



## **Consultation on forming an amalgamated Berrymede Primary School by extending the age range of one school to 3 to 11 years and technically closing the other**

### **1. What is the proposal?**

Ealing Council and the Governing Bodies of both Berrymede Infant School and Berrymede Junior School are proposing to join the schools together with one head teacher and one governing body from September 2022. Berrymede Infant School and Berrymede Junior School would become Berrymede Primary – a single school for pupils from Nursery to Year 6, instead of separate infant and junior schools.

Berrymede Primary would use the present sites and buildings of Berrymede Infant and Berrymede Junior. The primary school would have places for 60 children per year to join in Reception i.e., a Published Admission Number of 60. The existing Nursery provision would continue. All pupils attending the schools at present or due to join in Reception or Year 3 in September 2022 would automatically have places at the primary school.

Berrymede Infant had an OFSTED inspection in 2016 with a 'Good' outcome, the school was inspected again in early September 2021 as 'Good' schools are inspected every four years. The outcome of the inspection is expected later this term. Berrymede Junior had an OFSTED inspection in 2019 with a 'Good' outcome, and therefore, is not due another inspection for at least two years.

### **2. Why is this being proposed?**

Almost all pupils progress from Berrymede Infant School to Berrymede Junior School. The schools have been collaborating increasingly closely in recent years, including from this term sharing Mrs Lubna Khan as Executive Headteacher following the retirement of Mrs Ohene from the Infant School last year. Both Governing Bodies believe sharing an Executive Headteacher will benefit pupils and staff.

Amalgamating the schools to form a primary school therefore better reflects the pupil journey. In addition, Ealing Council and the two Governing Bodies believe that a single primary school is educationally and financially more sustainable than separate infant and junior schools.

### **3. What are the opportunities of an amalgamated school?**

An overall advantage is that primary schools provide the best opportunity for continuity and coherence in children's educational experience. It enables the Governing Body, Headteacher and staff to plan the curriculum and pastoral support for pupils from Nursery to Year 6. It also provides a consistent vision and ethos to benefit pupils, staff, parents and carers.

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

- Amalgamation eliminates the transition between Infant and Junior as it would be one school
- Greater continuity in planning the curriculum across Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 so that children make the best possible progress in learning
- A consistent approach to the ways in which children are taught and supported
- Greater continuity for the most vulnerable children and those with special educational needs, including gifted and talented pupils
- Opportunities for richer social development and interaction with a wider range of age groups for children

### ***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 removes duplication and ensures a joined-up approach for events, training and other matters
- One set of policies and procedures for Nursery to Year 6, rather than potential for differences between infant and junior schools – such as uniform, policies, and systems for parents to follow
- Removes the need for parents to apply for a place at the junior school

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

- A single governing body and single leadership team to provide vision and continuity from Nursery to Year 6
- The existing Executive Headteacher Mrs Lubna Khan would secure progress through the amalgamation process, including effective communication with parents and other stakeholders
- Single staff team providing greater expertise and resilience than two separate schools
- 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***

- Opportunities for career development through the sharing of a wider range of expertise and possibilities for working between Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2
- 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
- Opportunities to promote staff for curriculum development and other school initiatives

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

- Greater opportunity for financial economies of scale
- Scope for greater flexibility in use of money - a larger school would provide more options in premises, finances and staffing, which would help the school maintain greater flexibility to ensure the best provision possible for our children

## **4. What are the challenges in amalgamating the two schools?**

One risk is that the amalgamation process may distract governors and staff during 2021/22, with some uncertainty until legal decisions are taken, and then with implementation work required after legal decisions. Before this amalgamation proposal, the schools were working

more 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 Ealing Council and with a project manager to minimise the impact upon governor and staff time and ensure that the process runs as smoothly as possible.

There are a number of 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.

Throughout the amalgamation process the two Governing Bodies, the Executive Headteacher and all staff are committed to the success of the current pupils.

Ealing Council and the two Governing Bodies believe that the potential benefits outweigh potential risks. The results of this consultation will contribute to the final decision taken.

## **5. How would amalgamation be achieved?**

It is proposed that the amalgamation would be achieved by either:

- Extending the age range of Berrymede Junior School into Berrymede Primary School and closing Berrymede Infant School
- Extending the age range of Berrymede Infant School into Berrymede Primary School and closing Berrymede Junior School.

It is important to emphasise that both Governing Bodies and Ealing Council are approaching this as an amalgamation, not a takeover. The process outlined above is a means to an end – the objective of Governors and the Executive Headteacher is to take the best features of both schools into the primary school.

Alternative approaches would be:

- Establishing a brand new school and closing both existing schools – this creates additional process complications, including potentially requiring a competition whereby other organisations could seek to run the new school, and increases the period of uncertainty for staff and parents, without commensurate benefits to pupils given that both schools are ‘Good’.

## **6. What is Ealing Council’s view of primary schools?**

There have been a small number of separate infant and junior schools across the Borough, but the vast majority of children in Ealing are taught in all-through primary schools that educate children from Nursery or Reception through to Year 6. Children can, and do benefit from a good education in either system, as they do at Berrymede Infant and Junior schools but there are acknowledged benefits to an all-through primary school which were outlined in the section above about advantages of an amalgamated school.

It is also the case due to changes in how education is managed in England that it is becoming increasingly necessary for schools to become more self-reliant - working both independently and within their cluster groups. Ealing believes an amalgamated primary school would best combine the strengths of the two schools.

## **7. Would the primary school use both the current infant and junior school sites?**

In the event of amalgamation, the primary school would use both the current infant school and junior school sites. As these are in close proximity, it would operate as one larger site. The Governing Body and Headteacher would determine the most appropriate and efficient way to use the overall site and buildings.

## **8. How many pupils would there be in the Primary school?**

All pupils due to attend Berrymede Infant School or Berrymede Junior School in September 2022 would automatically join the primary school. This includes those who are offered places in spring 2022 to join Nursery, Reception or Year 3 in September 2022.

The primary school would have a Published Admission Number of 60 – meaning that up to 60 pupils would be expected to join each September. The buildings on the site would enable this to increase if this is required to provide sufficient pupil places in the area for local residents.

## **9. What about school uniform, school day, and other practical issues?**

Decisions about these issues cannot be made before the decision about whether to amalgamate. Our current thinking is that:

- *School uniform:* We would consult about developing a new school uniform. However, over the first year the children would be able to wear Berrymede Infant, Berrymede or Berrymede Primary school uniform so there would be no need to purchase new uniform just because of the amalgamation.
- *School day:* We would consult with parents to ensure the time for the children spent at school is the most productive for each age range.
- *Main office:* The school would use the current buildings. We would need to decide building would be best suited to accommodate the main school office.
- *Drop off and collection:* Drop off and collection of children could remain the same, using the school gates.

## **10. Who would be the Headteacher of the new school?**

The current Executive Headteacher, Mrs Lubna Khan, would be the Headteacher of the primary school.

## **11. What legal type of school would Berrymede Primary be?**

Berrymede Infant and Junior are both Local Authority Maintained Community Schools. Berrymede Primary would be formed by changing the age range of one school and closing the other. Therefore, the Primary school would remain a Local Authority Maintained Community School.

## **12. What is the proposed size and constitution of the single Governing Body?**

It is proposed that the single governing body would consist of:

- The Headteacher
- 1 LA Governor
- 2 staff governors
- 2 or 3 parent governors
- Up to 7 community governors

It is expected that the governors in September 2022 would be individuals who are currently on the Governing Body of either Berrymede Infant or Junior School.

### **13. Who is being consulted?**

Ealing Council's Cabinet and both Governing Bodies have approved undertaking this consultation. The Council's Cabinet Report can be read here: [22 September Cabinet Report](#).

This consultation document has been circulated to:

- Parents of current pupils of both schools
- Governors of both schools
- Staff of both schools
- Parents of children attending local pre-schools
- The local Councillors
- The local M.P.
- Relevant professional associations (e.g. staff unions)
- Headteachers and Chairs of Governors of nearby primary and secondary schools

Further copies of this document are available at the schools.

### **14. How will the decision be made?**

All consultation responses will be considered by both Governing Bodies and Ealing Council. They will then decide whether to:

- 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 one school would close and the other would change its age range to 3 – 11 years. At this point it would be necessary to decide which school is to close, and which will extend the age range. Ealing Council would publish two Statutory notices to this effect.

If the Statutory Notices are published any interested individuals would have four weeks to comment. Once again, all responses would be carefully considered. A final decision will then be made by the Cabinet of Ealing Council.

It is anticipated that, if the decision is to proceed, the Statutory Notices would be published in January 2022 and the final decisions would be made in March 2022.

### **15. How can I express my views?**

The consultation runs between Monday 4 October 2021 and Monday 15 November 2021 (six weeks). Please have your say before Monday 15 November 2021.

To share your views please:

- Complete the online questionnaire available on the Ealing Consultation website; and / or
- Attend a meeting:
  - For Nursery, Infant and Junior parents a face to face socially distanced meeting at Berrymede Junior School – Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021 3.30pm – 4.30pm.
  - For Nursery, Infant and Junior parents an on-line session – Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021 4.00pm -5.00pm

Please tell us what your views are on any aspects of the proposals 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 it would provide the best educational outcome.

**Feedback Form: Berrymede Infant School and Berrymede Junior School  
Preliminary Consultation about amalgamation**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to amalgamate Berrymede Infant and Berrymede Junior School to form a primary school for children from age 3 to the end of Year 6 (age 11):

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know / Can't say</b>

Further

1. Please outline what you consider to be the advantages or benefits of a primary school compared to the current infant and junior schools

2. Please outline any concerns that you have about the proposal for amalgamation

3. Please outline any other options that you think should be considered and why you believe that they may be suitable

4. Please outline any questions that you have or any further information that you would like about the proposed amalgamation

Both Governing Bodies and Ealing Council are approaching this as an amalgamation, not a takeover. The process outlined to close one school and extend the age range of the other is a means to an end – the objective of Governors and the Executive Headteacher is to take the best features of both schools into the primary school.

<b>Bearing in mind the closure is a technical means to an end</b>	<b>Berrymede Infant School</b>	<b>Berrymede Junior School</b>	<b>No Preference</b>
Please indicate your preference for which school should close.			

5. Please indicate your reason for your preference

Please tell us your interest in the schools by ticking appropriate boxes:		
	<b>Infant</b>	<b>Junior</b>
Parent/Carer		
Member of staff		
Governor		
Prospective Parent		
Local Resident		
Other Specify		

Please return this form by 5pm on Monday 15 November 2021.

- Online at [www.ealing.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.ealing.gov.uk/consultations) where there will be a online responses survey that you can complete
- By hand: to either Berrymede Infant School or Berrymede Junior School offices. A box will be available at each during the consultation period.
- By post: Berrymede Infant School, Castle Cl, London W3 8RN or Berrymede Junior School, 232 Osborne Rd, London W3 8SN