

London Borough of Barnet
REVISED
CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

Proposal to close
Barnet Hill Community Primary School
(and Nursery)
Hammond Close, Barnet EN5 2EQ

Other schools related to this proposal:

Whitings Hill Community Primary School
(and Nursery)
Whitings Road, Barnet EN5 2QY

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Comments on this proposal should be sent in writing to: School Organisation & Admissions Team, North London Business Park, Building 4, Oakleigh Road South, London N11 1NP, or by email to school.admissions@barnet.gov.uk by 10th January 2007. To facilitate the consultation process a questionnaire is attached to this document for those individuals wishing to respond.

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Service: Education

Division: Resources and Performance

Date: November 2006

Intended Target Group: All interested parties

Review Date: Post consultation period, January 2007

Part 1 Summary of Proposals

1. Barnet Council is consulting on a proposal to improve the quality and standard of its educational provision through a re-organisation as part of its Primary Schools Capital Investment Programme (PSCIP).
2. The proposal is for Barnet Hill School and nursery class to close at the end of the summer term in 2009.
3. There are two main reasons why this proposal is being considered as part of the Primary Schools Capital Investment Programme (PSCIP) in Barnet:
 - The poor state of the buildings at Barnet Hill School
 - The position of the school within a major regeneration area
4. According to the asset management data which the council holds on Barnet Hill School, the overall condition of the school is poor. Though the condition of the main building is relatively satisfactory, the remainder of the accommodation is very poor. Mobile classrooms are approaching the end of their life expectancy and will require replacement in the medium term. Replacement of window units to the Nursery building is required. Suitability is an issue for the school as a whole.
5. In addition to the need to provide improved school accommodation for the pupils, Barnet Hill School is located in within the Dollis Valley regeneration area. The closure of the school, combined with an expansion of Whittings Hill School to 2 Forms of Entry (FE), is the most viable option for the scheme as a whole.
6. Roll projections for the broader area within which the school is located are relatively stable, with sufficient surplus places. This indicates that there is no foreseeable need for additional school capacity within the area and that retaining 2FE by closing Barnet Hill School and expanding Whittings Hill School from 1FE to 2FE would be appropriate.
7. If the proposal were approved the school would close on the last day of the summer term 2009. The last intake of pupils to the school would be those joining the school in September 2008. At the end of the summer term 2009 remaining pupils would transfer either to the expanded Whittings Hill School or to other local schools with places. There are surplus places in every year group in neighbouring schools, hence giving parents a choice of schools in addition to the expanded Whittings Hill School.
8. The council recognises that this will be a time of uncertainty for pupils, parents and staff and will endeavour to support everyone through this process of change.
9. Consultation meetings will be organised for parents, staff and governors (see part 2). The period of consultation will last until 10th January 2007. The council will consider carefully any comments made at meetings and all comments and observations made in writing by this date.
10. Any individual wishing to comment on the proposal is invited to do so by filling in the attached questionnaire (see part 4) and sending it to the School Organisation & Admissions Team, North London Business Park, Building 4, Oakleigh Road South, London N11 1NP by 10th January 2007. Those requiring an electronic version can email: school.admissions@barnet.gov.uk

Part 2 Dates, times & venues of Consultation Meetings

A range of meetings will be held at the two schools affected by this proposal, including meetings for parents, staff, trade unions and governing bodies. Officers of the council will consider carefully any comments made at these meetings as well as all comments and observations made in writing.

Date & Time	Meeting	Venue
Day - Monday Date - 6 November 2006 Time - 3.30pm	Barnet Hill School Parents	Barnet Hill School Hammond Close, Barnet EN5 2EQ
Day - Wednesday Date - 8 November 2006 Time - 3.20pm	Barnet Hill School Staff & Trade Unions representatives	Barnet Hill School Hammond Close, Barnet EN5 2EQ
Day - Wednesday Date - 8 November 2006 Time - 4.30pm	Barnet Hill School Governing Body	Barnet Hill School Hammond Close, Barnet EN5 2EQ
Day - Wednesday Date - 13 December 2006 Time - 6.30pm	Barnet Hill School Parents	Barnet Hill School Hammond Close, Barnet EN5 2EQ

Day - Tuesday Date - 7 November 2006 Time - 3.00pm	Whitings Hill School Parents	Whitings Hill School Whitings Road, Barnet EN5 2QY
Day - Tuesday Date - 7 November 2006 Time - 3.30pm	Whitings Hill School Staff & Trade Unions representatives	Whitings Hill School Whitings Road, Barnet EN5 2QY
Day - Tuesday Date - 7 November 2006 Time - 3.30pm	Whitings Hill School Governing Body	Whitings Hill School Whitings Road, Barnet EN5 2QY
Day - Thursday Date - 14 December 2006 Time - 6.30pm	Whitings Hill School Parents	Whitings Hill School Whitings Road, Barnet EN5 2QY

Part 3 Detailed Proposals

Introduction

1. Barnet Council is consulting on a proposal to improve the quality and standard of its educational provision through a re-organisation as part of its Primary Schools Capital Investment Programme (PSCIP).
2. Having considered a number of options the council is proposing to close Barnet Hill School at the end of the summer term in 2009. The proposal also includes the closure of the nursery class.
3. In accordance with section 31(4) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, the council is consulting with all interested parties before it decides whether or not to publish statutory notices.

Background

4. There are two main reasons why this proposal is being considered as part of the Primary Schools Capital Investment Programme (PSCIP) in Barnet:
 - The poor state of the buildings at Barnet Hill School
 - The position of the school within a major regeneration area
5. According to the asset management data which the council holds on Barnet Hill School, the overall condition of the school is poor. Though the condition of the main building is relatively satisfactory, the remainder of the accommodation is very poor. Mobile classrooms are approaching the end of their life expectancy and will require replacement in the medium term. Replacement of window units to the Nursery building is required. Suitability is an issue for the school as a whole. These issues need urgent attention in order to ensure that pupils are given an appropriate learning environment.
6. In addition to the need to provide improved school accommodation for the pupils, Barnet Hill School is located in within the Dollis Valley regeneration area. The closure of the school, combined with an expansion of Whittings Hill School to 2FE, is the most viable option for the scheme as a whole.

Potential Options

7. In considering how best to proceed a number of possibilities have been considered, including the amalgamation of nearby schools within the vicinity. However, in reviewing the options available it is felt that this proposal in the long term offers the greatest chance of establishing educational provision to meet the needs of local children.

Proposal for Consultation

8. The proposal is to close Barnet Hill School and nursery class with effect from the end of the summer term in 2009. The last intake of pupils to the school would be those joining the school in the nursery or reception class in September 2008.
9. From September 2009, all pupils would transfer either to the expanded Whittings Hill School or to other local schools with places. An analysis of school places shows that there are surplus spaces at other local schools (Underhill Infant & Junior Schools, Grasvenor Avenue Infant School and Whittings Hill School) in every year group, hence giving parents a potential choice of place.
10. Whittings Hill School will be improved and enlarged with purpose built accommodation, including a swimming pool (subject to production of a robust business plan), a multi-use games area and state of the art ICT facilities. It will have playing fields which will meet Department for Education & Skills (DfES) standards. Section 77 statutory requirements will be applied to the disposal of playing fields at Barnet Hill School and the provision of suitable alternative provision at Whittings Hill School.

Roll Projections

11. Roll projections for the broader area within which the school is located are relatively stable, with sufficient surplus places. This indicates that there is no foreseeable need for additional school capacity within the area and that retaining 2FE by closing Barnet Hill School and expanding Whittings Hill School would be appropriate.
12. There will also be additional nursery places available for pupils at Underhill Infant School where a Children's Centre will be built (39 full time equivalent (FTE) children) for Easter 2008.

Implications for pupils currently attending Barnet Hill School and Whittings Hill School.

13. One of the vital issues in considering how best to move forward are the implications for pupils currently on roll at the schools in the area. The council has considered carefully the steps it would need to take to manage the process of closing Barnet Hill School with minimal disruption to its pupils, and pupils in surrounding schools.
14. Pupils at Barnet Hill School:

The proposal is for the school to close at the end of the summer term in 2009. Under this proposal:

- Pupils currently in Years 4, 5 & 6 (2006/2007 academic year) would be unaffected by the proposal as they would all leave the school by the end of the summer term in 2009.
- Pupils currently in Nursery and Reception and in Years 1, 2 & 3 (2006/2007 academic year) would be encouraged to remain at Barnet Hill School until it closes, and then transfer either to the expanded Whittings Hill School or to other local schools with places.

15.Capacity at local schools is sufficient to accommodate the number of pupils affected by this proposal. Whittings Hill School was originally built as a 2FE school and so could cope with the additional pupils from the proposed closure of Barnet Hill School regardless of any delays in the rebuilding programme.

Timetable of Phased Closure for Barnet Hill School

Year/ Year Group	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009 (Barnet Hill closes at the end of the academic year)	2009/2010 (Barnet Hill School closed, Whittings Hill School rebuilt from September 2009)
Nursery	Barnet Hill	Barnet Hill	Barnet Hill	Other local schools
Reception	Barnet Hill	Barnet Hill	Barnet Hill	Other local schools
Year 1	Barnet Hill	Barnet Hill	Barnet Hill	Other local schools
Year 2	Barnet Hill	Barnet Hill	Barnet Hill	Other local schools
Year 3	Barnet Hill	Barnet Hill	Barnet Hill	Other local schools
Year 4	Barnet Hill	Barnet Hill	Barnet Hill	Other local schools
Year 5	Barnet Hill	Barnet Hill	Barnet Hill	Other local schools
Year 6	Barnet Hill	Barnet Hill	Barnet Hill	Other local schools

New Applications for Barnet Hill School

16. Parents who wish to apply for places at Barnet Hill School for September 2007 and September 2008 may continue to do so under the new Co-ordinated Primary Admissions scheme, using a common application form or the new eAdmissions process.

17. Parents will not be able to apply for a nursery or reception place at Barnet Hill School for September 2009 as the school will be closed. Parents will be asked to apply for a place at other schools in the area.

18. Parents who request a mid-year school place will be asked to apply for a place at Whitings Hill School or one of the other community schools in the area.
19. Temporary transport arrangements will be made to transport Barnet Hill School pupils to Whitings Hill School.

Implications for the Governing Bodies

20. In the event of the proposal being approved the governing body of Barnet Hill School would be dissolved on 31st August 2009 as the school closes. The governing body of Whitings Hill School would need to be expanded as the school expands to 2FE on 1st September 2009.
22. It is proposed that a temporary governing body be established prior to the opening of the newly rebuilt Whitings Hill School which could involve joint membership of with the governing body of Barnet Hill School.

Implications for Staff

23. Staff at Barnet Hill School will be concerned about the proposed closure of the school and how it will affect them. The council recognises that this will be a time of uncertainty for staff and will endeavour to support staff through this process of change. The council wishes to ensure that the education of the pupils who remain at Barnet Hill School is as secure as possible throughout the proposed closure. Therefore the council will consider offering financial incentives to teaching staff and support staff to remain at the school to provide stability.
24. As the closure of Barnet Hill School is linked to the expansion of Whitings Hill School there will obviously be new posts created in Whitings Hill School. The temporary governing body would decide on staffing levels and needs and make the necessary appointments. It would be expected that applications from staff at Barnet Hill School would be treated sympathetically with assimilation to the new staffing structure. Any displaced member of staff who has not secured a post either at Whitings Hill School or elsewhere will be offered assistance in seeking alternative employment. Redundancy or early retirement will be the last resort of the options available to current staff.

Timescale and the Consultation Process

25. This document marks the start of a period of consultation. This enables all interested parties to give their views on the proposal before any statutory notices are published. This period of consultation will last until 10th January 2007. Meetings will be organised for parents, staff, governors and other interested parties. The council will consider carefully any comments made at meetings and all comments and observations made in writing by this date. As a result of this consultation the council may decide not to proceed any further with the proposal or to go ahead with the proposal or a modified version of it. Any formal proposal would be set out and published in the form of a public statutory notice.
26. The council has the powers to propose expansions or closures of community schools. If proposals are published then there follows a statutory six week period during which further representations and formal objections can be made.

27. The decision to go ahead with any formal proposals does not rest solely with the council. If there are objections both the proposal and the objections are referred to the School Organisation Committee (SOC) and it is this body, representing different groups concerned with schools in Barnet, which can approve or reject the proposal. If the SOC is unable to reach a unanimous decision then the proposal is referred to the Schools Adjudicator who is independent of all local interests and who has the power to make the final decision.

Action	Timescale/Deadline
Consultation period begins	30 th October 2006
Parents, Staff and Governors meetings	6 th , 7 th and 8 th November 2006
Revised Consultation document issued	27 th November 2006
Parents Consultation Evening	13 th and 14 th December 2006
End of Consultation period (8 weeks)	10 th January 2007
Consideration of comments received by Cabinet members	11 th and 12 th January 2007
If proceeding, statutory notices to be published	25 th January 2007
Period for formal objection (6 weeks)	25 th January 2007 to 15 th March 2007
Any objections forwarded to SOC Meeting. <i>(If no objections council will determine to proceed).</i>	By the end of March 2007
Refer to Schools Adjudicator, if SOC meets and cannot reach a unanimous decision	April 2007
Decision from Schools Adjudicator	April – June 2007
Assuming approval to proposal: Barnet Hill School and nursery class closes	31 st August 2009
Opening of the expanded Whittings Hill School	1 st September 2009

Current Admissions Criteria at Barnet Hill School

Offers of places at Barnet Hill School will be made unless the number of applicants for the school exceeds its admission limit (30). If the school were oversubscribed, the following criteria would be applied, in order, to allocate the places available.

1. Children whom the Chief Education Officer accepts have an exceptional medical, social or exceptional need that the school is particularly able to meet. These will include children 'looked after' by a local authority under the provision of the Children Act 1989.

Note: Applications in this category will be considered only if they are supported by an attached written statement from a doctor, social worker or other appropriate professional. Parents must demonstrate that there is a very specific connection between the child's need and the particular school. The medical condition of parents or other family members, or difficulties with child care arrangements because of work or other commitments would not be grounds for priority under this category. Information not provided at the time the application is submitted may not be considered at a later date.

2. Children who, when the places are allocated, have a sibling living at the same address who already attends the school, or the linked school in the case of separate infant and junior schools. Siblings would include half, step, adoptive and foster siblings provided they also live at the same address as the applicant.
3. Children in attendance at a nursery class at the school. If there are insufficient places available to offer to all children in attendance at a nursery class at the school, categories 4 and 5 below will be applied in order.
4. Children living within the individual school's defined area, with priority given to those who live closest to the school when measuring distance in a straight line.
5. Children living outside the individual school's defined area, with priority given to those living closest to the school when measuring distance in a straight line.

A map showing a school's defined area may be viewed at the school.

Parents whose child is not originally offered a place are asked to indicate whether they would still be interested in a place should subsequent vacancies occur and a waiting list will be maintained accordingly. When vacancies do occur everyone on the waiting list is considered and the places are offered according to the above criteria.

Vacancies continue to be offered to children on a waiting list as they arise. Although parents whose children are not offered a reception place will have the right of appeal to an independent committee, an appeal can only be upheld if the committee is satisfied that:

- i) the decision to refuse admission was not one which a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case, or
- ii) the child would have been offered a place at the school if the admission arrangements had been properly implemented.

**Consultation on the Proposal to close
Barnet Hill Community Primary School**

Barnet council would appreciate your response to this consultation paper which will help them in deciding future primary provision in the area. Please let us have your views and observations by completing and returning this response sheet.

Please tick the appropriate box in response to each question

Question 1

Do you agree there is a need to provide Barnet Hill School pupils with more suitable accommodation to support their education?

(tick one box only)

Yes 1

No 2

Question 2

Do you agree with the proposal to close Barnet Hill School? If not, please give reasons below

(tick one box only)

Yes 1

No 2

.....

Question 3

In which area do you live?

Barnet Other

(tick one box only) 1 2

Other (please specify)

Question 4

Are you:

	Barnet Hill	Whitings Hill	Another School
A pupil at	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
A parent of a pupil at	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
A member of staff at	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
A governor at	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3

Other (please specify)

Question 5

Are there any other comments you would wish to make on the proposals?:
(please write in your answer)

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Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Please return it to:
School Organisation & Admissions Team, North London Business Park,
Building 4, Oakleigh Road South, London N11 1NP by 10th January 2007.
If you wish to complete this form electronically please email:
school.admissions@barnet.gov.uk