

Proposal to consult to amalgamate Ashburnham Community School and Park Walk Primary School

Frequently Asked Questions

Proposed date of amalgamation: 1 September 2027

Summary of the proposal

The Fox Federation Governing Board, working with the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea (RBKC), is consulting on a proposal 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.

Every pupil attending either school at the point of amalgamation would be guaranteed a place at the combined school. The long-term intention would be for the school to operate as a one-form-entry primary school. Where a year group has more than 30 pupils, there would be two classes for as long as required. Seedlings Nursery would not be affected by the proposal.

No final decision has been made. The Governor-led consultation runs from Thursday 15 October to Thursday 10 December 2026. The Governing Board will consider all responses on 15 December 2026 and decide whether to recommend amalgamation to RBKC. If the proposal progresses, RBKC would then carry out the required statutory process before making the final decision.

This document answers the main questions that parents and carers may have and should be read alongside the full consultation proposal.

1. The proposal and why it is being considered

Q: Why is the Governing Board considering amalgamation?

A: Primary schools across central London have experienced a significant fall in pupil numbers and analysis of recent trends strongly suggests that a fall in borough-wide pupil numbers is likely to continue in the foreseeable future. Ashburnham currently has 125 pupils on roll, around 60% of its 210-place capacity, and Park Walk has 175 pupils, around 85% of its 210-place capacity. School funding is largely linked to pupil numbers, so sustained spare capacity places increased pressure on the resources available for teaching, support and wider opportunities. The Governing Board and RBKC are therefore considering how to secure strong, well-resourced and sustainable primary education for local children over the longer term.

Q: What has already been done in response to falling pupil numbers?

A: Governors have reviewed expenditures over a number of years and both schools have worked to promote themselves and attract new families. These actions have helped, but they have not removed the underlying demographic and financial pressures caused by lower pupil numbers.

Q: Why is amalgamation the preferred proposal?

A: The Governing Board believes that operating one appropriately sized school from one site would provide greater long-term stability and allow a larger proportion of available funding and staff expertise to be directed towards children. The aim would be to protect and strengthen teaching, SEND and pastoral support, the curriculum, enrichment, extracurricular activities and wraparound provision, rather than maintaining two school sites with significant spare capacity.

Q: Have other options been considered?

A: The Governing Board has considered trying to reduce costs through staff redundancies and closing one of the schools. Following discussions with school leaders and RBKC, amalgamation is the preferred proposal. It is not a final decision. The purpose of consultation is to hear views, concerns and any alternative ideas before the Governing Board decides whether to recommend amalgamation to the Local Authority.

Q: What is the financial position?

A: Ashburnham Community School ended the Summer 2026 term with a budget shortfall of approximately £71,000 and current projections indicate that this would increase to £1 million in four years. Park Walk is predicted to have a budget shortfall of £400,000 in 4 years.

Funding for both schools is closely linked to the number of pupils on roll. If amalgamation proceeds, the combined school would operate with one school budget and would not take on Ashburnham Community School's existing deficit. The proposal is intended to secure educational and financial sustainability over the longer term, rather than simply to make short-term savings.

Q: Why is an amalgamation proposed rather than simply closing one school?

A: Amalgamation is intended to bring the two school communities together in a planned way. Crucially, every pupil already attending Ashburnham or Park Walk would be guaranteed a place at the combined school. This allows children to move with familiar peers and supports a carefully managed transition.

2. What the proposal would mean for children and families

Q: Will my child have a place at the amalgamated school?

A: Yes. Every child attending Ashburnham Community School or Park Walk Primary School at the point of amalgamation would be guaranteed a place at the combined school. Parents would still retain the right to apply for an age-appropriate place at another school if they wished and if vacancies were available.

Q: What would happen to Reception admissions and sibling priority?

A: Children applying for Reception for September 2027 would continue to be offered places through the standard Local Authority admissions process. Sibling priority would apply in accordance with the admissions arrangements, including siblings attending either Ashburnham or Park Walk. If a distance tie-break were needed, the Park Walk Primary School entrance would be used for measuring home-to-school distance.

Q: What would happen to class sizes?

A: The long-term intention would be for the combined school to operate as a one-form-entry school, with up to 30 places in each year group as pupil numbers settle over time. At the point of amalgamation, some year groups may have more than 30 pupils. Where this happens, there would be two classes in that year group for as long as required.

Q: How would classes be organised where there are two classes in a year group?

A: Detailed class groupings would only be planned if the proposal proceeds. Decisions would be made during the transition period with children's educational, social and pastoral needs at the center. It would not be appropriate to determine class groupings before the consultation and decision-making process has concluded.

Q: How would children be supported through the transition?

A: The aim would be to make the transition as calm and familiar as possible. Children would move with peers, retain important friendships and continue to benefit from relationships with familiar staff. Both schools are already part of the Fox Federation, so children are used to the same Federation curriculum, expectations and inclusive approach. SEND, pastoral support and the needs of individual children would remain central to transition planning.

Q: How would the two school communities be brought together and how would behaviour be managed?

A: The schools already serve closely connected local communities and are part of the same Federation. They therefore share the same expectations for behaviour and inclusion. If the proposal proceeds, there would be a planned transition programme to help children and families build relationships across the two schools, and the Federation's behaviour and safeguarding arrangements would continue to apply.

Q: Would families have to buy a completely new uniform?

A: The proposed uniform would be the Park Walk uniform. The main difference for Ashburnham families would be the three branded items. Support will be given to parents for these items .

Q: Would school opening times, clubs and wraparound provisions change?

A: The two schools currently operate the same opening and closing times and the intention would be to maintain these. Clubs, activities and wraparound opportunities before, during and after school would continue to be an important part of the Federation offer.

3. The school site and practical arrangements

Q: Why is the Park Walk site proposed for the combined school?

A: The Park Walk site is a substantial school building with sufficient accommodation for the combined school and has benefited from significant Local Authority investment. If the proposal proceeds, the use of rooms and spaces would be reviewed so that the building best meets the needs of the children and staff in the combined school.

Q: What would happen to the Ashburnham site?

A: If the proposal proceeds and Ashburnham vacates the site, the Local Authority as the landlord will take responsibility for it. The whole site is currently designated for educational and community use.

Q: What would the combined school be called?

A: Under the current proposal, the combined school would be called Park Walk Primary School.

4. Staff and leadership

Q: What would amalgamation mean for staff?

A: The Federation's intention would be to retain the expertise and experience of staff from both schools wherever possible. Any changes would follow the appropriate HR and consultation processes with the Local Authority, staff and trade unions.

Q: Are staff being consulted as well?

A: Yes. Staff are being consulted on the proposal and have opportunities to submit their views.

5. The consultation and decision-making process

Q: How does the consultation process work and who makes the final decision?

A: There are two stages. The first is this Governor-led consultation, which runs from Thursday 15 October to Thursday 10 December 2026. The Governing Board will consider all attributed responses at its meeting on 15 December 2026 and decide whether to recommend amalgamation to RBKC. If the recommendation is made and RBKC decides to proceed, the Local Authority is expected to publish a statutory notice and hold a formal consultation for four weeks in 2027. Only the Local Authority can make the final decision on whether the schools amalgamate.

Q: Is the consultation a vote, and will parents' views make a difference?

A: The consultation is not a referendum or a simple vote. The Governing Board will consider the overall responses, the reasons people give for their views, any concerns raised and any alternative suggestions before deciding whether to make a recommendation to RBKC. All consultation responses will therefore form part of the evidence considered.

Q: How can I give my views?

A: Parents and carers can complete the consultation response form, submit the electronic version, attend one of the consultation meetings or use the consultation arrangements at either school to raise a question. Responses should be submitted by Thursday 10 December 2026 so that they can be considered by the Governing Board.

Q: What if there is a question that cannot be answered yet?

A: Some detailed implementation arrangements can only be settled if the proposal proceeds. Where an answer is not yet known, the Federation will be clear about what has and has not been decided and will provide further information at the appropriate stage. This avoids making premature commitments before the consultation and statutory decision-making processes are complete.

Further information

The full consultation proposal and response form are available from both school offices and on the school websites.

Ashburnham Community School: <https://ashburnhamcommunityschool.org.uk/>

Park Walk Primary School: <https://www.parkwalk.rbkc.sch.uk/>