

# Consultation on the Future of Copenhagen and Vittoria Schools

**Your views are invited on the proposal to:**

Amalgamate Copenhagen and Vittoria schools by moving Vittoria school to the Copenhagen school site and for pupils at both schools to be part of the single combined school

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Keep the Vittoria site for other education and community uses

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**ISLINGTON**

**For a more equal future**

# Introduction

Islington Council is seeking the views of parents and carers, staff, the local community, and other interested parties on a proposal to amalgamate Vittoria and Copenhagen primary schools into one school.

Across London, for a wide variety of reasons, pupil numbers are falling – and Islington is no exception. Schools with lower pupil numbers attract less government funding, risking their long-term future. We want to ensure a sustainable future for our schools, and excellent education for our children.

As a result, we are proposing to amalgamate Vittoria and Copenhagen primary schools into a single school under the Vittoria name, on the existing Copenhagen site – bringing together the identities and strengths of both schools under one roof. The amalgamation would mean these schools merging to operate from a single site, enabling them to make the best use of the staff expertise, while securing the merged school's financial future.

Keeping the Vittoria name whilst operating from the Copenhagen site means that the existing strong community identities would not be lost.

The six-week public consultation provides information on the reasons for this proposal and asks for your views about it.

Your views are invited on the proposal to:

- Amalgamate Copenhagen and Vittoria schools by moving Vittoria school to the Copenhagen school site and for pupils at both schools to be part of the single combined school
- Keep the Vittoria site for other education and community uses

We welcome your views on the proposal and will consider all views put forward during the consultation period. A decision will be taken on whether to proceed with the statutory process to amalgamate the schools at the council's Executive Meeting on 9 February 2023.

Please read the information carefully and respond to our short questionnaire before the closing date of **16 December 2022**.

# Background

Islington Council is committed to putting children first and to driving educational excellence through inclusive and sustainable schools. We have set out our mission in our **Education Plan** to ensure that every child, whatever their background, has the same opportunity and ambition to reach their educational potential in a good Islington school. We will equip and empower every child and young person who attends our schools and education settings with the learning and skills for life and the future world of work.

The quality of education in Islington is reflected in Ofsted gradings for schools with over 90 per cent of all schools judged to be 'good' or 'outstanding'. Performance at each key stage (Early Years, Primary, Secondary and Post 16) is typically in line with national averages or above.

However, pupil numbers in primary schools are falling significantly due to a declining birth rate. This is very important because school funding from the government is set by the number of pupils who attend a school. This means the quality of pupils' experience might be affected as a school's budget is reduced. We need to manage this situation to maintain educational excellence in Islington.

Schools operate most efficiently and effectively when full or nearly full, so we want to keep the number of surplus places to a minimum. This proposal aims to reduce the total number of surplus places across Islington, by reducing places in a part of the borough with high primary school vacancies, to help manage this situation.

Vittoria and Copenhagen federated primary schools are part of Islington Futures, a successful federation of four schools also including Elizabeth Garrett Anderson and Beacon High secondary schools. Vittoria and Copenhagen are already Federated with established working relationships with some shared staffing, resources, and activities. They are governed by a single governing board and led by an Executive headteacher.

# The proposal

We are proposing to amalgamate Vittoria and Copenhagen primary schools to a single school on the Copenhagen site to make best use of the staff expertise and so that the new school is financially viable.

Technically based on Department for Education guidance, this is seen as a closure of one school. However, in practice, the proposal would see Vittoria school move to the Copenhagen site keeping the Vittoria school name so that the strong community identity of both schools would not be lost. This proposal would therefore allow both schools to continue together, albeit as one amalgamated school.

The schools are part of a hard federation, which means they share an executive governing body, and staff have worked across both school sites. Should the amalgamation go ahead, these informal arrangements would be strengthened.

The amalgamated school will have space for 45 new pupils per year with a total capacity of 315 from reception through to year 6 and additional capacity for nursery provision. Current Copenhagen and Vittoria pupils would continue their education at the amalgamated school with a familiar staff and curriculum and their friends.

## Why we are making this proposal

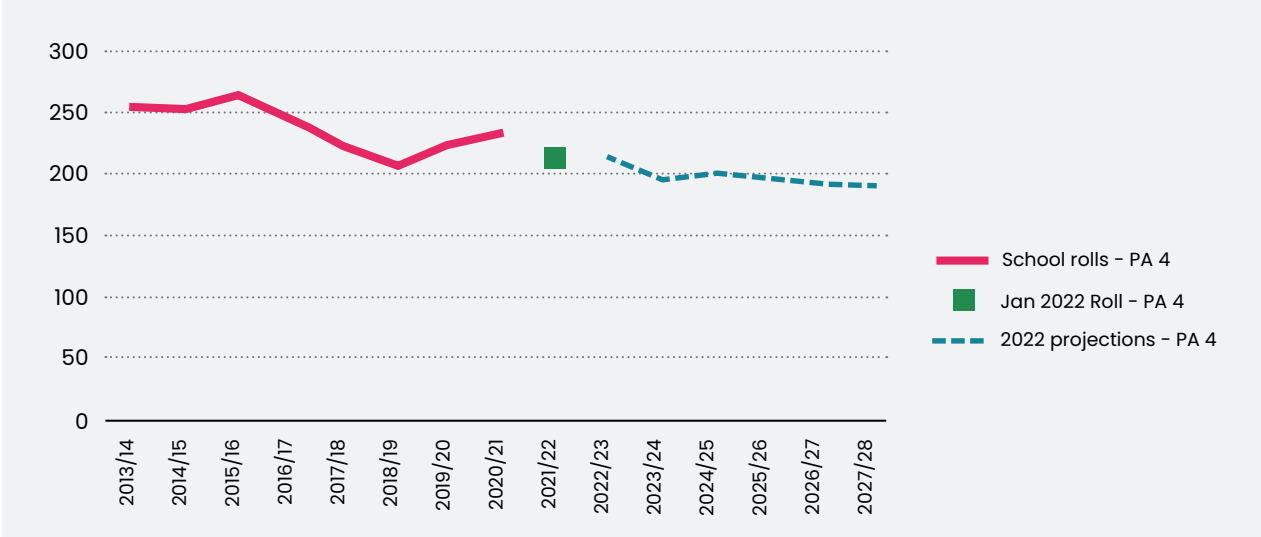
Copenhagen and Vittoria schools both have high levels of spare school places, with pupil numbers set to fall further still in the coming years. As a result, both schools are expected to experience budget deficits. This could lead to a decline in the educational offer if it is not addressed.

# Pupil Projections and Numbers in the Planning Area

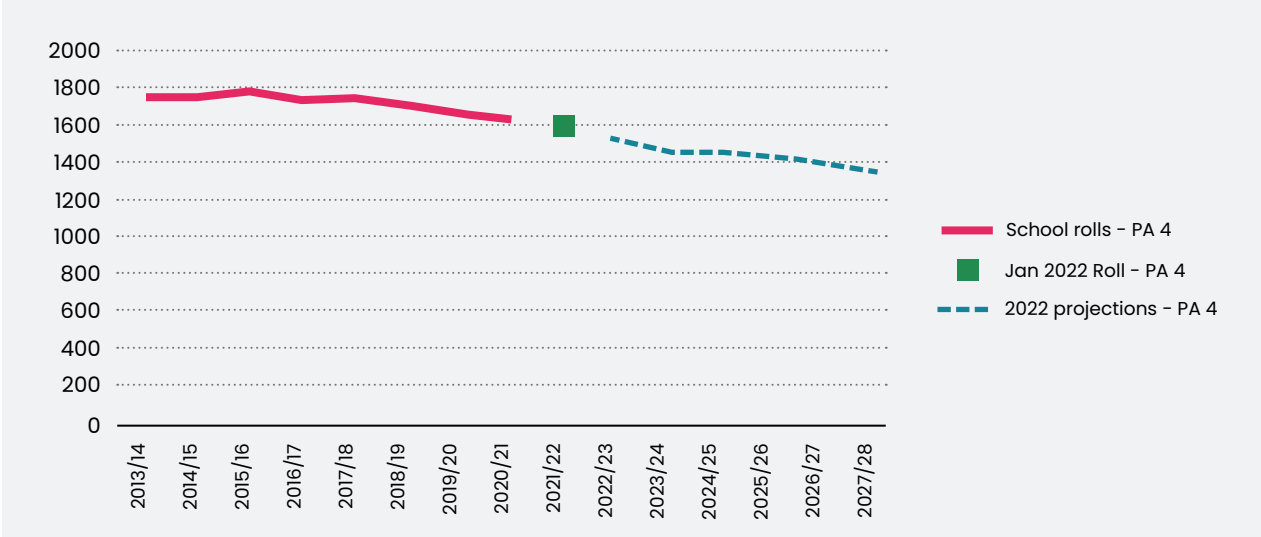
We plan for school places by dividing Islington into six different planning areas. Copenhagen and Vittoria Primary Schools are in Planning Area 4 (Barnsbury). This planning area currently has 260 places in reception across six primary schools, with 77 places currently unfilled in September 2023, a vacancy rate of 30%.

The pupil number projections show that this vacancy rate will increase further in the coming years at both reception and for all year groups.

**Table 1: Roll Projections for Reception in Planning Area 4**



**Table 2: Roll Projections – all year groups in Planning Area 4**



# The Number of pupils at Copenhagen and Vittoria

Copenhagen and Vittoria both currently admit one class per year group each year (30 pupils), which is called one form of entry. Copenhagen is a large site designed for two classes per year (60 pupils) and has the spare physical space to do this but has recently reduced the number of pupils admitted each year to one class due to the falling pupil numbers in the area. Vittoria is built and designed to admit one class per year, and cannot take more pupils than this.

Table 3 shows the reception numbers of both schools over the last five years. Both schools have been admitting fewer pupils than one form of entry (30 pupils) every year, and combined reception numbers of the two schools is at its lowest this academic year.

**Table 3: Number of children in Reception**

School	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Copenhagen	17	11	13	26	16	18
Vittoria	23	18	23	19	23	12
<b>Total of both schools</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>30</b>

Table 4 shows the total number of pupils from reception to year 6 at both schools over the last five years, which is declining year on year.

**Table 4: Number of children in whole school including nursery**

School	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Copenhagen	185	172	162	162	152	137
Vittoria	220	215	199	183	181	157
<b>Total of both schools</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>294</b>

## Number of first preferences

Preferences show how many parents each year choose a school as their first choice for their children starting in reception. Table 5 shows how many chose either Copenhagen or Vittoria as their first choice. From this, we can see that both schools have a lower number of first choice preferences than their capacity and have been under-subscribed for the last six years.

**Table 5: first choice by year**

School	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Copenhagen	13	10	8	22	7	13
Vittoria	18	14	18	17	15	9

# The Funding

Schools' funding from central government is based on the number of pupils in school at the start of a new academic year. As the number of pupils entering the education system is declining each year, so too is the funding schools receive. For every vacant place in an Islington primary school, the school is missing out on an average of £5,430 a year which has an impact on staffing and resources at the school. A school with vacancies is still required to fund the same level of fixed costs as though it was full; including the maintenance and operation of school buildings.

Smaller, one form entry, schools are particularly vulnerable to changes in pupil numbers as they have less flexibility to group classes of 30 children.

## What other options are there and why have we discounted them?

Our School Organisation Plan sets out a shared vision to put children first, using clear and consistent processes and principles where we need to manage surplus places in a school. In the cases of both Vittoria and Copenhagen, this process has been followed and all options have been explored and considered by the council, the Executive Headteacher and the Governing board, leading to the conclusion that the amalgamation of both schools, or the closure of one, are the most viable options remaining.

If you want more information about the other options and why these have been discounted, please see the Frequently Asked Questions.

## How will we manage it?

The proposal is for the amalgamated school to be established in its new form at the start of the academic year in September 2023.

Vittoria and Copenhagen Schools are an important part of the lives of the children and families who attend the schools, and of the local community. That is why we are proposing to expand and move Vittoria school to the Copenhagen site, making sure that the experience of pupils at Vittoria continues, just at a different site as both schools are brought together.

We are working closely with the Executive Headteacher and Chair of the Governing Board to see how we can develop and improve the Copenhagen site and establish a high-quality education provision that is attractive to existing and prospective parents. The headteachers of both Copenhagen and Vittoria schools along with the Executive Headteacher will work together to plan the arrangements for the proposed amalgamated school, should the proposals be agreed. The delivery of an excellent educational experience and making careful arrangements to support the transition would be at the heart of their planning.

We know that the staff at both schools are highly regarded by parents and pupils alike and that they will want some reassurance about the future of staff. As formal staff consultation can only take place if a decision were to be taken by the council's Executive to agree the proposal, it is too early to offer certainty regarding future staffing arrangements. We will, however, seek to protect employment as far as possible for staff currently working at Vittoria and Copenhagen.

The two schools already have a formally established partnership as part of a Federation, with some shared staffing, resourcing and activities that would support a smooth transition to a single school. Some examples of the partnership between the two schools includes joint professional development sessions for staff; shared curriculum lead training; football and other sporting events; and joint trips and residential. The two schools also have a closely aligned curriculum.

Most pupils live close to both schools and we hope it will not change travel plans. The two schools are located close together – just 0.3 miles apart.



# The vision for the single school-building on what works well

Choosing the right school is one of the most important decisions a parent or carer can make and that is why this proposal needs to reflect the needs of the communities the existing schools serve. We know that across both school sites, there is effective partnership working that enables children to meet and establish friendships.

Should the amalgamation proceed, we will build on the already strong relationship between the two federated schools to create an offer on the combined site that is the very best of both.

Work that already happens across the two schools includes:

- classroom-based working
- sports activities, and
- residentials

Children have already built friendships across both school sites, and they will continue to follow the already similar curriculum.

## Making the most of the building and external areas

The three floors of the Copenhagen building can accommodate two-year groups on each floor with classrooms surrounding a large central area. This enables staff to use the space flexibly for large groups to introduce new topics, or small groups for concentrated work, individual tuition, and traditional classroom work for a year group with one teacher.

A relatively new early years building at the Copenhagen site, currently empty due to falling rolls, could be recommissioned, and enhanced with the development of a cutting-edge external play area to provide a space for an enhanced early years and reception provision.

All this is open for discussion and agreement by staff, parents, carers, governors, Islington Council officers and drawing on wider national and local expertise. This could be an opportunity for the school leadership to plan with the community what they think is best for children in a newly amalgamated school – a unique opportunity.

Over recent years, the way the schools work has changed and we are hoping that by developing the Copenhagen site and considering the options for the Vittoria site this will open the opportunities available to local community groups at both sites.

## What would the options for parents be?

Our preferred process would be for a carefully managed transition so that children from Vittoria and Copenhagen Schools remain with their friendship groups, and continue their learning with an exciting start to the new year with teachers and support staff that they know but in a new location for some pupils from September 2023.

Parents will have a choice however and may want their child to attend a local school with vacancies other than the amalgamated school.

We would therefore offer on-line School Admissions Surgeries at convenient times especially for parents of both schools to talk directly to School Admissions Officers to discuss available options.

If a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan, their SEND Keyworker would contact the family directly to see if there were any special transition arrangements that needed to be considered to help the move to a new school go smoothly.

## Statement from the Executive headteacher of Islington Futures Federation and the headteachers of Copenhagen and Vittoria Primary Schools

Islington Futures Federation consists of a group of four Local Authority community schools in the London Borough of Islington:

- Copenhagen Primary School
- Vittoria Primary School
- Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Secondary School
- Beacon High Secondary School

Our ambition has always been that each of our schools is the number one choice for their local community, providing a broad, engaging education that equips all our young people with the knowledge and skills they need to become active and engaged members of the community.

**Copenhagen Primary** is a small school with a community-based vision. It has a real commitment to creating an environment where learning is an adventure and fun. Our children gain the skills and desire to journey far beyond the boundaries of King's Cross, Caledonian Road and Regent's Canal.

**Vittoria Primary** is a small community school with big ambitions. We work hard to build positive, trusting relationships with our pupils and families, within clear consistent boundaries, to ensure good attitudes, behaviour and outcomes.

"There's a lot of history in the school – you can imagine how many have been educated here over the years. The building isn't modern and shiny – but it is sedate, proud, mature.

Inside it's amazing – bright, shiny and clean – there's always a real buzz coming from the different rooms!"

A Year 6 pupil talking proudly about Copenhagen Primary School building!

Both our schools have consistently, over time achieved positive outcomes in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 national tests (SATs). Each school has been judged as Good by Ofsted.

Ofsted reports identify the following shared strengths across both schools:

School leaders and governors have developed a very clear vision for the school. There are high expectations, strong values and a focus on improving teaching and learning. Sharing expertise within the federation has helped to improve teaching and bring greater rigour to leadership. This is enhanced by a close and productive partnership with the local authority.

All pupils achieve well. Leaders have high expectations for good behaviour. These high expectations, shared by all, help lessons to progress smoothly.

Falling pupil numbers has impacted on what each school can provide and deliver individually. Through these proposals we could combine the best of what each school offers to create an exceptional single school. This builds on existing close partnerships between the schools, which includes shared staff, resources, professional development and joint trips and other educational experiences for children.

Over recent years, both schools have put cost saving measures in place to help tackle the financial difficulties facing many London schools. We feel that continuing to cost cut within our individual schools would be to a detriment to our childrens' learning experience.

The Federation has maintained a close partnership with Islington Council in developing this proposal and is committed to working closely with parents, carers and school staff to create a truly outstanding school on one site should these proposals be agreed.

# The timelines



## **Informal consultation: 2 November to 16 December 2022**

We will publish this consultation document and hold face to face consultation sessions with parents, staff, and the wider community. All interested parties will have the opportunity to respond to the proposals by 16 December 2022.



## **Council decision on informal consultation: 9 February 2023**

The council Executive will decide whether to proceed with a formal proposal and take the next step of issuing a statutory notice at their public meeting on 9 February 2023 considering responses to the consultation.

If this happens there will be a second stage consultation that will run for four weeks in the Spring.



## **Final Decision: Early Summer 2023**

The final decision would then be made by the council Executive in early summer 2023. If approved, the changes will be in place for the start of the school term in September 2023.

# Come and talk to us

We want to hear from parents and the local community about how these proposals might affect them if they are agreed.

## **Parents and carers meetings at Copenhagen Primary School**

- 6.45 - 7.30pm on Thursday, 3 November
- 2.15 - 3pm on Friday, 4 November

## **Parents and carers meetings at Vittoria Primary School**

- 2.15 - 3pm on Thursday, 3 November
- 6.45 - 7.30pm on Friday, 4 November

## **Community meeting**

- 6.45-7.30pm on Wednesday, 23 November

If you are a member of the community and would like to attend, please email [\*\*copenhagenandvittoria@islington.gov.uk\*\*](mailto:copenhagenandvittoria@islington.gov.uk)

## **School staff and governors**

School staff and governors will be invited to separate meetings.

# The consultation questions

Please complete and return by **5pm on Friday, 16 December 2022.**

You can also complete this form online at [www.islington.gov.uk/copenhagenandvittoria](http://www.islington.gov.uk/copenhagenandvittoria)

## What best describes you?

- Parent or carer of a child at Copenhagen or Vittoria School
- Staff member from Copenhagen or Vittoria School
- Governor on Islington Futures Federation
- Other, please specify

## Do you have any children who currently attend either school?

Copenhagen Primary School?  Yes  No

Vittoria Primary School?  Yes  No

## Proposal feedback

Statement	I strongly disagree	I disagree	Neutral (neither agree nor disagree)	I agree	I strongly agree
I understand the reasons for this proposal					
I agree with the proposal to amalgamate Copenhagen and Vittoria Primary schools					
The Vittoria school building should be used for education and other community services					

Please comment further if you have any questions, concerns or issues you would like Islington Council to consider:

Please continue on another piece of paper if you need to.

## Equalities Monitoring Information Form

The information you provide us with will be used to improve our services. These are standard questions we ask but if you do not wish to answer, that's fine. The information which you provide on this form will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

### Gender:

Female       Male       Non-binary       Prefer not to say

I use another term, please provide this here

### Do you consider yourself to be trans or to have a trans history?

Trans is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex and/or gender/ which they were assigned at birth.

No       Yes       Prefer not to say

### Age:

Under 16       16-24       25-44       45-64       65+       Prefer not to say

### Disability:

Do you have any physical or mental health conditions, impairments or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more?

No       Yes       Don't know       Prefer not to say

If yes, are your day-to-day activities limited because of your condition, impairment or illness?

Yes, a lot       Yes, a little       No       Prefer not to say

If yes, please select all that apply:

Vision (e.g. blindness or partial sight)       Memory

Deaf / British Sign Language User       Hearing (e.g. deafness or partial hearing)

Physical (e.g. mobility or dexterity)

Learning, understanding or concentrating

Mental health condition

Non visible health condition/impairment (i.e. cancer, HIV)

Other, please specify

Prefer not to say

Socially or behaviourally (e.g. associated with autism spectrum disorder, or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder)

### Religion or Belief:

Buddhist

Christian

Hindu

Jewish

Muslim

No religion

Rastafarian

Sikh

Othe

Prefer not to say

### Sexual Orientation:

Bisexual

Heterosexual/Straight

Gay

Lesbian

Prefer not to say

Other, please specify

### Ethnicity:

Please tick the appropriate box to indicate your ethnic background.

#### A White

British

Irish

Turkish/Turkish Cypriot

Greek/Greek Cypriot

Kurdish

Gypsy/Traveller

Prefer not to say

Any other White background:

#### B Mixed

White and black Caribbean

White and black African

White and Asian

Prefer not to say

Any other Mixed background:



**C Asian or Asian British**

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese

Prefer not to say

Any other Asian background:

**D Black or Black British**

- Caribbean
- Somali
- Eritrean
- Nigerian
- Ghanaian

Other African

Prefer not to say

Any other Black background:

**E Other Ethnic Groups**

- Arab
- Latin American
- Prefer not to say

Any other background:

You can return your completed form at either Copenhagen or Vittoria Primary School or email it to **[copenhagenandvittoria@islington.gov.uk](mailto:copenhagenandvittoria@islington.gov.uk)**





