

## Statutory Notice

### **Proposal to discontinue Colvestone Primary School and amalgamate the student body with Princess May Primary School**

Hackney Council publishes these proposals under section 15 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (as amended by the Education Act 2011) and the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013.

Hackney Council proposes to discontinue Colvestone Primary School and amalgamate the student body with Princess May Primary School.

The number of children in each year group at Princess May Primary School will remain at 60. All children attending Colvestone Primary School will be offered a place at Princess May Primary School and Colvestone Primary School will discontinue. These changes will take effect from 31 August 2024.

This proposal is published on 6 October 2023. Within four weeks from the date of publication of this proposal, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by visiting <https://consultation.hackney.gov.uk/children-education/primary-schools-statutory-proposals>, by emailing: [school.sufficiency@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:school.sufficiency@hackney.gov.uk), or by writing to:

School Sufficiency & Estates Team  
Hackney Council  
Hackney Service Centre  
1 Hillman Street  
London, E8 1DY

The closing date for receipt of responses to the representation period is 3 November 2023 at 5pm. The Council's Cabinet will meet after the end of the representation period, in December 2023, to take the final decision on whether to discontinue Colvestone Primary School and amalgamate its students with Princess May Primary School.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be viewed at:

<https://consultation.hackney.gov.uk/children-education/primary-schools-statutory-proposals>.

If you require a paper copy of this, please contact us via email at: [school.sufficiency@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:school.sufficiency@hackney.gov.uk).

This document has been translated into the following languages: Bengali, Turkish, Portuguese, Slovak and Spanish. These are the languages required to ensure access for families with English as an additional language, as identified by the affected schools in scope during the previous consultation period. Translated versions are available to view at: <https://consultation.hackney.gov.uk/children-education/primary-schools-statutory-proposals>. If you need this document to be translated into another language, please contact us as soon as possible by emailing us at: [school.sufficiency@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:school.sufficiency@hackney.gov.uk)

David Court  
Interim Assistant Director School Estates Strategy



Publication date: 6 October 2023

# Full Statutory Proposal to discontinue Colvestone Primary School and amalgamate the student body with Princess May Primary School

## 1. Contact details (name and address of the proposer):

Hackney Council  
Hackney Service Centre  
1 Hillman Street  
London  
E8 1DY  
Tel: 020 8356 3000  
Email: [school.sufficiency@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:school.sufficiency@hackney.gov.uk)

## Name, address and category of school to be discontinued:

Colvestone Primary School (community school)  
Colvestone Crescent, London, E8 2LG  
Tel: 020 7254 1143  
Email: [office@colvestone.hackney.sch.uk](mailto:office@colvestone.hackney.sch.uk)

## Name and address of school to amalgamate with Colvestone Primary School:

Princess May Primary School (community school)  
Princess May Road, London, N16 8DF  
Tel: 020 7254 1589  
Email: [admin@princessmay.hackney.sch.uk](mailto:admin@princessmay.hackney.sch.uk)

## 2. Implementation

Colvestone & Princess May Primary Schools will amalgamate on 31 August 2024.  
Colvestone Primary School to be discontinued on 31 August 2024.

## 3. Reason for discontinuance

Following seven years of unprecedented growth, the number of primary aged children joining reception classes in Hackney primary schools peaked in 2014/15 and has been in steady decline since, a trend observed across London and most prevalent in inner-London boroughs. Applying the information available to us, pupil numbers joining reception classes are not forecast to rise significantly in the immediate future.

School funding is primarily determined by the number of children on roll, and falling rolls equate to reduced funding to deliver education across the borough. While primary schools' rolls are falling but the number of schools remains unchanged, there is effectively less financial resource across all schools. This is because many costs are driven by the number of classes in a school, whereas funding levels are driven by the number of pupils.

The Council has a statutory duty to ensure there are a sufficient number of school places for pupils and that places are planned effectively. The Council monitors surplus reception places, a key measure of demand, and aims to maintain a 5-10% surplus across all Hackney primary schools.

Despite removing 375 reception places across Hackney schools between 2019 and 2023, the projections still indicate a steady increase in surplus reception places from 19% in 2023/24 up to 23% in 2025/26. This surplus is then projected to slowly decrease and stagnate at 20% until the end of the projection period in 2031/32.

The fall in numbers together with reduced funding from central government, means that some of our schools are facing major challenges. If we continue to allow schools to remain open with significant levels of surplus places, it will put schools at severe financial risk which

could lead to sudden, unplanned school closures or changes. Colvestone Primary School has been affected by a fall in pupil numbers and loss of funding.

Colvestone is not financially viable and ended the 2022/23 year with an extremely large deficit balance of £561,646.

In order to avoid unnecessary process duplication and to ensure efficient use of resources the council's finance department has not produced alternative financial modelling for Colvestone following the agreement with the school on the deployment of a SRMA (School Resource Management Adviser) report process. This was carried out by an independent SRMA.

Those in favour of keeping Colvestone open suggest the recent reporting supports a view that Colvestone can be financially viable in the future and has the capacity to pay down the deficit.

The local authority does not agree with this assessment, which includes a number of assumptions based on non-sustainable funding sources, and considers the school to be financially unviable. The SMRA expresses the view that the schools' "overall financial position is precarious. The school and SRMA have discussed potential ways the deficit could be reduced and the debt repaid to the Local Authority. School leadership has been and still is, very mindful of how efficiencies may impact pupil outcomes and teaching standards."

The SMRA's view is that it would be "extremely challenging" for the school to balance their budget and repay the current deficit over three/four years. They point out that "any chance of financial recovery heavily relies on strong incoming pupil numbers and current budgets are reliant on almost full cohorts of Reception children entering the school."

The local authority does not accept the statement made in the report that "the SRMA and school have discussed the pupil number forecasts with the LA, who advised that these numbers are not unrealistic." The local authority is firmly of the view that the projected number of children joining the school, on which the budget is based, are unrealistic. The budgets are based on 24 children joining reception in September 2023, 27 in 2024 and 30 in 2025. 14 children joined the school in the Reception class in September 2023.

The SRMA goes on to say "... it is evident that demand for Reception places is falling, with London Councils, the collective of London Councils, predicting a 12% decrease in demand for Reception places in Hackney between 22/23 and 26/27. Therefore, the forecasts may be unfeasible. The school can better gauge this once September 2023 numbers are confirmed."

The 3-year projected budget produced by the Senior Leadership Team (2023/24 - 2025/26) submitted in May 2023 projects a growing deficit as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Projected In Year deficit</b>	<b>Projected Cumulative deficit</b>
2023/24	-27,615	-589,261
2024/25	-93,690	-682,951
2025/26	-110,540	-793,491

By the schools' own forecasts, despite an in year surplus in 22/23 of £28,319 (supported by a £50,000 mid year additional cash injection), they are unable to demonstrate capacity to address their outstanding deficit.

The table in section 4 shows the number of unfilled places in each year group at the May 2023 census.

#### 4. Pupil numbers and admissions - numbers of pupils for whom provision is currently made

Colvestone Primary School is a maintained community school for pupils aged 3-11. The school has a published admission number (PAN) of 30 in each year group, giving a total of 210 places across all year groups.

##### Colvestone Primary School - Unfilled places (May 2023 census)

	Rec	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	TTL
PAN 2022/23	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	210
Roll (May 23)	17	23	25	13	14	19	19	130
No. of unfilled places	13	7	5	17	16	11	11	80
% of unfilled places	43%	23%	17%	57%	53%	37%	37%	38%

In May 2023, Colvestone Primary School had 8 children in its nursery, of which 5 were girls and 3 were boys.

SEND characteristics of children at Colvestone Primary School are included in the section below.

#### 5. Displaced pupils

Colvestone Primary School is situated in the west of the borough in an area where there are several other alternative primary schools. Should the proposal be agreed, all children currently attending Colvestone Primary School would be offered places at Princess May Primary School if that is what they want. There is sufficient space at Princess May Primary School to accommodate the pupils currently on roll at Colvestone because the building can accommodate 420 pupils.

Should parents not wish their children to transfer to Princess May, there are vacancies across Reception to Year 6 in other Hackney primary schools. Parents can also express any alternative preferences for other schools through the in-year admissions process should they wish to do so. Families will be offered one-to-one support to ensure their children have places at suitable schools, including extra priority for places at nearby schools.

The reported number of pupils (at September 2023) at Colvestone Primary School is outlined below. It is expected that pupil numbers will change; they may reduce between now and the final Cabinet decision, and during the implementation period following any Cabinet decision to proceed with the proposals.

School	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Colvestone Primary School	14	16	24	26	12	13	16	121

In October 2022 Hackney primary schools were carrying 4,685 vacancies across all year groups. Analysis of vacancies at the nearest schools to Colvestone Primary School shows there is capacity to accommodate all pupils affected within Hackney settings. Further details and analysis is available in the 25 September Cabinet report.

Mapping of children by postcode at Colvestone Primary School demonstrates that they reside across a wide area within and outside Hackney. This means that families are very likely to have several alternative schools within statutory walking distance of their homes (ie. two miles for children under eight years of age, three miles for pupils aged 8–16). Maps for each year group showing children requiring alternative school places following the proposed closure and vacancies at Hackney and nearby schools are provided in the 25 September Cabinet report.

There are sufficient alternative places for children attending the nursery class. The table below shows the approximate number of unfilled nursery places at the four nearest schools based on Spring 2023 census data.

School	Children in the nursery class	Unfilled places in the four nearest schools
Colvestone Primary School	6	37

There are no interim arrangements required for pupils at either school.

## 6. Impact on the community

The discontinuation of Colvestone Primary School would reduce the number of surplus primary school places in the borough.

The Council considers that allowing surplus places to remain above 20% through inaction would directly and negatively impact the financial viability of many Hackney schools, which in turn will have an impact on the quality and breadth of the education offered at those schools.

## 7. Rural primary schools

Not applicable.

## 8. Balance of denominational provision

Not applicable.

## 9. Maintained nursery schools

Not applicable - Colvestone Primary School is not a maintained nursery school. Nursery provision currently exists at Colvestone Primary School. Parents who access this provision will be able to access alternative provision locally. Information and advice for parents can be found at:

<https://education.hackney.gov.uk/section/childcare-family-support-and-childrens-centres>

## 10. Sixth form provision

Not applicable.

## 11. Special Educational Needs Provision

No specialist places are specifically reserved for pupils with special needs at Colvestone Primary School.

The number and percentage of children (Reception to Yr 6) with Education, Health and Care Plans and requiring SEN support is outlined below (May 2023 data).

School	Number of pupils with EHCPs	% of pupils with EHCPs	Number of pupils requiring SEN support	% of pupils with SEN Support
Colvestone	10	7.7%	21	16.2%
Hackney*	843	4.6%	2,656	15.2%
England*	116,661	2.5%	608,827	13.5%

\* Hackney and England data, DfE SEND National Statistics, June 2023

The Council understands that a change of setting for pupils with SEN can often be challenging and require additional support to ensure a successful transition. Officers from the Council are making arrangements for children with EHCPs and those on the SEN register to ensure that they are appropriately placed.

If the decision is taken to proceed as proposed, parents will be supported in the Spring term to help them understand their options and find out their preferences for alternative schools for their children. Families with children who have an EHCP impacted by this proposal will be directly supported by the SEN team to explain the process of how their children will transfer to other schools. Families with children on SEN support will be offered one-to-one support to ensure their children have places at suitable schools, including extra priority for places at nearby schools.

The Council is developing a funding proposal to support the transition of pupils with SEND (including SEND Support and EHC Plan children) as a result of the proposals

The Council acknowledges the excellent support provided by Hackney schools for children with SEND and particularly at Colvestone Primary School. Unfortunately the support provided will become increasingly difficult to sustain for schools with falling rolls. The financial impact of low pupil numbers is cumulative and means that, in the coming years, these schools will be unable to continue to provide the same level of support without exhausting contingency funds or going into deficit.

As a result of these proposals, outcomes for pupils with SEND may improve as they would move to a more financially viable and therefore long term sustainable school. This means that the school would be able to provide the additional necessary support and resources required to support children with EHCPs and those on the SEN register. Priority 1 of the Education Sufficiency & Estates Strategy is to increase SEN provision in Hackney and a programme of new ARP delivery is ongoing.

## 12. Travel

All children on roll at Colvestone will be offered a place at Princess May Primary School, which is 0.4 miles away from Colvestone Primary School. Every parent however is able to make a preference for an alternative school so longer journeys may be necessary as a result of parental preference. There are alternative school places within the statutory walking distance for primary aged children.

### **13. Procedure for making representations (objections and comments)**

Within four weeks from the date of publication of this proposal, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by visiting

<https://consultation.hackney.gov.uk/children-education/primary-schools-statutory-proposals>,

by emailing: [school.sufficiency@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:school.sufficiency@hackney.gov.uk), or by writing to:

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London  
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**Somali**

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**French**

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**Spanish**

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**Urdu**

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**Chinese**

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