

Main Report – Final

Prepared August 2023

Hackney Council

Consultation On Amalgamation Or Closure Of  
Six Hackney Primary Schools



**Kwest  
Research**



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Appendix 1 - Report from the Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission

Appendix 2 - Copy of the Questionnaire Used in the Consultation

# 1. Introduction & Background

During June and July 2023, Hackney Council undertook an informal consultation on the following proposals:

- Closure of De Beauvoir Primary in September 2024
- Closure of Randal Cremer Primary in September 2024
- Amalgamation of Colvestone Primary and Princess May Primary, onto the Princess May site, in September 2024
- Amalgamation of Baden Powell Primary and Nightingale Primary, onto the Nightingale site, in September 2024

The consultation ran for six weeks between 5th June and 16th July 2023 and aimed to gather feedback on the proposals, not just from parents and staff of the schools in scope, but also from wider categories of stakeholders that may be impacted by the decisions.

The consultation was hosted on Hackney's Citizen Space and was open to residents and stakeholders across the borough. A copy of the questionnaire is included in appendix two.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, paper consultations and questionnaires were sent to the following numbers of staff and parents at each affected school:

- Randal Cremer - 400
- De Beauvoir - 250
- Baden Powell - 300
- Nightingale - 350
- Colvestone - 300
- Princess May – 350

In June 2023, Hackney Council commissioned Kwest Research to analyse and report on the results of individual paper and online forms returned during consultations on the proposals.

Additional responses to the consultation, not submitted through the consultation form are being collated by Hackney Council in a separate report and will be added, by the Council, as an appendix to this report. Similarly, responses and comments shared during consultation events will also be included in Hackney Council's report.

## 1.1 Response Rates

At the end of the consultation period, a total of 613 postal and online questionnaires had been received, three-quarters of which were commenting on the proposed amalgamation of Colvestone Primary with Princess May.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://consultation.hackney.gov.uk/children-education/primary-schools-amalgamation-closure/>

The following table shows the number of responses to each proposal that were received by the time the consultation closed on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

Proposal	Number of online replies	Number of paper forms	Total responses
Closure of De Beauvoir	117	37	154
Closure of Randal Cremer	98	8	106
Amalgamation of Colvestone with Princess May	400	63	463
Amalgamation of Baden Powell with Nightingale	116	41	157

*Table 1 Number of responses per proposal*

Some of the online questionnaires contained a paragraph of identical comments so a review of the IP addresses used to complete the forms was conducted to check for the likelihood of multiple submissions from the same source. The vast majority of online forms (403/467) were found to come from a unique IP address. There were three IP addresses where four forms in each case were submitted, one with three forms and 25 where two forms were submitted.

The source of these identical comments has been identified as the Save Colvestone Primary School website. This contains a link called “council consultation tips” which leads to a list of points that can be used when responding to the survey. <sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.savecolvestone.com/council-consultation>

## 2. Overview Of Response To The Proposals

The proposals are universally unpopular, with 89% of respondents reporting that they disagree and 8% that they agree.

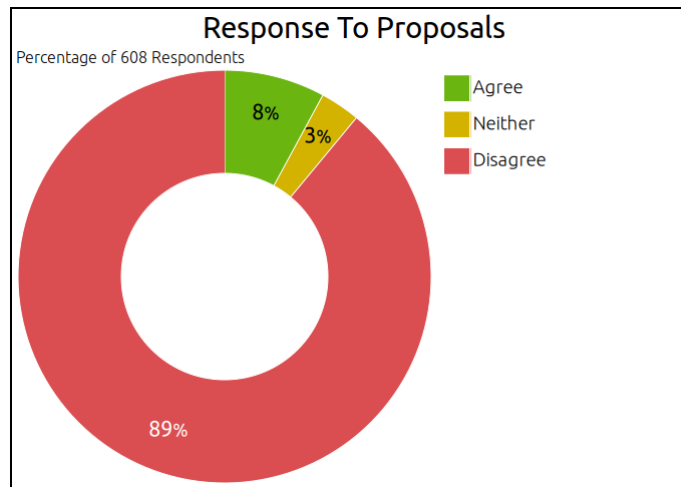


Figure 2.1

A breakdown of the results for each proposal is shown below.

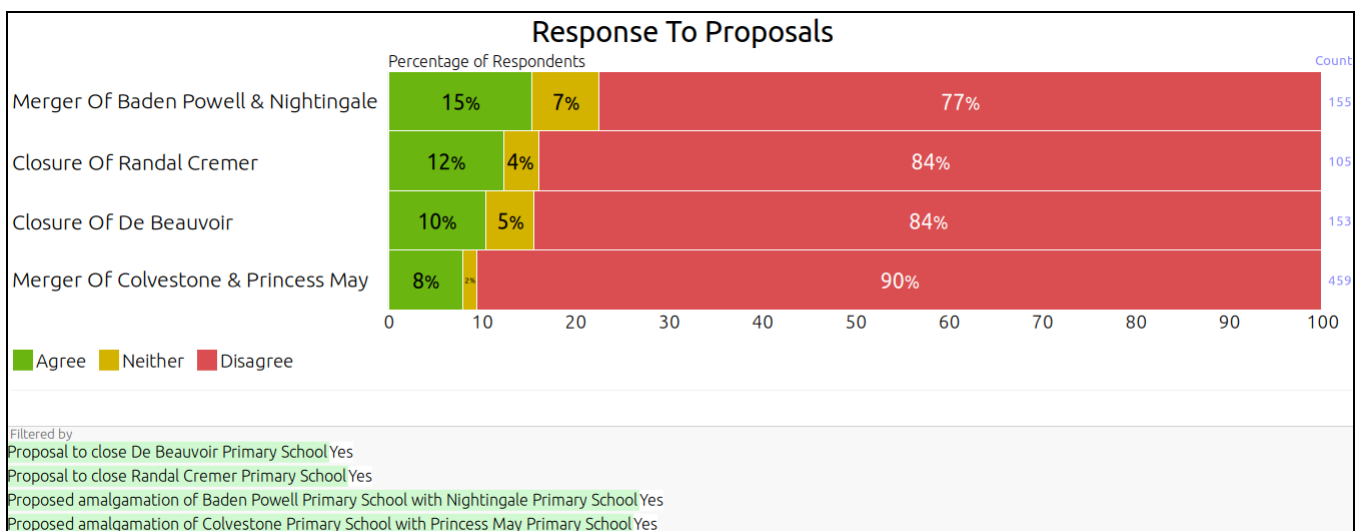
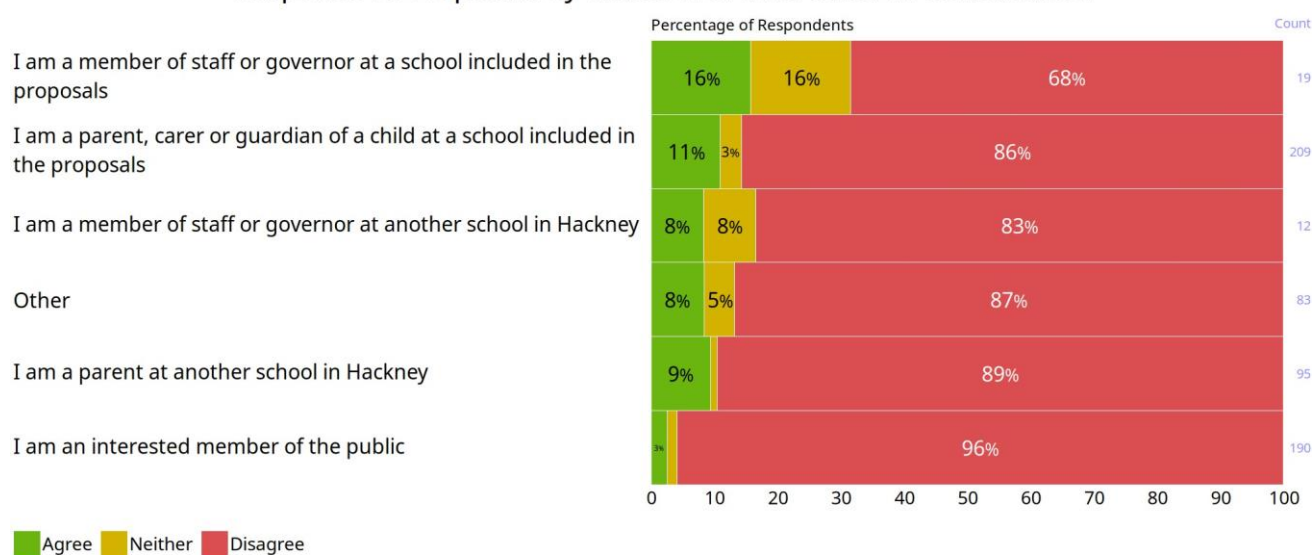


Figure 2.2

The graph below shows the results from the different respondent groups to the consultation. This is shown at an overall level due to the small number of responses in each group when broken down by proposal. It should be noted there were only 19 responses from staff or governors at schools included in the proposals and only 12 from those at another school in Hackney. Therefore, when looking at the percentage of these respondents who agree/disagree with the proposals the accuracy of the data is extremely poor.

Response To Proposals By Reason For Interested In Consultation



Accuracy poor when few replies

Figure 2.3

## 2.1 Strategic Themes In The Consultation Feedback

The consultation feedback received is wide ranging, including many testimonials from parents in support of their current school. The key themes in the comments are discussed in more detail in the sections on each individual proposal.

Some of the feedback received was more strategic in nature, offering alternative approaches to the issue of falling rolls and/or suggestions on how to move forwards, and the key points from these comments are discussed below.

### *Use Existing Schools To Address Borough-Wide Shortage Of SEND Places*

A number of SEND professionals responded to the consultation making the case for keeping one or more of the schools open and working with them to expand the SEND provision on their sites. The feedback encourages decision makers to consult further with the EHCP and wider SEND team, as well as the Re-Integration Unit, with a view to building and expanding on the good practice of SEND provision in a mainstream setting that already exists in Randal Cremer, De Beauvoir and Colvestone. In addition, De Beauvoir and Colvestone receive extensive praise from parents of pupils with SEND who chose these schools due to their small size and worry about whether their children will be able to cope in larger schools.

### *More Mergers Instead Of Closures*

Some respondents have asked why the Council is considering school closures, rather than mergers, since this would ensure friendship groups could stay together and potentially allow some staff to transfer alongside them, thus making the process slightly less difficult for children and parents.

Some respondents consider De Beauvoir and Colvestone to be schools with a similar ethos, and as they are located half a mile apart, several respondents suggest this would be a more suitable merger than Colvestone and Princess May.

Many respondents say they chose their children's existing school specifically because it was single form entry.

### *Future Use Of School Buildings*

Respondents comment that some of the schools are listed buildings which are over 100 years old. A Buildings and Heritage Conservator responding to the consultation points out the fragility of listed buildings when left unoccupied. As an original Birkbeck school, Colvestone Primary is believed by some respondents to have a restrictive covenant meaning it can only be used for educational purposes.

There is a perception amongst respondents that the buildings are likely to be sold off for development, into further unaffordable housing, increasing the perceived "gentrification" of Hackney.

One respondent to the consultation states that they work in "child-friendly urban planning and design", advising cities across the world. Their comments are shown below.

*Falling school roles and forced school closures can be an indicator of systematic problems making cities hostile to families and children. Hackney and London are not alone in this struggle and there are innovative and valuable examples to learn from in the international context especially around municipalities and councils retaining real estate even if schools close, to be repurposed to generate income for the municipality and also to be held for use in the event that populations swing upwards in the future.*

*The loss of the existing schools and school communities is challenging and emotional for all involved. The loss of these buildings forever I believe could be a strategic error on the part of the councils, which will have further negative impacts on the viability of cities for children and families in the short, medium and long term.*

A respondent from the Orthodox Jewish Community makes the point that Charedi schools in Stamford Hill are oversubscribed. Referring specifically to Baden Powell primary school, they suggest:

*Given these circumstances and considering the proximity of this site to the Stamford Hill Jewish community. I request that the council explore the possibility of leasing or selling the school premises to one of the Jewish schools in the area as part of this consultation process. This would alleviate some of the overcrowding issues faced by the Charedi schools and help accommodate the increasing number of students more effectively.*



### *Impact Of Extended Consultation Process On Trust & Confidence In The Council*

Many respondents to the Schools Consultation suggest the decision to close or merge these schools has already been made. There are concerns among respondents about the process exacerbating the sense of disempowerment amongst communities already feeling marginalised and neglected in local planning decisions taken as part of the perceived 'gentrification' of Hackney.

There are questions raised in respondents' comments about the data being used and the lack of answers provided by Hackney Education. Respondents express frustration at being "refused all meetings" with officials in charge of the process, about the lack of data and financial modelling provided, and the lack of Council engagement with the local community.

The following comment encapsulates the feelings expressed by these respondents.

*There's no point me reiterating all the many reasons why closing Colvestone is a bad idea because I don't think you're really listening anyway. But I will tell you this. My daughter, a student at Colvestone, was getting frustrated when I dragged her to yet another meeting related to trying to get the Council to listen to our arguments. She told me making all this effort to engage with the Council was a waste of my time and hers because no matter what we do the Council was going to close the school anyway. She's \*\*\* years old. At such a young age she is already cynical, already has no faith in democratic institutions and processes. She still believes in unicorns, but she doesn't believe in you. This is the lesson you are teaching hundreds of children across the borough, that elected officials lie, that democratic processes are phoney, that engagement is fruitless and that they are powerless. So when they grow up and they don't want to vote or get involved with local government or when they turn to more extreme means to respond to societal problems you can know that you helped contribute their sense of hopelessness.*

### 3. Response To The Proposal To Close De Beauvoir Primary

At the start of the consultation period, 250 forms were given out to parents and staff at De Beauvoir primary school, although replies were also accepted from wider stakeholders and interested parties. In total, 154 responses were received to the consultation on the proposal to close the school.

32% of respondents are a parent, carer or guardian of a child at the school, 27% are interested members of the public, 21% are parents at another school in Hackney and 6% are staff or governors at the school.

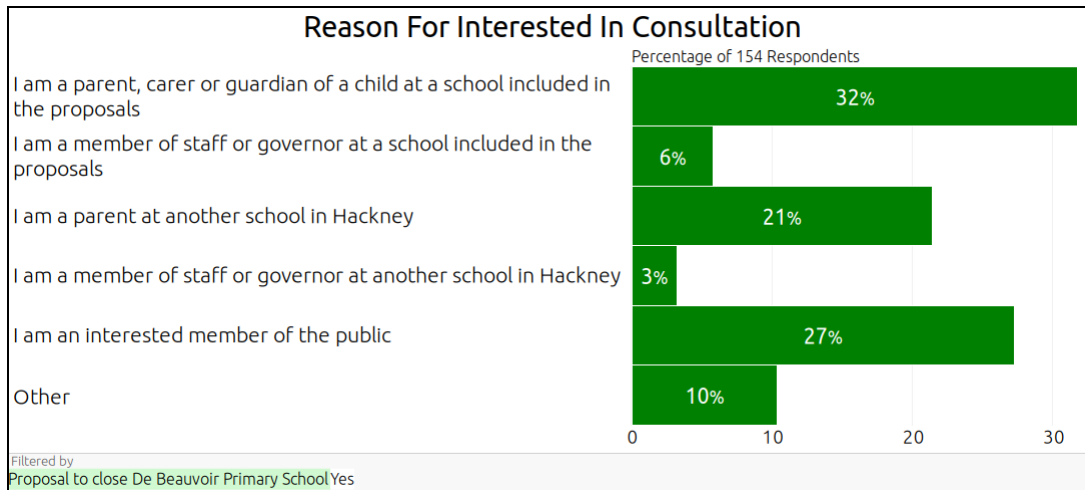


Figure 3.1

Overall, 10% of respondents agree with the proposal to close De Beauvoir, whilst 84% disagree.

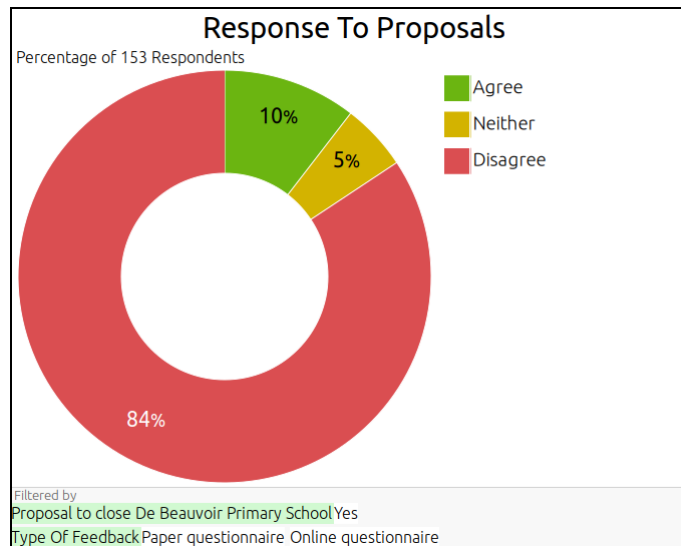


Figure 3.2

6% of parents, carers and guardians agree with the proposals to close the school, compared to 12% of other respondents. Caution must be used when interpreting these results due to the small numbers of respondents.

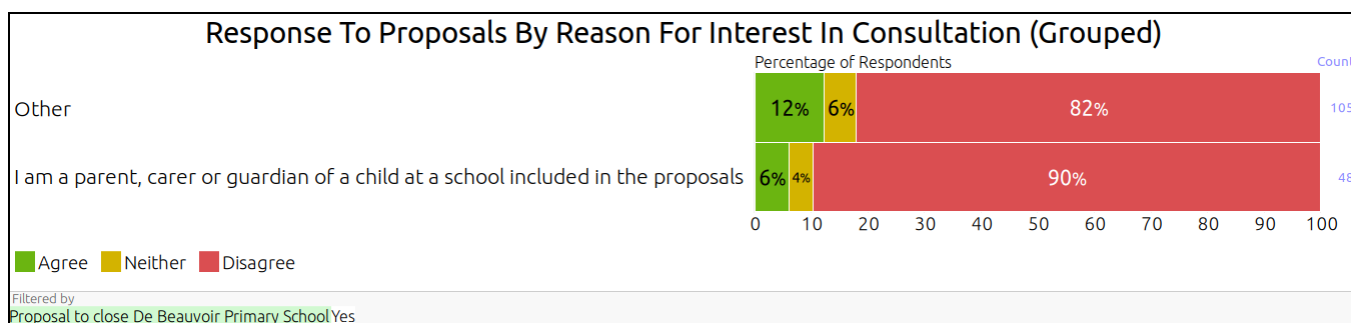


Figure 3.3

### 3.1 Analysis Of Comments On Proposal To Close De Beauvoir

Respondents were able to comment on the proposals and the feedback received has been classified into a number of broad themes. 43% of respondents gave positive feedback about the school, whilst 26% made negative comments about other schools or the process of moving. 24% gave broader feedback about school places in general and 23% discussed the wider context of the consultation.

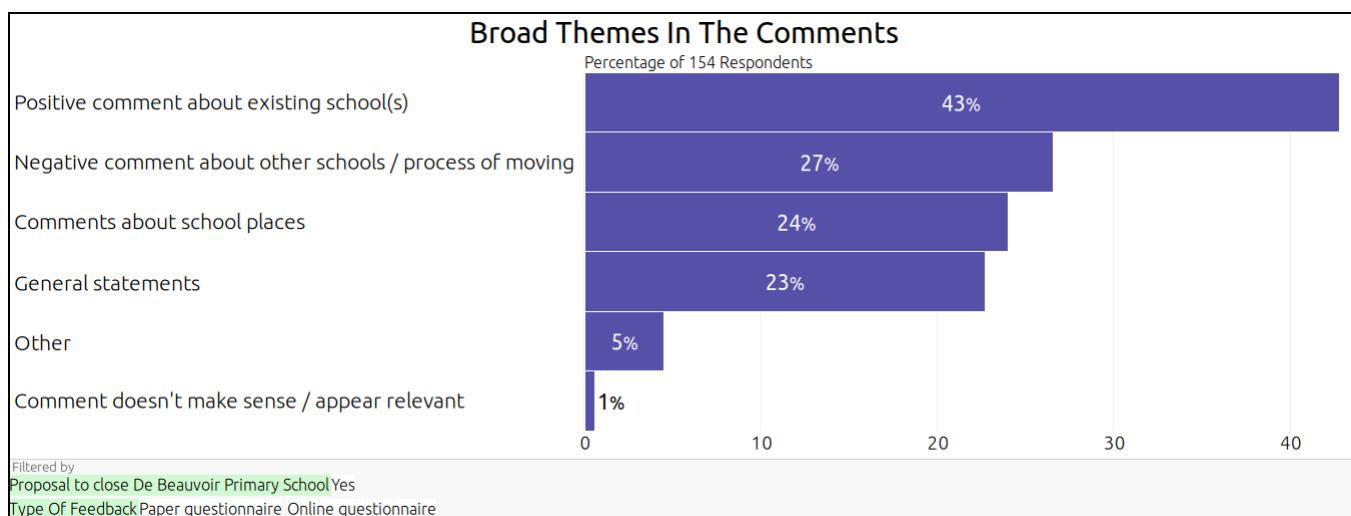


Figure 3.4

The qualitative feedback was further analysed to identify more specific themes, which are shown in the graph below and discussed in more detail in the sections that follow.

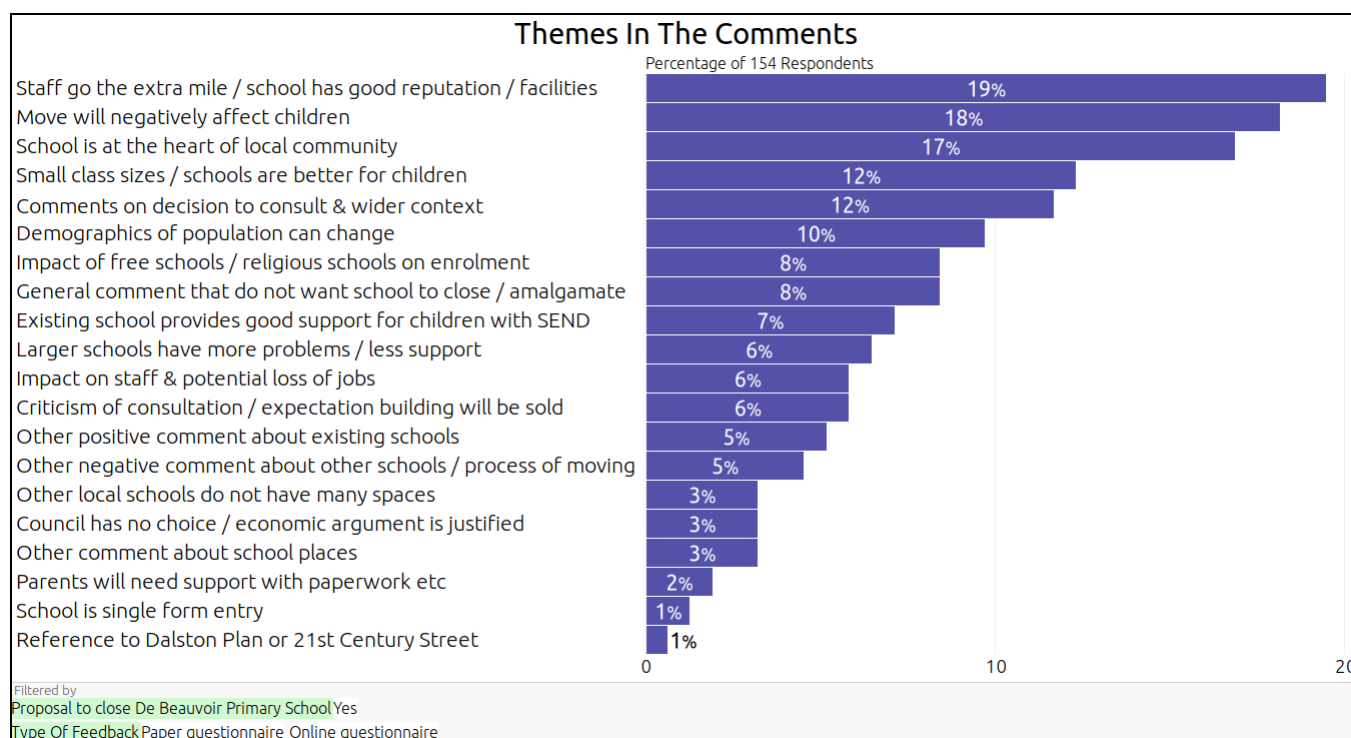


Figure 3.5

## 3.2 Positive Feedback About De Beauvoir

**19%** think that staff go the extra mile, the school has a good reputation and/or good facilities

**17%** say that the school is at the heart of the local community

**12%** think that small class sizes are better for children

Some specific points raised by respondents in their comments include the following:

- The latest OFSTED inspection (2022) is cited by respondents, one of whom points out that this rated De Beauvoir as ‘*Good with Outstanding Features*’, despite approximately 65% of children being in receipt of pupil premium and a similar proportion living in homes where English is not the first language.
- The school is currently believed by respondents to be operating with a surplus budget.
- A high proportion of children with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) attend the school (one respondent puts the figure at 35%). Concern was expressed, by several respondents, about the lack of specialist places for such children in the borough. A health and social care professional responding to the consultation urges the Council to consider the loss of this resource to the community, scope the SEND work the school is currently providing and carefully consider how these needs would be met in other settings. They consider De Beauvoir to be a model of good practice and excellence in this regard.
- Alternatives to closure were also suggested by respondents, including amalgamating with one of the other schools in the consultation.

The comments also include many testimonials from parents about how they and their children love the school and feel well supported by staff. A selection of this feedback is shown below.

*Four of my children have attended this school. [Name] and the teachers and staff at this school have been extremely supportive when I have had health and personal issues. My children love coming to this school and are devastated about the possible closure. This school is one big, supportive family. It is not just bricks and mortar. I highly doubt that I will have this support from another school.*

*The staff are caring and nurturing and have successfully adapted teaching and learning styles to suit all types of learners. As a parent who is unable to drop off and pick up my child regularly, I have been able to reach out to staff whenever needed, including sending late night emails which have received instant replies. During the Covid 19 lockdowns, the school was quite quick in implementing online learning which many private schools still have not been able to implement.*

*My children are at the school and have learning disabilities and struggle with transitions who is to support them or me, I have my own health I have \*\*\*, \*\*\*, \*\*\*. Who will support me with a new setting for my children? De Beauvoir was a decision I made thoroughly I put a lot of thought into choosing a school for my boys and now it's closing. I will keep them in there until the last day and probably won't get them back into a school until something magical happens and a school pops up like De Beauvoir small, intimate, family friendly environment, everyone knows everyone, everyone feels safe.*

### 3.3 Negative Comments About Other Schools / Process Of Moving

**18%** think the move will negatively affect children

**6%** feel that larger schools have more problems / less support

**6%** comment on the impact on staff / potential job losses

Some specific points raised by respondents in these comments are shown below:

- Respondents believe that walking to school is encouraged by the Council. However, if De Beauvoir closes and parents want to keep their children in local authority maintained schools, respondents fear there may be insufficient places to allow children to walk to school. The only nearby non-voluntary primary school not proposed to close is Princess May, and it is mentioned by respondents that this is also included in the consultation process and so may not be attractive to parents.
- Respondents make a comparison between one of the nearby free schools, Hackney New, which does not have a playground, and De Beauvoir, which has ample outdoor space and is on a quiet side street with no through traffic.
- Concern was also raised by respondents about the potential impact on local traffic flows as they feel that large schools in busy urban areas can be overwhelming for residents at pick up and drop off times.
- Staff members taking part in the consultation report a deterioration in their own well-being as they try to help children manage their anxiety.

Some parents and school staff submitted anecdotal evidence of how their children have been or will be negatively affected by the move. A selection of this feedback is shown below.

*Moving [my son] will make him feel alienated and in a completely new environment and I know this will affect his mental wellbeing as it will be difficult to handle this change and will be a completely new academic curriculum which will in turn worsen his grades.*

*Since this proposal has come to light, my eldest [child] has been feeling very anxious and upset as some of \* friends have left during this process.*

*Uprooting all these kids in the middle of a key development phase will not only cause distress to the child, but add more financial pressure onto each parent from having to buy new uniforms for their children and additional travel costs, which in this day and age is one more nail in the coffin*

*I have direct access to children crying and emotionally drained as their peers leave for another school one by one. I have direct access to children as young as 4 only having 1 day to process that it would be their last day with their friends and favourite teachers; as parents frantically do in-year applications. I have direct access to parents who struggle with the English language asking for support and guidance on how to do transfer applications.*

*My wellbeing is deteriorating as I have to constantly readjust and support my children as their friends leave randomly week by week. The anxiety in my class of \*\*\* year olds is completely unfair and out of their control*

### 3.4 Comments About School Places

**10%** think the demographics of the population can change and are concerned about what will happen should there be a future shortage of places.

**8%** discuss the impact that free schools and faith schools have on enrolment

**3%** believe that other local schools do not have many places

**3%** feel that the economic argument is justified / the Council has no choice

Examples of specific points raised by respondents in their comments include:

- There is confusion amongst some respondents about why there is now a surfeit of primary school places when permission was given recently for Hackney New Primary school, in De Beauvoir's catchment area.
- Respondents consider it unfair that free schools, academies and faith schools cannot be included in action taken by the Council to address falling rolls. There are questions in the feedback about the rationale behind closing and amalgamating so many local schools, whilst leaving the voluntary sector out of the equation, particularly when any future new schools in the borough would have to be free schools.

- Other local schools are believed to be mostly full already following the proposals being publicised. One respondent makes reference to a government website that they say shows many local schools, particularly those to the south of Dalston Lane, have been largely unaffected by the fall in pupil numbers, with some having as little as 2% of spaces free, despite an overall maximum pupil number of 500+.
- Respondents comment that some children at De Beauvoir are resident in Islington and may have a preference for relocating to an Islington school, where they believe they will have no priority in terms of waiting lists.
- There is doubt amongst respondents about the evidence for the predicted decline in demand for school places. Brexit, covid and cost of living, all cited as possible influences, are perceived as recent events, whose longer term impact may still be unknown.

Some examples of the comments received on these topics are given below.

*Hackney council have told parents that De Beauvoir school should close because pupil numbers are falling and will continue to do so in the future. The council cited three driving factors; Brexit, covid and the cost of living crisis; all of which were pushing families out of London. [...] Brexit, covid and the cost of living crisis are all recent events. Although they have had an impact on pupil numbers recently, there is no evidence that these trends will continue in the long term. In fact shortly before these events, pupil numbers in Hackney had been rising.*

*A school does not go from being oversubscribed in several year groups 6 or 7 years ago meaning my children had to wait until nearly the end of the school year for a place, to virtually empty now in comparison, as has happened with De Beauvoir. When this has happened elsewhere it has taken decades. I do feel like the council have somehow pursued an internal unwritten policy of diverting potential pupils whether they are reception age or in year admissions for older year groups, away from De Beauvoir and into other neighbouring schools, to keep pupil numbers up at the other schools so they don't have to consider closing more schools and the council admitted at a parent's meeting that they have no power to close free or academy schools and religious schools, so siphoning children into those schools saves the headache of trying to reason with those schools to close of their own accord.*

*There is low public confidence in the data interpretation. Many parents are sceptical, and cite examples such as the closure and reopening of Hackney schools previously.*

*Whilst the school has had a falling roll for a number of years, the opening of Hackney Free School severely impacted the number of children applying. When the area was already suffering with many unfilled Reception places, Hackney's decision to allow an additional Free School to be built is baffling. The closure of De Beauvoir, we believe, is related to this decision and seeing as the school has recently achieved a good Ofsted, the timing of the proposed closure is devastating for everyone involved.*

*I'm worried about the pressure the closure of De Beauvoir Primary will put on other schools in the area. Our most local school (Hackney New) has no outside space so it is important to us to have other options with outside space when our son starts reception in Sept 2025. We're worried if De Beauvoir Primary closes that not only takes that option away but possibly others as the other schools will be full with children who would have gone there.*



## 3.5 General Feedback

**12%** commented about the decision to consult and the wider context of falling school rolls.

**8%** just said they do not want the school to close, with little additional detail

**6%** are critical of the consultation and/or fear the building will be sold to developers

Some specific points raised in the feedback from respondents around these topics include:

- There are questions in the feedback about the slow response to the problem of falling rolls and the pressure this has placed on schools. Respondents believe that other local authorities took action sooner to address the issue.
- The feedback suggests many parents feel they are not being listened to, that the Council has already given up and the outcome of the consultation is a foregone conclusion. There are references to the 'gentrification' of Hackney as well as other council consultations where the proposals have subsequently been adopted despite a majority expressing disagreement.
- There are concerns in the comments about the perceived lack of answers from the Council to questions raised during meetings about the proposals. Additionally, there are reports of low public confidence in the data being used to inform decisions.

Examples of comments around these issues are shown below.

*I do wonder if filling this form is merely a process with no clear facts that it would be read and understood. This is because I cannot believe we are even at this stage considering the comments and issues raised at the first stage and the lack of answers and explanations provided by Hackney Council.*

*Hackney in general pushes people out the borough through, for example, their own housing schemes, increase in rental properties, lack of initiative to encourage people to come and live in the borough, road closures where many consultation processes showed more voted "no" to closure than "yes" but they still proceeded. They have not factored in their own conduct as a borough into this decision.*

*There are few spaces for children and young people. The school is a much valued community resource for families. I'd argue that the tokenistic closure consultation process has served to further disempower local residents who perhaps already feel marginalised and neglected in local planning decisions. The decision of the council to close the school will have a social impact beyond the disruption of those children who are currently being educated.*

*I think it would be wise for a third party to check the data informing the school closure policy. There is low public confidence in the data interpretation. Many parents are sceptical, and cite examples such as the closure and reopening of Hackney schools previously*

*I understand the rationale for the consultation for the closure of schools in Hackney. My concern is the length of time it has taken the Local Authority to address the problem of falling rolls - it has been clear London, including Hackney, was likely to be put into a difficult position. Other LAs adjacent to Hackney acted sooner.*



## 4. Response to Proposals To Close Randal Cremer Primary

At the start of the consultation period, 400 forms were given out to parents and staff at Randal Cremer primary school, although replies were also accepted from wider stakeholders and interested parties. In total, 106 responses were received to the consultation on the proposal to close the school.

35% of respondents are interested members of the public, 25% are parents at another school in Hackney, 17% are a parent, carer or guardian of a child at the school and 3% are staff or governors at the school.

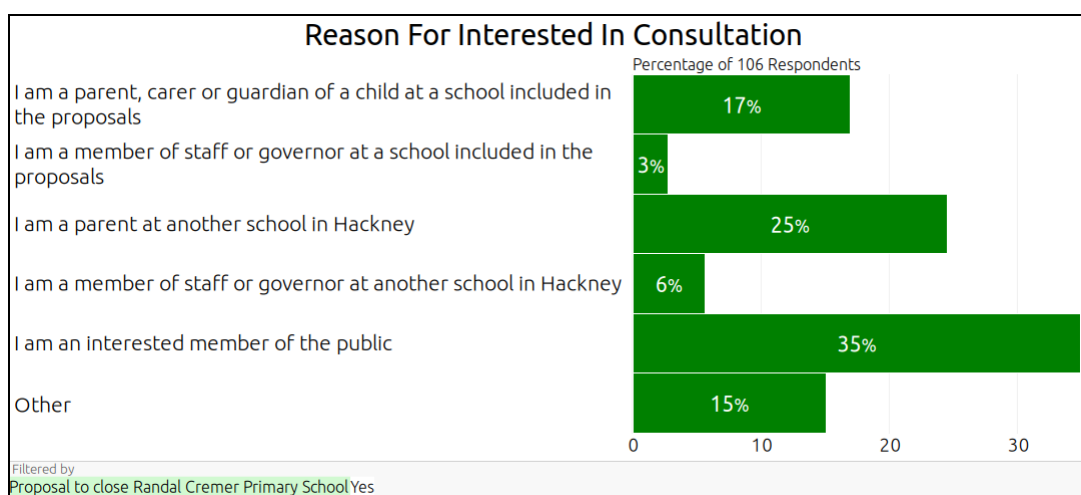


Figure 4.1

Overall, 12% of respondents agree with the proposal to close Randal Cremer, whilst 84% disagree.

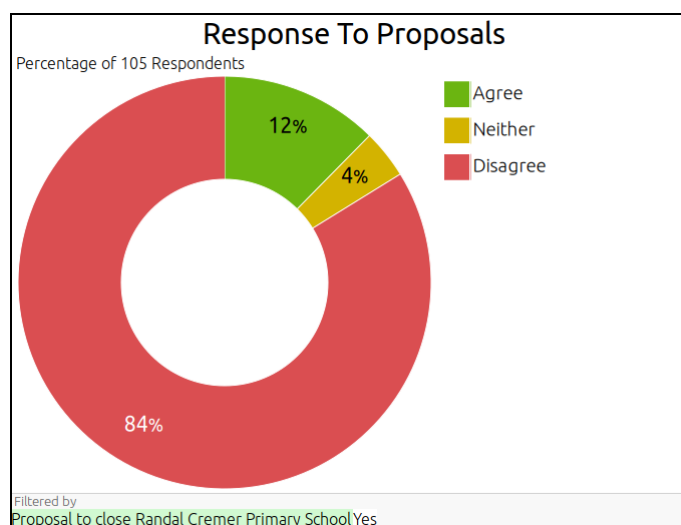


Figure 4.2

6% of parents, carers and guardians agree with the proposals to close the school, compared to 14% of other respondents. Caution must be used when interpreting these results due to the very small numbers of respondents.

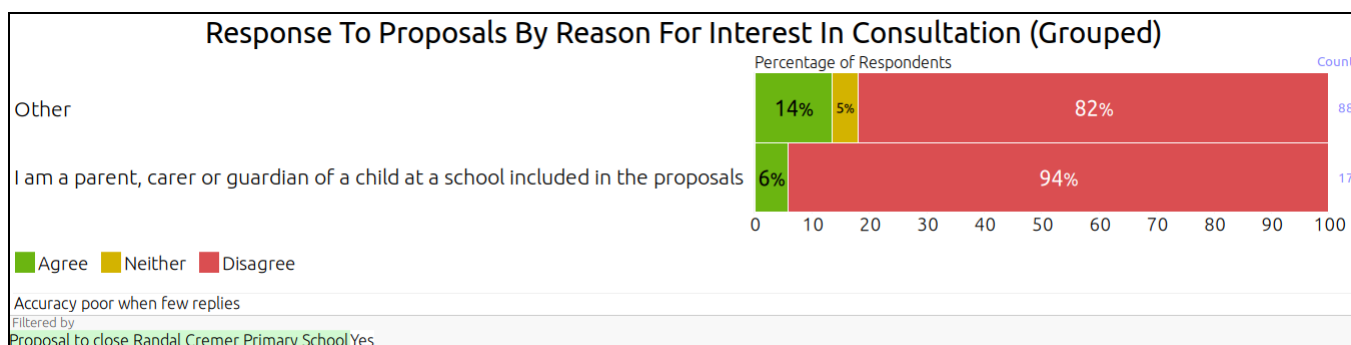


Figure 4.3

### 4.1 Analysis Of Comments On Proposal To Close Randal Cremer

32% of respondents gave positive feedback about the school, whilst 25% made negative comments about other schools or the process of moving. 22% gave broader feedback about school places in general and 18% discussed the wider context of the consultation.

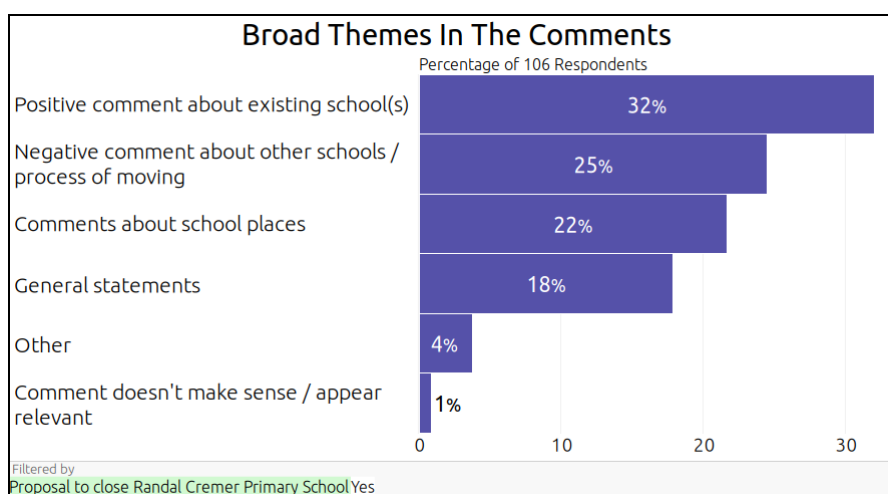


Figure 4.4

The qualitative feedback was further analysed to identify more specific themes in the comments, these are shown in the graph below and are discussed in more detail in the sections that follow.

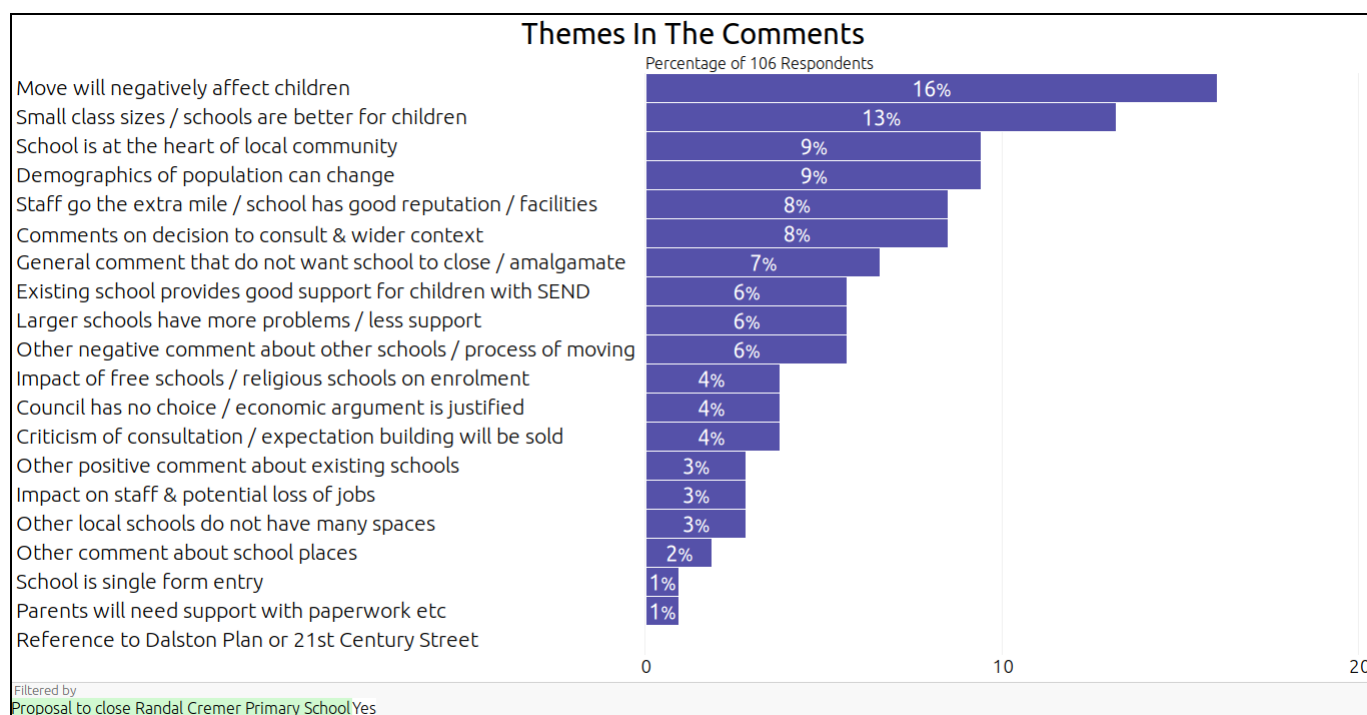


Figure 4.5

## 4.2 Positive Feedback About Randal Cremer

**13%** think that small class sizes are better for children

**9%** say that the school is at the heart of the local community

**8%** think that staff go the extra mile, the school has a good reputation and/or good facilities

Some specific points raised by respondents in these comments include the following:

- An Education, Health and Care Officer from the Hackney SEND team has responded to the consultation to raise concerns about the closure from a SEND perspective.
- Randal Cremer is also seen as a hub for refugee families as well as other minority groups.
- Additionally, the school is described by respondents as being somewhere that accepts those who have been excluded from other schools.
- Alternatives to closure were also suggested by respondents, including amalgamating with one of the other schools in the consultation.

The Education, Health and Care Officer from the Hackney SEND team highlights the very significant challenges the borough faces with the inclusion of such pupils in mainstream settings. With specialist settings and ARPs full, and more requests for placements than space available, “an extraordinary amount” is spent on out of borough independent provision.

Due to the inclusive, nurturing environment at Randal Cremer, the respondent feels that the children with SEND are less on the local authority's radar because their needs are being met, whereas this is likely to change if these children are required to move to a larger, less inclusive environment. There are concerns that these children may then require more costly specialist settings. The respondent expresses concern that "the proposal has not sufficiently considered both the distress and cost implications of closing our most inclusive primary schools". This could be avoided by working with Randal Cremer to expand on its current SEND provision. The respondent encourages decision makers to consult more widely with the ECHP, wider SEND Team and the Re-integration Unit.

Randal Cremer is also perceived to be a hub for refugee families. A respondent cites the latest Ofsted report, which confirms that pupils who do not speak English as a first language are well supported, helped by the partnerships the staff have formed with their families. There are concerns expressed by respondents about what will happen to these children if the school closes.

A selection of the positive comments about the school is shown below.

*Randal Cremer is the only school in the borough that will take pupils who have been excluded from other schools. It provides absolutely essential services for pupils who are our most vulnerable, and they have been directly impacted by the Hackney New School opening nearby - but this school won't address the needs of the very disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils served by Randal Cremer.*

*They are a fantastic support for children with SEN and other needs. They have also been a hub for Refugee families and other minority groups within the area. The loss of this school will be an incredible blow to an already marginalised community with no thought to where these families will be sent across the borough.*

*I feel that Randal Cremer is a strong community school which works well with marginalised families and children with high levels of SEND - perhaps it would be of great benefit to offer more funding to increase and extend this work.*

## 4.3 Negative Comments About Other Schools / Process Of Moving

**16%** think the move will negatively affect children

**6%** feel that larger schools have more problems / less support

**3%** comment on the impact on staff / potential job losses

The feedback collected in the consultation includes testimonials from parents about the negative impact the situation is having on their children.

*Everyone in the school is stressing about this proposal. I have two special needs kids. You are not thinking about us at all. Kids are struggling*

*I have had to move \*\*\* of my children to a different school and leave \*\*\* at Randal Cremer until they go to Secondary school. This is not because I wanted to or because it is a bad school but because I had to give my kids some stability in the situation that Hackney Council have created. There are children still at Randal Cremer seeing their friends leave because their parents, like me, want to give them stability. I have no faith that Hackney can meet their promises of supporting parents to find appropriate places. Moreover, I have seen the staff at Randal Cremer lose heart and although they are all doing amazingly to support the children, who is supporting them? They are about to lose community that can't be replaced and jobs that are hard to find elsewhere. To top it off, [teacher] is visibly heartbroken each week to see more kids leave. And then there are many kids left with SEN, who have no easy way to stay or move to somewhere else as places are so limited.*

*Not enough thought has been given to the long distances children will have to travel, what will happen to the vulnerable children who rely on Randal Cremer and the divide that is opening up between schools serving middle class pupils and those from working class families.*

## 4.4 Comments About School Places

**9%** think the demographics of the population can change and are concerned about what will happen should there be a future shortage of places.

**4%** discuss the impact that free schools and faith schools have on enrolment

**4%** feel that the economic argument is justified / the Council has no choice

**3%** believe that other local schools do not have many places

A selection of the comments on this topic is shown below.

*Birth rates and population rates rise and fall. What evidence does the council have that birth rates and population of Hackney will continue to decline? History says this is unlikely to be the case as dips in birth rates often follow a rise.*

*These are public local authority schools. Once closed, because of government policy, they can only reopen as academies, which are secretive schools outside democratic control. Many problems have recently come to light in Hackney academies. Working class and black students are less likely to thrive.*

*Unfortunately these schools have falling numbers of children attending. No fault of the schools - a problem across London. But the way schools are funded, it's unfair to disproportionately spend money on these few children when this money could be spread out amongst all Hackney schools.*

## 4.5 General Feedback

**8%** made comments about the decision to consult and the wider context of falling school rolls.

**7%** just said they do not want the school to close, with little additional detail

**4%** are critical of the consultation and/or fear the building will be sold to developers

Some specific points raised in the feedback from respondents around these issues are:

- Many parents feel that the decision has already been made and the outcome of the consultation is a foregone conclusion.
- There are references in the comments collected during the consultation to the 'gentrification' of Hackney and concerns that long-standing council policies have created the current situation.
- Respondents suspect that the land will be sold to developers.

Some of the comments illustrating these points are shown below.

*The closure of schools in Hackney seems to be a foregone conclusion. We found out about it earlier this year but I feel this has been years in the making, especially given the council's gentrification of Hackney in recent years.*

*This is not a consultation process. The decision has already been made. There seems to be no opportunity to amalgamate. Parents and staff have not been given adequate notice. It is opportunistic as undoubtedly the building will be sold to developers to turn into private housing for large amounts of money. Children will have to attend new schools, siblings may have to attend different schools, which amalgamation would have avoided.*

## 5. Response To Proposals To Merge Colvestone & Princess May Primaries

At the start of the consultation period, 300 forms were given out to parents and staff at Colvestone primary school and 350 to those at Princess May, although replies were also accepted from wider stakeholders and interested parties.

In total, 463 responses were received to the consultation on the proposal to close Colvestone and merge with Princess May.

Colvestone parents have created a website setting out their “case for Colvestone” with a link to the consultation and tips for what to say in response. Many comments received in response to the proposals appear to have been copied and pasted from the website.

40% of respondents are interested members of the public, 21% are a parent, carer or guardian of a child at the school, 19% are parents at another school in Hackney and 1% are staff or governors at the school.

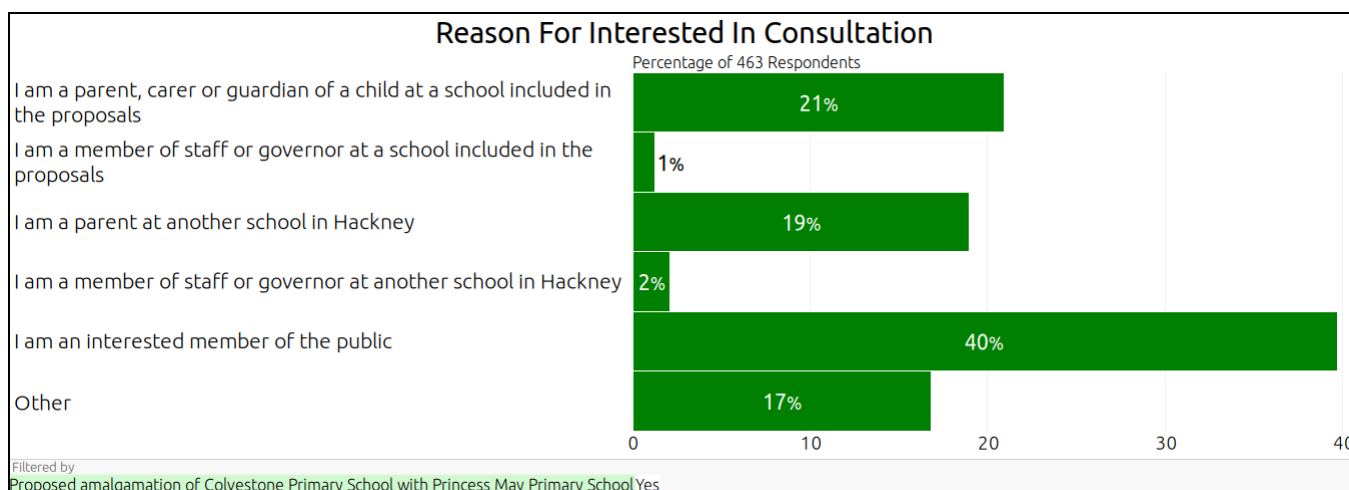


Figure 5.1



## 5.1 Response To Proposals

Overall, 8% of respondents agree with the proposal to merge Colvestone and Princess May, whilst 90% disagree.

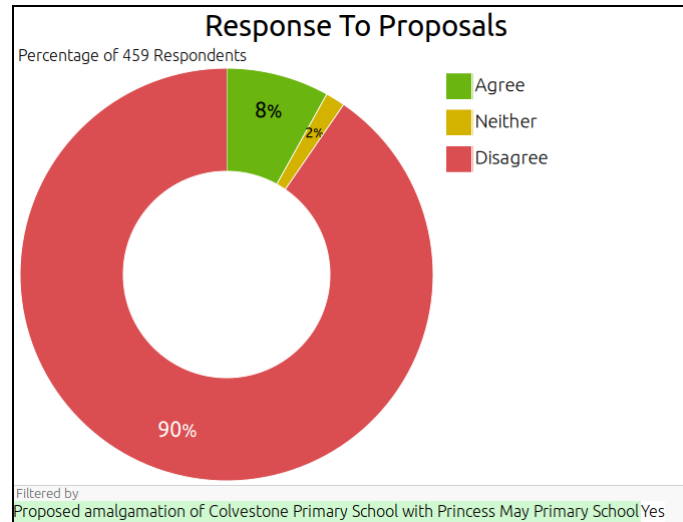


Figure 5.2

Due to the larger number of responses to the Colvestone consultation compared to the other proposals, it is possible to break results down in more detail by 'reason for interest in the consultation'.

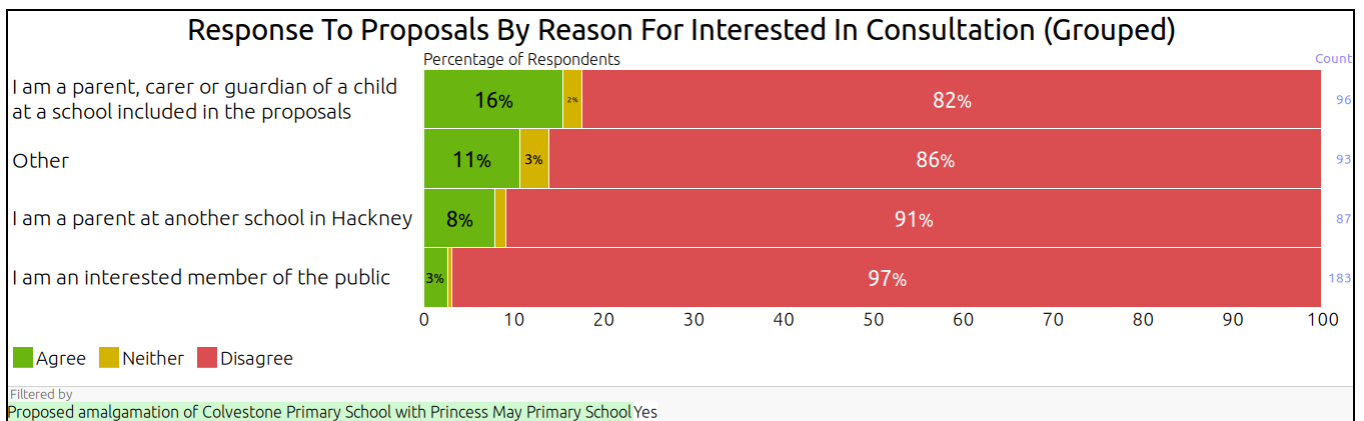


Figure 5.3

## 5.2 Analysis Of Comments On Proposal To Merge Colvestone & Princess May

58% of respondents gave positive feedback about the school, whilst 24% made negative comments about other schools or the process of moving. 26% gave broader feedback about school places in general and 19% discussed the wider context of the consultation.

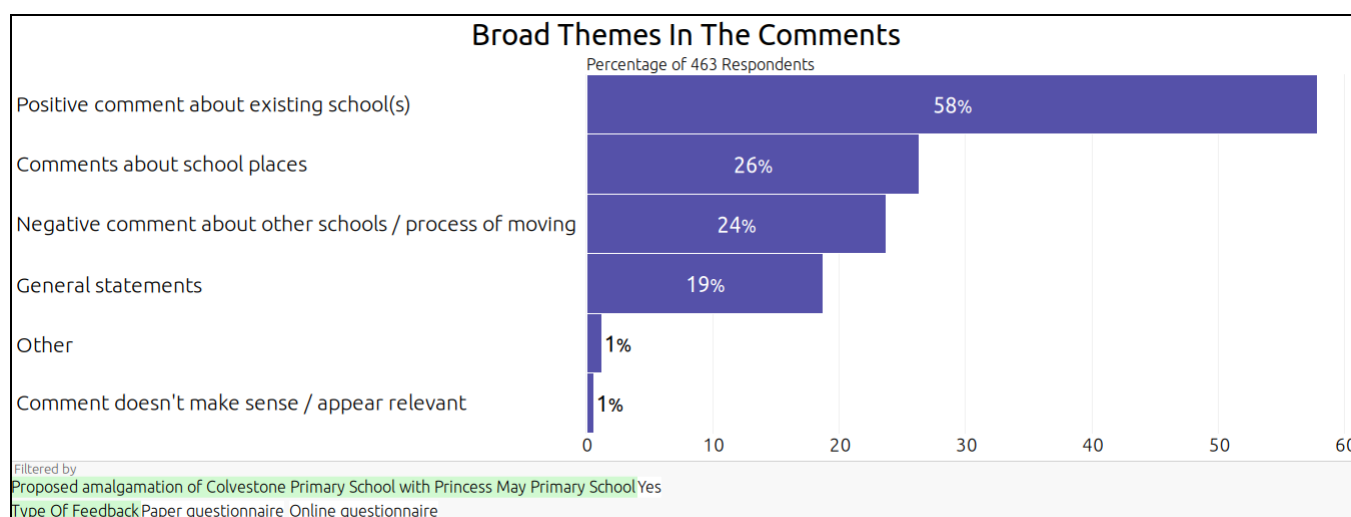


Figure 5.4

The qualitative feedback was further analysed to identify more specific themes in the comments, these are shown in the graph below and are discussed in more detail in the sections that follow.

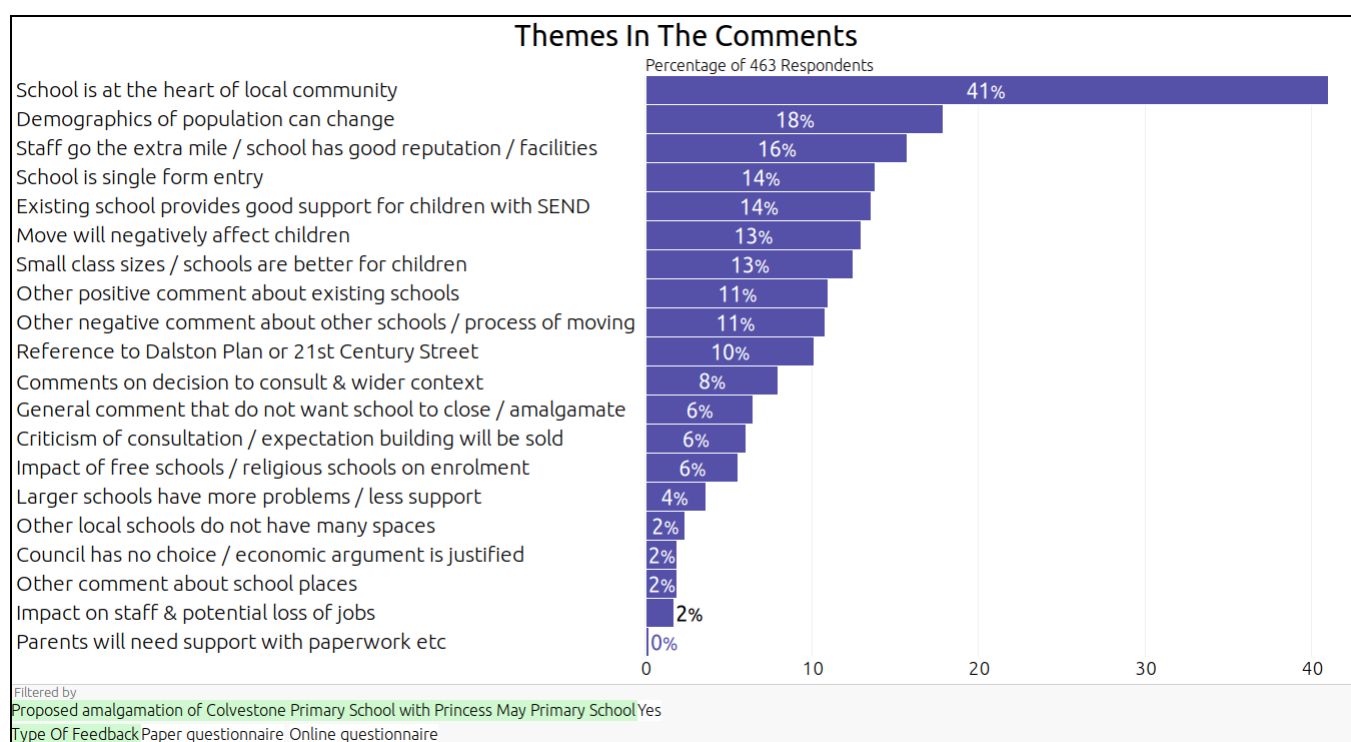


Figure 5.5

## 5.3 Positive Feedback About Colvestone

**41%** say that the school is at the heart of the local community

**16%** think that staff go the extra mile, the school has a good reputation and/or good facilities

**14%** mention that the school is single form entry

**14%** feel the school provides good support for children with SEND

Some specific points raised by respondents in these comments include the following:

- 10% of respondents mention the Dalston Plan and/or the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Street that is to be created in Colvestone Crescent, the area around the school.
- The comments suggest that the school has strong links with the local community. Traders in Ridley Road market responded to the consultation expressing concern about the reduction in footfall as the parents and children of the school are currently regular customers.
- Respondents state that 7% of Colvestone students have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), well above the 4.3% average across the borough. In addition, a number of SEND and Inclusion professionals responding to the consultation express concern about the merger. They consider the small, single form entry school to be “exactly what local authorities need right now to tackle a number of growing problems in our student population”.
- The grade two listed school buildings are believed to be of historic significance, being part of the original Birkbeck Schools founded by William Ellis. Some respondents believe there is a restrictive covenant on the building, barring its use for anything other than education provision. Respondents report that the building has also recently undergone an extensive restoration process.
- Respondents feel that joining the Blossom Federation in September 2022 has had a positive impact on Colvestone. The introduction of the new leadership team has been well received and the school is perceived by respondents to be on an upward trajectory with proactive steps being taken to address its budget deficit, including running an in-year surplus for 2022. Respondents believe this partnership deserves to be given more time.

## *Dalston Plan & 21st Century Street*

The Dalston Plan aims to shape the future of the area by building over 600 affordable new homes. A key feature of the Plan involves turning Colvestone Crescent into the borough's first 21<sup>st</sup> Century Play Street. As the primary school is located at the end of Colvestone Crescent, a number of respondents to the consultation feel it is an integral part of the creation of the Play Street. This is viewed by respondents as being the case as the Plan aims to create a child-friendly, safe environment. Similarly, Colvestone is the closest primary school to the main location proposed for the new homes.

A selection of comments about the Dalston Plan and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Street is shown below.

*The school is pivotal in the plan to turn Colvestone Crescent into a 21st Century Street, the borough's first permanent play street. This will not only be an incredible community asset, but will make Hackney an example for other boroughs to follow in the necessary move to make cities more human-friendly and sustainable, which is all key to ensuring improved mental health across our city communities.*

*Whilst pupil numbers have dropped, the local area has huge plans for residential development so I strongly believe this to be a temporary issue.*

*The 21st Century Street by Hackney Council is a brilliant plan and demonstrates everything Hackney is and what the residents want it to be like in the future. Colvestone Primary School is at the centre of this plan. The vision for such a street is built on creating a child-friendly safe environment. Closing the school makes no sense, whilst the plan itself is funded to go ahead. Without a school in that street, this investment is entirely pointless and a misuse of public finance.*

*The Dalston area has a Plan to build more housing very nearby. The proposed closure feels extremely short-sighted in light of this - will families have the choice they deserve? Or will families even choose to live there if there is no community school nearby*

*Colvestone is in the centre of the Dalston Plan, which includes the commitment to building 600 new homes, including 200 affordable family homes. Shutting Colvestone - the closest school to this development - is a short-sighted action, that will negatively impact the community. This is part of an important move to try and get families to stay in the borough and keeping this local school is a huge part of that.*

## SEND Provision

An Education, Health and Care Officer from the Hackney SEND team has responded to the consultation to raise concerns about the closure from a SEND perspective, highlighting the very significant challenges the borough faces with the inclusion of such pupils in mainstream settings. They state that as specialist settings and ARPs are full, and there are more requests for placements than space available, “an extraordinary amount” is spent on out of borough independent provision. Due to the inclusive, nurturing environment at Colvestone, the respondent feels that the children with SEND are less on the local authority’s radar because their needs are being met, whereas this is likely to change if these children are required to move to a larger, less inclusive environment. There are concerns that these children may then require more costly specialist settings. The respondent expresses concern that “the proposal has not sufficiently considered both the distress and cost implications of closing our most inclusive primary schools”. They feel this could be avoided by working with Colvestone to expand on its SEND provision. The respondent encourages decision makers to consult more widely with the ECHP, wider SEND Team and the Re-integration Unit.

These comments are echoed by a CAMHS social worker responding to the consultation, employed by another borough, whose children went to Colvestone. They consider the school to be a “huge resource precisely because it is small and nurturing” and suggest it would be waste of resources to close the school. Their suggestion is to use money from the SEN budget that is currently spent on alternative provision, out of borough, and work to enhance the SEND provision already offered by Colvestone. Similarly, an Inclusion Expert responding to the consultation suggests converting the currently vacant school keeper’s house into a resource base for children with SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs) and Neurodiversity. They believe this could be staffed with specialist teachers and teaching assistants who work to support children in mainstream classes.

Many parents of children with SEN included testimonials within their feedback about how happy and well-supported their children are at the school. Some examples are shown below.

*My older [child] with [SEND] went to \*\*\* schools in Hackney, including outstanding schools. \* was facing being out of mainstream education and Colvestone showed \* love, acceptance and support which totally changed things around and \* is now at a mainstream secondary. The fact that Colvestone accommodates for so many children with additional needs and keeps them in mainstream schools saves Hackney a lot of money. My younger [child], like so many other children, is on a 2-3 year wait list for a diagnosis with CAMHS and therefore is not part of the SEN stats*

*My child has SEN and needs to be educated in a small, calm school. It has taken \* \*\*\* years to settle at Colvestone, so any disruption to\* routine will harm \* health and education.*

*We have chosen Colvestone Primary school for our little [child], who is \*\*\* years-old and [SEND] because it provides a required quick journey access to school (5 minutes), a safe and happy environment (that a small one form school offers) and a wonderful SEN support ([my child] has an experienced SEN one to one). These are the 3 fundamental poles for [my child] to access education. It has taken time and great effort for [my child] to be happy and settled in \* school (\*\*\*) years now) and changing school at this stage will have an incredibly difficult impact on \* and it will be practically impossible for \* to access education, and this also will have an enormous impact on \* mental health.*

## *Historical Significance & Future Of The Building*

Colvestone has been a school since it was built in 1852 as one of the six Birkbeck schools. Respondents report that there has recently been investment in the fabric of the building: the exterior has been sand blasted and the lead on the roof replaced.

Campaigners believe there is a restrictive covenant on the site, which prohibits its use for anything other than education. The example of Hackney Downs School is cited in the feedback with respondents suggesting it closed and then had to re-open as a school (Mossbourne Academy) due to restrictions preventing the site being used for anything else.

Council figures are cited by respondents in reference to the cost of maintaining an empty listed building: £1m to close the school and £250-£300,000 each year to maintain the closed buildings. In addition to these costs, respondents comment that the Council would have to absorb Colvestone's historic debt, which respondents believe is currently being reduced under the new management.

Local residents of Colvestone Crescent responded to the consultation expressing concern that an empty, disused building could increase the risk of anti-social behaviour in the area. Many stated that they feel the school is an integral part of the community.

Examples of comments about the historical significance and future use of the building made in response to the consultation are shown below.

*The site has multiple protections - two Grade 2 listings and an outdoor classroom / playground that is an Asset of Community Value - it is not a building easily repurposed but it is an excellent building purpose-built as a school. We also strongly suspect that it has protected educational use and are searching for the deeds.*

*Colvestone is the beating heart of Dalston. It creates natural surveillance in the area and makes Dalston the vibrant, diverse, friendly community that it is. Without it I believe we would soon see a rise in the levels of anti social behaviour.*

*The decision to close a school without any plan for the future of the site is bizarre. I understand it is to be a community asset, but this is vague and without a clear plan and funding will likely see the site lay vacant for a long time, draining further resources. This lack of plan is compounded when you consider the very recent (and long overdue) capital works to the buildings.*

*I believe that writing off Colvestone's deficit, and paying for security costs whilst the school is mothballed, is an egregious use of public funds.*

## *Impact Of Joining Blossom Federation*

Respondents to the consultation are very positive about the stability, new leadership and improved facilities Blossom has brought the school since it began in September 2022 and they believe the school is now running an in-year budget surplus and can start to reduce its financial deficit.

Feedback has also been provided in the consultation about the previous partnership with Thomas Fairchild primary as part of the Soaring Skies Federation. Substantial criticism is levied by some respondents towards the previous leadership of the school and the oversight from the Learning Trust. Respondents feel the new leadership and partnership with Blossom has seen the school turn a corner and they feel this should be given further time to develop to fulfil its potential.

Some of the comments about the new partnership with Blossom are shown below.

*This year has seen huge developments at Colvestone since the Blossom Federation partnership, which can clearly be recognised in all the ODR and SIP reports - yet we need more time to be given a chance to develop further (and build a new reputation under the new leadership) to attract new families, increase our numbers of children, and therefore really begin to lower the deficit again.*

*It seems as though we are in this process mostly due to the large historic debt but Hackney Education supported the school to choose Blossom Federation as new leadership going forwards and they are taking proactive steps to address the deficit. YOU HAVE NOT GIVEN THEM A CHANCE.*

*The Federation has turned a budget surplus - despite a low pupil roll - in its first 6 months in charge. So doing Blossom Federation has shown that the school can be financially viable under its new leadership. We, as parents, carers and students, love the stability and improved facilities Blossom Federation has brought the school.*

*Being on the list to close (or merge - which essentially means our school will close), completely diminishes our chances of attracting more families - and yes, if we were not on the list, with all the work that Blossom have helped the school to do this year, we would have absolutely taken a lot of the surplus school children in the area looking for Reception places because that's how much we believe in the impact they have made to our school!*



## 5.4 Negative Comments About Other Schools / Process Of Moving

**13%** think the move will negatively affect children

**11%** comment on other negative aspects of moving

**4%** feel that larger schools have more problems / less support

The feedback from respondents in the consultation suggests that many Colvestone parents are unhappy at the idea of sending their children to Princess May. Some say they will chose another school, even if they have to move out of the area. Their comments cite a number of specific reasons for this:

- Several respondents mention a poll of parents that revealed that over 90% did not include Princess May as one of their original options when applying for a school place for their child. 13 respondents explicitly state that they will not be sending their child to Princess May and many others express concern about doing so.
- There are multiple references in the feedback to a meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2023 with Paul Senior (Hackney Education) who confirmed that Princess May is on the list of schools to be considered for consultation next year. Thus, there is a fear amongst some respondents that sending children here may result in them being subject to a second school closure or amalgamation in the future.
- Many comments make reference to Princess May being on the A10 with its playground backing directly onto the main road. Additionally, to get to the school, respondents say many children would have to walk directly up the main road, which they believe is very polluted and congested, and would be particularly difficult for children with SEND.

Examples of the comments on these topics are shown below.

*The pollution levels at Princess May Primary were 40% higher than Colvestone Primary School in 2021 due to the extremely busy main road that the school sits on. With 70% of eligible roads in Hackney becoming LTNs and the council's drive to promote LTNs in the borough, the diverted volume of traffic is only going to increase this pollution.*

*If the pupils currently at Colvestone are forced to move to Princess May, I feel the care afforded to children and the educational options available to their parents will suffer a serious deterioration, as they would likely be forced to disturb their children's education and transfer them to a school exclusively for SEND children.*

*It has become clear that many of the wonderful staff from Colvestone will not be transferred to Princess May and based on this information and the survey that was carried out, many, if not most of the families (ourselves included) will not go to Princess May. So the result would be that Princess May will still suffer from low numbers and also face closure in the not too distant future.*

*Had you chosen to merge De Beauvoir and Colvestone this would have been a different matter as they are very similar in ethos and size but going to Princess May is not an option for us.*



## 5.5 Comments About School Places

**18%** think the demographics of the population can change and are concerned about what will happen should there be a future shortage of places.

**6%** discuss the impact that free schools and faith schools have on enrolment

**2%** believe that other local schools do not have many places

**2%** feel that the economic argument is justified / the Council has no choice

Many of the comments about future changes to the demographics of the population refer to the Dalston Plan and the intention to build 600 new affordable homes by 2031. Colvestone is believed to be the closest primary school to the main site earmarked for this development so many respondents argue that closing it is short-sighted.

Other specific points about school places raised by respondents in the consultation feedback are shown below.

- Merging Colvestone with De Beauvoir is suggested as an option by some respondents, since otherwise children may have to travel long distances, if parents reject Princess May, as they believe that many other schools in south Hackney are oversubscribed.
- Without Colvestone, many respondents believe there will be a lack of future parental choice as those schools that remain are religious, academy or free schools. The comments mention the perceived unfairness that only community schools can be included in any consultation.
- There is concern amongst some respondents about the loss of the maintained (free) nursery facility on the site, which currently enables seamless transition to the main school.

A selection of comments about school places is shown below.

*Colvestone as a merger school for De Beauvoir. They are a much better fit and are not far geographically. Initially there may have been too many pupils at De Beauvoir but many of these have now transferred to other local schools. In fact we understand that as families have moved away from Randall Cremer and De Beauvoir in light of the proposal many of the schools in that part of the borough are now FULL and these families need another option.*

*I do not want to send my child to a religious school (especially as a gay parent) or a free school (the funding of which is cloaked in secrecy) therefore there are no other options available to us a family in this area. The schools we would otherwise choose are full.*

*Out of interest I looked at the reception intake for 2023 and saw that all the schools in my locality have a full allocation for this September, the only exception being Princess May. This was not on my list of schools and I would not send my child to this school. I'm concerned about the lack of parental choice if Colvestone closes. Also given that a high percentage of current Colvestone parents will not send their child to Princess May, would there be capacity in the other non faith (and potentially non free) schools in the area to accommodate these children?*

*It seems that it is only certain parents who fundamentally prefer the aesthetics of the school that are insisting on it remaining open. This preference is to the detriment of properly funded education for the pupils. The council is not to blame for the way in which education is funded, and it is not within the Council's gift to modify the national system of education funding. Wishing that it were different does not address the present problem. Amalgamation of the schools will deliver better outcomes.*

*The closures planned are unfairly hitting Dalston, with too many community schools close together being affected. You have not put any faith schools in this plan, which means there is nowhere left to go for pupils who do not want to go to faith schools. Leaving the one school with a strong community to continue, as a single form school, would be a fair way to rectify this problem.*

## 5.6 General Feedback

**8%** made comments about the decision to consult and the wider context of falling school rolls.

**6%** just said they do not want the schools to merge, with little additional detail

**6%** are critical of the consultation and/or fear the building will be sold to developers

Some respondents mention that they have formed a campaign group, Save Colvestone Primary School, but say that they do not feel the Council is listening to them. Criticisms from respondents of both the wider context and the Council's approach to the consultation include the following points:

- Respondents comment that despite being told that Hackney Education is one system, that has to meet the needs of all the borough's schools including academies, free and faith schools, the perception is that local authority schools have been unfairly targeted in the proposals. Their argument is that "if there is ONE system - then it needs to be considered as A WHOLE".
- Respondents believe that the threat of closure makes it impossible to increase numbers on Colvestone's roll. However, they think that the campaign has raised the school's profile and those involved feel it would be possible to increase numbers if the school is removed from the list.
- These respondents do not see the proposals as a merger but rather a closure of Colvestone with a presumption that children will transfer to Princess May.
- Campaigners believe they have articulated the reasons not to close Colvestone using facts, data and numbers, whereas, in their opinion, the Council has not taken this approach. For example, respondents say that financial modelling has only been provided by the school itself and the campaign group, rather than by the Council.
- Respondents describe officials as reluctant to discuss the proposals, with meetings with councillors said to have been blocked, although the comments also make frequent references to meetings, including with the Director of Education & Inclusion. Campaigners argue that a genuine consultation requires the Council to respond to the information received and that to act "on weak data or inertia or an ill-thought through proposal would be an act of gross dereliction of duty".
- The perception of respondents is that the Council has not engaged with the wider community, such as the market traders, neighbours and other local residents.
- Many comments from the campaign group express increasing cynicism as well as concern about how the experience is affecting their children's view of the democratic process.

The graphical documents provided to the Council alongside this report include all the comments submitted as part of the consultation. Extracts from the campaigners' responses to the consultation are shown below.

*I feel that the consultation 'process' as a whole has been completely unfair to the six schools thrown into the melting pot with no solid reasons given as to why they have been singled out. If this was a fair and considerate consultation all schools in the borough would have been included in the 'process' from day one. The six schools chosen are now having to fill their enrolment quotas for the coming school year with the shadow of closure hanging heavy above them. This is obviously going to have a massive negative influence on their success. If this was a 'consultation' I do not understand why Hackney Council would put a small number of the borough's schools at such a debilitating disadvantage.*

*It is hard not to despair at the lack of response we have been getting, at how badly the documents from the council are prepared, at the lack of data, research, or even just answers, at the fact that there is no discernible scope of the actual consultation that has been outlined, and how much this process reveals a broken democratic process and a dysfunctional education department. The only financial modelling has been provided by the school itself and our group of parents, and as it emerges that clearly closing the school will be more expensive to the tax payer than keeping it open one wonders if anyone really cares what a decision like this one is being based on.*

*The plans have not been properly thought through. The 'term' merger does not fool anyone. It is a closure of Colvestone with a presumption that our pupils will transfer to Princess May. This is not borne out in our consultation with parents and carers at Colvestone - and betrays a real lack of understanding behind parental choice. There is a real demand for a single form entry Local Authority school in Hackney. That need should be respected and met. Colvestone IS that school.*

## 6. Response To The Proposal To Merge Baden Powell & Nightingale Primaries

At the start of the consultation period, 300 forms were given out to parents and staff at Baden Powell primary school and 350 to those at Nightingale, although replies were also accepted from wider stakeholders and interested parties. In total, 157 responses were received to the consultation on the proposal to merge the schools.

40% of respondents are a parent, carer or guardian of a child at the school, 24% are interested members of the public, 20% are parents at another school in Hackney and 3% are staff or governors at the school.

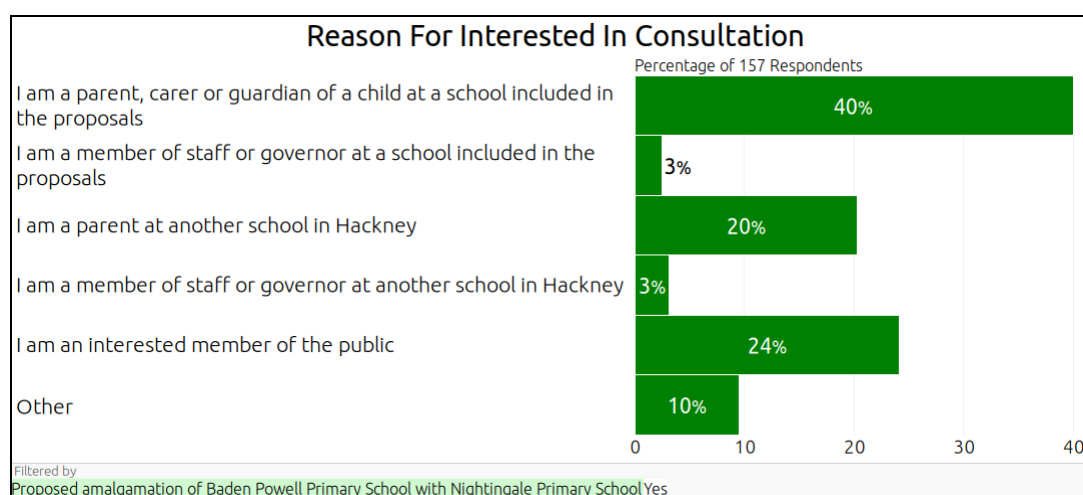


Figure 6.1

Overall, 15% of respondents agree with the proposal to merge Baden Powell and Nightingale, whilst 77% disagree.

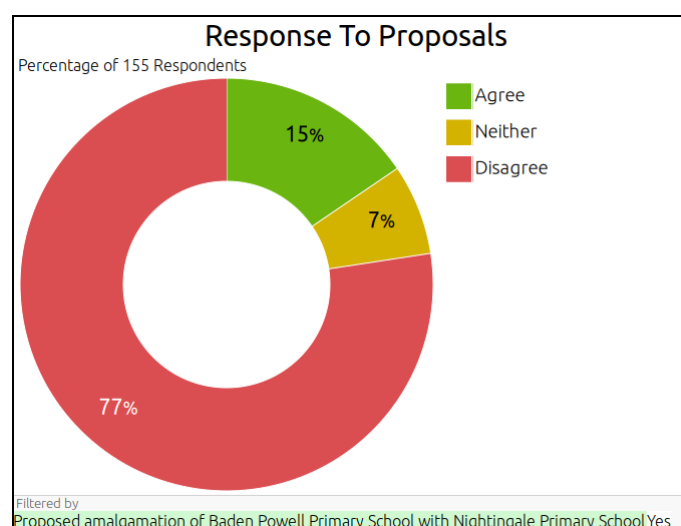


Figure 6.2

11% of parents, carers and guardians agree with the proposals to close the school, compared to 18% of other respondents. Caution must be used when interpreting these results due to the small numbers of respondents.

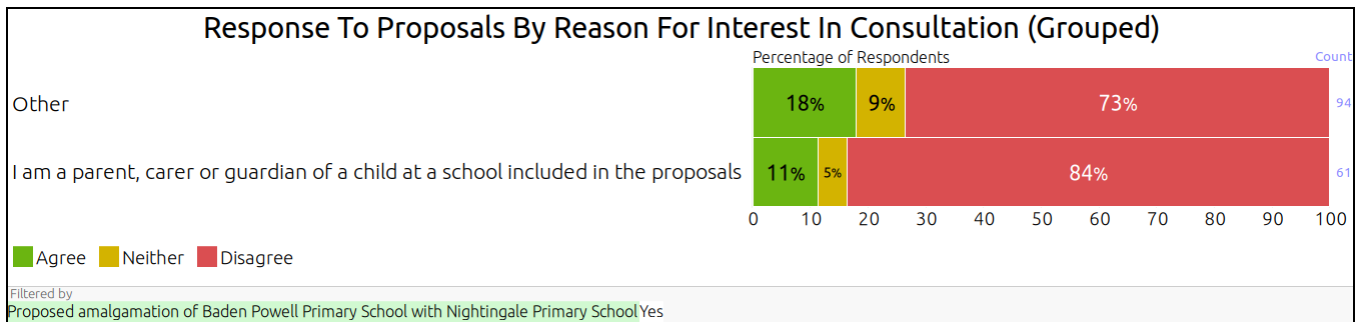


Figure 6.3

## 6.1 Analysis Of Comments On Proposal To Merge Baden Powell & Nightingale

31% of respondents made negative comments about other schools or the process of moving, whilst 27% gave positive feedback about the school. 20% discussed the wider context of the consultation and 17% gave broader feedback about school places in general.

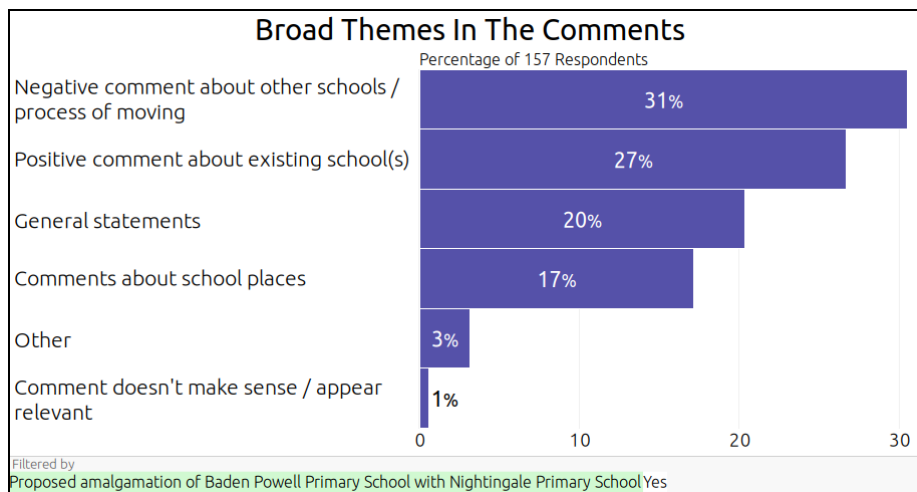


Figure 6.4

The qualitative feedback was further analysed to identify more specific themes in the comments, these are shown in the graph below and are discussed in more detail in the sections that follow.

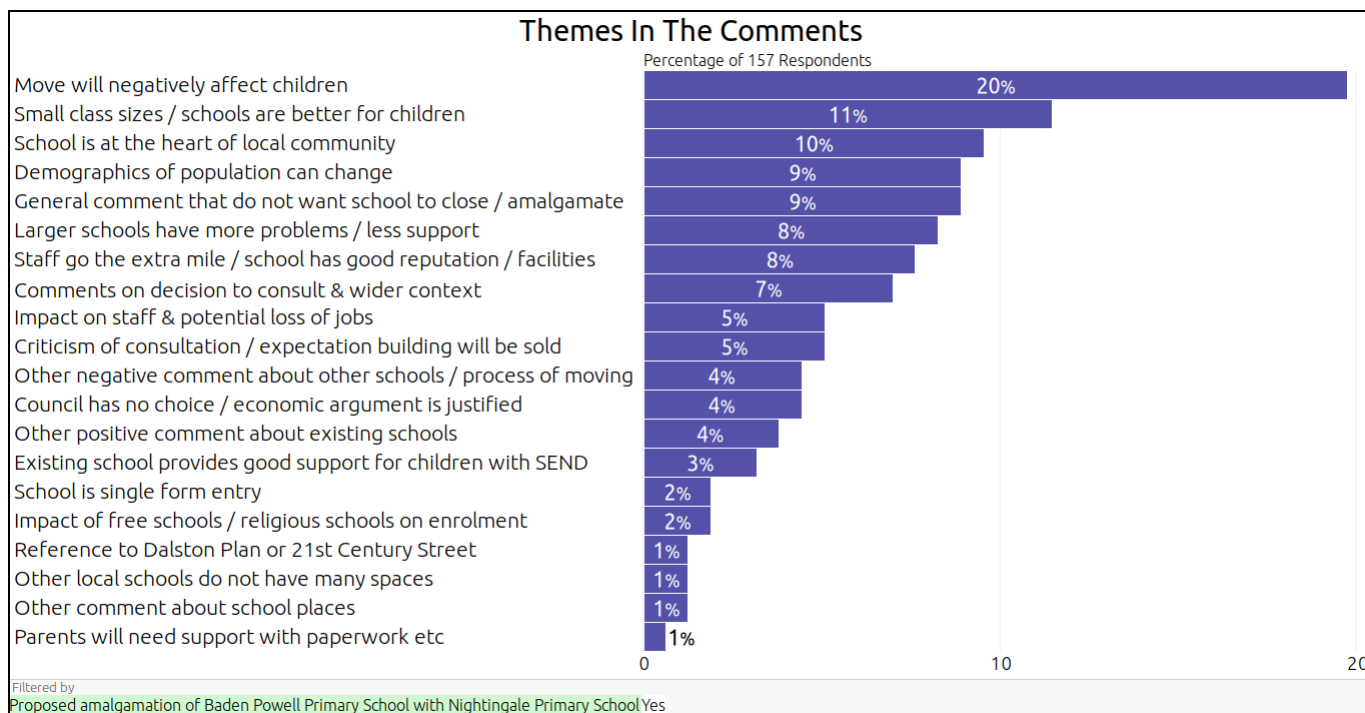


Figure 6.5

## 6.2 Positive Feedback About Baden Powell

**11%** feel small class sizes / schools are better for children

**10%** say that the school is at the heart of the local community

**8%** think that staff go the extra mile, the school has a good reputation and/or good facilities

Many comments included testimonials from parents about the school as shown below.

*BP school is over 30 years old, staff are very friendly and dedicated to their jobs and pupils. They take responsibilities really seriously: looking after the kids, helping them with classwork and encourage to achieve the best grades of education. Teachers give regular updates to the parents on how their kids have been in the classroom that day. At this moment the school has two amazing young pianists, a few talented chess players, 2 wonderful violinists etc.*

*Generations and generations of children have been attending this school and Baden Powell has been in the heart of the community of Hackney for many, many years with nothing but good things to say about it.*

*We are all very happy in our school and we love our little community. Children are learning, playing and growing up in a close and peaceful environment. I deliberately have chosen a one entry form school for my child.*

*I have an [SEND] child and one with needs in years \*\* & \*\*. They both don't like change and do not like too many children around them. It took more than a year for each of them to get settled in Baden Powell. It is going to be so unsettling for them to change into a large school with so many pupils. I chose Baden Powell as it was small for both their needs. We love all staff. All staff know the pupils and parents. Please don't merge. If you do I will move them to a smaller school like Baden Powell.*

Although there are only a small number of responses that were clearly from families of Nightingale pupils, their comments also related to the benefits of small schools, as shown in these examples.

*Nightingale is already a relatively small school, which also benefits from a distinctive admissions process that prioritises children in care and those subject to a child protection plan. There is a delicate ecosystem and one that will be particularly destabilised by the sudden arrival of so many additional pupils. Proximity should be just one measure of the suitability of a potential merger.*

*Many of us picked Nightingale because it's a small school. As a parent of a SEN child, I am worried how a busier school will affect \* day. I also hope that the kids won't be torn apart as they are a lovely little community with many friendships already formed.<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>3</sup> Nightingale has capacity for 60 children per year group but currently operates to 30 children per year group.



## 6.3 Negative Comments About Other Schools / Process Of Moving

**20%** think the move will negatively affect children

**8%** feel that larger schools have more problems / less support

**5%** comment on the impact on staff / potential job losses

Many respondents are worried that children will struggle to adapt to the change, especially those with SEND. There are also concerns expressed by respondents about whether all Baden Powell staff will be offered a job at the merged school.

Examples of the comments on this topic are shown below.

*Moving to a new school, some pupils will develop anxiety and stress, friendships between kids would be broken, some teachers would lose their jobs and Baden Powell Primary School structure would be shattered.*

*It's going to be devastating for year \* children to move once in year \* and then move to a secondary, which is a huge change in their life in general. My [child] has [SEND] and \* struggles to cope even with little changes during \* daily routine. This will completely mess \* up.*

*I feel Nightingale will not be able to handle the extra children and will also not be able to employ everyone to come over either. Their after-school clubs do not tie in well with working single mums as well and it will cause a real disruption to my work as well as my son's schedule. I do not see the point of this merger and can only see Nightingale being overwhelmed by the extra students.*

*I would like all Baden Powell staff offered a job at Nightingale to ensure a smooth transition for the children. I would like there to be extensive collaborative work between Baden Powell and Nightingale in the lead up to September 2024 to ensure that this is a proper amalgamation of systems & ethos and not just Baden Powell becoming taken over by Nightingale. I would like the leadership at Baden Powell to move with us as the leadership in Nightingale.*

## 6.4 Comments About School Places

**9%** think the demographics of the population can change and are concerned about what will happen should there be a future shortage of places.

**4%** feel that the economic argument is justified / the Council has no choice

**2%** discuss the impact that free schools and faith schools have on enrolment

**1%** believe that other local schools do not have many places

Many of the comments received on this topic are general in nature, as shown in the examples below.

*Firstly, I do not understand why the school budget has been cut and they have to merge schools. What happens when they agree to close the school and the birth rate goes back up?*

*I am a parent of a 2 year old in Hackney Downs that would likely have enrolled in one of the 4 schools involved in the merges. I was not aware of the falling enrolment numbers but agree Hackney council should protect the funding and quality of the school provision by merging. My only concern is whether there will be enough places in future years if numbers start to rise again and the closed school buildings have been repurposed/sold to developers.*

*My concern is that no information was given about birth rate projections for the future and the level of confidence the council have that numbers will not rise again in the foreseeable future that would impact on these proposals. I am also concerned about the loss of publicly provided nursery places, I do feel this is a loss to the local area and that alternative provision will not have the same outcomes for the children that they currently get being on the same site.*

## 6.5 General Feedback

**9%** report they do not want the schools to merge, with little additional detail

**7%** made comments about the decision to consult and the wider context of falling school rolls.

**5%** are critical of the consultation and/or fear the building will be sold to developers

There are concerns amongst respondents about what will happen to the school buildings if the merger goes ahead. A representative of the Orthodox Jewish community taking part in the consultation suggests the Council should consider the possibility of selling or leasing the school to one of the local Jewish schools as there is extensive overcrowding in these establishments.

Examples of the comments received about the building/repurposing are shown below.

*I am worried if Baden-Powell is closed that Hackney council will build a tower block in its space blocking out light and scenery, making it harder to find a parking space due to more people living on this road. And you will probably only provide a minimal amount of social housing.*

*This has the makings of landgrab. i.e. Hackney council are very aware of the increasing land value in the area, and closing Baden Powell is an easy way to sell off valuable land to the next property developer waiting in line.*

*I would also like to see the former Baden Powell site used for something that would benefit the community.*

*Merging schools and selling off public land to developers is taking the interest away from residents and is more of a money making scheme.*

*The loss of the existing schools and school communities is challenging and emotional for all involved. The loss of these buildings forever I believe could be a strategic error on the part of the council that will have further negative impacts on the viability of cities for children and families in the short medium and long term.*

## 7. Feedback - Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission

The Hackney Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission met on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2023 to scrutinise the proposals and has submitted a short summary of its conclusions in response to the consultation.

The Scrutiny Commission's role is strategic and, therefore, its submission to the consultation avoids commenting on the proposals for specific schools. Instead, it aims to highlight issues that can positively contribute to decision-making. The summary report, which is presented in full in Appendix 1, makes the following key points:

- Any decision to close a locally maintained school is likely to be irreversible, as the 2011 Education Act requires future demand to be met by the academy or free school sector.
- The impact of falling rolls is a long-term policy issue, as GLA modelling does not suggest a stabilisation until the end of the decade. Therefore, the Commission suggests conducting broader engagement with stakeholders and the public across the borough about the implementation of the School Estates Strategy. This would also provide an opportunity for the Council to clarify the restrictions of the existing legal framework, which does not permit them to effect direct change equally across all schools.
- The Commission acknowledges that the 20% pupil vacancy rate across the borough's primary schools is not sustainable and the Council needs to act to maintain the quality and integrity of education in Hackney.
- A number of concerns with the approach used in the consultation are highlighted in the Commission's report. In particular, it was not clear to the Commission how the information would be analysed and used to develop proposals for the next stage of the process, given the volume and wide ranging nature of the feedback likely to be received.
- Whilst accepting the financial impact falling school rolls is having, the Commission would have welcomed the provision of further evidence to demonstrate this impact on schools. More details from the affected schools would have helped those responding to the consultation to understand the implications of the situation and the Commission believes this could assist the case for change.
- The Commission also considers that it would be helpful for the Council to provide further information, going forwards, on the number of school places that need to be removed and a more detailed review, with costs, of possible alternative models for delivering the required reduction. For example, other local authorities have chosen a merger-led approach rather than school closures.
- Falling school rolls impact the wider community. In addition, they are an indication of a loss of children and families from the area, which will need the Council to make maximum use of all available options to deliver on its broader aims to create diverse and sustainable communities.
- Financial viability is clearly a key factor to be considered when determining the future of schools with falling rolls. The latest figures indicate the number of local schools carrying forward a budget deficit at the end of 2022/23 will rise from 11 to 13. However, the picture for the schools in the consultation is mixed, with some managing to maintain a surplus whilst others have a substantial deficit.
- If all the proposals go ahead, the cost to the Council is estimated to be £3.4m, of which £1m will be ongoing (for security of the vacant sites).
- The provision of further information on the additional support that may be made available to help children with SEND transfer to new schools might give some reassurance to parents.

## 8. Demographic Profile Of Respondents

### Postcode Areas Of Respondents

Responses were received from postcodes across the borough and further afield.

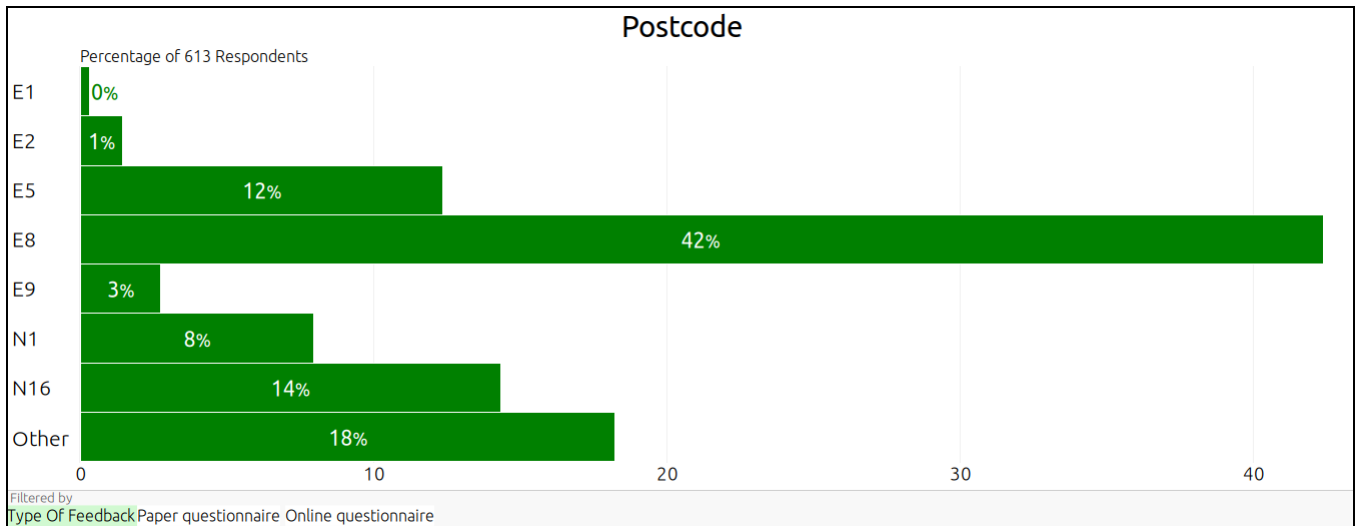


Figure 8.1

### Gender Of Respondents

68% of respondents were female and 29% are male. 1% describe themselves as non-binary and a further 1% using another term.

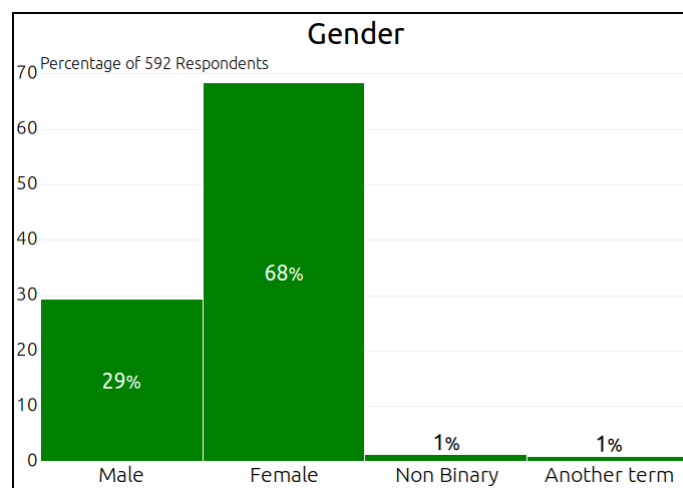


Figure 8.2

### Age Profile Of Respondents

Responses were received from a broad cross section of age groups. Eight in ten respondents are under the age of 55, whilst the remainder are aged 55 or over.

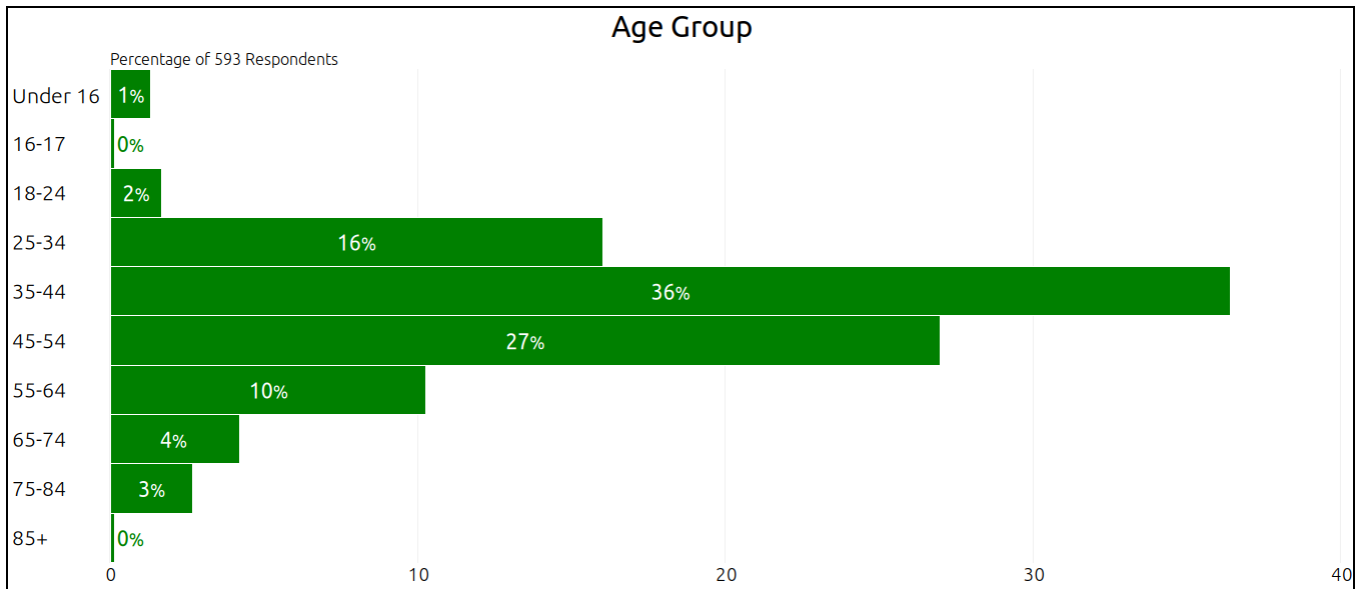


Figure 8.3

### Disability

10% of respondents have a disability and 18% have caring responsibilities.

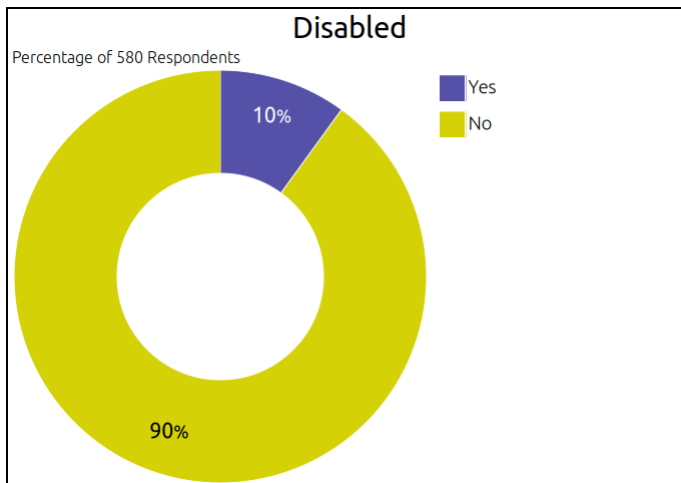


Figure 8.4

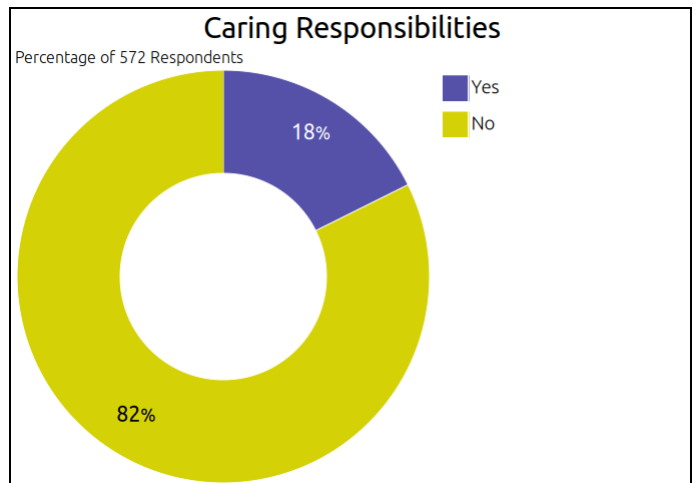


Figure 8.5

### Ethnicity Of Respondents

58% of respondents are White, 15% are Black and 8% are Asian. 17% of respondents describe themselves as being from another ethnic group and 1% say they are from a mixed background.

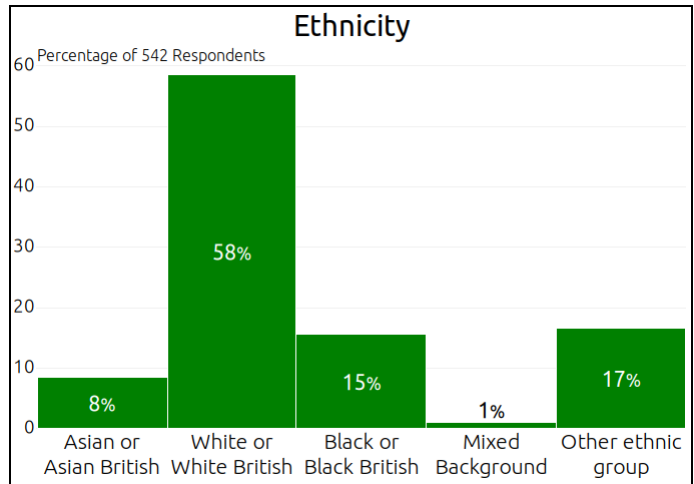


Figure 8.6

### Religion Of Respondents

46% of respondents describe themselves as being atheist/having no religious belief.

27% of respondents are Christian and 13% Muslim. Smaller proportions are Jewish (2%), Buddhist (1%), Hindu (1%) or Sikh (1%). 6% describe themselves as having another belief or religion.

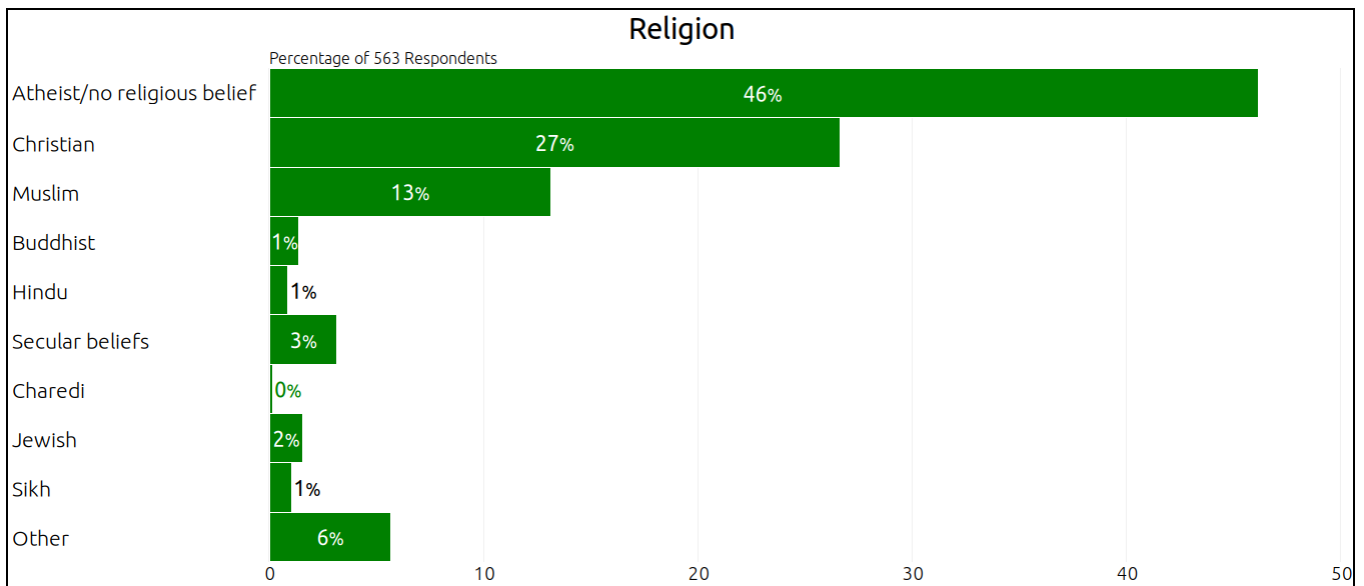


Figure 8.7

### Sexual Orientation Of Respondents

19% of respondents reported that they prefer not to answer the question about sexual orientation.

74% say they are heterosexual, whilst 2% are bisexual. 1% in each case describe themselves as a gay man, lesbian or gay woman, pansexual or queer.

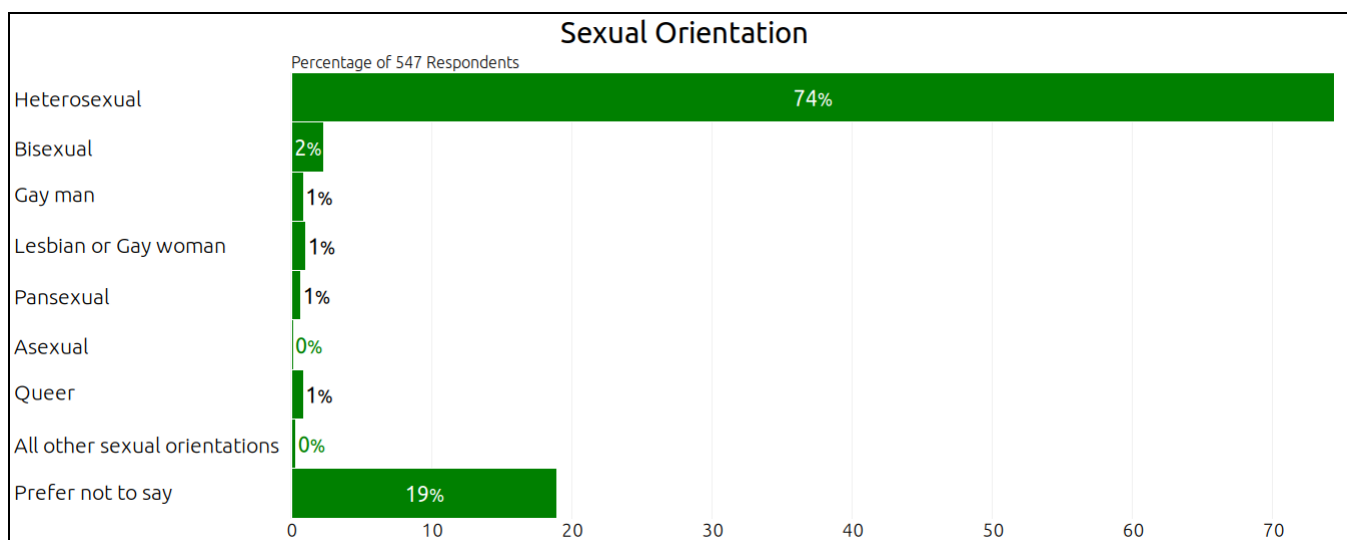


Figure 8.8

### Housing Tenure Of Respondents

67% of respondents are in rented accommodation. 24% rent from the council and 16% from a housing association, while a further 27% rent privately.

23% of respondents own their home outright, whilst 3% have a mortgage. 6% are in a shared ownership property.

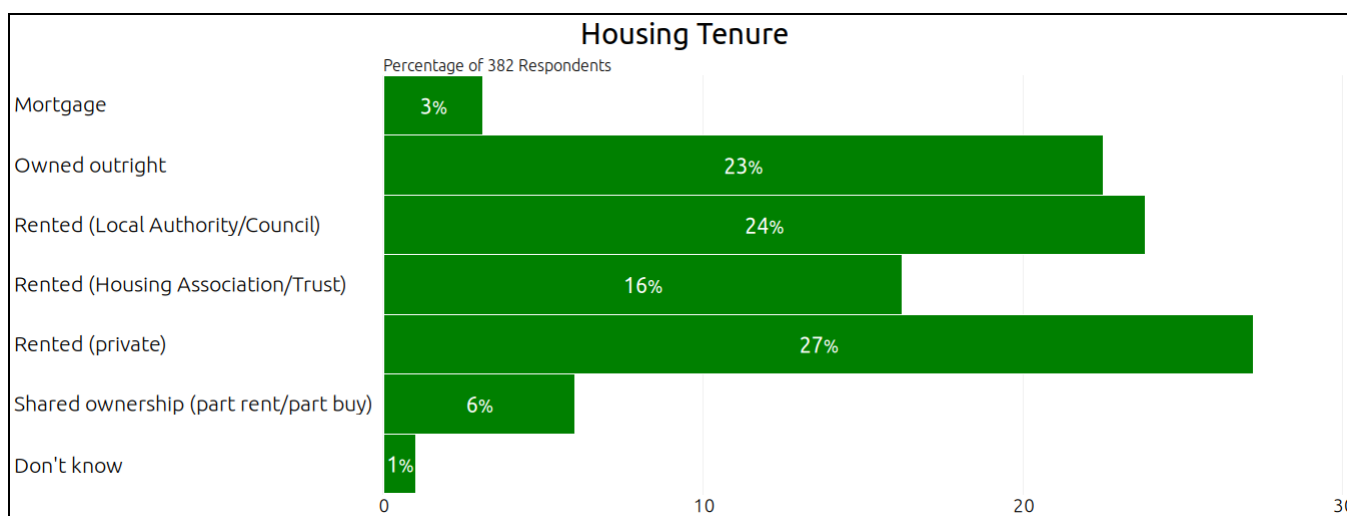


Figure 8.9



# Appendix 1

## Report from the Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission

# Overview & Scrutiny

**Children and Young People  
Scrutiny Commission**

Room 118, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Hackney Town Hall  
Mare Street  
London, E8 1EA

15th July 2023

[martin.bradford@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:martin.bradford@hackney.gov.uk)

Cllr Anntionette Bramble,  
Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education,  
Young People and Children's Social Care  
London Borough of Hackney.

Dear Cllr Bramble

School Estates Strategy (Falling School Rolls) - Informal Consultation Response

At its recent meeting on the 27th June 2023, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission scrutinised proposals emerging from the School Estates Strategy to close two primary schools (De Beauvoir and Randal Cremer) and to merge a further four (Baden-Powell with Nightingale and Colvestone with Princess May). At this meeting, members of the Commission agreed to submit a short summary of its conclusions which were to be submitted to the informal consultation on these proposals (ending 16th July 2023).

The Commission is grateful for the support and contributions from local parents representatives (from Colvestone Primary School and Baden Powell Primary School) as well as those officers that attended the meeting and who responded to questions raised by members. All these contributions have helped to shape and inform the Commission's response to the informal consultation which is attached to this letter. A full record of this meeting is provided through the [audio visual recording](#) and the [draft minutes](#).

Schools are anchors within local communities. As well as being a hub for learning, creativity and inclusion schools are also commonly the centre of community and social networks of local children, families. Children over multiple generations have often attended these same local schools which help to create long-standing bonds and ties to the community, therefore changes to the local school establishment undoubtedly raises concerns among local children and families, school staff and among the wider community. With a 20% pupil vacancy rate across local primary schools the Commission acknowledges that the current position is not sustainable

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and there is a need for the Council to act to preserve the integrity and quality of local educational systems.

The Commission understands the difficulties and challenges of falling school rolls and accepts that there are no easy pathways ahead in making such difficult decisions about the future of our local schools. The existing legal framework for education provision by the local authority compounds the difficulty of such decisions, which whilst placing a duty on local authorities to ensure that there is sufficient education does not give them jurisdiction to effect *direct change* equally across *all* educational settings. Furthermore, the Commission is all too aware that any decision to close a locally maintained school now is likely to be final as any future increase in local demand for education provision will need to be met through the academy or free school sector (*the academy and free school presumption* as set out in the Education Act 2011).

Scrutiny can play a positive and constructive role in local decision making, particularly where decisions might be difficult and challenging. Engaging and bringing local stakeholders together helps to bring a shared understanding of the issues and challenges at hand and can help to identify a common way forward. Scrutiny, where proposals are challenged and tested in public can also provide assurance to both local decision makers and the local community that subsequent decisions are taken in the public interest.

Attached is the submission of the Commission to the informal consultation to the School Estates Strategy (Falling Rolls) and the proposal to close two primary schools and merge a further four which we hope will prove helpful. As the focus of scrutiny is strategic it has necessarily avoided commenting on individual proposals for specific schools but has sought to draw together issues which can positively inform current and future decision making in this area.

Yours sincerely

**Cllr Sophie Conway**

Chair, Children and Young People Scrutiny  
Commission

**Cllr Margaret Gordon**

Vice Chair, Children and Young People  
Scrutiny Commission

Cc:

- Jacquie Burke, Group Director Children and Education
- Paul Senior, Director of Education and Inclusion
- [school.sufficiency@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:school.sufficiency@hackney.gov.uk)

## Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission Submission to the Informal Consultation on the Proposals to Close Two Primary Schools and Merge a Further Four

### Consultation

1. The Commission welcomes the ambitions of the informal consultation as an opportunity to engage and involve a wide range of local stakeholders ahead of any statutory consultation and formal decision making process on the future of local schools. Given that the consultation is likely to cause concern and anxiety among children and families likely to be impacted by the proposals to close or merge local schools however, it is important that there are clear and unambiguous expectations of the information which is required from contributors in this consultation.

The [consultation documentation](#) sets out just one question (whether contributors agree or disagree with the proposals) and one open-ended invitation to comment on the proposals more broadly. Alongside some stakeholders, the Commission wish to highlight a number of concerns with this approach:

- a) The agree/ disagree questioning infers that there is some form of ballot on the proposals which may inflate expectations arising from this consultation.
- b) Whilst understanding there is genuine desire to garner wide ranging feedback on the proposals, with little guidance as to what information is being sought through this open-ended questioning, stakeholders may be confused as to what practical, useful or meaningful information might be required which may influence or provide mitigation for the proposals or future subsequent plans.

In relation to above, given the volume and wide ranging nature of contributions likely to be received through the consultation, it was not clear to members of the Commission as to how this information would be analysed and used in developing proposals for the next stage of this process. In this context, further clarification was needed.

2. GLA modelling forecasts that school rolls will continue to decline in Hackney over the medium to long-term with rolls not expected to stabilise until the earliest in 2029/30. Given that the impact of falling rolls is a long term policy issue and likely to impact on a growing number of schools across the borough, the Commission suggests that this might be the basis for broader borough wide public conversation on the *implementation* of the School Estates Strategy. Such a process with broader stakeholder and public engagement may help to further develop overarching principles and guidance which can inform future proposals in relation to school place planning. Equally importantly, this would also be a further opportunity for the Council to clearly again set out its duties and obligations in respect of school place planning and in maintaining high quality education for all young people across Hackney, but to also highlight the limitations and the legal framework in which it can act to reduce provision, which is perhaps less widely understood.

## Falling School Rolls - Impact and Evidence

3. The Commission acknowledges the financial impact that falling school rolls is having across the local education system and indeed the wider community. In Hackney Education's own estimate, falling school rolls has meant that local schools are missing out on up to £30m of central government funding due to places going unfilled in local primary schools. In making the case for proposed primary school closures and mergers, the Commission would have welcomed further evidence to illustrate how falling school rolls have begun to impact on the delivery of local education. In particular further evidence would have been welcome in respect of the following:
  - The number of teaching and other support staff (classroom assistants) lost in the local educational system;
  - Impact on extra -curricular activities on local schools (visits and after school clubs etc);
  - Impact on building maintenance and other physical investments.

A more detailed narrative from schools themselves would help stakeholders and the wider community to fully understand how falling school rolls impacts on schools, teachers and of course the educational support and development provided to children themselves. Such data would help stakeholders understand the impact of falling school rolls and assist the case for change.

4. Officers presented evidence to the Commission that local proposals to close or merge schools were delayed to ensure that the impact of those local interventions to help maintain the viability of local schools were fully tested and evaluated. Whilst officers noted that a number of actions that local schools had taken to help improve financial viability and long-term sustainability (e.g. shared leadership, vertical classes, clustering/ Federation) the Commission felt it would have been useful to share further evidence of the impact of these interventions.

Understanding that the issue of falling school rolls is likely to be an ongoing issue for the medium to long-term in Hackney and other central London boroughs, it is important that there is a open and transparent evidence base about what actions are effective, not only to inform future policy and decision making but to also ensure that there is greater community awareness and understanding of the reasonings behind future decision making.

5. Recognising that falling rolls is a London wide issue where a number of other boroughs are having to make similar difficult choices about the future of local schools, the Commission believe that in future decision making, it would be helpful to understand more about the different approaches taken across these authorities (for example, why Lambeth has adopted an approach which is more focused mergers rather than closure of schools under its jurisdiction). This underlines the importance

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of the need for London boroughs to work collectively and to develop and share local innovations and solutions to the challenges of falling school rolls which can help develop and extend best practice across London. The work of London Council's on this issue is noted by the Commission as this can provide a conduit for such intelligence and information sharing.

## Objectives of the Proposals and Possible Alternatives

6. Whilst the need to remove surplus places in the primary sector has been made clear to the stakeholders, further clarification was perhaps needed as to the *numbers of places* that are needed to be removed to ensure the ongoing sustainability of local education systems. Whilst assessment criteria used to assess and identify which schools fall into scope (based on financial viability, falling school rolls etc) it is not apparent if there is a 'target' figure which the planned closures or mergers aimed to achieve in reducing school places through this process.
7. The Commission would also welcome further clarification as to possible alternative models and options to reduce vacancies in the local school system. In particular, the Commission is keen to understand why it may be preferable to close rather than merge schools and why (for example) [other authorities](#) have opted for a predominantly school merger approach rather than a mixed model of closures and mergers. Given the possible liabilities to the Council, it would also be helpful to have financial assessment of the different options (noting that London wide documentation suggest that school mergers may be preferred by some authorities as the liabilities to the Council could be minimised (particularly in relation to staff redundancy costs).

Going forward therefore, the Commission felt it would be helpful in further delivery stages of the School Estates Strategy to have a clearer understanding of the number of places that need to be removed (for sustainability) and a more detailed appraisal (with costs) of the different options which may deliver the required reduction in places.

## Coordinating a cross-department local response

8. Falling school rolls is a clearly systemic issue in which a range of national and regional issues (e.g. falling birth rates, Brexit and the housing crisis) have interacted to precipitate widespread migration of families from inner city areas. Whilst the Commission accepts that there is no easy solution which will resolve this problem at either national or local level, it does believe that a more coordinated and consistent local approach which seeks to utilise and align those levers over which the local authority does have control, may help to *mitigate* some of the impact of falling school rolls.

The Commission suggests that there are a number of local processes over which the Council does exert some control, which albeit on their own may appear to have

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limited impact, but if aligned to this purpose may have some cumulative impact.

Examples noted by the Commission include:

- Further promotion of inclusive schools and education to ensure that more children are supported in mainstream local education settings;
- Minimise the loss of pupils through cross-border flows where neighbouring authorities may have comparatively better borough wide offers (e.g. FSM provision, wraparound school provision or holiday programme activities);<sup>1</sup>
- Ensure that there is effective, regular and ongoing engagement with parents whose children are receiving Elective Home Education and that they are aware of the pathways back to mainstream education;<sup>2</sup>
- Further assurance that Housing and Education services are working closely together so that where possible, families can be supported to stay within the borough (e.g. particularly in relation to placements of Temporary Accommodation)
- Ensuring local development plans and other planning policies reflect the need to develop family accommodation.<sup>3</sup>

In this same vein, the Commission wishes to emphasise that falling school rolls is not an issue solely for local education and children services as the impact and repercussions of such closures and mergers are likely to be felt much more widely across the community and across the wider family of council services. Falling school rolls is an indicator of the loss of children and families from local communities which will need the local authority to maximise the use of all those levers at its disposal if it is to deliver on broader local ambitions for genuinely diverse and sustainable communities.

## Plans to Support Local Secondary Schools Against Falling School Rolls

9. Falling school rolls in the primary sector will inevitably soon impact on secondary education. With demand for primary places peaking in 2019 it is likely that demand for secondary schools will peak this or next academic year. The Commission notes that there have already been recent reports of secondary school closures in other parts of London - 2 of these in Lambeth.

[Local admissions data](#) suggests that, without any reductions in PAN, surplus places in the secondary will begin to accumulate in Hackney from 2022/23. This data estimates that surplus places will increase year on year, so that in 2028 there will be an estimated 367 surplus places in secondary schools across Hackney (which is the equivalent of 12 Form Entry).

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<sup>1</sup> 2022 [admissions data](#) suggest that **135** children were offered reception places outside of Hackney.

<sup>2</sup> Currently over **200** children (excluding those from the Charedi community) are in EHE.

<sup>3</sup> Data submitted to the Cabinet report suggests that 70% of planned new homes for the borough comprise 1 and 2 bedroom accommodation.



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The authority's ability to act to address growing numbers of pupil vacancies in the secondary sector will however be more limited, as the majority of schools in the secondary sector in Hackney are academies, free schools or faith schools (16 out of 18 schools) over which the Council has no direct jurisdiction (in terms of reduce PANs or decision to close). In this context, the Commission is concerned that measures to reduce local places may fall disproportionately on the small number of local maintained secondary schools. The Commission would therefore welcome further assurance on how local secondary schools are being engaged in preparation for prospective falling school rolls and how the authority intends to protect the local diversity of provision in secondary settings.

## Managing school deficits

10. Financial viability is clearly a key determinant in the future of local schools facing challenges from falling school rolls. Data submitted as part of the Cabinet report suggests that this is a complex and varied picture however, where some schools in the scope for closure or merger have managed to maintain a significant budget surplus whilst others have accumulated substantial deficits. Whilst wishing to avoid comment on any singular schools financial situation it was not clear to the Commission how the authority had allowed a school to have an ongoing budget deficit of around £500k for the past three financial years and what support had been provided to turn around this position. This clearly presents a financial risk / exposure to the wider DSG budget if proposals are confirmed.
11. The scale of the financial challenges facing schools is clear. The most recent data published at Schools Forum suggest a deteriorating financial position across local community schools which indicate that the number of schools carrying forward a deficit revenue balance at end 2022/23 has risen from 11 to 13 local schools and where the total budget deficit across these schools has risen from £2,254,228 in 2021/22 to £3,463,813 in 2022/23 (a 53% increase). Nine of these schools will carry forward a revenue budget deficit in excess of £200k.

In the context of the above, the Commission welcomes the establishment of a dedicated schools strategy team to support schools in face of ongoing falling rolls and make sure schools are making appropriate plans to mitigate against falling rolls, and working together to minimise disruption and for the continuation of education. In addition however, the Commission is seeking further assurance as to what specific business planning and financial support will be made available to local schools to help contain and manage budgets, and there are effective plans in place to reduce budget deficits. The Commission is also keen to understand if there will be any additional capacity within the existing business support/financial planning function in Hackney Education, given that demands upon this service are likely to increase.



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## Budget impact for Hackney Education and Council (General Fund)

12. Should the proposals to close two schools and merge a further four be confirmed by Cabinet later this year, it is estimated that this will result in an estimated £3.4m cost of which £1m will be recurring (for security of vacant sites). There are a number of uncertainties about the projections and accountabilities within this budget for which the Commission would like further reassurance:
- a) How confident are officers that the projected costs and financial liabilities in administering the proposed closures and mergers are realistic given the i) expected deteriorating financial positions of schools in scope as roll numbers may decline ii) the unknown contracted liabilities of the schools in scope?
  - b) Further clarity is also needed as to the financial responsibility of these costs and which local budgets will be accountable for any occurring losses/liabilities (e.g. which will be met by Direct Schools Grant and those by the Hackney Council General Fund).
  - c) The Commission is particularly concerned about those liabilities from the proposed closure and mergers which may fall within the Council General Fund, not only in the context of the broader pressures this budget is under, but also if this may impact on the Hackney Education budget (where discretionary spending is limited and budget savings adversely impact a small number of services).

## Mitigations - SEND

13. Accepting that what has been presented thus far are just proposals for school closures and mergers, along with other stakeholders, the Commission would welcome further details in respect of the possible mitigations which *may* be put in place to support affected children, families and schools should these be approved.

The impact of prospective school closures and amalgamations on children with SEND has been a key feature in many of the consultation responses, with many parents anxious about the upheaval that a school move would have on their child. In particular, parents were concerned that they would be required to move their child with SEND from a one form entry school (which had been their preferred choice) to a larger two form entry school which may be a more challenging experience.

At present, documentation proposing the closure and merger of schools notes that 'additional provision' will be provided to support children with SEND, with no illustrative examples of what that might look like. In the context of the above, further details of the mitigations which might be put in place to support transition of children with SEND to new schools may provide some reassurance to parents impacted by this change.

## Impact on the diversity of schools

14. A long-standing area of interest to the Commission has been diversity of children within local schools. The Commission believes that a key aim of local education provision is not only to ensure that there is diversity of schools in terms of range and type of settings available for parents to choose from, but also to ensure that there is diversity of children within local schools which reflect the rich and vibrant social, economic and cultural mix of local communities in Hackney. [For example the Commission notes that with the exception of one school in scope for proposals for closure or amalgamation, all have significantly higher rates of Free School Meal entitlement than the Hackney average (36%) for primary schools.]

Accepting the supremacy of parental choice in this matter, the Commission is keen to understand what assurance can be provided that current and future school place planning (or admissions processes) can protect and promote ambitions for diversity *within* and across local schools.

## Appendix 2

### Questionnaire Used in the Consultation

# Consultation on the amalgamation/closure of 6 Hackney primary schools

## Introduction

1. (Optional) Your name:

2. Which of the following best describes your interest in this consultation?

(Required)

- I am a parent, carer or guardian of a child at a school included in the proposals
- I am a member of staff or governor at a school included in the proposals
- I am a parent at another school in Hackney
- I am a member of staff or governor at another school in Hackney
- I am an interested member of the public
- Other

If other, please specify:

3. Which of the proposals do you wish to comment on?

Select all that apply

(Required)

- Proposal to close De Beauvoir Primary School
- Proposal to close Randal Cremer Primary School
- Proposed amalgamation of Colvestone Primary School with Princess May Primary School
- Proposed amalgamation of Baden Powell Primary School with Nightingale Primary School

## Response to the proposals

4. Do you agree or disagree with the proposals?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

5. Please comment on the proposal(s) in the space below:

## About you

This information will help us to understand our service users and residents, allowing us to establish if the response to the questionnaire is representative of the borough. All information is used under the strict controls of the 1998 Data Protection Act and the 2016 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

This information is optional and will not be used in a way that identifies you.

6. Postcode: Please provide the first half of your postcode followed by the first number of the second half

For example, if your postcode was E8 1DY, you would write E8 1. If your postcode was N16 5HB, you would write N16 5.

Postcode:

7. Gender: Are you...

- Male
- Female
- Non Binary
- Another term

If you prefer to use your own term please provide this here:

8. Age: what is your age group?

- Under 16
- 16-17
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75-84
- 85+

9. Disability: Under the Equality Act you are disabled if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities. Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

- Yes
- No

10. Caring responsibilities: A carer is someone who spends a significant proportion of their time providing unpaid support to a family member, partner or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or substance misuse problems. Do you regularly provide unpaid support caring for someone?

- Yes
- No

11. Ethnicity: Are you...

- Asian or Asian British
- White or White British
- Black or Black British
- Mixed background
- Other ethnic group

Other (please state if you wish):

12. Religion or belief: Are you or do you have...

- Atheist/no religious belief
- Christian
- Muslim
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Secular beliefs
- Charedi
- Jewish
- Sikh

Other (please state if you wish):

13. Sexual orientation: Are you...

- Heterosexual
- Bisexual
- Gay man
- Lesbian or Gay woman
- Pansexual
- Asexual
- Queer
- All other sexual orientations
- Prefer not to say

Other (please state if you wish):

14. Housing Tenure: Which of the following best describes the ownership of your home?

- Being bought on a mortgage
- Owned outright
- Rented (Local Authority/Council)
- Rented (Housing Association/Trust)

- Rented (private)
- Shared ownership (part rent/part buy)
- Don't know







## **Kwest Research**

Suite 5, Egerton House  
The Towers Business Park  
865 Wilmslow Road  
Didsbury  
Manchester  
M20 2DX

Tel: 0161 448 1388  
Fax: 0161 445 3551  
email: [sales@kwest.info](mailto:sales@kwest.info)