

Informal Consultation on the proposal to amalgamate Redlands Primary School and Smithy Street Primary School

9th September 2019

The Proposal

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets, in partnership with the governors of Redlands and Smithy Street Primary Schools, are proposing to merge the two schools to form a three form entry 3-11 primary school. This will create a single primary school from the start of the September Term in 2020.

Why are we proposing the change?

Pupil numbers in Tower Hamlets schools are currently falling, particularly in the West of the borough where our schools are situated. This means that both schools do not have sufficient numbers to fill four forms from September 2020 and we also are starting to see vacancies in other year groups. As our pupil numbers fall, this affects our budget as we will get less money to educate our children, pay salaries and manage the upkeep of our elderly buildings. Our schools already work closely together and engage in joint planning. The Governors suggest that now is the right time to consider becoming a single primary school as the only thing that divides us is a wall.

What would happen to our Headteachers?

As parents from Redlands will know, Ann has decided to retire at the end of the 2019/2020 school year after a long and successful career. Edith, the current Head Teacher at Smithy Street has been responsible for maintaining its outstanding status would move into the role of Head Teacher for both schools. The Governing Bodies from Redlands and Smithy Street Schools have discussed this and agree that the headteacher post for the new school is not, in effect, vacant and therefore not subject to advertising or selection requirements.

This would mean that a single headteacher and a single governing body would collectively oversee the running of the new school. A single primary school would bring both schools together to become one community, which we believe will be the best for the children.

What are the benefits of becoming a single primary school?

Continued access for pupils and their families to extended services and facilities. The opportunity for both schools to keep improving and moving forward.

Greater financial stability to make certain we continue to improve and offer world class education.

More development opportunities for the staff, such as shared training and the chance to work more closely across the curriculum and gain experience and understanding of all key stages.

The strengthening and continued developing of community links which already exist.

What will it mean for the children?

The whole purpose of the merger is to create an environment that will have a positive impact on the quality of education that children receive.

In the future there would be the same policies and procedures, and the same dates for staff training days and school holidays.

The outdoor areas will be accessed by children from both school buildings.

What will it mean for my child being part of a larger school?

On a day-to-day basis very little will change. The differing needs of each age group will continue to be met.

The care and importance given to each individual child, which is a strength of both schools, will always remain paramount.

What will it mean for the staff?

Again, very little will change on a day-to-day basis. Staff conditions of service will not be affected. All staff employed at the Redlands and Smithy Street Schools (at the time of the proposed amalgamation) would automatically continue their employment in the new primary school and their rights would be preserved under TUPE.

We will continue with the existing four classes for pupils already attending the school but moving forward we will reduce to three classes in each year starting from reception which means we do not anticipate having to make staff redundancies.

Would there be any changes to the school building?

In the event of merger, the school would remain largely the same with all the existing premises being used in the most appropriate and effective way. Plans are being developed to help children access the resources across the two sites, with the dividing wall removed and a new entrance being developed (probably at the Smithy Street entrance). As we settle in as one school there may be changes which need to be made to ensure we use all the school space effectively.

Procedure to achieve the merger

It is proposed that the New Primary School will open on 1 September 2020 catering for pupils from age 3 to 11.

The process to achieve this involves the 'technical closure' of Smithy Street School and the expansion of Redlands School on 31 August 2020. However, it should be noted there will be no actual closure of school buildings.

Once this process has been completed, children will continue to be educated in the "Redlands" or "Smithy" buildings but they will become one school. We anticipate children will move between the buildings.

To celebrate the start of this exciting new venture, the governors of both schools are proposing that when the new school opens in September 2020 it should have a new name, Stepney Park Primary School. We welcome your views on the proposed name as part of this consultation.

Admissions

If the proposal is agreed a primary school would be created on 1 September 2020 and the following would apply:

- First admissions: Children who have applied for places at Redlands or Smithy Street School for September 2020 would be offered places through the standard admissions process, using the new school entrance for measuring distance.
- All children currently attending Redlands or Smithy Street School will join the New School.

If any new child applies to the New School and was not able to be offered a place there are likely to be vacancies less than 0.5 of a mile away at John Scurr School, and 0.8m away at Cayley and Halley Schools. Across the Stepney Catchment area there are nearly 200 vacancies this September.

Why are we consulting you?

We want to consult you to gather your views because you are part of the school community. The governing body of the schools and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets cannot simply decide to make changes to schools without first seeking the views of parents and others. There is a legal process which must be followed before changes can be made, and it is important that the governing body and the council hear your views before deciding whether to proceed.

We have organized the following opportunities for parents and carers to share views. Meetings will be held at the same time in both schools.

Tuesday 24th September from 9-10 am
Wednesday 25th September from 6-7 pm

What happens next?

The informal consultation period starts on 9th September 2019 and ends on 18th October 2019 – the last page of this document can be used for you to feedback your view to governors. It should be returned to the school office. Following the consultation process, the governors' steering group body will review your feedback and use it to make a response to the council, on whether or not to recommend proceeding with the school merger proposal.

The full governing body of each school will consider your feedback in its representations following the publication of the formal statutory notice, if the Council decide to move to this stage at their Cabinet meeting on 30th October 2019.

If the Council decides to proceed, a public notice will specify details of the final proposal and there will be a period of at least four weeks when representations can be made. This will be the final opportunity to make any comments on the proposal. It is then anticipated that a

final decision on whether to merge the schools will be made by the council by February 2020.

How can I get more information on the proposal?

The LA will publish the feedback from the consultation on the council's website during the Autumn Term.

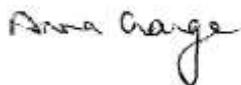
If permission is granted to publish a public notice, further details of this proposal will also be available in the Consultation sections of the Council's website

This document is also available on both school websites

www.smithytreet.org.uk

www.redlands.org.uk

Thank you for taking the time to consider our proposal, we look forward to hearing your views.



Anna Gouge

Redlands Chair of Governors



Ros Coffey

Smithy Street Chair of Governors

Proposal to Amalgamate Redlands and Smithy Street Primary School – Response Form

Our proposal is to bring Redlands and Smithy Street Schools together as one all-through primary school from 1st September 2020. We welcome your views on this proposal. Please fill in this response form and return it to the address below no later than 18th October 2019 3.30pm.

1) Do you agree with the proposal to amalgamate our two schools to become one school?
Please tick as applicable

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

2) If you like the proposal, please say why you think it is a good idea?

3) If you dislike the proposal, please tell us why you are concerned?

4) Any other comments?

	Redlands School	Smithy Street School
I have child/ren attending	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am a staff member at	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am a governor at	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please describe)		

Your Name (Optional) _____

Please return this form to the relevant school by 18th October 2019. Feedback from question one will be summarised numerically. Comments will be typed-up and anonymised. This information will be made available to the public (via the school website), but all respondents' comments and information will be anonymized.