



Hamstead Infant School and Hamstead Junior School

June 2023

THE FUTURE FOR HAMSTEAD INFANT SCHOOL AND HAMSTEAD JUNIOR SCHOOL

What is the proposal?

Sandwell Council is consulting parents / carers, staff and the local community on the future of Hamstead Infant School and Hamstead Junior School. We have proposals which we believe will result in an improvement in educational provision for all pupils in the area by ensuring that resources available to both schools are used in the most effective way to meet the needs of learners.

We have written this for parents / carers, staff and the local community served by the two schools so that you are aware of the proposals and so that you can let us know your views.

There are two possibilities for the future of the two schools:

Either

- **the amalgamation of the schools on 1st January 2024 to form one 2 Form Entry (60 places per year group) primary school operating on the existing sites with a capacity for 420 pupils.**

Or

- **the two schools could remain as they are and continue to operate in the way they do at present.**

This document:

- explains why the possible change is being proposed.
- covers in detail the implications for the two schools.
- includes a response form for your comments.

Before any decision is made, we would like to know what you think.

2. HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE CONSULTATION

A letter has been sent to parents / carers of children at the schools and staff, directing them to this document via each school's website:

www.hamstead-inf.sandwell.sch.uk and

www.hamsteadjuniorschool.co.uk

Copies have been circulated to other interested parties, including the local Member of Parliament and Ward Councillors.

Hard copies are available at either school or by contacting Sharon Hammick, Project Officer, School Organisation, Children and Education Directorate on 07917 077876 or email

sharon_hammick@sandwell.gov.uk

You are invited to express your views on the proposal at an event organised at both Hamstead Infant and Hamstead Junior Schools on Tuesday 13th June 2023.

Please note that this will be an appointment led event, requiring interested parties to make a booking prior to the event, between the hours of 4.00 and 8.00pm. This will allow us to manage the process effectively, minimise waiting times and ensure that appropriate officers are available to offer advice and guidance relating to specific matters of interest.

Bookings can be made by telephone or email by contacting the School Organisation on 07917 077876 or sharon_hammick@sandwell.gov.uk

The closing date for booking an appointment is Monday 12th June 2023.

If you cannot attend, we also welcome your views in writing. Please use the form at the end of this booklet, and return it to either school, or the address on the form, by 5.00pm, Monday 3rd July 2023. All views and comments must be received by this date in order to be considered by the Council when we decide whether or not to proceed with the proposal.

3. WHY WE ARE PROPOSING A CHANGE

Hamstead Infant School and Hamstead Junior School are in the Newton Ward in Great Barr. Both schools have the capacity to admit up to 60 children in each year group. The current and projected numbers on roll at the two schools (as at January 2023) are given as follows:

Pupil numbers and school buildings

	School Capacity	January 2023 Number on roll	Forecast based on October 2022		
			2023	2024	2025
Hamstead Infant School	180	189	180	180	180
Hamstead Junior School	240	232	240	240	240
Total	420	421	420	420	420

(Hamstead Infant School has a 78 place (39 full-time equivalent) nursery, and offers both part and full-time places – nursery figures are not included in the above table)

These figures indicate that both schools will continue to be popular.

The running costs of the two schools are inevitably higher than the costs of running a single primary school. Each school currently has its own management and administrative structures. If we keep the two separate schools a lot of money will continue to be used on management and administration which therefore cannot be spent directly on the education of children.

The Local Authority has previously amalgamated a number of schools in the borough to form all-through schools in the interest of providing better educational outcomes for the pupils. The opportunity to consider the option at Hamstead Junior School has arisen due to the vacant post of Head Teacher at Hamstead Infant School.

4. STANDARDS

The most recent Ofsted inspection reports are available on the Ofsted website.

Hamstead Infant School:

<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/21/103896>

Hamstead Junior School

<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/21/103895>

School performance data is available on each school's website. Bringing the two schools together has a number of potential benefits to pupils which can impact on standards:-

- One curriculum and assessment model which focusses on improving pupil outcomes at all key stages.
- Continuity in teaching approaches.
- Shared teacher knowledge on how to support pupils and get the best out of them.
- One set of policies and procedures with a focus on standards.

5. POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSAL

- **Budget and staffing flexibility**

A single Head Teacher and Governing Board of one school would provide more flexibility in responding to the needs of the school through having a single larger pool of resources than either of the individual schools through the combined teaching and non-teaching staff. Deployment of staff and other resources across both sites of the school will enrich the curriculum delivery and also allow for more flexibility when additional staffing support is required.

- **Management and support structure**

Having just one school would provide a single school management and support structure. Less money would need to be spent on management and administration freeing it up to be spent directly on children and in the community. A revised set of 'whole school' policies and practices would be developed as part of planning the way the new school will work.

- **Continuity of Learning**

At present with the two schools as separate establishments, parents of Year 2 children at Hamstead Infant School must apply for their children to attend Hamstead Junior School, with no guarantee that they will secure a place.

Should the amalgamation proceed, from 1st January 2024 parents / carers of children in Year 2 will no longer need to apply to secure a Year 3 place.

With lots of opportunities for staff and pupils to work together as one school community, movement of pupils from Year 2 to Year 3 would be seamless.

- **Greater breadth of staff experience**

Recent curriculum developments, including new expectations from Ofsted have led to an increase in the number and range of specialist

tasks to be completed in schools. The sharing of these tasks amongst a larger number of staff with a wider range of experience, would mean an improvement in the standard of education that pupils receive. A larger number of staff would enable school leaders to increase extra-curricular opportunities for pupils.

- **Increased opportunities for staff development**

A wide range of teaching and learning expertise is needed in a primary school. The skills and knowledge of teaching staff would be extended. This would benefit the children and support the recruitment and induction of new staff and the retention of existing colleagues.

- **Improving the environment for learning**

The Head Teacher and staff of a single school could plan to use all of the available school buildings and outdoor areas to provide a greater range of educational facilities and activities.

6. POSSIBLE DISADVANTAGES OF THE PROPOSAL

Although we have identified many benefits from the proposal, we recognise that you may have several concerns which need to be considered.

- **Budget implications**

In the longer term the budget for the new school will be smaller than the total amount currently available to both schools combined but the costs will be less as savings will be made from running one school instead of two and from other economies of scale. The overall effect on the new school is expected to be broadly neutral.

This issue is addressed fully in section 10 titled 'Finance' below. Our view is that the final decision on whether to go ahead or not must be made on the basis of giving the children the best chance of a good quality education.

7. WHEN WOULD THE PROPOSAL TAKE PLACE?

The amalgamation would be achieved by the closure of Hamstead Infant School which would take place on 31st December 2023. Hamstead Junior School would be expanded to become a two-form entry primary school as of 1st January 2024.

All children currently on roll at both schools and children who have been offered a Reception place at Hamstead Infant School, or a year 3 place at Hamstead Junior School will become pupils at the new primary school.

8. LOCAL AUTHORITY SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS DURING REORGANISATIONS

There is a School Improvement Adviser attached to each school. The level of support each school gets is determined according to individual need, but is sufficient to support school personnel and to ensure that the school is supported professionally and pastorally. The School Improvement Adviser will be one of the key personnel supporting schools through the reorganisation process if it goes ahead.

The school's Human Resources provider will also provide support to the schools throughout the process and will also provide support to individual members of staff.

9. WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

The consultation period for this proposal ends at 5.00pm on 3rd July 2023. The Council will then need to consider the outcome of the consultation exercise and decide whether to proceed with the proposal. The Council could decide not to proceed, in which case both schools would continue as present as separate schools.

If the outcome of this process leads the Council to decide to go ahead with the proposal, it has to publish a legal notice called a 'Statutory Proposal'. This notice, which would be published in September 2023 and would formally state that the Council intends to close Hamstead Infant School and expand Hamstead Junior School to become a two-form entry Primary School on the existing schools' sites. The notice would explain how and when it would do this and would also give people the opportunity to make formal representations about the proposals. These representations would need to be made within 4 weeks of the publication of the Statutory Notice.

The Council would consider any formal objections in October 2023. A final decision would then be expected.

The table below shows the likely timeline should approval be given for the proposal to proceed:

DATE	ACTION
Tuesday 6 th June	Initial consultation begins
Monday 3 rd July	Initial consultation ends
To Be Confirmed	Cabinet meeting to consider feedback from consultation and whether to publish a Statutory Proposal
Monday 25 th September	Publish statutory notice
Sunday 22 nd October	End of statutory notice and representation period
w/c Monday 23 rd October	Director – Children and Education considers outcome of representation period and makes a final decision on the proposal

10. FINANCE

When a school closes, any balance (whether surplus or deficit) shall revert to the Local Authority; it cannot be transferred as a balance to any other school, even where a school is a successor to the closing school.

The combined budget of both schools is currently £2,249,321 (taking into account the original budget share, Early Years and high needs funding). The budget of any school is worked out on the basis of a School Funding Formula that takes into account the number of children on roll and their pupil characteristics, i.e. prior attainment, English as an additional language. This means that the budget can fluctuate from year to year as the numbers of children go up or down and the pupil characteristics change.

11. THE SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND OUTDOOR AREAS

The new Governing Board will be responsible for management of the site and buildings for both Hamstead Infant School and Hamstead Junior School.

12. THE GOVERNING BOARD

The current Governing Boards for both Hamstead Infant School and Hamstead Junior School continue to look after the two schools until the 31st December 2023.

Representatives of each Board will work together to make decisions on behalf of the new single school. The Local Authority will determine the size and membership of this group. This group will be responsible for ensuring that any action needed to prepare for the opening of the new school is undertaken.

The existing Governing Board compositions and the proposed temporary Governing Board composition are given in the table below:

	Existing composition of Governing Board		Proposed temporary Management Board structure
	Hamstead Infant	Hamstead Junior	Primary School
Parents	2	2	-
Staff (including Head Teacher)	2	2	1 (Head Teacher – Advisory Capacity)
Local Authority	1 (vacant)	1(vacant)	-
Chair of Governors	1 (included in co-opted figures)	1 (included in co-opted figures)	-
Vice Chair	1 (included in co-opted figures)	2 (included in co-opted figures)	-
Community / Co-opted	5	6	6
Total	10	11	8

13. STAFFING

The number of staff currently employed at each school is as follows:

	Teaching ¹		Non-teaching	
	Full time	Part time	Full time	Part time
Hamstead Infant	8	2	11	12
Hamstead Junior	7	3	9	12
Total	15	5	20	24

The staffing structure of a new 2 form entry primary school would be the responsibility of the Governing Board to determine. There will be discussions with relevant trades unions about the staffing process.

In the interim, the Head Teacher of Hamstead Junior School will provide leadership support to Hamstead Infant School and determine any other additional arrangements in conjunction with the Joint Management Board.

¹ Including Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher

CONSULTATION ON THE REORGANISATION OF HAMSTEAD INFANT AND HAMSTEAD JUNIOR SCHOOLS
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CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

Are you a:

	Please tick	
	At Hamstead Infant	At Hamstead Junior
Parent / Carer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Governor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member of staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member of the community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Do you agree that Hamstead Infant and Hamstead Junior Schools should amalgamate on 1st January 2024 to form a new 2 form entry Primary School operating on the existing sites (so that it will be a school with a capacity for 420 pupils)

Yes / No* (*please delete as necessary)

Please add any comments here (and overleaf if necessary)

Signed:

Date:

Please return this form by 5.00pm, Monday 3rd July 2023 to either school or, if you prefer to: Sharon Hammick, Project Officer, School Organisation, Children and Education, Sandwell Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, B69 3DE (or email: sharon_hammick@sandwell.gov.uk)

The information you provide on this form is subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations. Where applicable information entered will be forwarded to the relevant Education / Council sections for action or for a reply to be given.