

GOVERNOR-LED CONSULTATION

Consultation on the proposed amalgamation of Ashburnham Community School and Park Walk Primary School

Proposed date, if approved: 1 September 2027

The proposal at a glance

The Fox Federation Governing Board, working with the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea (RBKC), is consulting on a proposal to amalgamate Ashburnham Community School and Park Walk Primary School to form one school from 1 September 2027.

The school would operate from the current Park Walk Primary School site. Every pupil attending either school at the point of amalgamation would be guaranteed a place.

No final decision has been made. The Governing Board is asking for views before deciding whether to recommend the proposal to RBKC. Only the Local Authority can make the final decision.

Ashburnham and Park Walk each have their own history, identity and strong relationships between children, families and staff. The Governing Board does not underestimate the importance of those communities or the impact that uncertainty can have on pupils, parents, carers and staff.

The purpose of this consultation is to explain why change is being considered, set out the proposal as clearly as possible and hear your views. No decision has been made. If the proposal goes ahead, careful transition planning would be needed to protect children's friendships, learning, support and sense of belonging.

1. Why are we consulting?

Primary schools across Central London have experienced a significant decline in the number of school-aged children in recent years. This reflects a combination of factors, including:

- falling birth rates;
- changes in migration;
- the high cost of housing;
- the effects of Covid and Brexit; and
- the wider cost of living.

Current forecasts indicate that lower pupil numbers are likely to continue for a number of years. RBKC pupil place planning data also shows a continuing borough-wide decline in the number of primary-age pupils.

Why is this being considered?

School funding is largely linked to pupil numbers. When pupil numbers fall, income reduces, while many building and running costs remain. This can leave less money available for teaching, support and wider opportunities for children.

Ashburnham currently has 125 pupils on roll, around 60% of its 210-place capacity. Current projections show the total number of pupils falling to below 100 by 2030.

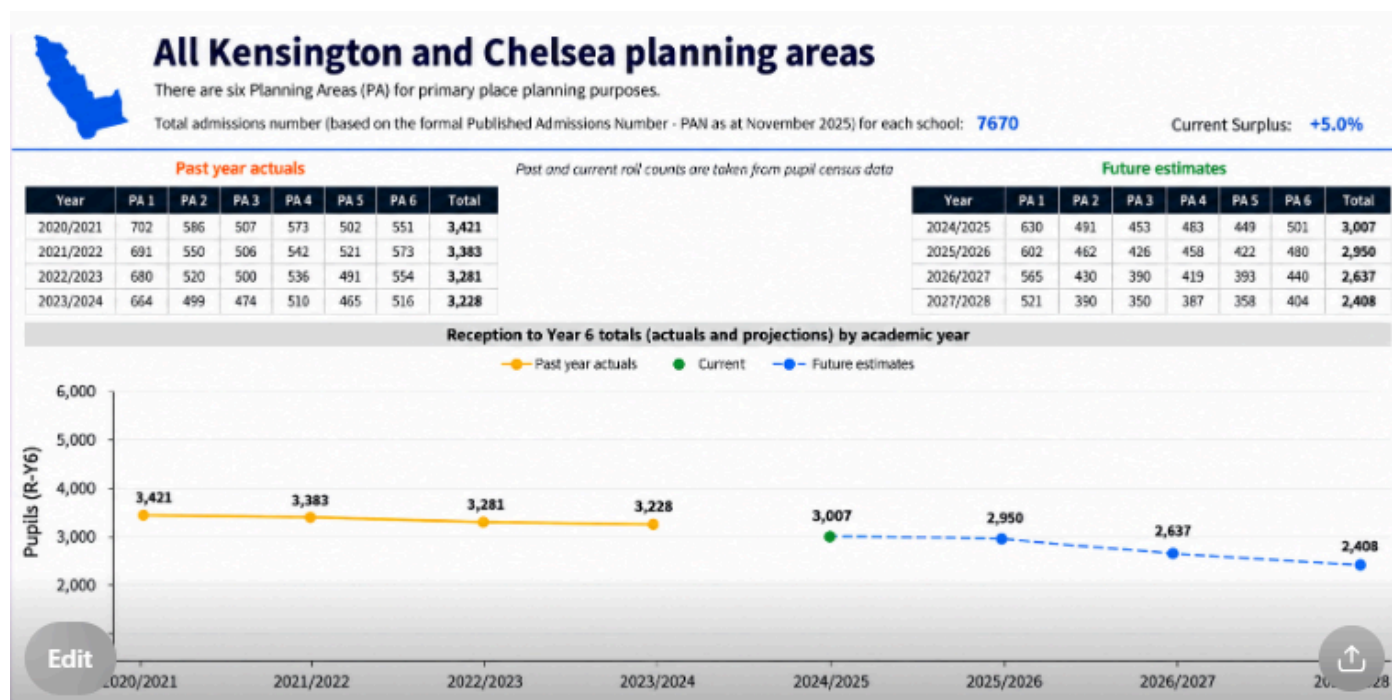
Park Walk currently has 175 pupils on roll, around 85% of its 210-place capacity. Current projections show the total number of pupils falling to below 167 by 2030.

Ashburnham has declared a budget shortfall for 2026–27. This budget shortfall is forecast to rise to more than **£1 million** by 2029–30. Park Walk is also spending more than it receives in income and is forecast to have a budget shortfall of about £50,000 by 2028–29, rising to about **£400,000** by 2030–31.

All schools are required by the Department of Education to set a balanced budget.

Borough-wide pupil number trends

The chart below, supplied by RBKC, shows the recent and projected decline in primary pupil numbers across Kensington and Chelsea.



Source: RBKC pupil place planning data (November 2025).

For several years the Governing Board has monitored pupil numbers and finances at both schools, and both schools have worked hard to increase admissions. Park Walk has had limited success in increasing its roll, but Ashburnham's numbers remain substantially below capacity.

2. What exactly is being proposed?

What does "amalgamation" mean?

In this proposal, amalgamation means bringing Ashburnham Community School and Park Walk Primary School together as one school from 1 September 2027. The school would be called Park Walk Primary School and operate from the current Park Walk School site and would remain part of the Fox Federation.

If the proposal proceeds, further information about the school's identity, leadership arrangements, ethos and transition arrangements will be shared with families and staff as the implementation plans are developed.

- Every pupil attending Ashburnham or Park Walk at the point of amalgamation would be guaranteed a place.
- Where a year group has more than 30 pupils, there would be two classes in that year group for as long as required.
- The long-term intention would be for the school to operate as a one-form-entry primary school, with up to 30 places in each year group as pupil numbers settle over time.
- Seedlings Nursery, which provides care from six months to three years, would not be affected by this proposal.
- The existing Fox Federation governance arrangements would continue.

3. What would this mean for my child?

The most important consideration is the experience of the children. If the proposal proceeds, transition arrangements would be planned carefully so that children move with familiar peers, retain important friendships and continue to benefit from relationships with staff who know them well.

- Every existing pupil would have a guaranteed place at the school formed by bringing Ashburnham and Park Walk together.
- Children would continue to follow the Fox Federation curriculum and benefit from the Federation's high expectations, inclusive practice and wide range of opportunities.
- A larger combined staff team would provide a broader pool of expertise to support learning, SEND, pastoral care and enrichment.
- Children's individual educational, social and pastoral needs would remain central to planning.
- Clubs and activities before, during and after school would continue to be an important part of the Federation offer.

4. What would this mean for pupils with SEND?

Every pupil currently attending either school would be guaranteed a place, including pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

If the proposal proceeds, each child's individual needs and existing support would be considered as part of transition planning. Park Walk already has established accessibility arrangements, including a lift. The use of rooms, specialist spaces and support arrangements would be reviewed so that the site can meet the needs of the pupils attending the school.

5. What would happen to classes?

Where the combined number of pupils in a year group is greater than 30, there would initially be two classes. This is likely to apply to some year groups in the first year after amalgamation and would continue for as long as pupil numbers require it.

Detailed class organisation would be developed during the transition period if the proposal proceeds. Decisions would take account of children's educational, social and pastoral needs, including continuity and friendships. It would not be appropriate to make those decisions before the outcome of the consultation is known.

6. Why is the Park Walk site proposed?

The current Park Walk site is proposed because it is a substantial school building capable of accommodating the pupils from both schools. It has also benefited from significant Local Authority investment and has established accessibility arrangements, including a lift.

The two schools are geographically close. If the proposal proceeds, the use of rooms and spaces at Park Walk would be reviewed so that the building is organised around the needs of the pupils and staff of the school.

7. What other options have been considered?

The Governing Board has considered the options available in the context of falling pupil numbers and increasing financial pressure. The main options are:

1. Continue with both schools separately and make further cost reductions. This could require significant reductions in staffing and provision as income falls, with potential risks to the breadth and quality of education, pastoral support and safeguarding capacity.
2. Close one or both schools. This would create greater disruption and would not provide a way of keeping the pupils from both school communities together.
3. Amalgamation, bring the two schools together on one site. This would guarantee a place for every existing pupil and allow available funding and staff expertise to be used across one school rather than two separate sites.

After considering these options, the Governing Board believes that amalgamation is the strongest option to explore. This consultation is seeking the views of parents, carers, staff and other stakeholders and allowing them to raise concerns or alternatives that should be considered.

8. Why might amalgamation strengthen the schools?

Operating from one appropriately sized school site would allow available funding and staff expertise to be used more efficiently. The aim would be to protect the quality and breadth of education by directing as much resource as possible towards children, including teaching and support, the curriculum, arts, humanities, sport and wider enrichment.

The proposal is also intended to provide greater long-term stability for pupils, families and staff in the context of falling pupil numbers across the local area.

9. What would this mean for staff?

We recognise that staffing will be one of the most sensitive parts of the proposal. Bringing two schools together on one site would require a staffing structure that reflects the number and needs of pupils in the school. This may mean changes to roles and, depending on the final structure, fewer posts overall.

No individual staffing decisions have been made. A detailed staffing structure would only be developed if a decision is taken to proceed. Any changes would be managed through the appropriate consultation processes with the Local Authority, Human Resources, staff and trade unions. The Local Authority and Governing Board are committed to avoiding compulsory redundancy wherever possible.

10. Admissions and school places

If the proposal is agreed and the schools come together on 1 September 2027:

- Pupils already attending Park Walk Primary School would automatically have a guaranteed place.
- Pupils already attending Ashburnham Community School would automatically have a guaranteed place.
- All children applying for a Reception place at both Park Walk and Ashburnham for September 2027 will be guaranteed a place at the newly amalgamated school.
- Children applying for Reception for September 2028 would be considered through the standard admissions process for the school. The normal admissions criteria will apply, and all accepted children will be based at Park Walk (sibling preference applies)

The Governing Board and RBKC would encourage pupils to stay together through the transition, which will be very carefully considered and thought through.

11. Who makes the final decision?

The Fox Federation Governing Board cannot itself decide to amalgamate the two schools. The final decision can only be made by the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea following the required statutory process.

There are two stages:

1. Governor-led consultation: this consultation opens on Thursday 15 October 2026 and closes on Thursday 10 December 2026. The Governing Board will consider the responses at its meeting on 15 December 2026 and decide whether to recommend the proposal to RBKC.
2. Local Authority statutory process: if the Governing Board recommends amalgamation and RBKC decides to proceed to the next stage, the Local Authority is expected to publish a statutory notice and hold a formal consultation in February 2027. Further representations can be made during that process before RBKC makes the final decision.

Important

This document sets out a proposal, not a final decision. The Governing Board wants to hear the views of parents, carers, staff and other stakeholders before deciding whether to make a recommendation to the Local Authority.

12. How can I give my views?

We want to hear from parents, carers, staff and other members of both school communities. You can respond via the following ways:

- Complete the consultation response form at Annex A and return it to either school office.
- Attend one of the parent and carer consultation meetings at Ashburnham, Park Walk or online.
- Submit additional questions through the consultation arrangements at either school.

The consultation closes on Thursday 10 December 2026. Responses must include the respondent's name in order to be considered by the Governing Board.

Parent and carer consultation meetings

School	Morning meeting	Evening meeting
Ashburnham Community School	Wednesday 11/11/26 at 9am at Ashburnham	Friday 13/11/26 at 3pm online
Park Walk Primary School	Tuesday 10/11/26 at 9am in person	Thursday 12/11/26 at 5pm online

Information about the consultation will also be published on both school websites, shared through school communications and available from the school offices.

13. Where can I find further information?

For further information, please see the consultation information and frequently asked questions issued by the Federation. Some implementation details cannot be finalised until after the consultation and decision-making process. Where this applies, the Federation will state clearly what is known and what remains undecided.

School websites:

- Ashburnham Community School: <https://ashburnhamcommunityschool.org.uk/>
- Park Walk Primary School: <https://www.parkwalk.rbkc.sch.uk/>

If RBKC publishes a statutory notice, details of the formal Local Authority consultation will be available through the Council's consultation arrangements.

Alison Mould, Chair of the Governing Body, The Fox Federation

ANNEX A

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

Proposal to amalgamate Ashburnham Community School and Park Walk Primary School

The proposal is to bring Ashburnham Community School and Park Walk Primary School together as one school from 1 September 2027, operating from the current Park Walk Primary School site. We welcome your views.

Please return this form no later than Thursday 10 December 2026. You may also complete the electronic version and email it to the relevant school consultation email address by that deadline.

1. What do you see as the main benefits or strengths of the proposal?

2. What concerns do you have about the proposal?

3. If the proposal goes ahead, are there steps that could reduce your concerns or support children, families and staff through the transition?

4. Are there any other issues, alternatives or practical points you think the Governing Board should consider?

About you

Please tick all that apply:

	Ashburnham	Park Walk
I have a child/children attending	☐	☐
I am a staff member at	☐	☐
Other	☐	☐

Your name: _____

Please note

Anonymous responses will not be considered by the Governing Board.

Written comments will be grouped by theme before publication or reporting. Please do not include information in your response that you would not wish to be included in a consultation summary.