

## **Formal Consultation on bringing together Lady Bankes Infant and Nursery School and Lady Bankes Junior School to form a single three-form primary school**

Hillingdon Council and the Federated Governing Body of Lady Bankes Infant and Nursery School and Lady Bankes Junior School are proposing to join (amalgamate) the two schools together to form a single three-form entry school led by Mrs Kate Needs (the current Headteacher of Lady Bankes Junior School).

The new school would include pupils from Reception (ages 4-5) through to Year 6 (ages 10-11) and provide the same nursery class provision for children aged 3-4 as the Infant and Nursery School currently does (90 places split across morning and afternoon sessions which includes a number of 30-hours spaces).

The new school would continue to admit up to 90 pupils a year, giving it the same Published Admissions Number (PAN) of the current infant and junior school PANS when combined.

**All pupils currently attending both schools, as well as those due to join Nursery, Reception or Year 3 in September 2021, will automatically have places at the new school.**

The amalgamation of the schools would have no implications on traffic or site access.

The new school would continue to provide an education that offers equality of opportunity for all regardless of age, gender, and ethnicity, learning ability, religious or social background and attainment, including special needs and disabilities.

*Governors believe that bringing the schools together into a single primary school would enable them to improve further and achieve more for our pupils and our community. This consultation seeks your feedback about this proposal.*

### **Who is being consulted?**

- Pupils at both schools;
- Staff of both schools;
- Parents, carers and guardians of current pupils at both schools;
- Relevant professional associations (e.g. staff unions);
- Community members and other interested parties; and
- Local Councillors.

**Consultation opening date: Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

**Consultation closing date: Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

**Please have your say on this proposal before 5pm on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021 by using the form at the end of this document.** You can have your say through the following ways:

- Emailing: [schoolgovernance@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:schoolgovernance@hillingdon.gov.uk)
- Writing to: School Governance Team, Education Service, 4E/07, Civic Centre, Uxbridge, UB8 1UW

You may want to use the enclosed sheet for your response.

### **A copy of this consultation is also available at:**

- <https://www.ladybankes-inf.hillingdon.sch.uk>
- <https://www.ladybankes-jun.hillingdon.sch.uk>
- [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/consultation](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/consultation)
- Hard copies are available by contacting the office of either school (contact details are available on the above websites).

## **1. Why is amalgamation being proposed?**

Part of the role of any Governing Body is to consider the long-term vision of the school(s) it is responsible for and how, in the future, they can continue to:

- improve and provide the best possible education and care for every child;
- provide an excellent working environment and experience for staff; and
- support and work with their local community.

Following the resignation of Mrs Dyer, Headteacher of Lady Bankes Infant and Nursery School, the Federated Governing Body of both schools, in light of its responsibilities detailed above, met to discuss options for the future successes of both schools. The decision was made to explore amalgamation and an informal consultation with staff and parents/carers was carried out which showed great support for the idea. In summary, 112 responses were received, of which 93 were in favour of the proposed amalgamation, 8 were opposed and 11 were undecided. Following a piece of work on financial due diligence, the Federated Governing Body made a formal recommendation of amalgamation to Hillingdon Council.

The Council and Federated Governing Body believe this is the logical next step for the two schools. Almost all pupils progress from Lady Bankes Infant and Nursery School to Lady Bankes Junior School. The schools have also been collaborating increasingly closely in recent years to the benefit of pupils and their families. Amalgamating the schools to form a primary school therefore reflects the pupil journey and formalises this collaboration. In addition, Hillingdon Council and the Governing Body believe that a single primary school is educationally and financially more sustainable than two schools.

## **2. What are the benefits of an amalgamated school?**

The proposal to amalgamate the schools is underpinned by the intention of the Governing Body to further improve the quality of provision already in place at both schools by ensuring a consistent and continuous approach to teaching and learning throughout children's time at Lady Bankes. It will also enable the Governing Body, Headteacher and staff to plan pastoral support for pupils from Nursery to Year 6. Finally, the proposal will enable the two schools to merge and strengthen their community links and to build on the extended school programmes in place in both schools.

### ***Educational advantages for pupils***

- Amalgamation would eliminate the Infant to Junior School move at the end of Year 2 removing any anxiety this might cause, as well as interruptions to learning.
- Enhanced curriculum planning which can take into account all three stages of the primary phase of education (Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2) so that children make the best possible progress in their learning and development during their time at Lady Bankes;
- A consistent approach to the ways in which children are taught and supported;
- Being able to monitor children's progress from age 3 to age 11 would enable staff to build up a comprehensive understanding of each child and build consistently on their achievements throughout their time at Lady Bankes.
- Continuity of experience and provision, which could be especially important for vulnerable children and those with special educational needs;
- Increased opportunities for children in all key stages to come together for pastoral, social and creative activities.
- Improved safeguarding through seamless knowledge throughout children's time at Lady Bankes
- Would allow consistency of policy and planning across key stages as well as the potential for cross-phase policies with a key stage specific focus.

### ***Advantages for school families***

- Consistency of parental involvement throughout the primary phase of education by having the ability to foster longer-term relationships with families within one school;
- Communication between school and parents will be simplified, especially for parents with children in both schools. It would remove any duplication and ensure a joined up approach for events, training and other matters;
- Removes the need for parents to apply for a place at the Junior School as children would automatically continue their education as part of one Lady Bankes school.

### ***Advantages for the leadership and governance***

- A single leadership team providing vision and continuity from Nursery to Year 6;
- The opportunity to build partnerships with children, parents and families over a longer period of time.
- Working in partnership as one school with the community.
- A single larger staff team would provide a wider range of expertise and greater resilience.
- Potential to attract from a wider pool of teaching and support staff due to greater career opportunities provided by an all through primary school.

### ***Advantages for the staff***

- Increased career development opportunities through the sharing of a wider range of expertise and the possibility to gain experience and an understanding of all Key Stages.
- Continuous assessment, tracking and target-setting procedures for the entire primary phase of education;
- Opportunities to use the accommodation of both schools more effectively to support teaching and learning;
- Stability of staffing and increased opportunities for staff retention through improved staffing structures.

### ***Advantages for the use of resources***

- Increased sharing of resources and expertise would benefit both children and staff and avoid unnecessary duplication.
- As one school there is the potential to improve the use of school facilities e.g. specialist teaching spaces, reception areas, outdoor areas;
- Greater opportunity for cost effectiveness through economies of scale e.g. in purchasing, ensuring the best provision possible for the children;
- A larger workforce with a broader range of shared expertise.

## **3. What are the risks in amalgamating the two schools?**

Hillingdon Council and the Governing Body consider that an amalgamation would bring a range of benefits and opportunities to the schools' pupils, staff and families and that these potential benefits outweigh potential risks.

One possible risk is that the amalgamation process may distract governors and staff during the year with some uncertainty until legal decisions are taken, and then with implementation work required after legal decisions. However, before this amalgamation proposal the schools were already working closely together in areas such as policies and systems, and the amalgamation would accelerate that integration. To mitigate this risk the schools are working closely with Hillingdon Council and a Senior Education Advisor to minimise the impact upon governor and staff time and ensure that the process runs as smoothly as possible.

Also, pursuing this route (i.e. an amalgamation) would be more complex and time consuming in the short term than simply recruiting a new headteacher for the Infant School. An amalgamation may also be unsettling to

staff and would need to be carefully managed. The Governing Body is committed to undertaking all steps of this process in an open and transparent way, with the best interests of the schools at heart.

There are a number of other possible risks that are common to all schools – such as staff recruitment and retention, pupil numbers in the local area changing, and school funding decisions by the Department for Education. Amalgamation is not considered to increase the risk of any of these issues, and indeed may help reduce or manage the risk compared to remaining as separate infant and junior schools.

Whatever the outcome, the Governing Body, Mrs Needs and all staff in both schools are committed to the high level of provision and support for all children and families for which Lady Bankes is well known for.

#### 4. How would the new school be created?

It is important to emphasise that the Federated Governing Body and Hillingdon Council are approaching this as an amalgamation that takes the best features of both schools into the new school. When making a decision on how to propose the joining of the two schools, the Governing Body was mindful to consider what was in the best interests of the children at Lady Bankes at all times. In light of this, the proposed process involves the following steps:

- Closing Lady Bankes Infant and Nursery School and transferring pupils, staff, land, buildings and equipment to Lady Bankes Junior School on 31 August 2021
- Extending the age range of Lady Bankes Junior School from Years 3 to 6 to Nursery to Year 6 (and changing its name to reflect the full primary age range) with effect from 1 September 2021

The Governing Body has given careful thought to this proposed approach and is aware that it would mean the loss of the Infant and Nursery School’s Outstanding rating. However, the Governing Body and Hillingdon Council strongly believe that it is not the formal rating that makes the Infant School outstanding but the excellent teaching provision, ethos and values within it, which together with those of the Junior School, would be built on and continue in the future in the new school. [A key part of this proposal is for Mrs Needs to lead the amalgamated school. Effecting the amalgamation in the way proposed is the most straightforward way of achieving this.]

#### 5. How can I make my views known?

The consultation runs between 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021 and 5pm on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021. To share your views please tell us what your thinking is on any aspect of the proposal outlined in this document or you may wish to propose an entirely different option. If you want the schools to remain unchanged, it is important that you tell us why you think that option would provide the best educational outcome for pupils at Lady Bankes.

<b>For pupils</b>	The view of pupils will be collected using current pupil voice methods.
<b>For staff</b>	Initial informal meetings with staff of both the Infant and Nursery school and Junior school have already taken place to advise of the proposed amalgamation. Further meetings will be held on Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> March as outlined in the timetable below and trade union colleagues are welcome to attend. Staff are also able to submit their views and questions direct to the Council as outlined below.
<b>For parents, carers and other interested parties</b>	The current restrictions mean we are not able to run the consultation process in exactly the way we would like, for example by holding open meetings for parents and carers to hear more information and ask questions.

	<p>Instead, we ask that you write to the Council with your comments<sup>1</sup>. This will assist the Council and the Federated Governing Body in reaching a clear understanding of the views held. You may use the form provided, or write separately to the address provided at the end, or email: <a href="mailto:schoolgovernance@hillington.gov.uk">schoolgovernance@hillington.gov.uk</a></p> <p>All written comments should be received by the Council by <b>5pm</b> on Wednesday 24 March 2021.</p>
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If you have any questions about the consultation, please contact the Borough of Hillingdon School Governance Team by emailing: [schoolgovernance@hillington.gov.uk](mailto:schoolgovernance@hillington.gov.uk)

## 6. What is the decision-making process/what happens next?

At the end of the consultation period, the Council will consider all of the views expressed by all interested parties, including minutes from any meetings, and make a decision on what will happen next. At this point there are two choices:

- Keep the schools as they are now – in which case the process would stop and no further action would be taken; or
- Proceed with the proposed amalgamation – in which case Hillingdon Council would publish a Statutory Notice on the amalgamation. If a Statutory Notice is published any interested individuals would have four weeks to comment on the Statutory Notice. This four-week representation period will provide the final opportunity for individuals and organisations to comment on, or submit objections to, the proposal. After that, all responses would be carefully considered and a final decision would then be made by the Cabinet of Hillingdon Council.

### Proposed timescale

Date	Activity
Wednesday 10 March 2021	Consultation proposal opens and document distributed
Thursday 18 March 2021	Meetings for staff and trade unions
Wednesday 24 March 2021	End of consultation period

If the decision at the end of the consultation is to amalgamate, then the dates of the statutory notice period will be as follows –

Friday 26 March 2021	Publication of Statutory Notice
Friday 23 April 2021	End of period of statutory representations
<i>To be confirmed</i>	Decision on proposal made

<sup>1</sup> The Council handles all information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 to ensure that all personal information retained through this process is stored safely, only accessed by people who need to access it, used safely and responsibly, and disposed of safely and securely when no longer required. This also includes transporting data, either physically or electronically. Your answers to this consultation will only be used to assess the stakeholders' view of the proposed amalgamation and not for any other purpose.

**Consultation Response Form**  
**Proposed amalgamation of Lady Bankes Infant and Nursery School and Lady Bankes Junior School**

Please indicate below with a ✓ whether or not you support the proposal

I/We <b>support</b> the proposal to close Lady Bankes Infant and Nursery School and extend the age range of Lady Bankes Junior School to become an all-through primary school.	
I/We <b>do not support</b> the proposal to close Lady Bankes Infant and Nursery School and extend the age range of Lady Bankes Junior School to become an all-through primary school.	
I/We/ am/are not sure about the proposal to close Lady Bankes Infant and Nursery School and extend the age range of Lady Bankes Junior School to become an all-through primary school.	

**Please provide any supporting information for your preference and / or any other specific comments you want the Council to consider**

**Full name/s:**

**Full postal address:**

**Email:**

**Tick which group you represent: staff / parents /carers / local community / other \_\_\_\_\_**

**To be received no later than 5pm on Wednesday 24 March 2021**

**School Governance Team, Education Service, 4E/07, Civic Centre, Uxbridge, UB8 1UW**

**[schoolgovernance@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:schoolgovernance@hillingdon.gov.uk)**

**Hard copies of this proposal can be obtained by using the Council contact details above or by contacting the Lady Bankes Infant and Nursery School or the Lady Bankes Junior School offices.**

## Appendix One – Response Document to Frequently Asked Questions

### *Identified through the Informal Consultation Process*

#### **Amalgamation Process**

**1. Will there be any changes to the size of the school and the school buildings?**

No, the size of the school and building will remain exactly the same. The proposed Primary school will have a *published admission number* equal to the sum of the current Infant, Nursery and Junior Schools' numbers. Therefore there would be **no change to the capacity** of the proposed amalgamated Primary school if the decision were made to proceed.

**2. Does the amalgamation affect school funding?**

The proposal for amalgamation is not being made because of financial reasons. The education budget that the Council receives from government is 'ring-fenced' and can only be spent on education – so there is no saving to the Council through amalgamation. The budget for each individual school is determined by a formula that includes some amounts for every school but is mainly determined by the number of pupils. There are many primary schools in the borough the same size as the proposed new primary school, and they are able to provide effective education within their budgets.

**3. What will happen to the infant school between Easter and September after Mrs Dyer leaves?**

Mrs Needs will take on the role of Interim Acting Strategic Head working with Mrs McCarthy and Mrs Donaghey who will take on the roles of Interim Acting Heads of School.

**4. What will happen if the amalgamation does not proceed?**

The schools would remain separate and the Governing Body would appoint a new headteacher for Lady Bankes Infant and Nursery School from September 2021.

**5. Why would an all-through primary school be the best structure for the future?**

All pupils entering Reception would receive their education from Reception to Year 6. A single primary school enables a consistent ethos and approach and has a single governing body and Headteacher accountable for pupil progress. The Council and Federated Governing Body believes that the proposal is in the best long-term interest of the children and their families.

#### **General**

**6. Will the school rename itself to Lady Bankes Primary School?**

If the schools do progress to amalgamation then the Governing Body together with Mrs Needs would consult with staff, parents and carers on a possible new name for the all-through primary school.

**7. Who would be the governors of the new Primary School?**

The schools currently share a Governing Body and have done so for the last five years. An amalgamation would therefore not cause any change to the existing governance of the schools.

#### **School Processes**

**8. What would the school admissions arrangements look like after amalgamation?**

The admissions process would be simplified, as there would be no need for families to submit an application for a Junior School place. Children attending the school in Year 2 would automatically move to Year 3.

There would be no changes to the admissions arrangements for Nursery and Reception (i.e. families would continue to apply directly to the school for a Nursery place and via the Borough of Hillingdon for a Reception place).

**9. Will there be any impact on the current Year 2 pupils who will be going into year 3 in September 2021?**

An amalgamation would not have any impact on the current Year 2 pupils. Parents of year 2 children will already have applied for a Junior School place for their child, in line with the current admission arrangements through the London Borough of Hillingdon.

Both schools will continue to provide the normal transition process for the children in the summer term. Like last year it is possible COVID restrictions may mean the schools are not able to do things in the usual way but staff will work creatively once again to support the children.

**10. Who will be parents' first point of contact if the schools amalgamate? Will there just be one reception team?**

It is too early at this stage to know exactly how the school support team would be structured. If the schools do amalgamate, arrangements for contacting the school would be simplified, as there would likely be a single office email address and telephone number.

**11. If an amalgamation goes ahead, would everything just be 'done the junior way'?**

The Governing Body recognises that the schools each have their own unique values and want to ensure that those of Lady Bankes Infant and Nursery School are not lost if the schools do amalgamate. Mrs Needs shares this view and would work with the staff team to preserve these values in the new Primary School. If the amalgamation is approved, the Governing Body would be keen to seek the opinion of staff and families regarding what works well and what makes the schools special.

## **Staffing**

**12. Who would be the head teacher of the Primary School if amalgamation goes ahead?**

Mrs Kate Needs.

**13. Does Mrs Needs have experience in EYFS and KS1?**

Yes. Mrs Needs has been teaching since 1992, and while she has always officially taught in KS2 she has covered many classes across the primary age range while holding positions as Assistant Head and Deputy Headteacher. Mrs Needs has been subject coordinator for English, R.E, Music and History across all primary levels, so she has an excellent understanding of curriculum progression, planning and delivery from EYFS to Year 6 and beyond.

Mrs Needs has been through an amalgamation before as a teacher in her first school and has worked in Primary Schools since then until she joined Lady Bankes Junior School. For over 20 years Mrs Needs was an Assessment Lead so has been responsible for reporting and analysing data from EYFS to the end of KS2, working with teachers and support staff across the primary age range to improve outcomes for pupils.

**14. Will there be any job losses?**

The Governing Body does not anticipate any change to the number of children attending the school or to the number of classes within each year group. The staffing structure would be considered in detail if the amalgamation is formally approved. This would involve further consultation with staff and trade unions, as appropriate.



**15. Will staff have the opportunity to work across different key stages (EYFS, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2)?**

Yes, becoming a Primary School would give staff the opportunity to gain experience in different key stages where they were interested in doing so. This would be based on individual preferences and the school's requirements.

**16. Will there be any changes to the Senior Leadership Team structure?**

It is too early in the process to confirm what the Senior Leadership Team structure might look like. Staff would of course be consulted on any changes which realistically may not be until the start of the summer term. The consultations would include a timeframe for any changes.

**17. Will there be any changes to subject leaders – i.e. would there be a need for two subject coordinators?**

It is too early in the process to confirm what a primary staffing structure might look like for the new school. Staff would of course be consulted on any changes to the staffing structures which realistically may not be until the start of the summer term. The consultations would include a timeframe for any changes.

**18. Will staff be placed on new contracts?**

An amalgamation does not necessitate a generic need for new contracts of employment. The underlying employer for staff in both schools is the Borough of Hillingdon and this would remain unchanged. If there were to be any changes to staffing structures as a result of the amalgamation process, those affected would be consulted on the changes. It is not known at this stage if there would be any such changes to staffing structures and the implications of this. However, pupil numbers are stable and therefore any changes are likely to be limited.

**19. Will teachers be moved into different year groups or key stages?**

Individual preferences would be accommodated wherever possible, with some people seeing this as an opportunity to gain experience of a different Key Stage. The best interests of the children will also obviously be in mind when decisions are made too.