

Equalities Impact Assessment:

Full Assessment

Before completing this form you should have completed an Equalities Screening Tool and had sign off from your Head of Service and the Fairness and Equality Team.

This Equality Impact Assessment should be completed where the Screening Tool identifies a potentially negative impact on one or more specific groups but it can also be used to highlight positive impacts.

Summary of proposal

Name of proposal	Proposal on the Future of Pooles Park Primary School
Reference number (if applicable)	
Service Area	Children and Young People
Date assessment completed	6 June 2023

Before completing the EQIA please read the guidance and FAQs. For further help and advice please contact equalities@islington.gov.uk.

1. Please provide a summary of the proposal.

Please provide:

- Context on how the service currently operates (if relevant) and the scope of suggested changes
- The intended beneficiaries and outcomes of the proposal
- Reference to any savings or income generation

Islington's School Organisation Plan sets out our strategy for managing school places over the next three years and describes:

1. the context of falling rolls leading to a high level of surplus school places
2. the principles for managing places
3. the current organisation of Islington's education provision
4. the options to reduce surplus places in primary schools and maximise the use of the school estate

Reducing the number of school places in a planned way will support schools to manage change within their funding.

The intended outcome of our school organisation plan is to achieve our ambition that every child has a good local school place to achieve their best outcomes. We expect all schools to be viable and provide a high quality of education so that every child in Islington has the same opportunity and ambition to reach their educational potential in a good Islington school.

The School Organisation Plan sets out various options to reduce surplus capacity at our schools:

- Reduce the Published Admission Number (PAN)
- Maximise the pupil numbers
- Make better use of spare building capacity
- Including children with SEND
- Collaboration and Federation to achieve economies of scale

After all these options have been considered to reduce surplus capacity and the school continues to have a surplus, we are forced to consider closing the school.

In the case of Pooles Park Primary school, this school was inspected by Ofsted on 8 and 9 November 2022 and was judged to be inadequate and placed in special measures. This means the school is now subject to an academy order issued by the Secretary of State for Education. Should the Secretary of State determine the school is not viable, it may rescind this academy order, and will expect the Local Authority, Islington Council, to close the school.

Further, Pooles Park Primary School is in Planning Area 2, Hornsey, which currently has one of the highest levels of surplus capacity in Islington of 23% in reception and 25% from Reception to Year 6. First preferences for admission in September 2023 are at their lowest level with first preferences at 61% of the published admission number, which compares to 71% for admission in September 2022. This means the school is not viable and as such, we are proposing to close the school.

The proposal meets the criteria for closure set out in statutory guidance:

- there are surplus places elsewhere in the local area which can accommodate displaced pupils
- there is no predicted demand for the school in the medium to long term
- it has been judged inadequate by Ofsted

Please provide:

- Context on how the service currently operates (if relevant) and the scope of suggested changes
- The intended beneficiaries and outcomes of the proposal
- Reference to any savings or income generation

- it is no longer considered viable.

The intended beneficiaries of this proposal are pupils attending Pooles Park Primary school who will be offered places in alternative good and sustainable local schools.

When closing a school, we must follow statutory guidelines ([Opening and closing maintained schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)). The first stage is to complete an informal consultation on the proposal. This informal consultation ran from 28 April to 5 June, which included a week's extension to accommodate parents and carers who requested the information about the proposal in another language or format.

Following this informal consultation, the Executive is now being asked to progress to the next stage: to issue a statutory notice informing our intention to close the school. Should the Executive agree to this, a further four-week representation period will run before the Executive decides whether to proceed, amend or withdraw the statutory notice. Should the Executive agree to proceed, Pooles Park school will close with the earliest closure date of 31 December 2023.

2. What impact will this change have on different groups of people?

Please consider:

- Whether the impact will predominantly be external or internal, or both?
- Who will be impacted – residents, service users, local communities, staff, or others?
- Broadly what will the impact be – reduced access to facilities or disruptions to journeys for example?

The impact will be predominantly external, impacting on pupils, parents and carers and school staff.

The proposal will change where current and future pupils attend school, potentially leading to stress and anxiety for pupils and families. The proposal would also impact on staff currently working at the school as it would potentially lead to staff redundancies. Our Schools HR service will provide full support to staff, including identifying other staffing opportunities in nearby schools, and providing training and support with CV writing and interview training. However, we should work on the assumption that all staff are likely to face the prospect of redundancy.

The latest available information from the School Workforce Census indicates that there are 43 staff working at Pooles Park Primary School, including both teachers and support staff.

The proposal will impact on where the current pupils at Pooles Park Primary school attend school and potential future children and parents who wish to attend this school specifically. However, this will not

impact on our legal duty to ensure that every child has a school place, which will be maintained within close distance (under one mile) for all affected pupils.

All nearby schools have surplus capacity so will be able to absorb all Pooles Park pupils, both current and planned. This will help ensure the financial viability of the other schools, who will then have more funding (as funding is set by the number of pupils) to better improve the quality of education.

Staff will be affected by the proposal. All staff will be placed on a redeployment register and will receive direct emails of available vacancies in Islington. Our HR service will support affected staff through CV and interview workshops and supporting applications for placements in other Islington schools.

The proposal will close Pooles Park Primary school if it is approved following a consultation and statutory notice processes. Our Education Plan sets out our mission that, by 2030, every child has the same opportunity and ambition to reach their educational potential in a good Islington school.

Schools operate most efficiently when full or nearly full and any surplus places should be kept to a minimum to ensure the financial viability of schools and the ability of schools to provide a high quality, broad and balanced curriculum.

This proposal supports the delivery of this objective.

3. What impact will this change have on people with protected characteristics and/or from disadvantaged groups?

This section of the assessment looks in detail at the likely impacts of the proposed changes on different sections of our diverse community.

3A. What data have you used to assess impacts?

Please provide:

- Details of the evidence used to assess impacts on people with protected characteristics and from disadvantaged groups (see guidance for help)
- A breakdown of service user demographics where possible
- Brief interpretation of findings

All the equalities data listed in this section is taken from the January 2023 School Census.

Gender

Pooles Park has a similar proportion of male and female students to the primary borough average (49% female, 51% male).

Gender	Percentage at Pooles Park
Male	51.7%
Female	48.3%

Data on gender reassignment is not collected in the School Census.

Free School Meal eligibility

Across all Islington primary schools, 41.5% of pupils were eligible for Free School Meals as at January 2023. Islington tends to have relatively high levels of Free School Meal eligibility compared to other boroughs, with the third highest proportion of primary pupils eligible in the country in most recent comparator figures.

Pooles Park has a slightly higher proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals than the Islington average, however is below the median (46.1%) in Islington schools.

	Pooles Park
% FSM eligible	45.9%

Special Educational Needs

Across Islington primary schools, 16.7% of pupils were at the SEN Support level of provision in January 2023. This indicates they have some special educational need, but do not meet the threshold for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). 4.5% of Islington primary school pupils had an EHCP. Therefore, 21.3% of Islington primary school pupils were known to have Special Educational Needs.

Pooles Park has a higher proportion of pupils at SEN Support than the borough average and a lower proportion of pupils with an EHCP than the borough average.

	Pooles Park
SEN Support	30.6%
EHCP	4.3%
Total SEN	34.9%

English as an Additional Language

40% of Islington's primary school pupils had English as an Additional Language (EAL) in January 2023. Pooles Park has a high proportion of pupils with EAL, the 3rd highest in the borough.

	Pooles Park
% EAL	66.51%

Ethnicity

Compared to the average across all Islington primary schools:

- Pooles Park has a high proportion of pupils from 'Other' ethnic groups including Arab.
- Pooles Park has a lower proportion of White UK pupils than the Islington primary average, with the fifth lowest proportion out of Islington primaries.

	Pooles Park	Islington Primaries
White-British	10.5%	26.2%
White-Turkish	6.7%	4.0%
White-Other	11.0%	13.7%
Kurdish	1.0%	0.7%
Asian-Bangladeshi	6.7%	5.3%
Asian-Other	2.4%	1.9%

Please provide:

- Details of the evidence used to assess impacts on people with protected characteristics and from disadvantaged groups (see guidance for help)
- A breakdown of service user demographics where possible
- Brief interpretation of findings

Black-Caribbean	3.8%	4.2%
Black-African	4.8%	8.8%
Black-Other	1.9%	1.7%
Mixed - White & Black-Caribbean	4.3%	4.2%
Mixed-Other	12.9%	15.2%
Chinese	0.0%	1.5%
Other	12.0%	6.4%
Not stated / refused	1.0%	1.4%

Pupil residence

The pupils on roll at Pooles Park are predominantly from Finsbury Park ward (58.4%) with 12.9% from Tollington ward. 85.6% of children are Islington residents and 78% of pupils live within 500m of the school.

Religion

Data on religion is not collected in the School Census.

3B: Assess the impacts on people with protected characteristics and from disadvantaged groups in the table below.

Please first select whether the potential impact is positive, neutral, or negative and then provide details of the impacts and any mitigations or positive actions you will put in place.

Please use the following definitions as a guide:

Neutral – The proposal has no impact on people with the identified protected characteristics

Positive – The proposal has a beneficial and desirable impact on people with the identified protected characteristics

Negative – The proposal has a negative and undesirable impact on people with the identified protected characteristics

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Age	Positive and negative	<p>The intended beneficiaries of the proposals are pupils the school, who by moving to an alternative school will receive a broad and balanced curriculum in sustainable high quality schools.</p> <p>There may be considerable stress and anxiety for pupils and their families.</p>	<p>There will be a school place available at a good school that has long term financial sustainability within the local area for all primary aged pupils. Neighbouring schools have a high level of surplus capacity and it will be possible to offer pupils to move together as whole classes and groups should parents/carers want this.</p> <p>Those pupils who need additional support will receive this from the school and the local authority, including from our SEND and Health and Wellbeing teams.</p> <p>The school community will be involved at all steps of the process, including through the two statutory consultation periods, which will include parent/carer meetings at the school.</p>

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Disability (include carers)	Negative	<p>As with all pupils, any change can cause anxiety and this can be a particular issue for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families, particularly those with Autism who represent 52% of children and young people with SEND in Islington. A recent study undertaken by the National Autistic Society (2022) found that 47% of autistic people fall into the severe anxiety category based on GAD-7 diagnostic criteria (measure for assessing generalised anxiety disorder). It is anticipated there will not be a significant impact on carers, as there are available alternative places at neighbouring schools within an appropriate distance.</p> <p>An added factor for Pooles Park is the community garden – a unique asset where pupils have daily access to outdoor space where they can grow vegetables and learn about the environment. Parents, carers, and staff all tell us of the benefits the community garden brings to all pupils, but especially children with SEND.</p>	<p>An initial assessment of children with Education, Health and Care Plans shows that their needs can be met within the neighbouring schools. The SEND team will work with individual children and their parents/carers to support their transition, including identifying a tailored list of alternative schools suitable to the child's needs as set out in their plans if necessary.</p> <p>The school community were involved in the informal consultation and invited to submit submissions online, by email or verbally through a series of meetings at the school and at Islington Town Hall. The feedback from the community highlighted the importance of the community garden and we are proposing that the council make a commitment to retain and develop the community garden into a Forest School provision that can be accessed by local schools in the area as part of their curriculum offer during school time and to also develop a clear plan for the ongoing use and management of the garden as a community garden.</p>

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Race or ethnicity	Positive and Negative	<p>While there are some differences between the proportion of children from specific ethnic groups compared to the borough average, these are based on small numbers of pupils and are not statistically significant.</p> <p>Pooles Park has a high proportion of Somali pupils and the proposal could potentially widen and strengthen community bonds as children move to neighbouring schools.</p> <p>As Pooles Park has a particularly high percentage of pupils with English as an Additional Language, it is likely that a considerable proportion of parents would also not have English as their first language. This may form a barrier when informing parents about the changes.</p>	<p>We mitigated this by translating the proposal document into the most common second languages as advised by the school.</p> <p>We also arranged a specific parent and carer meeting with Arabic, Somali, Spanish, and Turkish interpreters so that parents and carers were able to express their views in their main language.</p> <p>We supported an individual parent who contacted us with translating the proposal document into Punjabi. We will offer further support to any parent or carer or their advocates who contacts us as we move to the formal consultation stage.</p> <p>Parents will benefit from other schools in the area having surplus capacity, which could create the opportunity for all existing pupils to move to one school, should parents want this.</p>

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Religion or belief (include no faith)	Neutral	<p>Pooles Park is a non-religious school.</p> <p>The neighbouring schools' welcome students from diverse communities and faiths.</p>	
Gender and gender reassignment (male, female, or non-binary)	Neutral	<p>There should not be any difference in the impact on different genders. The school and its neighbouring schools are mixed gender.</p>	

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Maternity or pregnancy	Negative	Any staff who are pregnant or on parental leave may not have had the opportunity to take part in the consultation or in the staff meetings organised by our HR service during the consultation	Any staff on parental leave will receive all statutory support and protections. As with all staff, our HR service will support affected staff through CV and interview workshops and supporting applications for placements in other Islington schools.

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Sex and sexual orientation	Neutral		
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral		

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
<p>Other - deprivation</p> <p>(e.g. people living in poverty, looked after children, people who are homeless or refugees)</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>The school has relatively high levels of Free School Meal eligibility, however this is similar to the borough average. Neighbouring schools have slightly higher levels of FSM eligibility.</p> <p>The mapping of pupils' home residences shows that most pupils live within 500m of the school. There are three nearby primary schools within 500m of Pooles Park and an additional seven within 1 km. This is important as moving schools should not lead to additional travel costs or times.</p>	<p>Pupils will be offered places in alternative good and sustainable local schools, all of which are within walking distance.</p>

4. How do you plan to mitigate negative impacts?

Please provide:

- An outline of actions and the expected outcomes
- Any governance and funding which will support these actions if relevant

All pupils will have continued access to Ofsted rated 'Good' local provision following the school's closure. Current surplus places within all Islington Primary School planning areas mean that future pupils will continue to have access to local provision and that the provision will be more sustainable in the longer term by reducing the excessive surplus places.

The SEND team will work with any family whose child with special educational needs may be affected by these proposals. The team will further consider with the family and those who support the child any additional supports that might need to be put in place to support transition. Full consideration will be given to travel, friendship groups and any access needs.

The School Admissions team will offer open surgeries and individual sessions at the school to provide advice to families. Full consideration will be given to travel, friendship groups and any access needs in considering alternative schools for pupils.

These surgeries will be arranged with the school to consider any groups who may be impacted differently, for example translation or interpreters will be arranged for those for whom English is an additional language.

The School Admissions Team will also liaise directly with Children's Social Care to ensure that any Child In Need, Looked After Child or child with a protection plan is given full support from their allocated Social Worker to ensure they understand processes to be followed, and to support visits.

There are many Social, Emotional and Mental Health services already operating with the school that may be affected by these proposals. These include the School Wellbeing Service and CAMHS in Schools, as well as pastoral care. These services will be informed of any change so they can ensure support can be targeted at this school, where pupils may have increased anxiety around the changes.

The feedback from the community during the informal consultation highlighted the importance of the school's community garden. We are proposing that the council make a commitment to retain and develop the community garden into a Forest School provision that can be accessed by local schools in the area as part of their curriculum offer during school time and to also develop a clear plan for the ongoing use and management of the garden as a community garden.

These arrangements will be kept under review by the School Organisation Project team that will be overseeing all aspects of any transition, including for example premises, staffing and transfer of records.

5. Please provide details of your consultation and/or engagement plans.

Please provide:

- Details of what steps you have taken or plan to take to consult or engage the whole community or specific groups affected by the proposal
- Who has been or will be consulted or engaged with
- Methods used or that will be used to engage or consult
- Key findings or feedback (if completed)

To close a school authority (Local Authority, Governing Body/Diocese, Trust, or Foundation) is required to complete a statutory process.

This includes both an informal consultation/listening period and then a formal statutory consultation period if the council intends to propose closure.

We have completed an informal consultation that lasted five weeks. The proposal was shared with the school community who were invited to share their views on the proposal to close the school and asked whether they agree or disagree with the proposal.

We translated the proposal into the most common languages spoken by parents/carers at the school and held parent/carer meetings at the school premises, including one with interpreters, to explain the proposal and to seek verbal feedback. Parents/carers and members of the community were also invited to submit written comments by email or by post.

We received 231 responses to the proposal and 83 people attended six consultation meetings. Approximately 16% of respondents said they were parents of children at Pooles Park Primary School and 6% said they were staff members. Most respondents (77%) selected 'other'.

We also received a petition with 133 signatories asking that a school remain on the site and that all staff remain part of that school. Most of the signatories on the petition stated they were parents, and we do not know if they also submitted a response to the proposal.

As expected with any proposed school closure, respondents were overwhelmingly opposed to the proposal and most shared their positive personal and family experiences of the school and the important role the school plays in the local community.

The key theme emerging from the responses was the community garden with 65 respondents raising this: respondents expressed how much their children and the wider community had benefited from this asset in an area with little or no green or outdoor space and the daily educational benefits this brought to all pupils at the school. Respondents also commented on the numbers of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and other children with vulnerabilities and the detrimental impact closing the school would have on these groups.

Although not directly related to this proposal, respondents were keen to share their disagreement with the recent Ofsted grading, which judged the school to be inadequate. Some are hopeful that the

Please provide:

- Details of what steps you have taken or plan to take to consult or engage the whole community or specific groups affected by the proposal
- Who has been or will be consulted or engaged with
- Methods used or that will be used to engage or consult
- Key findings or feedback (if completed)

Department for Education will appoint an academy sponsor as it would avert closing the school. The Department for Education is the decision-maker about whether to convert the school to an academy.

The information received through the consultation has now been analysed and written and verbal comments shared with the Executive.

Based on the feedback received, we are proposing that the council make a commitment to retain and develop the community garden into a Forest School provision that can be accessed by local schools in the area as part of their curriculum offer during school time and to also develop a clear plan for the ongoing use and management of the garden as a community garden. We will also ensure all parents are supported with transitioning their children to other local schools, including providing support through Bright Futures – our early help family support service – and from our SEND team.

The Executive will consider this feedback before deciding whether to proceed with the proposal.

If the Executive agrees to proceed, we will issue a statutory notice informing of our intention to close Pooles Park school and a second, formal consultation period will run for exactly four weeks. This notice will be shared in a local newspaper, on the council website and with the school community. Anyone will be able to submit their views on the proposal in this four-week period.

The Executive will then consider any feedback and make a final decision about the proposal. They can then proceed with the proposal, make amendments to it, or withdraw it.

6. Once the proposal has been implemented, how will impacts be monitored and reviewed?

Please provide details in the table below.

Action	Responsible team or officer	Deadline
We will review admissions data, budgetary details, and educational attainment data in the planning area through regular monitoring channels	Learning and Achievement	Ongoing
We will communicate with and provide support to schools that displaced pupils move	Learning and Achievement	July 2024

Action	Responsible team or officer	Deadline
to, to ensure pupils are settling in and offer any additional support as required		
We will monitor the work around developing a Forest School provision to ensure it is accessed equally by all local schools and the local community	Learning and Achievement	Ongoing

Please send the completed EQIA to equalities@islington.gov.uk for quality checking by the Fairness and Equality Team. All Equality Impact Assessments must be attached with any report to a decision-making board and should be made publicly available on request.

This Equality Impact Assessment has been completed in accordance with the guidance and using appropriate evidence.

Member	Name	Signed	Date
Staff member completing this form	Matthew Beevor		12 June 2023
Fairness and Equality Team	Sydney Alexander		12 June 2023
Director or Head of Service	Alison Cramer		13 June 2023