Consultation on the closure of St Peter's & St Gildas' Catholic Schools

Have your say by 24 March 2025

In recent years many London boroughs have experienced a significant fall in pupil numbers. The reasons behind this are thought to include lower birth rates, the cap on housing benefits, and families leaving London (as a result of the housing crisis, the cost of living, Brexit, and the pandemic).

In Haringey the number of primary aged children joining our primary schools has been in steady decline since 2014, a trend also observed across many of our neighbouring boroughs. Primary pupil rolls i.e. the number of children attending primary schools in Haringey, has reduced by over 2,000 in just 5 years: 21,300 in 2019 to 19,100 in 2024 (January school census data) and pupil numbers are forecast to continue falling until at least 2028.

St Peter's Infants and St Gildas' Junior are both Catholic Voluntary Aided (VA) schools maintained by Haringey Council and located on Oakington Way, N8 9EP. St Peter's Infants is federated with St Gildas' Junior school. Both schools have the same headteacher and governing body. Since 2019, the number of pupils on roll has dropped significantly at both schools. From April 2024, some year groups have been merged and the governing body moved the infant school to the federation's junior school site in September 2024.

School Funding

Haringey Council is very concerned that St Peter's and St Gildas' Catholic Schools may not be financially viable in the long run. School funding is primarily determined by the number of children on roll (per-pupil funding) and falling rolls means reduced funding which over time creates increasing financial pressures on schools. Smaller schools such as St Peter in Chain's and St Gildas' can feel the greatest impact on funding due to the drop in children attending. This therefore impacts the funding available and compromises their ability to continue providing a high quality of education. Less funding means less money for staff, resources, equipment, ability to pay bills, maintenance work, as well as extracurricular activities.

High quality education and Cabinet decision to consult on closure

The council has a duty to provide high quality education for all school aged children in the borough. Unless we act now, in time, the quality of education in a school with falling rolls will be impacted due to a diminished access to resources and funding.

On 11 February 2025 Haringey Council's Cabinet agreed to consult on the closure of St Peter's and St Gildas' Catholic Schools.

There are several ways you can respond to the consultation. At the end of this consultation period, a decision whether to proceed to the next stage and issue a statutory notice on firmer proposals will be taken by Haringey Council's Cabinet. If this happens, this is likely to be in May 2025.

Why are we consulting?

Falling pupil numbers

Haringey is divided into five Planning Areas (PAs) for the purpose of planning school places. See map of Haringey PAs on page 4 below.

Due to a continued fall in demand for school places in Planning Area 2 (PA2) and the fall in demand for local faith places, St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior are currently both operating as 1 form entry schools, which means one class of 30 pupils per year group.

Both schools used to have a published admission number (PAN) of 60. From September 2019, after a noticeable decline in admissions, the schools reduced their class sizes from 60 to 30 to align with lower demand. From April 2024, some year groups have been merged, and the governing body moved the infant school to the federation's junior school site in September 2024.

Total number of pupils on roll (reception to year 6)

St Peter's and St Gildas' Catholic Schools							
School Net Capacity	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Oct. 2024*
210	**324**	**283**	**248**	**219**	**185**	**135**	**65**

Source: 2019-2024 January school census (PLASC) data

*October 2024 census

Over several years the pupil roll at both St Peter's and St Gildas' Catholic Schools has significantly fallen. The data above shows how the combined pupil roll has fallen from 324 in 2019 to 65 as of October 2024 census.

School financial position

As previously mentioned, school funding is primarily determined by the number of children on roll, and with falling rolls equating to reduced funding, it is extremely difficult for schools such as St Peter's and St Gildas' Catholic Schools to remain financially viable as most school funding is pupil-based in line with the National Funding Formula.

Unused or vacant school places create an immediate cost pressure for a school through a reduced budget, which in turn can affect the overall sustainability and quality of education standards. When several schools across a planning area have lower pupil rolls it can also negatively impact school funding at these federated schools now operating from a single site.

Due to the reduction in the number of pupils on roll, St Peter's and St Gildas' Catholic Schools have seen a reduction in the funding they receive to run the federated schools in recent years. This has resulted in significant financial challenges.

Curriculum challenge

Schools are required to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum. With the significant fall and the current projection of no increase to the current numbers on roll this objective will be very difficult for the schools to sustain as a greater proportion of the budget will be spent on fixed costs such as teaching staff and building costs with little left over for curriculum expenditure and enrichment activities.

Mitigating against future risk

The Schools Finance team at the council have identified a growing deficit at St Peter's increasing by 57% to over £120,000 in the 2024-25 financial year whilst the surplus at St Gildas' has reduced from £87,000 to £45,000 in the 2024-25 financial year. The current federation model is not achieving its desired outcomes, and this is evidenced from the financial returns the schools have submitted to the council which shows a combined deficit forecast of £75,000 for 2024/25.

Whilst the Headteacher and senior leaders continue to robustly address educational standards with support from the council's school improvement partner, Haringey Education Partnership (HEP), a consultation on the closure of the schools is necessary owing to the significant decline in pupil numbers and concerns around the long-term financial viability of the schools.

Alternative options

Continue with no change

Given the falling school rolls across London and in local schools in Haringey's PA2 this option is likely to be unviable. The federated schools also have a combined deficit budget and there is a significant risk that this will increase at a greater rate due to further falls in pupil rolls.

In time, a school affected by income loss will almost inevitably see performance and standards fall. It is the duty of the council to ensure that the quality of education for children, and stability for teaching and support staff, take priority.

This is a highly cost-inefficient option and is not sustainable. Taking no action to the issues affecting schools with falling rolls is unlikely to be an acceptable option available to the council.

Federation

A federation is defined in law as two or more maintained schools operating under the governance of a single governing body. Federated schools operate in collaboration with each other, sharing senior staff and possibly governing bodies, which allows them to maximise good educational practice, while achieving economies of scale.

St Peter's in Chains Infant School is already federated with St Gildas' Junior School. Both schools exist as separate organisations but have the same headteacher and governing body. The current federation model is not achieving its desired impact due to the significant drop in pupil numbers and worsening financial position. Federation is therefore no longer a viable option and not achieving any of the benefits that would normally be associated with this partnership.

It is also possible for more than two maintained schools to operate under the governance of a single governing body, however, there has been no appetite expressed from any other school to be part of St Peter's and St Gildas' federation. This would also not address the decline in numbers on roll or the financial risk.

Amalgamation

An amalgamation is defined as bringing together two (or more) maintained schools as one single school, located on the same site and under the same leadership and governance arrangements. An amalgamation can only be achieved by closing one or more schools and providing spaces for displaced children in another 'host' school.

This option would involve the host school retaining its original DfE school number as it is not technically considered a new school. However, following the amalgamation process, governors have the option to rename the school to create a new identity for the merged schools.

This option is not recommended due to the current financial position of St Peter's and St Gildas' Catholic schools and reduction in pupil numbers which makes this option very risky and unaffordable. Furthermore, opportunities for a potential amalgamation with another local Catholic primary school have not yielded any interest from partners.

Conversion to Academy

The Governing Body consulted on the option of converting to an academy and joining a Multi Academy Trust but this application was withdrawn by the Diocese following discussion with the DfE about the school's ongoing viability.

Closure

The local authority has a statutory duty to ensure the efficient use of resources. Maintaining a school with a declining roll could not be considered efficient given that there are surplus places in other local schools.

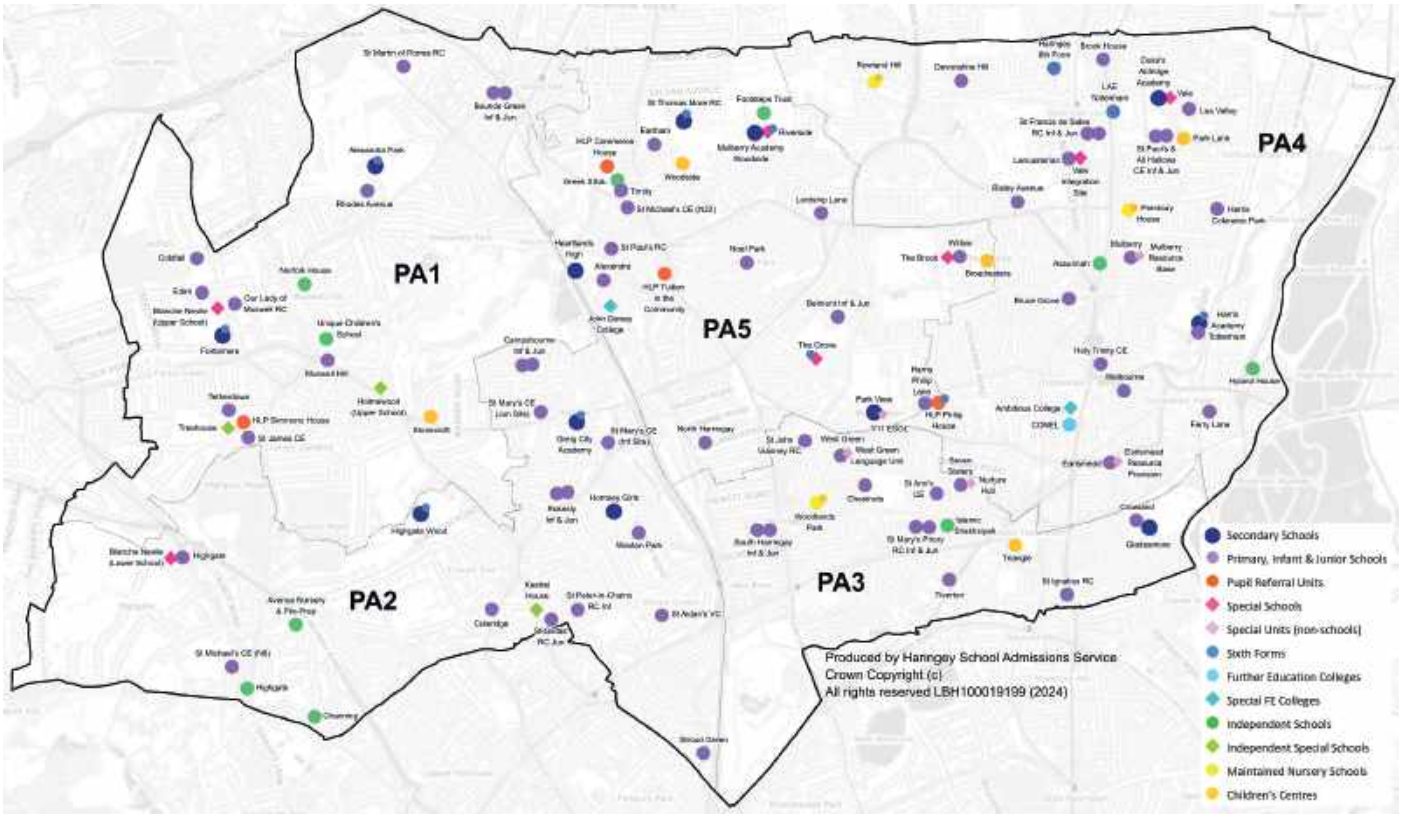
A full and immediate closure of St Peter's and St Gildas' school is a viable option but would require all pupils on roll to join the roll of another school. There are sufficient primary school places in the local area and in other Roman Catholic schools in the borough that can provide a suitable alternative for displaced pupils.

If the final decision is to close the school, the admissions team at Haringey Council will work closely to support families to make a planned transition to a new school for the start of the new academic year in September 2025. There are enough places at other schools within a reasonable travelling distance for all pupils currently on roll at St Peter's and St Gildas' school to join. The council will work closely with affected families to ensure all children are offered support to find a suitable alternative school place. Families may also seek to secure a place at an alternative school via the in-year admissions process at any time.

Children with SEND, with or without an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), will receive additional support to ensure a smooth transition.

Those interested can share their views by taking part in the consultation until 24 March 2025 inclusive.

Map of Haringey Planning Areas



Prescribed stages and proposed timeline for the consultation process

Stage one: Pre-publication consultation	24 February – 24 March 2025 inclusive	This is the start of the process where the local authority provides information about what is being proposed and gathers the views on interested parties to help them develop the proposals.
Stage two: Publication	5 May 2025	A legal notice is published in the local paper and on the council website which sets out brief details of the proposal and where more information can be found. It also gives details of where objections and comments can be sent and the closing date for these. It marks the start of the 28 days representation period or formal consultation.
Stage three: Representation	5 May – 2 June 2025	This is the formal consultation stage. During this period, any person or organisation can submit comments on the proposal to the LA, to be taken into account by the decision maker.
Stage four: Decision	June 2025	All of the objections and comments gathered during the representation period are provided to the decision maker (Council's Cabinet of Elected Members) to enable them to make the final decision. A statutory notice outlining the decision will be published.
Stage five: Implementation	31 August 2025	Decision made in stage four is implemented on the last day of the 31 August 2025.

Have your say by 24 March 2025

How can I share my views on the proposals?

We are now asking parents, staff, and all interested stakeholders to share their views as part of this consultation on the proposals.

Consultation response

You can let us know what you think by:

Completing our online questionnaire:
https://stpetersandstgildasconsultation.commonplace.is

Or filling out the questionnaire below and mailing it to:

The Admissions Service 5th Floor 48 Station Road, Wood Green, London, N22 7TY

Q1) To what extent, do you support the proposal to close St Peter's and St Gildas' Catholic Schools? Please tick one answer only:

	Very supportive	Supportive	Neutral	Unsupportive	Very unsupportive
Closure	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q2) Please provide reasons for your views below:

Equalities Monitoring Questions

Collecting, analysing, and using equalities information helps us to understand how our policies and activities are affecting various sections of our communities and helps us to identify any inequalities that may need to be addressed. We will be grateful if you could complete and return this form. The information you provide on this form will be held in the strictest confidence and only be used for the purpose stated above.

Age Which age group applies to you?

Under 16	17-21	22-29	30-39
40-49	50-59	60-74	75+

Sex Please tick the box that best describes your sex

Male	Female	Prefer not to say

I use another term (please specify):

Trans

Trans is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender identity is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were regarded to be at birth.

Do you consider yourself to be trans?

Yes	No	Prefer not to say

Disability

Under the Equality Act 2010, a person is considered to have a disability if she/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on her/his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Are you disabled?

Yes	No	Prefer not to say

Please tell us which of the following impairment groups apply to you. You may tick more than one box.

Visual Impairment	Physical Impairment	Deaf / BSL User
Hearing Impairment	Mental health/mental distress issues	Learning difficulties
Long term health condition/ hidden impairment	Neurodiverse	Prefer not to say

Other (please specify):

Ethnicity Please tick the box that best describes your ethnic group

Asian or Asian British:

Bangladeshi
Chinese
Indian
Pakistani
Any other Asian background: (please specify):

Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African:

African
Caribbean
Any other Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African background (please specify):

Other ethnic group:

Arab
Kurdish
Turkish
Any other ethnic group (please specify):

Mixed or multiple ethnic groups:

White and Asian
White and Black African
White and Black Caribbean
Any other Mixed or Multiple background (please specify):

White:

English/Welsh/Scottish/ Northern Irish/British
Irish
Gypsy or Irish Traveller
Roma
Any other White background (please specify):

Prefer to self-describe (please specify):

Prefer not to say

Sexual Orientation **Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?**

Bi | Gay / Lesbian | Heterosexual / Straight | Prefer not to say

I use another term (please specify):

Religion or belief **How would you describe your religion or belief? Please tick as appropriate**

Atheist	Christian	Jewish	Rastafarian
Buddhist	Hindu	Muslim	Sikh
Prefer not to say	No Religion	Prefer to self-describe:	

Pregnancy and maternity **Please tick one box**

Are you pregnant?

Yes | No | Prefer not to say

Have you had a baby in the last 12 months?

Yes | No | Prefer not to say

Language **Please tick the boxes that best describe your preferred language**

Albanian	English	Japanese	Russian
Akan	French	Kurdish	Somali
Arabic	German	Lithuanian	Spanish
Bengali	Greek	Persian/Farsi	Filipino

Bulgarian	Gujarati	Polish	Turkish
BSL User	Hungarian	Portuguese	Urdu
Chinese	Italian	Romanian	Yiddish

Other (please specify):

Thank you for completing and returning this form.

FAQs

Why were St Peter's and St Gildas' Catholic schools chosen for this consultation?

The situation regarding falling pupil rolls and surplus primary school places is kept under constant review. Our annual School Place Planning report is a key document that outlines historic data on school place demand and projected future demand. It, along with a range of other school-level data has helped the council decide which schools are best placed to be consulted on options for the future.

The council is particularly mindful of the overall primary roll position and future pupil roll projections of St Peter's and St Gildas' and the budget position of the schools at the end of the 2024/25 financial year. A consultation on closure has been triggered by a lack of demand for places at these schools against a backdrop of falling demand in PA2 coupled with concerns about their long-term financial viability.

Are falling pupil rolls a Haringey issue?

No. Most boroughs across London have been experiencing sharp falls in demand for primary school places for several years now. For instance, our neighbouring borough Hackney permanently closed four primary schools in August 2024 in response to this problem and is currently consulting on changes that would affect up to six primary schools on 31 August 2025.

The reasons for the decline are varied but related to lower birth rates; the cap on rent benefits; families leaving the capital as a result of the housing crisis; Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic.

What has already been done to cope with falls in the number of pupils?

The council is continually working with schools to mitigate the effects of falling pupil rolls. Measures taken so far include staffing restructures, reducing planned admission numbers, combining year groups and classes in the school, establishing local school partnerships to achieve savings, limiting extra-curricular activities such as school trips, and establishing school budget deficit recovery plans. However, these measures have not, in every case, managed to avoid the need to consider other options.

Have any decisions been made already on the future of St Peter's and St Gildas' Catholic Schools?

No. This consultation aims to receive the views and opinions of affected stakeholders.

What will be done to ensure the wellbeing of all children and families if they need to change schools?

Our primary schools are very experienced in supporting children that transition to secondary schools, as well as those that are transferring from one school to another during the school year. If the final decision of the Cabinet is to proceed with closure, we will support families and children to ensure that transition plans have as little impact as possible on the children's wellbeing, meeting the needs of those most vulnerable.

Will there be more support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)?

All schools in Haringey provide a welcoming and inclusive environment for children with SEND. Many of our schools have a high number of pupils with SEND, and one of our priorities in recent years has been to deliver more new SEND places in the borough.

If closure was progressed, children with SEND, with or without an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), will receive additional support to ensure a smooth transition.

What will happen with the staff of the schools affected?

In the event that St Peter's and St Gildas' Catholic Primary Schools close, the council will do everything it can to help staff find alternative roles. However, as a last resort, some staff will be offered redundancy, which the council hopes would be managed through voluntary redundancies and a retirements package.

We will work with the leadership team and governing body of the schools to assess the full impact on staff. Staff and all other relevant parties including trade unions would be consulted about any potential changes.

How will you ensure standards of teaching are maintained between now and any potential merger/closure?

Whilst options for the future of the schools are being considered, the council remains firmly committed to ensuring that all pupils on roll are receiving an excellent education that supports them in reaching their potential. Senior leaders are robustly addressing educational standards with support from the council's school improvement partner, Haringey Education Partnership (HEP). Staff will continue to access training and development in the same way.

What if demand for school places increases and there is more need for school places in the future?

Our 2024 School Place Planning report shows that we are projected to have surpluses of spaces in Reception of around 400 places between now and the end of the decade should action not be undertaken. There is therefore a lot of spare capacity in the system and even if existing primary schools reduced their entry (as many have done in recent years including St Peter's and St Gildas') they will still retain the physical capacity to revert to their original capacity if required. That said our projections up until 2030 do not indicate any additional demand for primary school places.

Are other primary schools at risk? Can the council guarantee that the schools children would move to wouldn't also close in a few years?

Other primary schools are at risk due to falling pupil rolls across the borough. Reducing the number of school places will help the finances of many schools but there can be no guarantee that additional schools won't also need to close in future if pupil rolls continue to fall.

Will secondary schools need to reduce in future years?

We are currently working closely with all our secondary and all-through schools to ensure their capacity matches well with falls we have already started to see in demand. The good results and popularity of Haringey secondary schools will help to protect them from the greatest impact. We are working with our secondary schools to mitigate the future risks.

Can't the council receive more funding for schools?

No. Funding for school places is nationally set and allocated according to pupil numbers. The council has to ensure sufficiency of school places but also ensure there isn't an over-provision of school places as well.

Are there any housing development plans in the areas impacted that would affect the demand for school places?

All housing developments have been incorporated into our calculations for school rolls in PA2 where St Peter's and St Gildas' school are located. Our latest 2024 School Place Planning report continues to show that future projections for PA2 remain low.

Will there still be sufficient places for all school aged children if all the schools close?

Yes. There will be enough primary school places both in PA2 and across the whole borough including Catholic school places. As of January 2025, there are 214 surplus reception places in Haringey.

Will families have enough time to choose an alternative place for their children if the council decides to close St Peter 's and St Gildas' Catholic Schools?

In the case of a school closure, families will be supported to secure a place at an alternative school near to their home. The Haringey School Admissions Service will assist parents with information and guidance and support them to apply for alternative schools.

Parents also have a right to secure a place at an alternative school at any time via the council's In Year Admissions process. Although, we encourage families to keep their children at their current school through to the end of the school year.

The process will be different for children with an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP). For these families, parents will be contacted as soon as possible to begin discussion about the transition to alternative schools, in case the council decides to implement proposals in relation to closure.



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