

# Keeping Education Strong

Strategy and plan for future proofing primary schools and  
protecting the quality of education in Southwark schools

**Update for OSC October 2023**



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# Strategy & Plan

- ❖ Keeping Education Strong A strategy for future-proofing quality and supply was approved by Cabinet in December 2022  
<https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=7759>
- ❖ An update report 'Keeping Education Strong Recommendations' was approved by Cabinet in June 2023:
- ❖ <https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=7880>



# Introduction

In Southwark 97% of our schools are good or outstanding Ofsted rated

- Today outcomes for our children and young people are consistently above the national average
- Many of our schools are amongst the best 10% state funded schools in the country
- We have invested £200m into the school building and refurbishment programme

# Demographics

## Reasons for decline in numbers

- Falling birth rate – 30% decrease in births since 2012 in Southwark
- Demography – Census 2021 data: 0-4yo reduced by 21% in 10 years
- Migration/Brexit – net migration from EU countries is now in decline
- Housing crisis – Southwark house prices up 32% since 2016, while average rents are as high as £3,100 for a 2-bed property
- Benefit changes – Universal Credit, Local Housing allowance and bedroom tax may have forced families out

# Financial impact

- 72 State funded primary schools
- 420 reception places (14 classes) removed since 2017
- Reductions in supply have not kept pace with falling demand
- Vacant school places are not funded
- Expenditure could exceed income by over £5m in financial year 2023-24
- £10m in-year deficit would accrue over the next two financial years

# Strategic principles

- **The schools strategy is about working with schools and not doing to schools**
- Where a school is under threat of closure there is an understanding of the uncertainty and anxiety that is created for all involved. The Council in collaboration with the Head Teacher will make sure that there is a full consultation involving school staff, parents, and local councillors.
- We enlisted independent consultants to work with team and schools
- They attended scrutiny
- Equalities Impact assessment
- Where a Southwark school is closed – the building will be retained for education or training purpose. By keeping the building in the education estate, the Council will be ready when the current trend reverses again.
- Lobby Government – we wrote to Education Secretary signed by inner London Lead, secured Cross Party Action – London Councils



# Options

- Formal reduction of Reception Published Admission Number (PAN)
- Amalgamation of schools
- Closure



# Schools already taking action

- St Johns, St Francesca Cabrini – closed
- Townsend – closed

## Formal consultation

- Cobourg Primary School – amalgamated with Camelot Primary School to form new Bird in Bush Primary School
- St Judes (CofE and Charlotte Sharman)



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# Keeping Education Strong Timeline

- Cabinet agreement of strategy (Dec '22)
- Schools informed of recommendations (March 23)
- Informal consultation (Jun/Jul '23)
- Statutory consultation (Sep '23)
- Final Cabinet decision (July '24)
- The programme is to be concluded by 2025

# Keeping Education Strong Implementation

## 7 Proposed Pupil Admission Numbers (PAN Reductions)

*PAN reductions - to be included in report to Cabinet, January 2024*

- Grange Primary School **London Bridge and West Bermondsey**
- St Joseph's Camberwell Infants **Camberwell Green**
- St Francis RC Primary **Old Kent Road**
- Goose Green Primary **Goose Green**
- Rye Oak **Rye Lane**
- Bessemer **Champion Hill**
- **St Paul's (no longer amalgamation)**

# Keeping Education Strong Implementation

## Status of 3 amalgamations

- **Comber Grove Primary School, Camberwell Green**

*Consultation details to be issued*

- **Harris Free Primary School Rye Lane**

*amalgamated with Harris Primary Academy Peckham Park*

- **St Mary Magdalene's C of E Primary School Rye Lane**

*Consultation details to be issued*

# Keeping Education Strong Timeline

St Mary Magdalene Primary School (SMM) -Church of England Primary School  
overseen by [Southwark Diocese Board of Education \(SDBE\)](#).

An amalgamation with St John's and St Clément's C of E Primary was  
explored but unable to be agreed

Letters from community, councillors and parents

Meeting with the school 05.10.23



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# Q & A



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