

# PROPOSAL TO AMALGAMATE HAREFIELD INFANT SCHOOL AND HAREFIELD JUNIOR SCHOOL - SUMMER 2025

<b>Committee name</b>	Children, Families & Education Select Committee
<b>Officer reporting</b>	Abi Preston – Director of Education & SEND
<b>Papers with report</b>	Appendix 1 – Proposal for pre-publication – Harefield Infant School & Harefield Junior School Proposal Appendix 2 – Pre-publication Information Session presentation Appendix 3 – Harefield Schools consultation Public Notice Appendix 4 – Harefield Schools – Statutory Proposal for Amalgamation Appendix 5 – Harefield Schools Amalgamation – Frequently Asked Questions Appendix 6 – Financial Benchmarking for Harefield Infant School Appendix 7 – Financial Benchmarking for Harefield Junior School Appendix 8 – Harefield Schools - Senior Leadership Structure 2024-2025 Appendix 9 – Information sessions presentation – Proposal to amalgamate Harefield Infant and Junior Schools – Summer 2025
<b>Ward</b>	Harefield Village, All

## HEADLINES

The London Borough of Hillingdon are consulting on a proposal for Harefield Infant School and Harefield Junior School to amalgamate to form a single two-form entry maintained primary school for children aged 3 to 11 years. This change would take effect from 1st April 2026, if approved, with a total published pupil number of 420. In order to amalgamate the 2 schools and create a primary school, the Council are proposing to close Harefield Infant School and extend the age range of Harefield Junior School.

Following the DfE statutory process, approval is being requested (Local Authority as the decision-maker) to amalgamate the two schools.

## RECOMMENDATION:

**That the Children, Families & Education Select Committee provide comments to Cabinet on the proposal to amalgamate Harefield Infant School and Harefield Junior School, by closing Harefield Infant School, and extending the age range of the Junior School from 7–11-year-olds, to 3–11-year-old**

*Note: Cabinet is currently scheduled to consider this matter on 18 September 2025.*

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Council, and schools are expected to consider the long-term vision of each school, ensure the best outcomes for our children and young people, and the sustainability of schools. Part of this responsibility is to continue to:

- improve and provide the best possible education and care for every child;
- provide an excellent working environment and experience for staff; and
- support and work with their local community

Both Harefield Infant School and Harefield Junior School are community-maintained schools located in the Harefield Village ward and were both graded 'Good' at their last Ofsted Inspection. Harefield Infant School was inspected in March 2023 and maintained its grade from the full inspection in December 2012, and Harefield Junior School was inspected in October 2023 and improved its grade from 'Requires Improvement' from the full inspection in September 2019.

Both of these schools are located adjacent to each other and effectively share one site. As they are community-maintained schools, this means they are both maintained by Hillingdon Council and the Council owns the buildings and the land. The Local Authority is also responsible for determining the school admission arrangements for both schools.

Harefield Infant School and Harefield Junior School have been in a federation since October 2018. This means that, although they are legally two separate schools, they operate as much as possible as one school. There is one federated Governing Board that oversee both schools, one Executive Headteacher, and one Head of School for both schools.

The Hillingdon Infant and Junior Amalgamation Policy, September 2022, (see **Background Paper 1**) states that "The London Borough of Hillingdon will require Governing Bodies of all separate infant and junior schools to consider amalgamating their two linked schools when one or more of the following 'trigger circumstances' occur, unless there are compelling and overriding reasons"

- a) A headteacher vacancy arises in either or both schools.
- b) Total pupil numbers in either school are 25% or more below the Published Admission Number.**
- c) Ofsted inspection in one of the schools identifies a 'Requires Improvement' judgement.
- d) One or both of the schools cannot set a balanced budget or has financial problems.
- e) One or both of the schools involved is judged to be a 'School causing concern' by the London Borough of Hillingdon.
- f) One or both schools have PANs or are recruiting at below two forms of entry – making the individual schools relatively small and at risk of becoming unviable within the Hillingdon funding context.**
- g) Other pressures whereby the educational provision would be improved through amalgamation such as provision of SEN support, staff recruitment and retention or issues linked to the buildings.

In line with the Council's School Amalgamation Policy, two triggers (highlighted above) have been met which warrant consideration of amalgamation for the schools in question:

## Pupil Numbers 25% or More Below Published Admission Number (PAN):

Current enrolment data shows that total pupil numbers in Harefield Infant School are more than 25% below PANs. This under-enrolment indicates a significant surplus of places, which can lead to inefficiencies in resource allocation, reduced funding per pupil, and challenges in maintaining a broad and balanced curriculum.

## Small School Size and Below Two Forms of Entry:

Both schools are either operating with PANs below two forms of entry (i.e., fewer than 60 pupils per year group) or are recruiting below this level. In the context of Hillingdon's funding model, such small schools are increasingly at risk of becoming financially unviable. Smaller schools face greater difficulty in absorbing fluctuations in pupil numbers, managing fixed costs, and sustaining high-quality provision across all areas of the curriculum.

Together, these two triggers highlight the growing vulnerability of the schools and the need to explore structural solutions—such as amalgamation—to ensure long-term sustainability, educational quality, and efficient use of public resources.

The birth rate in Hillingdon has been steadily declining since 2016, which has impacted primary aged pupil numbers across the Borough. The combined pupil on-roll figures at Harefield Infant and Harefield Junior Schools have decreased over the past 6 Spring census' as noted in the tables below, and meet the triggers b & f listed above, despite the Published Admission Number (PAN) of the schools being reduced in 2023 / 24.

### Harefield Infant School

Harefield Infant School						
Census	Whole School PAN	Pupils on Roll				% Vacancies
		R	Yr 1	Yr 2	Total on Roll	
Jan-20	270	75	64	71	210	22%
Jan-21	270	55	67	63	185	31%
Jan-22	270	51	57	62	170	37%
Jan-23	270	62	52	54	168	38%
Jan-24	180	36	59	45	140	22%
Jan-25	180	39	35	60	134	26%

### Harefield Junior School

Harefield Junior School							
Census	Whole School PAN	Pupils on Roll					% Vacancies
		Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6	Total on Roll	
Jan-20	360	71	85	54	69	279	23%
Jan-21	360	67	66	82	53	268	26%
Jan-22	360	58	61	65	82	266	26%
Jan-23	360	63	53	55	66	237	34%
Jan-24	240	48	62	52	55	217	10%
Jan-25	240	43	47	60	51	201	16%

## Equality Impact Assessment for the proposed amalgamation

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carefully considered in relation to the proposed amalgamation of Harefield Infant and Harefield Junior Schools (**Background paper 2**). It is not expected that this proposal will have any significant impact on pupils, staff, or the wider community, as the newly formed primary school will continue to operate in much the same way as it currently does.

Since all children currently enrolled at both schools will remain on the same site, within the same school community, and continue to be supported by the same staff, and curriculum, no adverse effects are anticipated for pupils with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

Key points include:

- No change to the school's Net Capacity;
- No change to the Published Admissions Number (PAN) for either school;
- No change to the curriculum being delivered. The assessment highlights that White boys with English as their first language, and pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support are overrepresented compared to borough-wide averages. As such, these groups may be more vulnerable to any unintended negative effects of the proposed changes. However, the EIA has demonstrated that the funding to support children with SEND (SEND Support and EHCP) and those who are disadvantaged (pupil premium funding) are calculated on a per-pupil basis and therefore funding for these cohorts will not be impacted by the amalgamation directly.

The amalgamation process will be managed with care and sensitivity, ensuring that the needs of all pupils, particularly those with SEND, are fully considered and supported throughout.

This assessment may be updated following the outcome of the public consultation. The impact of the proposed amalgamation will be closely monitored in collaboration with the school and its governing body, and appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented if necessary.

## Financial Implications

The Designated Schools Grant (DSG) Schools Block Funding represents the majority of funding for schools within Hillingdon, although each school may receive additional DSG funding or Grants.

If the schools amalgamate, the combined school will only be eligible for one lump sum (an allocation from the Dedicated Schools Grant provided to individual schools to support fixed costs that is currently £159,662 a year – based on the budget for 2025/26) in the future.

As detailed in the [Schools operational guide: 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#),, “where schools amalgamate after 1 April 2025, the new school will receive funding equivalent to the formula funding of the closing schools added together for the appropriate proportion of the year. This means that they receive the combined lump sums for the remainder of the year and 70% of the second lump sum in the following year. Local authorities can apply to provide a second year of protection. This needs to be discussed and agreed with Schools Forum.”

The financial implication of the amalgamation of the two schools will be the eventual loss of the lump sum income usually available per school. The school can however, benefit from better economies of scale which could mitigate the impact of this loss.

Both schools combined funding is approximately £2,231k funding per year. If the proposal is approved, this would mean that following financial year (2027/28) after amalgamation the amount received would be £2,183k and the second financial year (2028/29) funding would be £2,075k due to the eventual loss of one lump sum payment. The figures above and detailed in the table below are based on the assumption that the number of pupils remains constant.

DSG Schools Block Funding	2026/27 Financial Year	2027/28 Financial Year	2028/29 Financial Year
Harefield Infant School funding	£901k	£852k	£745k
Harefield Junior School funding	£1,330k	£1,330k	£1,330k
Combined Harefield Schools funding	<b>£2,231k</b>	<b>£2,183k</b>	<b>£2,075k</b>

It is important to note that other DSG funding e.g. Early Years funding (EYSFF), Pupil Premium and other grants paid to the school may be affected in future years, however these are based on pupil numbers and would not be affected by amalgamation (these would be depending upon the grant conditions, guidance and specific calculations).

Once the school receive their budget, they decide how this is allocated across the school, and what the funding is spent on including staff and resources.

## RESIDENT BENEFIT

As both schools are maintained schools, Hillingdon Council can propose to close Harefield Infant School under Section 15 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, with notice given in accordance with The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013 and propose to extend the age range of Harefield Junior School from 7–11-year-olds to 3–11-year-olds, with notice given in accordance with The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013.

The two proposals follow two separate guidance processes: [Opening and closing maintained schools](#) and [Making significant changes \('prescribed alterations'\) to maintained schools](#). This sets out an expectation that interested parties are consulted informally prior to publication of a statutory proposal and formal consultation.

While there is no longer a statutory 'pre-publication' consultation period for proposed prescribed alteration changes to increase the age range of a school, there is a statutory requirement to consult any parties the proposer thinks appropriate before publishing proposals under section 15 proposals to close a maintained school. Consultation was carried out in Spring 2025 with the two Harefield schools related to this proposal, however, the following engagement with all 10 sets of Infant and Junior Schools in Hillingdon by Council Officers should also be noted:

- 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024 – a letter was sent to all Infant and Junior Headteachers in keeping with the Council's Infant and Junior Schools Amalgamation policy (Successful, Sustainable,

Viable Schools). As part of this policy, on the retirement or resignation of the Headteacher from either of the linked Infant and Junior Schools, the two schools will amalgamate and form an all through primary school.

- 18<sup>th</sup> June 2024 – Head Teachers Termly – Presentation by Head of Education and Lifelong Learning to go through benefits of infant and junior amalgamations and recognising the different contexts.
- 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024 - Amalgamation Information Session 1 for Head Teachers and Governors of Infant and Junior Schools
- 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2024 - Amalgamation Information Session 2 for Head Teachers and Governors of Infant and Junior Schools

A period of pre-publication consultation was carried out between Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025 and Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025. The end of the consultation was originally the Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2025, however, this was extended to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025 following feedback and a request from an attendee, during a consultation event with the school and other stakeholders, to provide additional time as a result of the school holidays. An additional 26 responses were received during this extended period.

An informal consultation document (see **Appendix 1**) was made available in hard copy and electronic form, that outlined the proposals and relevant background information. Hard copies were made available on request from the Local Authority. This information was sent to the Executive Head and Chair of Governors to share with parents of all children attending both schools on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025 on how to access the consultation document and submit a response. Information about the informal consultation and a survey about the proposals was included on the Hillingdon 'Have Your Say' webpage.

Three online consultation meetings were hosted by Local Authority officers that provided parents/carers, staff, governors and members of the public the opportunity to comment on and ask questions about the proposals. Officers had planned for two of these events to be held face to face at the Harfield Library, however based on the strong interest expressed by parents, carers, and members of the local community at the start of this statutory process and in anticipation of a significant turnout, we were committed to ensuring the meeting was as inclusive and accessible as possible. Given that the originally proposed venue was not of sufficient capacity to safely accommodate all those wishing to attend, we concluded that hosting the event online was the most appropriate and effective means of enabling broad participation and facilitating the opportunity for attendees to ask questions. One of these events was reserved for school staff only. A summary of dates and attendees is set out in the table below:

Information Session Date	Information Session Time	Attendees	Number of Attendees
Tuesday 25 <sup>th</sup> March 2025	5:00 pm to 6:00 pm	Virtual Meeting Public	40
Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup> March 2025	2:00 pm to 3:00 pm	Virtual Meeting Public	40
Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup> March 2025	4:30 pm to 5:30 pm	Virtual Staff Meeting	7 (Harefield Infant and Juniors schools arranged for many of their staff to join on a single device)

Please see **Appendix 2 – Information Session Presentation** for a copy of the presentation used at the events.

Parents, carers, staff, governors and members of the public were also invited to share their views by responding to the consultation by any of the following ways;

- completing the on-line consultation form
- writing directly to the Council
- attending an online event

Following the end of the pre-publication consultation period, a Chief Officer Report was submitted which details the key themes raised in the responses (**Background paper 3**). The report was approved on 16th May 2025 and recommended proceeding to a formal consultation process through the publication of a statutory notice for the expansion of the age range at Harefield Junior School, and the (technical) closure of Harefield Infant School, to become one school, with the change of name from Harefield Junior School and Harefield Infant school, to Harefield Primary School, to achieve the amalgamation.

## **Publication**

As part of the formal consultation, the Council issued a Public Notice (**Appendix 3**) which was sent to the West London Gazette for publication on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2025, with 6 copies put up around the school site on entrance/ exits in line with the statutory process.

As the proposal for one change is linked to another, this was made clear in any notices that were published. Where a proposal by a local authority is 'related' to a proposal by other proposers such as this, the 2 notices could be published together and cross-refer to the other.

The full proposal was published on the schools' websites and the Council website, and included information setting out (in line with the statutory process):

- how copies of the proposal may be obtained;
- that anybody can object to, or comment on, the proposal;
- the date that the representation period ends; and
- the local authority's address to which objections or comments should be submitted.

## **Representation**

The statutory proposal (**Appendix 4**), was available from Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at 9:00am to Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2025 at 5:00pm on the consultation page of the Hillingdon Council website. This included a brief outline of the proposed change, the full proposal, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document (**Appendix 5**), a copy of the Public Notice, a questionnaire to obtain feedback, financial benchmarking for Harefield Infant School (**Appendix 6**) and Harefield Junior School (**Appendix 7**) and Senior Leadership Structure 2024-2025 (**Appendix 8**).

Information regarding the consultation was publicised to all schools within the Borough via email. Both Harefield Infant School and Harefield Junior School shared the information on their school webpages by including the pdfs of the above documents as well as including a link to the Hillingdon Council consultation webpage.

As Hillingdon Council also receives school admissions applications from residents who live outside of the Borough, the consultation was designed to be inclusive. Therefore, officers contacted the following surrounding Councils to share details of the consultation:

- London Borough of Ealing
- London Borough of Hounslow
- London Borough of Brent
- London Borough of Harrow
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Buckinghamshire County Council
- Slough Borough Council

There were also drop-in sessions at the school site, where Officers were on hand to answer any questions in person and to explain the proposal as necessary. This was scheduled for Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025 between 2:00pm – 3:00pm (which ran over past 3.30pm), for stakeholder including parents/guardians, school staff and residents and a further session was held for school staff separately, from 4:00pm to 5:00pm. Each of these sessions were attended by approx 30 people. A presentation was created to share with stakeholders at the information sessions (**Appendix 9**) and subsequently added to the Council's website as it was unable to shown on the day.

To provide stakeholders with an opportunity to ask questions and comment on the proposal, two virtual information sessions were scheduled for Wednesday 2nd July 2025, from 12:30pm to 1:30pm and from 6:00pm to 7:00pm to ensure broad accessibility.

Unfortunately, due to unforeseen technical issues, some residents were unable to access the 12:30pm session. Only one individual successfully joined the session but left without contributing. In recognition of this disruption and to ensure all stakeholders had a fair opportunity to engage, an additional virtual session was held on Wednesday 16th July 2025, from 1:00pm to 2:00pm, which was attended by one person in addition to Officers. The information for the new session was shared with the school and added to the Harefield Schools consultation page on the Hillingdon Council website.

The evening session on Wednesday 2nd July 2025, from 6:00pm to 7:00pm, was attended by 8 people, in addition to Officers.

The consultation closed on Wednesday 30th July. All responses will be thoroughly considered and reflected in the report presented to Cabinet, ensuring that every voice is heard.

The proposed amalgamation aims to enhance the learning experience for children by offering a more consistent and seamless journey through their primary education. By combining resources from both schools and having one unified staff team, children will benefit from stronger relationships with familiar adults and smoother transitions between year groups.

The consultation period ended at 5:00pm Wednesday 30th July. All feedback received will be carefully reviewed and included in a report to Cabinet, ensuring that every response is shared ahead of any recommendations presented to Cabinet.



## Next steps

If Cabinet approves the proposal to amalgamate Harefield Infant and Harefield Junior Schools, the Education Service will formally notify the Department for Education. The implementation of the proposal will then follow the statutory process set out in the Department for Education's guidance: [School organisation: local-authority-maintained schools - GOV.UK](#), [Opening and closing maintained schools](#) and [Making significant changes \('prescribed alterations'\) to maintained schools](#). This ensures that all legal and procedural requirements are fully met.

## LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to the recommendations within the report.

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Background paper 1](#) – Hillingdon Infant and Junior Amalgamation Policy – September 2022

**Background paper 2** – Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment – Proposed Amalgamation of Harefield Schools

[Background paper 3](#) – Chief Officer Decision Notice – Harefield Infant and Junior Schools

[Background paper 4](#) – Opening and Closing maintained schools

[Background paper 5](#) – Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools.

## APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Proposal for pre-publication – Harefield Infant School & Harefield Junior School Proposal

Appendix 2 – Pre-publication Information Session presentation

Appendix 3 – Harefield Schools consultation Public Notice

Appendix 4 – Harefield Schools – Statutory Proposal for Amalgamation

Appendix 5 – Harefield Schools Amalgamation – Frequently Asked Questions

Appendix 6 – Financial Benchmarking for Harefield Infant School

Appendix 7 – Financial Benchmarking for Harefield Junior School

Appendix 8 – Harefield Schools - Senior Leadership Structure 2024-2025

Appendix 9 – Information sessions presentation – Proposal to amalgamate Harefield Infant and Junior Schools – Summer 2025