

Proposal to Merge Garden Suburb Infant and Junior Schools

Consultation Document

What is the proposal?

This consultation document is about the possible creation of a single primary school called Garden Suburb Primary (for children aged 4 to 11) to replace the existing Garden Suburb Infant and Junior Schools. The new school would be run and funded by Barnet Council, as both schools are today.

In order to create the new school, Garden Suburb Junior School will close on 31 December 2026 and the age range of Garden Suburb Infant School will extend to cover ages 4 to 11 from 1 January 2027. All existing children at the Junior and Infant schools will transfer onto the roll of the primary school on 1 January 2027.

Garden Suburb Primary will be based on the same site as the existing two schools. It will continue the move to two-form entry (two classes per year group, 60 children) that is already underway, providing 60 places per year group from Reception to Year 6.

The new primary school will have thirty fewer places per year group than the two existing schools combined. In practice, however, Reception through to Year 3 already reflect this reduction in pupil numbers.

Why are we proposing this merger?

Like many schools nationally, Garden Suburb Infant and Junior Schools are experiencing falling pupil numbers. Because a large part of school funding is based on the number of children on roll, this has placed increasing pressure on the schools' finances at a time when costs, particularly staffing costs, continue to rise. Both schools are rated 'Good' by Ofsted (the body that inspects schools in England), and the quality of education is not in question. This merger is about protecting that quality for the future.

The two schools, under their single governing body, have already begun a staff restructuring to address these financial challenges and are moving to two-form entry. Merging the schools into a single primary will go further by removing the duplication that comes from running two schools on one site, and ensuring a greater share of the budget goes towards teaching, learning and the support children need.

Beyond the financial case, an all-through primary school offers real educational advantages, building on what both schools already do well:

- **Consistent leadership and management** across all year groups, from Reception (age 4) to Year 6 (age 11)
- **A joined-up curriculum** designed to run from age 4 to 11, so children's learning builds smoothly from year to year

- **Stronger support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)** that follows the child throughout their time at the school, without the disruption of moving between Infants and Juniors
- **Deeper relationships** because the connection between pupils, parents and the school can build over a longer period, helping us understand and respond to each child's needs
- **Consistent policies and planning** across Early Years (ages 4 to 5), Key Stage 1 (ages 5 to 7) and Key Stage 2 (ages 7 to 11)
- **Better tracking** of how children are learning and progressing across all year groups
- **Greater flexibility** in how we use staff skills and expertise across the school
- **More opportunities** for staff professional development
- **Better value for money** by running one school rather than two

In the interests of balance, we should also set out the potential advantages of keeping separate Infant and Junior schools:

- Separate schools allow a strong focus on each age group, and staff can develop deep expertise for that stage
- Smaller schools can mean that staff know individual pupils very well
- The move from Infants to Juniors can help prepare children for later school changes

Why are we consulting you?

The Governing Body and Barnet Council must seek the views of parents and the wider community before deciding whether to go ahead. There is a legal process that must be followed, and it is important that your views are heard before any decision is made.

We want to hear from you because you are part of the school community.

Who is this consultation for?

This document is for parents, carers, staff, governors and everyone with an interest in primary education in the area.

What is the process?

There is a legal process that must be followed before changes like this can be made. There are five stages:

Stage	What happens
1. Consultation	This document marks the start of a period where we ask for your views. What you tell us will be carefully considered before we move to the next stage.
2. Publication	If, after listening to your views, the Governing Body and Barnet Council decide to go ahead, they will publish a formal public notice setting out the proposal.
3. Your views	Once the public notice is published, there is a four-week period where anyone can submit their views before a final decision is made.

4. Decision	Within two months after that period ends, the Governing Body and Barnet Council must make a final decision on whether to proceed.
5. The new school opens	If approved, Garden Suburb Primary School would open on 1 January 2027.

How can I share my views?

The consultation period will last for six weeks from 23 April 2026 to Wednesday 10 June 2026. You can share your views by completing the online questionnaire at

<https://forms.office.com/e/y0WDWpXg5F>