 11 below.

5. Displaced pupils

We will offer each child attending the school a place in a primary school near to their home, that is Ofsted rated 'good' or 'outstanding'. Where possible we will place children at the school preferred by the parents including at other CofE schools.

Other local schools would be able to accommodate the displaced pupils. There are sufficient places at other schools, including CofE schools, within statutory walking distance to accommodate all pupils on roll. The Council would work closely with the LDBS to support families to move to other Church of England schools if that is their preference.

Families will be offered one-to-one support to ensure their children have places at suitable schools, including extra priority for places at nearby schools (where the local authority is responsible for admissions).

The reported number of children on roll at the October 2024 census is outlined in section 4 above. It is expected that pupil numbers will change; they may reduce between now and the final Cabinet decision, and during the implementation period following any Cabinet decision to proceed with the proposals.

No interim arrangements are required for these pupils.

6. Impact on the community

The discontinuation of St Mary's CofE Primary School would reduce the number of surplus primary school places in the borough.

The Council considers that allowing surplus places to remain above 20% through inaction would directly and negatively impact the financial viability of many Hackney schools, which in turn will have an impact on the quality and breadth of the education offered at those schools.

We do not underestimate the impact that this proposal would have on the community, parents, carers, staff and pupils, if approved. Schools are more than places for children to receive education, as they play an important part in their local community. However, the impact of falling rolls is being felt widely across many schools, and it is evident that over time it is becoming increasingly difficult for them to continue to achieve the best possible outcomes for children.

7. Rural primary schools

Not applicable.

8. Balance of denominational provision

The Council is under an obligation to consider the impact on the balance of denominational provision in the area before it determines the outcome of school closure proposals. St Mary's is a Church of England (CofE) school. Were St Mary's to close then other nearby CofE

primary school options would continue to be available in Hackney and neighbouring Islington.

There has been a significant decline in the number of applications for CofE primary schools in Hackney over recent years and this mirrors the decline in the borough's Christian population, as evidenced by the last national census, where in Hackney the proportion of Christian residents reduced by 7.9% between 2011 and 2021. Church of England schools have always provided education for families regardless of whether or not they are practising Christians. However it is evident that these changes to the borough's population have had a particular impact on the pupil recruitment at St Mary's CofE and other faith schools.

The table below shows the balance of denominational provision at entry to Reception over a ten year period. For 2025/26 the impact of the proposed closures is reflected and demonstrates that the balance of denominational provision in the borough would be retained.

School Year	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26
Reception Places in faith schools	585	615	600	600	600	600	600	570	570	570	480
Places in non-faith schools	2495	2555	2555	2555	2435	2435	2435	2330	2210	2105	2045
Total Places	3080	3170	3155	3155	3035	3035	3035	2900	2780	2675	2525
% faith places	19.0%	19.4%	19.0%	19.0%	19.8%	19.8%	19.8%	19.7%	20.5%	21.3%	19.0%

9. Maintained nursery schools

Not applicable - St Mary's CofE Primary School is not a maintained nursery school.

10. Sixth form provision

Not applicable.

11. Special Educational Needs (SEN) Provision

No specialist places are specifically reserved for pupils with special needs at St Mary's CofE Primary School. The number and percentage of children with Education, Health and Care Plans and requiring SEN support is outlined below (October 2024 census).

	Number of pupils with EHCPs	% of pupils with EHCPs	Number of pupils requiring SEN support	% of pupils with SEN Support
St Mary's CofE Primary School*	5	8%	13	20%
Hackney (primary phase)*	948	6%	2762	18%
England (state-funded primary schools)**	136,642	3%	651,458	14%

* Source: Hackney October 2024 pupil census

** Source: Department for Education, Special educational needs in England, Academic year 2023/24, Published: June 2024

The Council understands that a change of setting for pupils with SEN can often be challenging and require additional support to ensure a successful transition. Officers from the Council are making arrangements for children with EHCPs and those on SEN support to ensure that they are appropriately placed. Children identified as having a special educational

need and receiving SEN Support will be able to continue doing so at any school.

If the decision is taken to proceed as proposed, parents will be supported to help them understand their options and find out their preferences for alternative schools for their children. Families with children who have an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) impacted by this proposal will be directly supported by the SEN team to explain the process of how their children will transfer to other schools if this proposal is implemented. Families with children receiving SEN support will be offered one-to-one support to ensure their children have places at suitable schools, including extra priority for places at nearby schools (where the local authority is responsible for admissions).

The Council acknowledges the excellent support provided by Hackney schools for children with SEND and particularly at St Mary's CofE Primary School. Unfortunately the support provided will become increasingly difficult to sustain for schools with falling rolls. The financial impact of low pupil numbers is cumulative and means that, in the coming years, these schools will be unable to continue to provide the same level of support without exhausting contingency funds or going into deficit.

As a result of this proposal, outcomes for pupils with SEND may improve as they would move to a more financially viable and therefore long term sustainable school. This means that the school would be able to provide the additional necessary support and resources required to support children with EHCPs and those on SEN support.

12. Travel

All children on roll at St Mary's CofE Primary School will be offered places at local schools. Every parent is able to make a preference for an alternative school.

It is recognised that these pupils will need to make new journeys to school and may need to travel slightly further to other schools. However, in the majority of cases the journey to the new school will be less than 2 miles.

Eligibility for assistance with home to school travel will be determined in line with the Council's home to school travel policy, which can be accessed at education.hackney.gov.uk/content/help-home-school-travel

13. Procedure for making representations (objections and comments)

Within four weeks from the date of publication of this proposal, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by visiting consultation.hackney.gov.uk/children-education/stat-notice-closure-merger (scan the QR code below), by emailing: school.sufficiency@hackney.gov.uk, or by writing to:

School Sufficiency & Estates Team
Hackney Council
Hackney Service Centre
1 Hillman Street
London
E8 1DY

The closing date for responses to be received is 5 March 2025 at 5pm.



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We will consider your request and get back to you in the next five working days.

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- اگر آپ یہ جاننا چاہتے ہیں کہ دستاویز میں کیا لکھا ہے تو ازراہ کرم مناسب باکس میں صحیح کا نشان لگائے اور اپنا نام، پتہ اور فون نمبر اس صفحہ کے نیچے لکھئے اور اسے نیچے دیئے گئے پتہ پر واپس بھیج دیجئے۔ (Urdu)
- Nếu bạn muốn biết tài liệu này nói gì hãy đánh dấu vào hộp thích hợp, điền tên, địa chỉ và số điện thoại của bạn vào cuối trang này và gửi lại theo địa chỉ dưới đây. (Vietnamese)
- אויב ווילט איר וויסן וואס דער דאָקומענט זאגט, ביטע טיק די פאסיגע קעסטל, שרייב דיין נאָמען, אַדרעס און טעלעפאָן נומער און שיק עס צוריק צו די אַדרעס אונטן. (Yiddish)

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Consultation Team, Hackney Town
Hall, Mare Street, London, E8 1EA**