



London Borough of Hackney – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Monday, 22 May 2023

This document outlines the decisions taken by Cabinet on Monday, 22 May 2023.

Decisions listed below that are Key Decisions will come into force and may then be implemented on the expiry of 5 clear working days unless called-in by at least 5 non-executive members in writing and submitted to the Monitoring Officer.

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Contact: Mark Agnew, Governance Officer, [governance@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:governance@hackney.gov.uk), 020 8356 2398

Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
10	CE S190 Education Sufficiency and Estate Strategy - falling rolls	<b>RESOLVED:</b>  That Cabinet approve that informal consultations are carried out on the:  <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Proposed closure of De Beauvoir Primary School from September 2024.</li><li>2. Proposed closure of Randal Cremer Primary School from September 2024.</li><li>3. Proposed merger/amalgamation of Colvestone Primary School and Princess May Primary School, onto the Princess May site from September 2024.</li><li>4. Proposed merger/amalgamation of Baden Powell Primary School and Nightingale Primary School, onto the Nightingale site from September 2024.</li></ol>

## REASONS FOR DECISIONS

### **1. Summary**

Following years of growth, the number of primary aged children joining Hackney primary schools has been in steady decline since 2014/15, a trend observed across London, and most prevalent in inner-London boroughs. Pupil numbers are forecast to continue falling until at least 2028.

School funding is primarily determined by the number of children on roll, and falling rolls equates to reduced funding to deliver education across the borough. While primary schools' rolls are falling but the number of schools remains unchanged, there is effectively less financial resource per school/child.

The Council has a statutory duty to ensure there are a sufficient number of school places for pupils and that places are planned effectively. Published Admission Numbers (PANs) reflect the maximum number of pupils schools can accommodate in each year group: this is derived from dividing the whole school PAN by the number of years within the school. Reductions to PANs have been implemented across several schools in recent years, however, they have not kept pace with falling numbers, leaving the surplus well above viable levels.

The Council monitors surplus reception places, a key measure of demand, and aims to maintain a 5-10% surplus across all Hackney primary schools. In 2023, the reception vacancy rate in Hackney was 21%. Without taking action, surplus reception places are forecast to rise above 25% by 2029.

Allowing surplus places to remain above 20% through inaction would directly and negatively impact the financial viability of many Hackney schools, which will have an impact on education. This is because schools with less income have less money for staff salaries, for extra curricular activities, for equipment, to pay bills and carry out maintenance work. The quality of education and classroom support offered for children in these schools would deteriorate in time, as the affected schools would have to deplete surplus funds or go into deficit to maintain their current education offer.

The proposals outlined in this report begin to address the issue of falling rolls. The Hackney Education team will continue to work together with our schools to review and adjust future plans in line with the

priorities outlined in the Education Sufficiency and Estates Strategy to bring surplus places to within a sustainable range.

## **2. Demand for reception places**

### **2.1 Historical and current demand**

In 2007 a surge in demand for reception places began to occur in Hackney, a trend replicated across other London boroughs. In response to this, LAs created additional places, at speed, either through new provision or by implementing bulge classes in existing schools.

In addition, outside of Hackney Council's control, the Department for Education (DfE) approved the opening of four new free schools/academies, creating a further 290 unplanned reception places: The Olive School (Sep 2013), Hackney New Primary School (2015), Halley House School (Sep 2015), and Mossbourne Riverside Academy (2015). The current number and type of Hackney schools can be viewed in appendix A.

After the surge in demand for reception places between 2007/08 and 2014/15, demand has decreased, with the most recent years seeing drops of over 100 children each year. (Figure 1).

This London-wide decrease in the demand for reception places has resulted in LAs (including Hackney) having to take action to reduce the high levels of surplus reception places to more manageable levels.

Historically, LAs have sought to maintain a level of 5% - 10% surplus reception places against the total number of places available to accommodate in-year arrivals. However, as rolls have reduced, surplus reception rates have far exceeded the target level.

Figure 2 below shows the high level of surplus reception places throughout the borough at the latest school place census (January 2023), ranging from no vacancies to 39% vacant reception places in the individual planning areas (PAs).

Nine out of the fourteen planning areas (PAs) had a reception place surplus of 20% or more. Four of the fourteen planning areas had a surplus of 10% or below, covering the areas of Stoke Newington, Lower Clapton, Hackney Central and London Fields.

### 2.2 Projected demand for reception places

Hackney commissions the Greater London Authority to provide an annual 1 school rolls projection output based on January school census data in the year that the projections are produced.

For the 2024/25 academic year, the projected number of surplus places is predicted to fall to 18% as a result of the PAN reductions scheduled to come into effect from September 2023.

However, the projections go on to show a year on year rise in surplus places until 2027 due to fewer projected children and no further school organisation changes being proposed. Between 2027 and the end of the projection period (2031), the surplus is projected to stagnate at 25-26%.

Projections become less robust the further forward the data projects. This risk is mitigated by ensuring that the number of reception applications are routinely monitored against current projections data. It is clear that further action must be taken to reduce surplus places. The next set of projections based on January 2023 census data is expected by the end of May 2023 and is likely to reflect a further decline in demand for reception places.

### 2.3 Factors driving the reduction in reception demand

Demand for reception places depends upon a range of factors including parental perceptions of schools in a given area, parental choice, birth rates, migration and the ability to afford to live in an area.

The reasons for Hackney's declining numbers are multifaceted, but include a combination of falling birth rates, changes to welfare benefits, the housing crisis, increases in the cost of living, the withdrawal of the right of entry and freedom of movement from EU nationals (Brexit) and as a result of families leaving London during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Many of these factors remain outside the Council's control and are no fault of the schools or their current leadership. A report on Managing Surplus School Places in London (2023) published by London Councils in January 2023 provides some wider context and independent analysis of the issue.

### **3. Reducing the surplus through managing published admissions numbers (PANs)**

For the reception intakes in 2019, 2022 and 2023 a total of 375 reception places were removed through reducing PANs, with the result that the projected surplus is likely to reduce to 18% in the 2024/25 academic year.

Hackney Council has the authority to reduce school PANs at all community schools (ie. 38 out of 58 primary schools), and to recommend PAN reductions at the remaining 20 academies, free or faith schools. The final decision to reduce PAN at these schools rests with their governing body or academy trust.

Reducing a school's PAN (e.g. from 60 to 30) allows governors and school leaders to plan for and employ fewer staff knowing they will only need one teacher for each year group.

However, while PAN reductions directly reduce the number of surplus places, they are not a long term solution because the size of the school building remains unchanged. The unused space (eg. empty classrooms) that PAN reductions create in schools must still be maintained, heated etc, and this draws on resources that could be more directly used to educate and support children.

The Council continues to consider reducing PANs wherever possible at schools significantly affected by falling rolls. Further details of PAN reductions are available in appendix B.

#### **Diocese**

Of the 58 primary schools in Hackney, 11 are faith based Roman Catholic or Church of England primaries (19%). The 2021 Census data found that 30.7% of Hackney residents identify as Christian. It is important that we retain an appropriate mix of faith-based schools to reflect the needs and beliefs of our communities.

While the Council is not the decision maker regarding PAN reductions at faith schools, it should be noted that the relevant dioceses have taken steps to reduce their combined published admission numbers to reflect changes in Hackney's population.

Each Roman Catholic primary school has moved to one form of entry, thereby reducing their total PAN by 60, from 180 to 120. For September 2023 starters, there were 157 applications for 120 places.

In spite of most Church schools being one form of entry, the Church of England primary schools have reduced their overall PAN by 15, with a further 30 places removed temporarily via an informal cap. This reduces places from 285 to 240. For September 2023 starters, there were 284 applications for 240 places.

The Council will continue to work within a collaborative process and take a graduated approach in partnership with both dioceses.

#### **4. The impact of falling rolls and surplus places**

The impact of fewer children starting reception in individual schools creates challenges for school leaders and needs to be managed both individually and collectively.

This impacts disproportionately with oversubscribed schools being unaffected while others are now facing serious financial pressure after year-on-year declines to their roll. This impacts on the efficient running of schools, financial stability and education outcomes as outlined below.

##### **4.1 School income and deficit**

School funding is primarily determined by the number of children on roll and falling rolls equates to reduced funding to deliver education across the borough. While primary schools' rolls are falling but the number of schools in Hackney remains unchanged, there are effectively less financial resources per school/child.

Figure 3 shows the falling number of children in Hackney primary schools, down by 1,776 between 2018 and 2023. This reduced borough-wide roll means that in 2022/23, Hackney receives circa £11.5m less

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Schools Block funding based on 2022/23 per pupil 3 funding rates, compared with 2018/19.

In accordance with DfE funding regulations, the majority of school funding must be allocated on the basis of pupil numbers. The impact of surplus places can be significant to a school's overall budget and financial viability.

In the 2022/23 academic year, for every surplus place that a maintained primary school carries, it loses on average £6,484 per pupil, meaning that a 33% surplus equates to approximately £64,840 in lost potential income per class while there is no change to the number of year groups or class teachers.

High levels of surplus places results directly in a reduction in income, which can lead to deficit budgets. Falling rolls is a major theme that runs through the budget planning considerations of many schools in financial difficulty. A number of schools are currently managing small year group sizes that prove to be uneconomical and require adopting a more flexible approach to resourcing i.e. vertical grouping (children from different years groups taught together) and capping of PAN.

To manage and balance budgets, many Hackney school leaders have had to make efficiencies and innovations, which include reducing costs and exploring opportunities to increase income, for example, by hiring out facilities. However, in many cases these options have already been taken and budgets are still under pressure before they must deal with the financial impact of surplus school places.

Whilst federations can provide some financial support through economies of scale, our current data in relation to budget deficits suggests that it does not protect schools sufficiently. Deficit budgets of course directly contribute to a school's lack of viability.

It is key that schools experiencing falling rolls produce realistic 3-year budget plans (in accordance with DfE requirements for all schools) and deficit recovery plans (if necessary), and consider their options regarding future financial viability. These options could include staffing restructures, reducing costs, amalgamating with (an)other school(s) and potentially closure.

#### 4.2 School performance and outcomes

While school performance and Ofsted grading often helps to strengthen demand and protects a school from falling rolls, this isn't the case for Hackney, as 94.7% of primary schools in the borough are rated good or outstanding.

Managing school performance in the context of falling rolls requires governors and school leaders to make difficult decisions affecting changes to provision for existing pupils. eg. around restructuring the staffing complement or the removal of important enrichment provision or wrap-around provision such as after school clubs to balance reducing budgets.

What has been done already?

Further detail provided within the report. In summary, the Council and school leaders have:

- reduced the admission number at schools that don't fill up.
- combined different year groups to keep schools financially viable.
- reduced their staffing resources to balance budgets.

The Council has no control over the factors causing a reduction in school aged children.

The Council must now start looking at schools that have been hardest-hit by falling pupil numbers and budget pressures and consider school closures or mergers.

#### 4.3 Schools with excess physical space and large sites

Reduced budgets impact on schools' ability to set aside sufficient budget to deal with day to day repair and maintenance issues as resources must be prioritised to deal with staffing and delivery of education.

This can have a significant impact on larger school buildings and sites with fewer pupils which will have higher premises costs. Underinvestment in the premises will create longer term issues and increased need for capital funding to deal with a lack of maintenance.

Many schools who have had their PANs reduced or capped still have larger buildings and sites to maintain, while having a significantly smaller budget.

#### 4.4 Roll instability

Surplus places make it easier for families to move their children from school to school, as so many have vacancies. These unplanned transfers between schools present significant challenges for schools, as high levels of mobility can be unsettling for schools, and may require significant additional resources to properly induct and support new starters.

School admissions regulations protect parental preference, meaning that regardless of whether the new school is in a position financially to meet the joining child's needs, they are obliged to admit.

#### 4.5 Quality of education offer

Schools with reduced budgets have less income for support staff such as teaching assistants and learning mentors, who provide important support for pupils through academic and pastoral interventions. Specialist teachers with expertise in physical education, languages or art become too expensive, meaning primary class teachers who may not be skilled or trained in these areas have to teach these subjects themselves. It is also common in small schools to see leaders double up on roles, such as headteachers taking on the SENCO responsibility.

As budget pressure becomes greater, and class sizes drop below 50%, schools must also consider the option of vertically grouped classes to avoid going into deficit. This involves a sufficiently experienced and able teacher being employed to teach children from across two year groups in the same classroom. Vertical grouping brings increased complexity in day to day management and organisation and increased workload for the teacher. The challenges of recruiting and retaining skilled and experienced teachers in London can make schools under grave financial pressure less attractive.

In addition, limited budgets mean that occasional but important work to maintain the quality of experience at school is not taken forward in a timely manner e.g. the computers used by staff and children become increasingly obsolete and need replacement, sometimes across the whole school at once due to their original purchase being made in bulk.

#### **5. Impact of new housing and regeneration**

There are proposed areas for regeneration and new housing across the borough and in some of the areas close to the schools covered in this report. However, despite the extensive council and family housing planned, the expected initial child yield is low and thus would not impact on school place demand in the short to medium term, and there would remain enough school places to accommodate need. Projections obtained annually from the Greater London Authority take into account proposed new developments that have attained planning permission.

Adopted in July 2020, the Hackney Local Plan 2033 (LP33), requires that all new development in the borough have regard to existing social infrastructure, which includes the provision of education facilities. Within LP33, policy LP8 states that ‘where proposed development is expected to place pressure on existing social infrastructure by increasing demand, these developments will be expected to contribute towards the provision of additional social infrastructure to meet needs, either through on-site provision or through contributions towards providing additional capacity off-site.

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which informed the policies within LP33, notes that while the borough’s population is expected to increase to 321,000 by 2033 (42,000 higher than in 2018), that the age mix of the borough is anticipated to shift towards the older community with the growth in over 65s being four times greater than the growth in the school age population, ages 0-15.

Since 2011, the Council’s in-house building programme has delivered more than 1,000 new homes, prioritising homes for Council social rent. Between 2018 and 2022, we started, completed or received planning permission for 1,984 homes – more than half being genuinely affordable. Over the next few years, we’ll also complete 1,146 homes, including 255 social rent homes and 136 shared ownership homes, on the existing programmes of council homes.

This means that between 2022 to 2026, we'll start building, and support partners to build, 1,000 new homes for social rent through a mix of methods. In this context, the Mayor and Cabinet agreed, in December 2022, a direct programme of 400 additional new homes on sites we've identified via our HRA asset base; 75% of which are proposed for Council social rent.

While there are variances across the different housing tenures, across the Councils programme as a whole, just over 70% of the homes delivered have been 1 and 2 bed homes; with just under 30% comprising a mix of 3 and 4 bed family sized homes. This is broadly consistent with policy LP14 as outlined in LP33, which, depending on the tenure of housing, requires all new developments to comprise a mix of family sized homes, ranging from 15 to 36%. Despite Hackney building new homes the numbers will be insufficient to have any significant impact on the proposals in this report for schools in scope for closure or amalgamation.

#### Options for reducing surplus places

A review of schools with falling rolls has been undertaken to identify how excess places can be removed from Hackney's school estate from September 2024. A range of options, outlined below can be implemented to achieve this in addition to the PAN reductions already outlined in this report

#### 5.1 Merger / 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.

Historically, an amalgamation would have involved the closure of multiple schools and the creation of one new school. However, under current legislation, this option would fall under the 'free school presumption' meaning that the Local Authority is unable to open a new school, but instead are placed under a duty to seek proposers for a free school/academy.

#### 5.2 Closure

The DfE advises that school closure decisions should be taken when there is no demand for the school in the medium to long term and there are sufficient places elsewhere to accommodate displaced children.

A school closure would see a school cease to exist as a statutory entity with all displaced children taking places in other local schools. School closures can take the form of a full and immediate closure, whereby all children on roll are supported to find places in other local schools, or the closure can be 'staggered'. Full and immediate closures are recommended in this report.

A staggered closure option would cease the admission of children into reception each year until all remaining children have worked their way through to year 6, at which time the school would close. While this may be a less disruptive option for some families, it significantly increases the financial burden and further damages the quality of education at the school as pupils do not benefit from the mixing of year groups they would usually experience.

#### **6. Options review process to identify schools at risk**

Following approval of the School Estates Strategy by Cabinet in February 2022, the Council developed the framework outlined below to include objective measures impacting on a school's viability, using available key data to identify the schools most at risk from falling rolls.

Criterion A - was the starting point for review:

Schools were reviewed based on meeting one of the following three criteria:

- 25% or greater surplus reception places;
- 25% or greater surplus physical capacity;
- budget deficit in the top 10 schools raising most financial concern.

Criterion B - The list created from the above criteria A was then refined to include:

- schools meeting more than one of the initial three criteria, or

- schools with greater than 45% surplus reception places.
- Additional schools falling outside these criteria were also considered where they are located geographically near a shortlisted school and identified as a potential partner for amalgamation.

Criterion C - The list created from the above B criteria was further refined:

- The list of schools derived from the above quantitative data driven criteria were then reviewed for further data and qualitative considerations.
- The community schools were reviewed based on: locality and geographic partnership options [walking distances], suitability of site to host an amalgamation and finally overall school effectiveness and quality of education, as indicated by current Ofsted grading, trajectory of pupil outcome data and local reporting.

Finally, a feasibility review of the options created from the above criteria was completed, this included:

- Number check on projected school pupil numbers and check if all pupils would fit in the proposed amalgamated school for September 2024.
- If closures were proposed, a review of nearby schools with surplus places was completed to ensure alternative options were available nearby.
- Community impact and children centre locations.
- The impact of local area plans, such as whether new neighbourhoods and new-build estates will create significantly more need for school places in that area in the future.

The proposals that have been included in this report are a direct result of the application of that options review process.

## 7. Individual school data for the 6 school proposed for closure/merger

### 7.1 De Beauvoir Primary school - Closure proposal

#### 7.1.1 Background

De Beauvoir Primary School is a 1 form entry school in the south-west of Hackney. The school was graded good when inspected in January 2022. The school sees positive outcomes in primary assessments 2022.

Prior to 2018, the school had a PAN of 60. This was reduced to 30 from September 2019. From September 2021, the school has been operating a capped PAN of 15, which is unprecedented for Hackney.

The January 2023 census recorded 13 reception children on roll for a capped PAN of 15 places (official PAN is 30). There were a total of 10 offers made on national offer day for children to join the school in September 2023.

#### 7.1.2 Financial position

Financial Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Brought Forward Balance	-73,473.57	-212,875.50	-125,557	82,566 *	140,418

\*De Beauvoir school received the sum of £154,132, in support of the directed PAN reduction in the financial year 2021-22.

#### 7.1.3 Reason for proposed closure

Due to sustained falling rolls over several years, the school will not be financially viable in the future. Despite a capped PAN of 15, the school has been unable to fill all the places. A total of 10 children were offered places to join reception in September 2023 on national offer day.

At the January 2023 census, De Beauvoir recorded 13 children in Reception (a surplus of 17 places, or 57%) and 115 children across all year groups (a surplus of 185 places, or 62%).

Based on the number of children on roll, 73% of the intended capacity of the school building is unused.

The school remains financially viable through vertically grouping of all year groups. This is not a model of school organisation that is encouraged or sustainable as it brings increased complexity in day to day management and organisation and brings increased workload for teachers and leaders who often need to pick up multiple roles.

Should De Beauvoir close, there are several nearby schools (all of which have been graded 'Good' or Outstanding' by Ofsted) that also have low rolls that children can transfer to. These schools include Holy Trinity, Princess May and St Matthias - all 16 minutes or less walk away and 0.52 miles and under. If a decision is made to progress with a closure, further information and support for families affected will be provided from the admissions team throughout the process.

#### 7.1.4 Impact and equalities

If the proposal is agreed, by September 2024, De Beauvoir Primary School is projected to have approximately 95 pupils who will need to find an alternative school. There is a high incidence of need at the school with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) numbers at De Beauvoir of 10 [which is 9%], and pupils on free school meals (FSM) [67%], both above the Hackney average [Spring 2023 Census, reception to year 6]. The school has 20 staff members [including classroom teachers, head teacher, other support staff, teaching assistants]. Additional support to enable a smooth transition will be offered to affected pupils who have EHCPs.

#### 7.2 Colvestone Primary School & Princess May Primary School - Amalgamation proposal

##### 7.2.1 Background

Princess May School is currently graded good by Ofsted (October 2017) and has strong Year 2 and 6 outcomes. The school is continuously improving. Colvestone School is also graded good (March 2018) and has strong Year 2 and 6 outcomes. The school was part of the Soaring Skies Federation with Thomas Fairchild school. This was dissolved by its governors in 2021 because, as reported by Ofsted after a

monitoring inspection in May 2021, ‘...Thomas Fairchild has not improved quickly enough following the previous inspection in 2020’.

Both the executive headteacher and head of school left in August 2022.

Subsequently, the school is in a soft partnership with the Blossom Federation until July 2024 to receive leadership and business support. Colvestone is also receiving intensive level support which brings additional school improvement adviser time and funding for curriculum development from Hackney Education as part of its Good to Great Policy due to the changes in leadership.

At Colvestone, the January 2023 census recorded 18 reception children on roll for a PAN of 30 places. There were a total of 12 offers made on national offer day for children to join the school in September 2023.

At Princess May, the January 2023 census recorded 19 reception children on roll for a PAN of 60 places. There were a total of 29 offers made on national offer day for children to join the school in September 2023.

#### 7.2.2 Financial position

##### Colvestone

Financial Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Brought Forward Balance	-300,669.36	-475,486.70	-664,807	-589,966	-561,646*

\*Colvestone was granted £50k from contingency in the financial year 2022-23 to aid the stabilisation of the school post de-federation.

##### Princess May

Financial Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Brought Forward Balance	361,302.83	88,584.70	48,454	24,947	29,630

### 7.2.3 Reason for proposed amalgamation

At Colvestone, in 2014 Reception was full with no unfilled places and there were 3% unfilled places across all year groups (6 places out of 210). By January 2023 there were 40% unfilled Reception places (12 places out of 30) and 38% unfilled places (80 places out of 210, or nearly 3 classes) across all year groups.

At Princess May, in 2014 there were 2% unfilled Reception places (1 place out of 60) and 6% unfilled places across all year groups (24 places out of 420). By 2022 this had increased to 68% unfilled Reception places (41 places out of 60) and 53% unfilled places (222 places out of 420, or more than 7 classes) across all year groups. This downward trend is forecast to continue. There is a temporary PAN of 30 in operation for Reception, Yr 1, Yr 3, Yr 4 and Yr 5.

Other schools within the Blossom Federation were not considered for amalgamation with Colvestone due to the distance between them.

Princess May and Colvestone both featured on the list of schools derived from applying the criteria and are both facing the issue of falling rolls. The proposal to amalgamate with Princess May is due to the close proximity of the schools, minimising disruption, but also due to both schools having a high surplus as well as high unused capacity in their buildings. Princess May is 0.3 miles away from Colvestone, which is a 6-minute walk between the two schools. The process of amalgamating the two schools would create a stronger educational establishment.

The decision to propose an amalgamation on the Princess May site takes into account the capacity to host the merger. Princess May school is a 2 form entry building with a current net capacity of 420. Based on

the number of children on roll, 53% of the intended capacity of the Princess May school building is unused.

Colvestone is a 1 form entry school, the capacity of the school is 243 at the latest net capacity assessment (the number of pupils that could be accommodated at the school). Based on the number of children on roll, 47% of the intended capacity of the Colvestone school building is unused. The existing buildings at Colvestone do not have the physical capacity to accommodate pupils from Princess May.

#### 7.2.4 Impact and equalities

If the proposal is agreed, by September 2024, Colvestone is projected to have approximately 120 pupils who would move to the Princess May site. There is a high incidence of need with EHCP numbers at Colvestone of 10 [which is 8%] and Princess May of 10 [5%], and pupils on FSM at Colvestone of 35% and of 46% at Princess May [Spring 2023 census, reception to year 6]. Additional support to enable a smooth transition will be offered to affected pupils who have EHCPs.

Colvestone has 18 staff members and there are 29 staff members at Princess May [including classroom teachers, head teacher, other support staff, teaching assistants].

Postcode analysis on average time parents travel to school shows that Colvestone parents travel on average 10 minutes by walking, and travelling to Princess May would make the average travel time 13 minutes to get to school. By comparison, current Princess May families on average travel 14 minutes walking to get to school.

#### 7.2.5 Travel to school routes for merger proposals - Impact assessment

An analysis of key journeys based on clusters of Colvestone pupil postcodes was completed and mapped on Google Maps to highlight key desire lines for travel to Princess May. These key routes have been used to identify potential impacts on active travel to Princess May Primary School. They include:

- A proportion of pupils will need to cross the A10 to get to Princess May, with most Colvestone pupils living east of the A10. Approximately half of current Princess May pupils live east of the A10 and already make a similar journey.

- A10 is a much less child friendly walking route to school than surrounding quiet residential roads that pupils may have previously used.
- Dunn Street may become more heavily used for active travel to school, to avoid walking along the A10, this road has narrow and inconsistent pavements.
- Downs Park Road between Amhurst Road and St Mark's Rise may become more heavily used for active travel to school.

The following measures are proposed to mitigate the above impacts:

- An assessment of safe crossing points with which we engage Transport for London, as the strategic transport authority with responsibility for the A10. TfL are planning a new crossing across the A10 at Sandringham Road as part of the Cycleway 23 route, along with restrictions to vehicle movements from Sandringham Road onto the A10 that will make it easier to cross Sandringham Road as well.
- Completion of the Cycleway 23 route connecting Lea Bridge to Dalston
- The Council has committed to implement a low traffic neighbourhood east of the A10, which will reduce traffic, and improve walking and cycling routes in the area.
- Monitor footfall on Dunn Street and conduct a footway inspection to consider pavement improvements if needed.
- Monitor recent traffic scheme at the junction of Downs Park Road and St Mark's Rise, which improved the westbound cycle lane.
- Additional public realm improvements on Princess May Road and Barrett's Grove considering the higher number of children using them following the amalgamation.

In addition to the mitigations outlined above, pupils of Princess May Primary school already benefit from a School Streets scheme, which was permanently implemented in 2022 to reduce traffic congestion around the school estate at the beginning and end of the school day, thereby improving road safety. Additionally, as a matter of course, the Council will continue to undertake a rolling programme of traffic monitoring in the area, to ensure that any existing and new measures remain appropriate.

### 7.3 Baden Powell Primary School & Nightingale Primary School - Amalgamation proposal

#### 7.3.1 Background

Nightingale Primary School is currently graded Good by Ofsted (November 2017). It has strong 2022 Year 6 outcomes and has a good curriculum model in place. The school is on an upward trajectory. The January 2023 census recorded 30 reception children on roll for a PAN of 30 places. There were a total of 30 offers made on national offer day for children to join the school in September 2023. The school is not currently impacted by falling rolls consistently, maintaining less than 10% surplus places in recent years.

Baden Powell is graded good by Ofsted (October 2018). Its Year 6 outcomes are higher than the national average and it is performing well. The January 2023 census recorded 15 reception children on roll for a PAN of 30 places. There were a total of 13 offers made on national offer day for children to join the school in September 2023.

#### 7.3.2 Financial position (Baden Powell)

Financial Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Brought Forward Balance	313,664	257,386	274,666	111,747	31,768

#### 7.3.3 Reason for proposed amalgamation

Baden Powell Primary School has been affected by falling rolls. In 2014 the school was full to capacity in every year group. By January 2023 there were 50% unfilled Reception places (15 places out of 30) and 23% unfilled places (48 places out of 210, or more than one class) across all year groups. This downward

trend is forecast to continue. Baden Powell school was selected for a proposed amalgamation after applying the selection criteria, as one of the schools most affected by the falling rolls.

Nightingale has a net capacity of 420 which is the actual physical capacity of the building. With 198 pupils on roll there currently is 53% unused capacity in the building. There is sufficient capacity on the Nightingale site to accommodate the children from Baden Powell. Nightingale school was selected to host an amalgamation because this school is in a new building which was built for 2FE, and currently operating at 1FE due to the low pupil numbers in the area.

#### 7.3.4 Impact and equalities

If the proposal is agreed, by September 2024, an estimate of 140 children would move from Baden Powell to Nightingale. There is a high incidence of need at the schools, with the pupils with an EHCP at Baden Powell at 8, [this is 5%], and at Nightingale 22, [this is 11%]. The percentage of pupils on FSM is 51% at Baden Powell and 44% at Nightingale [Spring 2023 census, reception to year 6]. Additional support to enable a smooth transition will be offered to affected pupils who have EHCPs. Staff numbers at Baden Powell are 34 and at Nightingale are 33 [including classroom teachers, head teacher, other support staff, teaching assistants].

Postcode analysis on average travel time to school shows that Baden Powell parents travel on average 8 minutes by walking, and travelling to Nightingale would keep the same average walking travel time. By comparison, current Nightingale families on average travel 9 minutes walking to get to school.

#### 7.3.5 Travel to school routes for merger proposals - Impact assessment

An analysis of key journeys based on clusters of Baden Powell pupil postcodes was completed and mapped on Google Maps to highlight key desire lines for travel to Nightingale. These key routes have been used to identify potential impacts on active travel to Nightingale Primary School. They include:

- In terms of travel, overall, there appears to be very limited impact, as Nightingale is very close to Baden Powell. It is a 2 minute walk between schools.

- For those living south of Hackney Downs the journey will be shorter, and pupils can continue to travel through Hackney Downs to lower exposure to traffic on their journey to school.
- The cut-throughs from Charnock Road and Heyworth Road will become increasingly important and utilised (connect Baden Powell to Nightingale).

Mitigation measures:

- Potentially child focused improvements to the cut-throughs from Charnock Road and Heyworth Road.
- There would be more children using Tiger Way in case of an amalgamation, so additional public realm improvements may be beneficial, including school focused planters, or planters to indicate School Street.

7.4 Randal Cremer - Closure proposal

7.4.1 Background

Randal Cremer is currently graded good by Ofsted (March 2020). The school has managed well despite the impact falling rolls has had on leadership capacity. Assessment data in 2022 was low. The school is currently receiving focussed support from Hackney Education as part of the Good to Great policy.

The January 2023 census recorded 29 reception children on roll for a PAN of 45 places. There were a total of 16 offers made on national offer day for children to join the school in September 2023.

7.4.2 Financial position (Baden Powell)

Financial Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Brought Forward Balance	37,601	42,574	179,035	273,791	310,032

#### 7.4.3 Reason for closure proposal

Randal Cremer Primary School has been severely affected by falling rolls. In 2014 there were 3% unfilled Reception places (2 places out of 60) and 4% unfilled places (15 places out of 420) across all year groups. By January 2023 the surplus had increased to 36% unfilled Reception places (16 places out of 45) and 40% unfilled places (163 places out of 405, or more than 5 classes) across all year groups. Based on the number of children on roll, 41% of the intended capacity of the Randal Cremer school building is unused.

#### 7.4.4 Consideration of an amalgamation with other nearby schools

Options were considered for amalgamation, but there was no local school located close enough [walking distance] with the required surplus to take all of the pupils. However, there are sufficient schools nearby with surplus places that could accommodate the pupils from Randal Cremer. Hoxton Garden, Sebright, St Monica's and St John the Baptist are likely destination schools - they are all under 0.45 miles away from Randal Cremer as the crow flies [all under 13 minutes walking] and all Ofsted rated Good or Outstanding.

If a decision is made to progress with a closure, further information and support for families affected will be provided from the admissions team throughout the process

#### 7.4.5 Impact and equalities

If the proposal is agreed, by September 2024, Randal Cremer Primary School is projected to have around 200 pupils who will need to find an alternative school. The school has 56 staff members [including classroom teachers, head teachers, other support staff, teaching assistants]. There is a high incidence of need at the school with EHCP numbers at Randal Cremer of 14 [6%], and the percentage of pupils on FSM at 51% [Spring 2023 Census, reception to year 6]. Additional support to enable a smooth transition will be offered to affected pupils who have EHCPs.

#### 7.5 Air Quality review

Air quality as measured by average Nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) at the six school sites in Hackney was reviewed. For 2021 all of the diffusion tubes located near these schools were well below the Hackney air quality objective of 40 (µg/m<sup>3</sup>), as seen in table below.

Site name	2021 NO <sub>2</sub> annual concentration (µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	Pollutants monitored
Randal Cremer Primary School	20	NO2
Nightingale Primary School	19	NO2
Baden-Powell Primary School	18	NO2
De Beavior primary school	20	NO2
Colvestone Primary School	23	NO2
Princess May 1	23	NO2
Princess May 2	32	NO2