

CONSULTATION OUTLINE: PRE-PUBLICATION CONSULTATION - November 2024

PROPOSAL TO AMALGAMATE HOLY TRINITY, CHURCH OF ENGLAND, PRIMARY WITH FENSTANTON PRIMARY SCHOOL.

Introduction

The governors of both Holy Trinity, Church of England, Primary and Fenstanton Primary, in consultation with the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education (SDBE) are proposing the amalgamation of the two schools to form one new school from **September 2025**.

This proposal would see the discontinuation of Fenstanton's DfE number and a new Church of England, 1 form entry, primary school created, using the current Holy Trinity DfE number.

Decisions regarding the site, uniform, staff models, and the name of the new school have not yet been determined, and governors are keen to use the consultation period to hear the views of the community.

Why are we proposing to amalgamate Holy Trinity and Fenstanton?

In September 2024, in response to falling pupil numbers across Lambeth, the council published plans to reduce the surplus places by proposing the closure of both Holy Trinity and Fenstanton. In response to this closure proposal, school leaders and governors submitted an alternative to Lambeth which outlined the desire to work together as an amalgamated school. It was agreed by cabinet, on the 4 November, that this proposal would be considered if formally proposed by governors.

This proposal is driven by the desire of headteachers and governors to ensure that this community, which is well served by its schools despite the challenges of falling rolls, has a local education offer long into the future. Governors are committed through this consultation, to being clear and transparent, to listening to and acting on the views and concerns of those affected, and to providing reassurance where possible.

Background information

1. Over the last 12 years, across London, the school age pupil population has grown by over 10%. At its peak in 2018, the primary school population had grown by over 20%, from circa 15,600 in 2010 to 19,800. However, since 2018, early years and primary school numbers have decreased by over 7%. During the same period, school capacity has increased by almost 40%. This capacity increase, alongside a reduction in pupil numbers has left many schools unable to fill their places.
2. This trend has also been seen in Lambeth and since 2018, factors such as affordability, Brexit and Covid plus a decline in birth rate has meant fewer children are going to school in Lambeth. The council has been working to address the decline in pupil numbers and has already removed 975 places (roughly 33 classes) from primary schools across the borough (between 2016 and 2025 from 3,650 to 2,675). Despite the removal of places, the scale of the problem exists.

Town Centre Planning Area	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
North	8%	9%	10%	11%	14%	15%	15%
West	16%	20%	21%	23%	23%	20%	20%
East	14%	18%	19%	24%	26%	28%	29%
Southwest	6%	7%	9%	10%	11%	10%	8%
Southeast	5%	7%	10%	13%	18%	19%	21%
Total Vacancies	10%	12%	14%	17%	19%	19%	19%

3. As part of the council's latest attempt to address the number of surplus places across the borough, a proposal was made to close both Holy Trinity and Fenstanton Primary schools.

Holy Trinity

4. Holy Trinity Church of England, Voluntary Aided, Primary School is a two form-entry, primary school, located in the London Borough of Lambeth. The school is part of the educational provision of the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education and the London Borough of Lambeth.

- The Published Admission Number (PAN) was 60 up to 2021/22 when the LA asked the school to consider a reduction. This was due to the drop in overall pupil numbers in the area which had resulted in the school not being able to fill the 60 reception places each year. After careful consideration the governors agreed to a reduction to support Lambeth. Since then, at the request of Lambeth, a further reduction in PAN to 15 had been agreed by governors to take effect in September 25.
- Holy Trinity is in the East planning area. In January 2024, 218 Reception places (approximately equivalent to 7.5 classes or 32.3%) in primary schools in the East planning area were vacant.
- In October 2024, Holy Trinity had 180 pupils on roll from Reception to Year 6 out of a possible 330 total PAN. Based on the physical size of the school, in October 2024 Holy Trinity was 57% empty, with 240 spaces for additional pupils

Holy Trinity CE Primary School																	
Total roll in each year group as at January each year from 2011/12 to 2023/24																	
Year	PAN	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Cohort size	YR/PAN	Roll YR-6	Total PAN	Vacancies	Capacity	Spaces		
2011/12	60	61	61	60	57	58	50	55	-	102%	402	420	18	4%	420	18	4%
2012/13	60	57	58	60	58	56	52	49	-	95%	390	420	30	7%	420	30	7%
2013/14	60	57	60	59	60	60	52	51	-15.0%	95%	399	420	21	5%	420	21	5%
2014/15	60	60	57	53	56	60	60	55	-3.5%	100%	401	420	19	5%	420	19	5%
2015/16	60	41	56	55	54	57	59	60	+25.0%	68%	382	420	38	9%	420	38	9%
2016/17	60	35	39	52	58	57	57	58	-6.5%	58%	356	420	64	15%	420	64	15%
2017/18	60	49	35	37	51	55	55	57	-6.6%	82%	339	420	81	19%	420	81	19%
2018/19	60	41	48	34	40	50	53	59	+3.5%	68%	325	420	95	23%	420	95	23%
2019/20	60	38	42	50	36	39	52	58	+1.8%	63%	315	420	105	25%	420	105	25%
2020/21	60	25	36	38	48	34	37	52	-13.3%	42%	270	420	150	36%	420	150	36%
2021/22	60	30	29	33	37	48	36	36	-12.2%	50%	249	420	171	41%	420	171	41%
2022/23	30	22	29	30	36	40	49	36	+2.9%	73%	242	390	148	38%	420	178	42%
2023/24	30	17	23	29	28	34	39	48	-2.0%	57%	218	360	142	39%	420	202	48%

Fenstanton Primary School

- Fenstanton is a three form- entry community primary school located in the London Borough of Lambeth. The school is part of the educational provision of the London Borough of Lambeth and is part of the Gipsy Hill Federation.
- The Published Admission Number (PAN) was 90 up to 2019/20 which was gradually reduced to 45 in 2022/23. The school agreed to further reduce the PAN to 30 for September 2024.
- Fenstanton is in the Southeast planning area. In January 2024, 114 Reception places (approximately equivalent to 4 classes or 16.2%) in primary schools in the Southeast planning area were vacant.
- In October 2024, Fenstanton had 226 pupils on roll in Reception to Year 6 out of a possible 450 total PAN. Based on the physical size of the school, in October 2024, Fenstanton was 50% empty, with 224 spaces for additional pupils.

Fenstanton Primary School																	
Total roll in each year group as at January each year from 2011/12 to 2023/24																	
Year	PAN	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Cohort size	YR/PAN	Roll YR-6	Total PAN	Vacancies	Capacity	Spaces		
2011/12	90	87	82	84	81	90	77	71	-	97%	572	630	58	9%	630	58	9%
2012/13	90	86	85	74	85	71	85	72	-	96%	558	630	72	11%	630	72	11%
2013/14	90	83	86	90	81	85	71	84	+21.7%	92%	580	630	50	8%	630	50	8%
2014/15	90	82	82	89	87	86	80	73	-14.1%	91%	579	630	51	8%	630	51	8%
2015/16	90	80	78	84	87	87	75	83	-5.7%	89%	574	630	56	9%	630	56	9%
2016/17	90	78	80	74	81	83	87	80	-5.9%	87%	563	630	67	11%	630	67	11%
2017/18	90	69	76	75	69	77	88	88	+1.1%	77%	542	630	88	14%	630	88	14%
2018/19	90	57	66	74	76	69	78	85	-1.2%	63%	505	630	125	20%	630	125	20%
2019/20	90	47	54	63	65	78	59	78	-6.0%	52%	444	630	186	30%	630	186	30%
2020/21	60	43	41	49	56	59	72	57	-30.5%	72%	377	600	223	37%	630	253	40%
2021/22	60	38	45	40	54	49	56	73	-8.8%	63%	355	570	215	38%	630	275	44%
2022/23	45	43	37	43	35	58	48	59	-24.4%	96%	323	525	202	38%	630	307	49%
2023/24	45	21	40	35	39	31	58	47	-31.9%	47%	271	480	209	44%	630	359	57%

Rationale for Amalgamation

- This proposal is driven by the desire of the headteachers and governors of both schools to ensure that this community, which is well served by its schools despite the challenges of falling rolls, has a local

education offer long into the future on a site that has the flexibility to be developed and utilised in the short term and will secure school space long into the future.

13. Both schools are geographically close, just 0.6 miles apart and serve predominantly the same community.
14. There is a huge commitment from each school, supported by the SDBE, to find a better educational solution for this community that risks being fragmented and dismantled. Both schools are beacons of support and community identity which together could secure education in the community with strong outside providers already established continuing to offer additional services from Speech and Language provision, child mental health provision and foodbanks to support for families facing financial hardship.
15. Both schools have staff teams representative of the communities they serve, and this staff profile is hugely important when offering stability and security. A priority for governors is to retain highly skilled professionals within Lambeth schools.
16. Many parents have already expressed concern about any transition for their children through a closure. An amalgamation would allow a transition managed carefully by staff of both schools to ensure that all pupils and particularly SEND pupils have minimal disruption to their education.
17. This is a bold, innovative proposal with the scope to develop into an outstanding community hub providing opportunities for all including pupils, staff and families. Both schools have a strong sense of service, and their ethos, mission and values are complementary with diversity and inclusion at their core. Both schools endeavour to provide a stimulating and nurturing environment for their pupils and one which values empowerment, advocacy, kindness, confidence and has high expectations for all.
18. Initial feedback via surveys, from communities in both schools, overwhelmingly favoured an amalgamation, forming a new C of E school, rather than closure.
19. Holy Trinity Parish Church is very supportive of the proposed amalgamation and the church has had a long association with Fenstanton.

Financial

20. School funding is dependent on pupil numbers. Vacant school places have an immediate impact for schools through reduced budgets, which in turn can affect the overall sustainability and quality of education standards at the school. Both schools have seen a substantial decline in funding due to reduced pupil numbers. By amalgamating the two schools, this proposal aims to create a strong school that continues to be financially viable long into the future.
21. Holy Trinity has been very effective in reducing a large deficit budget that was the result of major restructuring supporting a reduced PAN.

Alternative options considered and rejected

22. **No change:** Doing nothing is not a realistic option in the current climate. If no change is made, the schools are highly likely to see a continual decline in pupil numbers, placing further pressure on their financial position. Further staff restructures are not possible due to the impact on the ability of each school to provide an effective curriculum and maintain the safety of pupils with such limited resources.
23. **Alternative Amalgamations:** Consideration was given to alternative amalgamations for both schools. The council explored an amalgamation between Jubilee Primary School and Fenstanton Primary School, however, this proved to be an unviable option due to issues relating to serious youth violence linked to

postal districts. For Holy Trinity, the option of amalgamation with the nearest Church of England School, Christ Church, was not deemed viable by the Multi Academy Trust to which they belong.

24. **Closure:** Lambeth’s initial proposal was to close both Holy Trinity and Fenstanton. The closure of two schools serving the same community would have far-reaching negative consequences, including the displacement of vulnerable pupils and families. The table below shows clearly that the levels of disadvantaged pupils attending these two schools far exceeds that of all but one other nearby school and is significantly above national deprivation averages.

School	Distance from Holy Trinity	Distance from Fenstanton	Disadvantage intake (PP)
Streatham Wells	0.7 miles (requires crossing South Circular)	0.3 miles (requires crossing South Circular)	23%
Hitherfield	1.2 miles	0.8 miles	22%
Richard Atkins	0.4 miles	0.8 miles	37%
Rosendale	1.2 miles	0.9 miles	21%
Jubilee	0.6 miles	0.8 miles	56%
Holy Trinity	N/A	0.6 miles	55%
Fenstanton	0.6 miles	N/A	56%

*This data is taken from the most up to date DfE dashboard and may be inaccurate based on current school data.

25. Disadvantaged pupils often face more challenges, such as poverty, food insecurity and trauma. Closing the only two schools in the area with high numbers of vulnerable pupils and displacing these communities to schools with entirely different intakes, will deepen educational inequalities and exacerbate disadvantage and marginalisation.
26. The closure of both schools would lead to the loss of valuable community assets. Both schools are central to their local communities, offering more than just education. They serve as community hubs for extracurricular activities, local events, and provide support for vulnerable families. The closure of both schools would remove these vital assets from the community, affecting the social fabric of the area.

Admissions

27. All children attending each school will have a place at the amalgamated school meaning no children will be displaced. Provision can be made to accommodate all pupils that are on roll of both schools as the current combined numbers do not exceed the overall school capacity of 280. All pupils can be accommodated on either site.
28. The combined number of pupils in both schools is currently 380. The building capacity of Holy Trinity is 420 pupils and Fenstanton has capacity for 630 pupils. Either site could therefore accommodate all current pupils.
29. Holy Trinity admission criteria currently has 50% foundation places (offered first to families of Christian Churches). Their Governors propose to reduce this to 25% or fewer foundation places to ensure future intakes would continue to welcome children from the whole community.

SEND

30. Currently 24% of pupils attending Fenstanton are registered as SEND and Holy Trinity has 25% of pupils registered as SEND, with 8% of pupils having an Education Health Care Plan. These figures are significantly above both the national and Lambeth figures for SEND and reinforce the need to maintain a school in the local area.

31. This proposal recognises the need to provide additional support for pupils with SEND throughout any transition period. The Head of SEND and Inclusion in Lambeth will work closely with the SENDCo in each school to support all children with an EHCP and their families to consider any additional support children may need throughout the process.

Transition planning

32. The School and Community Educational Psychology Service will work with both schools to manage the impact of this proposal on staff, pupils and their families. Should this proposal progress, they will support the school to develop a transition plan for children as they move to the new school. These conversations and this work will be carefully planned and managed sensitively in discussion with the headteachers and senior leadership teams.
33. Given the cost of living crisis, there is a commitment to ensure any change in uniform does not come at additional costs for families. This would be managed into any transition planning.

Site and travel

34. The location of the new school has not been decided and governors will seek feedback from stakeholders as part of the consultation. Other factors such as efficiency, age and suitability of building, home addresses of pupils and accessibility will be considered as part of the decision making process.

Impact on Staff

35. We know that staff will be anxious about the implications of any decision, and their wellbeing is important to us. We offer our reassurance that governors, the SDBE, council officers and school leaders are here to support staff as we navigate this process together.
36. Governors anticipate that staff redundancies will be minimal, as staff will be needed in the new school. However, it is also expected that some staff will want to consider their options depending upon their individual circumstances. All staff will be supported throughout this process and governors are very clear that regardless of the decision reached, we do not want to lose the experience, skills, and talent of education staff in Lambeth.
37. Governors will continue to offer support to all staff through the Lambeth Community Educational Psychology Service to work through and manage the anxieties and emotions which will inevitably be felt given any proposal that seeks to change the current make up of our schools.
38. To supplement the support outlined above, all staff have access to the council's employee assistance programme and further support through the SDBE.

Impact on quality of education

39. While both schools were judged "requires improvement" overall at their last Ofsted inspections in the summer term of 2023, significant work has been done to secure sustained and substantial improvements in the quality of education. Both schools were judged to have good personal development and behaviour and attitudes, and the breadth of curriculum was highlighted as a strength in both schools. Ensuring high quality education for pupils is an ongoing and key priority and additional resources from the LA and SDBE will be deployed throughout the implementation stage and into the first year of amalgamation.

Consultation and decision-making process

There is a defined statutory process in the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013 which must be followed before making a decision on the closure of a maintained school. This is supplemented by further guidance on the process published by the Department for Education.

There are five stages to the statutory process:

Consultation:	The publication of this consultation document marks a period of consultation during which the views of interested parties are sought.
Publication	Dependent upon the outcome of the consultation, governors will decide whether to publish statutory notices regarding the proposed amalgamation.
Representation	The representation period starts on the date of publication of the statutory notice and must last for a period of four weeks. During this period, any person or organisation can submit comments on the proposal, to be taken into account before a final decision is made.
Decision	Within two months of the end of the representation period the local authority must make a decision on the proposal.
Implementation	If the proposal is approved the amalgamation would take place in September 2025.

Equality Impact Assessment

Governors recognise the need to have 'due regard' to the duties set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Public Sector Equality Duty, 'PSED') in determining these proposals. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of the consultation process to identify the equality implications of this proposal and any appropriate mitigation, which we are seeking views on as part of this consultation.

How to share your views

The governors of Holy Trinity, Church of England Primary and Fenstanton Primary will begin consulting on the 26 November 2024 to get views on the outlined proposals. This will close on the 6 January 2024.

You can give your views via:

- *Online survey: we would encourage you to complete the online survey as the most efficient and secure way to give your views.*



- *Hard copies can be available on request, by emailing consult@fenstantonprimary.co.uk*
- *You can also give your views by attending the consultation event at the schools on*

<i>Fenstanton Primary School 10 December 2024 3:30 – 4:30</i>	<i>Holy Trinity Primary School 5 December 2024 3:30 – 4:30</i>
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Upon concluding this consultation stage, all views will be considered in full before deciding whether to publish statutory proposals for these changes.

Who we will consult

The governing bodies are consulting with pupils, parents and carers, staff, other local schools and trade unions. We are also consulting with other groups as well as the wider local community.

Proposed Consultation Timeline

Activity	Timeline
Pre-publication consultations	26 November 2024 to 5 January 2025
Review period for consultation feedback and to decide whether to publish statutory proposals for these changes.	5 January 2025 to 10 January 2025

FAQs

What is an amalgamation of schools?

Amalgamation refers to the process of combining two or more schools into one, typically to improve educational opportunities, reduce costs, or address declining enrolment.

What happens during the consultation period and how will you ensure it is accessible for all?

The consultation process must follow the statutory guidance referenced above. Over the consultation period we will be consulting with pupils, parents and carers, staff, other local schools and trade unions and the wider local community.

We will translate all relevant material into the languages which are spoken by the school community and will pay attention to those parents and carers with additional needs to ensure their voices are heard through this engagement phase.

There will be different forms of engagement, including questionnaires and a face to face QA session at which we will have interpreters.

When will we know which site will be used?

Governors aim to use this consultation to gain the views of all stakeholders on the proposed amalgamation and this will include views on the preferred site. Responses will be reviewed and will help to inform the decision around the site, alongside other elements such as travel distance for families, suitability and building efficiencies. After the period of the review, governors will decide whether to publish formal proposals and at that stage the site will be named.

Does my family need to go to church or be religious to attend a Church of England school?

No, Church of England (C of E) schools welcome children of all faiths or no faith at all. They are inclusive and aim to serve the whole community, reflecting Christian values while respecting and celebrating diverse beliefs. Both Fenstanton and Holy Trinity share a strong ethos based on core values, this will not change in the new school. All pupils, regardless of faith, background or belief will be welcomed and supported to flourish.

Will every child affected by this proposal get a place in the new school?

Yes. Every pupil on roll at Holy Trinity and Fenstanton will automatically get a place in the new school. There will be no need for families to 're-apply', this will be done as part of the transition.

How will you assess the impact of the amalgamation on the community?

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and has been shared as part of this consultation and will be reviewed and updated in line with responses received.

How will I be supported if I choose to go to a different school and not the new school?

We will ensure every attempt is made to support parents to transition to other schools in the borough where possible. The SDBE will work with parents who would like to be placed in Church schools and Lambeth admissions team will aim to support those families wishing to seek a place in an alternative Lambeth school.

My child has SEND, how will they be supported?

The Head of SEND and Inclusion in Lambeth will work closely with the SENDCo in each school to support all children with an EHCP and their families to consider school preferences, taking into account home to school

distance. We will give consideration to the wider SEND pupil cohort to manage transitions well and address any concerns parents may have.

What support will be available to parents whose children will be affected by this proposal?

Advice and guidance from a range of professionals from the LA and SDBE will be available on school vacancies and the admission processes, managing the transition, supporting your children.

All relevant documents will be translated for those who may require it and we will provide interpreters for the face-to-face QA session for ease of understanding.

Staff

How will staff be selected for the new school?

A transparent selection process will be established once the staff structure is determined, considering factors such as experience, qualifications, and the needs of the pupils.

What support will be available to staff affected by this proposal?

Governors will work together with the LA, SDBE and school leaders to support staff as we navigate this process together.

When will staff have support people they can talk to about their futures?

We recognise that the proposals will be concerning for many staff and will ensure support is available for staff as they need it. Although the outcome of the proposal is still to be decided there will be general support from HR colleagues from the LA and SDBE. Meetings will be arranged for any staff who would like to discuss options and get advice. If a decision is made to amalgamate the two schools, more formal advice will be given to all staff in meetings and 1 to 1 sessions.