

PROPOSAL TO AMALGAMATE WHITEHALL INFANT SCHOOL AND WHITEHALL JUNIOR SCHOOL - SPRING 2026

Committee name	Children, Families & Education Select Committee
Officer reporting	Abi Preston – Director of Education & SEND
Papers with report	Appendix 1 – Equalities Impact Assessment for the proposed amalgamation of Whitehall Infant and Whitehall Junior Schools Appendix 2 – Proposal for pre-publication – Whitehall Infant School & Whitehall Junior School Proposal Appendix 3 – Pre-publication Information Session presentation Appendix 4 – Whitehall Schools consultation Public Notice Appendix 5 – Whitehall Schools – Statutory Proposal for Amalgamation Appendix 6 – Whitehall Schools Amalgamation – Frequently Asked Questions Appendix 7 – Financial Benchmarking for Whitehall Infant School Appendix 8 – Financial Benchmarking for Whitehall Junior School
Ward	Uxbridge, All

HEADLINES

The London Borough of Hillingdon are consulting on a proposal for Whitehall Infant School and Whitehall Junior School to amalgamate to form a single three-form entry maintained primary school for children aged 3 to 11 years. This change would take effect from 1st September 2026, if approved, with a total published pupil number of 630. In order to amalgamate the 2 schools and create a primary school, the Council are proposing to (technically) close Whitehall Infant School and extend the age range of Whitehall Junior School to form a primary school.

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Children, Families & Education Select Committee:

- 1. Review the proposal to amalgamate Whitehall Infant School and Whitehall Junior School, by closing Whitehall Infant School, and extending the age range of the Junior School from 7–11-year-olds, to 3–11-year-olds; and**
- 2. Provide comments to be included in the Cabinet report which will be presented on 23 April 2026.**

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

Officers see a range of benefits in combining the existing schools into a new primary school through the statutory amalgamation process, which include:

- A consistent approach to the ways in which children are taught and supported, recognising the current strengths of both schools.
- Increased opportunities for children in all key stages to come together for pastoral, social and creative activities.
- Consistency of parental involvement throughout the primary phase of education by having the ability to foster longer-term relationships with families within one school.
- Communication between school and parents will be simplified, especially for parents with children in both schools. It would remove any duplication and ensure a joined-up approach for events, training and other matters.
- Removes the need for parents to apply for a place at the Junior School as children would automatically continue their education as part of one Whitehall school.
- Increased career development opportunities for staff through the sharing of a wider range of expertise and the possibility to gain experience and an understanding of all Primary Key Stages.
- Greater opportunity for cost effectiveness through economies of scale e.g. in purchasing, ensuring the best provision possible for the children;

Both Whitehall Infant School and Whitehall Junior School are community maintained schools located in the Uxbridge ward and were both graded 'Good' at their last Ofsted Inspection. Whitehall Infant School was inspected in November 2024 and maintained its grade from the full inspection in March 2015, and Whitehall Junior School was inspected in June 2023 and maintained its grade from the full inspection in September 2014.

Both 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.

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.

Following the announcement that the Headteacher of Whitehall Infant School would be retiring in August 2026, the schools met trigger A as listed above. Initial discussions were then held with both governing bodies to outline and explore the potential for amalgamation.

The potential of amalgamating Infant and Junior schools, in line with the amalgamation policy, has been discussed with schools over the last few years at various collective and individual meetings, and schools have been made aware that the Council would propose this solution under the appropriate circumstances.

Both schools have been affected by the ongoing decline in the birth rate across Hillingdon, which has resulted in Whitehall Infant School and Whitehall Junior School reducing their Published Admissions Numbers from 120 (4FE) to 90 (3FE) from September 2025.

Whitehall Infant School

Whitehall Infant School						
Census	Whole School PAN	Pupils on Roll				% Vacancies
		R	Yr 1	Yr 2	Total on Roll	
Oct-20	360	93	115	86	294	18%
Oct-21	360	100	96	114	310	14%
Oct-22	360	100	107	95	302	16%
Oct-23	360	90	99	102	291	19%
Oct-24	360	87	102	98	287	20%
Oct-25	330	86	88	105	279	15%

*The October 25 figure shows a reduction of 30 in the PAN, as PAN changes only take effect in the year of entry, which in this case, is Reception.

Whitehall Junior School

Whitehall Junior School							
Census	Whole School PAN	Pupils on Roll				% Vacancies	
		Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6		Total on Roll
Oct-20	480	103	87	104	88	382	20%
Oct-21	480	86	99	87	106	378	21%
Oct-22	480	116	88	93	88	385	20%
Oct-23	480	90	115	89	90	384	20%
Oct-24	480	109	87	118	85	399	17%
Oct-25	450	96	110	91	122	419	7%

*The October 25 figure shows a reduction of 30 in the PAN, as PAN changes only take effect in the year of entry, which in this case, is Year 3.

Equality Impact Assessment for the proposed amalgamation

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carefully considered in relation to the proposed amalgamation of Whitehall Infant and Whitehall Junior Schools (**Appendix 1**). 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 identifies that boys, pupils from 'other' ethnic backgrounds, pupils with English as an additional language (EAL), and pupils receiving Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support are overrepresented in the affected cohort when compared to borough-wide averages. These groups may therefore be more susceptible to any unintended negative impacts arising from the proposed changes. However, the EIA confirms that funding streams allocated to support children with SEND (including SEN Support and Education, Health and Care Plans) and pupils who are disadvantaged (through pupil premium funding) are both calculated on a per-pupil basis. As a result, the amalgamation will not directly reduce the level of funding available to these groups.

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 both schools and their governing bodies, and appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented if necessary.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

As both schools are maintained schools, Hillingdon Council can propose to (technically) close Whitehall 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 Whitehall 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 2026 with the two Whitehall 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:

- 11th 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.
- 18th 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.
- 1st July 2024 - Amalgamation Information Session 1 for Head Teachers and Governors of Infant and Junior Schools
- 2nd July 2024 - Amalgamation Information Session 2 for Head Teachers and Governors of Infant and Junior Schools

During the Autumn term of 2025, the local authority was informed that the headteacher of Whitehall Infant School would be retiring at the end of the 2025/26 academic year, with Officers meeting with both headteachers and Chair of Governors in late November 2025. In early January 2026, meetings were held with each Governing Body to outline the proposed amalgamation process and address any questions they had.

A period of pre-publication consultation was carried out between Tuesday 20th January 2026 and Friday 13th February 2026.

An informal consultation document (see **Appendix 2**) 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 both headteachers and Chair of Governors to share with parents of all children attending both schools on Monday 19th January 2026 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. 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
Monday 26 th January 2026	4:00 pm to 5:00 pm	Virtual Staff Meeting	47
Wednesday 28 th January 2026	12:30 pm to 1:30 pm	Virtual Public Meeting	7
Wednesday 28 th January 2026	5:00 pm to 6:00 pm	Virtual Public Meeting	9

Please see **Appendix 3** – 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 online 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 2**). The report was approved on 19th February 2026 and recommended proceeding to a formal consultation process through the publication of a statutory notice for the expansion of the age range at Whitehall Junior School, and the (technical) closure of Whitehall Infant School, to become one primary school.

Publication

As part of the formal consultation, the Council issued a Public Notice (**Appendix 4**) which was sent to the West London Gazette for publication on Wednesday 25th February 2026, 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 5**) is available from Wednesday 25th February 2025 at 9:00am to Wednesday 25th March 2026 at 5:00pm on the consultation page of the Hillingdon Council website. This includes a brief outline of the proposed change, the full proposal, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document (**Appendix 6**), a copy of the Public Notice, a questionnaire to obtain feedback, financial benchmarking for Whitehall Infant School (**Appendix 7**) and Whitehall Junior School (**Appendix 8**).

Information regarding the consultation was publicised to all schools within the Borough via email. Both Whitehall Infant School and Whitehall 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

Drop-in sessions took place on Tuesday 3rd March at the school site and on Monday 9th March online. Officers were available at both sessions to answer questions and to explain the proposal as necessary.

The consultation closes on Wednesday 25th March. All responses will be thoroughly considered and reflected in the report presented to Cabinet, ensuring that every voice is heard.

Conclusion

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 ends at 5:00pm Wednesday 25th March. 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 Whitehall Infant and Whitehall 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.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Dedicated 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 £165,436 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.”

Amalgamating the two schools will ultimately result in the loss of one of the lump-sum funding allocations that each school currently receives. However, the combined school may achieve improved economies of scale, including savings from needing only one headteacher, which could help offset the impact of this funding reduction. If the proposal was approved, the new primary school would receive the same lump sum payment as all other primary schools in the Borough. Funding for pupils with SEND would not be affected by the proposed amalgamation.

Both schools combined funding is approximately £4,624k funding per year. If the proposal is approved, this would mean that following financial year (2027/28) after amalgamation the amount received would be £4,575k and the second financial year (2028/29) funding would be £4,459k. 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 (2 lump sums)	2027/28 Financial Year (1 lump sum + 70% of second lump sum)	2028/29 Financial Year (1 lump sum)
Whitehall Infant School funding	£1,912k	£1,863k	£1,747k
Whitehall Junior School funding	£2,712k	£2,712k	£2,712k
Combined Whitehall Schools funding	£4,624k	£4,575k	£4,459k

* Early Years Funding is not included in the figures above

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.

The amalgamation will have no impact on the Council's General Fund, as all financial implications are contained within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The proposal does not require additional Council funding or create any new pressure on the General Fund.

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](#) – Chief Officer Decision Notice – Whitehall Infant and Junior Schools

[Background paper 3](#) – Opening and Closing Maintained Schools

[Background paper 4](#) – Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Equalities Impact Assessment for the proposed amalgamation of Whitehall Infant and Whitehall Junior Schools

Appendix 2 – Proposal for pre-publication – Whitehall Infant School & Whitehall Junior School Proposal

Appendix 3 – Pre-publication Information Session presentation

Appendix 4 – Whitehall Schools consultation Public Notice

Appendix 5 – Whitehall Schools – Statutory Proposal for Amalgamation

Appendix 6 – Whitehall Schools Amalgamation – Frequently Asked Questions

Appendix 7 – Financial Benchmarking for Whitehall Infant School

Appendix 8 – Financial Benchmarking for Whitehall Junior School