



Consultation on the Proposal to Amalgamate
Squirrels Heath Infant and
Squirrels Heath Junior Schools
into a Single Primary School
from 1 September 2025

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Introduction

The London Borough of Havering's view is that 'all-through primary schools (infant and junior school aged children in one primary school), deliver better continuity of learning as the model for primary phase education in Havering. Therefore, we will aim to move towards this model of a single primary either through amalgamation or federation instead of separate Infant and Junior Schools where it is practical to do so if an opportunity arises.

As the Head Teacher of Squirrels Heath Infant School is relocating at the end of the summer term, this provides a natural opportunity to review the organisation of the school and to consider the needs of current and future pupils. Whatever the decision regarding the future of the school, the certainty is that there will be change in the school, which is inevitable when there is a change in leadership.

As the Head Teacher of Squirrels Heath Infant School is relocating, the Local Authority has decided to consult on a proposal to amalgamate Squirrels Heath Infant and Junior Schools into a single primary school (age 4 -11) from September 2025.

The Local Authority is aware of concerns regarding school reorganisation; as local communities see a school as being at the heart of the community and sometimes any proposed change may often be contentious. Taking this into account, the Local Authority will have regard to existing local arrangements and seek to avoid leaving existing schools without links on which they have previously depended, whilst ensuring that its vision for every child to reach their potential by having a good start and reaches the highest possible standard in their education.

This document explains the amalgamation proposal, attempts to answer some questions and seeks the views or comments interested parties may have on what is being proposed.

What does "amalgamation" mean?

Amalgamation is the merging of both Squirrels Heath Infant School and Squirrels Heath Junior School to create one single primary school. The process would mean that Squirrels Heath Infant School would close and a primary school would be established by altering the lower age range of Squirrels Heath Junior School. Squirrels Heath Infant School presently caters for pupils aged between 4 and 7 and has a capacity of 270. Squirrels Heath Junior School on the other hand, caters for pupils aged between 7 and 11 and has a capacity of 360 pupils.

The amalgamation of both schools would mean that the primary school would cater for children aged 4 to 11 with a capacity of 630 pupils

Why is the Local Authority proposing to amalgamate Squirrels Heath Infant and Squirrels Heath Junior Schools?

The proposal is in line with our strategic objective of bringing separate Infant and Junior schools together where appropriate and over time, to form a primary school so children can benefit from primary education in one school rather than changing schools at age 7.

The relocation of the Head teacher of Squirrels Heath Infant School in Summer 2025 provides a natural opportunity to review the organisation of the school and consider the needs of current and future pupils.

The two schools currently have different ethos. An amalgamation will enable a new collaborative ethos to be formed which would aid the development and running of education provision from nursery to Year 6 provided in a continuous and logically progressed curriculum which is proven to be educationally beneficial.

If the proposal to amalgamate the schools is approved, the Local Authority would work closely with staff and Governors of the schools to provide support with governance, finance, personnel and curriculum issues.

What is the proposal?

The proposal is to amalgamate Squirrels Heath Infant and Junior Schools to form a 3 form entry single primary school on the existing site by closing the Infant School and expanding the age range of the Junior School (from age 7-11 to age 4-11). The proposed implementation date would be September 2025 if agreed.

What are the benefits of a single primary school?

There are a number of benefits that primary schools have including but not limited to:

Benefits for Children

- There is strong evidence that continuity of learning has a significant impact on pupils' progress. The fewer moves children have during their school education, the better they perform.
- With a single ethos, shared expectations, assessed across the whole primary range; continuity of learning and accurate measure of each child's progress would be easier as staff would know exactly where they left off at the end of the previous year rather than cover learning which has already taken place – this would enable children make more progress in their learning.
- Unified leadership and management of the curriculum, teaching, learning and social development; would mean a consistent approach to the way children are taught including vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Assessment of pupils will be consistent and transition from KS1 to KS2 will be much smoother and cause less anxiety for pupils.

- Bringing the schools together would help all staff to safeguard the needs of all pupils, facilitate better and more reliable pupil tracking that provides early interventions.
- Phase specific expertise and resources can be shared across phases so that pupils working outside their own phase can benefit.

Benefits for Parents/Carers

- The requirement for parents to apply for a place in the Junior School would be removed, enabling children to progress automatically from Year 2 to Year 3
- As a single primary school, parents and carers are able to develop a longer term relationship with all of those involved in the school, including the Head Teacher and support staff. School policies & procedures are the same throughout the primary years. For example:
 - How children with special needs are supported
 - Arrangements for open evenings and school events
 - School uniform
 - School closure days, etc.
 This means parents and carers know what to expect.

- Over time the staff build up a good knowledge of children and their families as they progress through the school, creating a sense of the school as a 'family', which in turn helps develop trust and confidence.

Benefits for Staff

- Primary schools offer greater career opportunities across the key stages and it is often easier to recruit and retain staff in schools with more than one key stage. This is also true of leadership appointments, so the recruitment to an Infant school could prove to be difficult.
- In a single primary school, there are greater opportunities for staff to build upon their professional knowledge and skills across a wider age range, it can:
 - Provide opportunities to increase the range of expertise and experience of teaching staff
 - Provide opportunities for improvement in the deployment and development of all staff
 - Provide opportunities for sharing good practice across the whole school

General Benefits

- A more efficient school leadership and management system enabling leaders to have the required overview to make the best decision for a school as a whole with finances and resources being shared more easily.
- A single Head Teacher, as part of a restructured Senior Leadership Team, would be able to make changes and take a whole school approach.
- School inspectors and school leaders would be able to make judgements more accurately about the education children receive when they can see 'the whole picture' rather than in separate schools.
- Greater financial security for the school, providing stability for pupils, staff and the local community.

- Make available a broader range of job opportunities available at a larger all-through primary school. This in turn will make it easier to attract, recruit and retain staff.

What will the admission criteria be for the proposed primary school?

If the proposed primary school is agreed, the planned admission number (PAN) at Reception age for the school will be 90. The oversubscription criteria for admission to the school will be the same as it is for the current infant and junior schools.

How will this proposal affect Pupils?

All pupils attending Squirrels Heath Infant and Squirrels Heath Junior School would automatically transfer to the proposed primary school. This should have a positive impact for pupils as discussed above.

How will the proposal affect parents?

If the proposal is agreed, parents would only have to apply for a place in Reception and will not need to apply for a Year 3 place. This will enable consistent engagement with parents across the primary phase, with no need to transfer information at the end of Key Stage 1.

How will this proposal affect Governors?

The Governing Body of Squirrels Heath Infant School would cease to exist with effect from 31 August 2025. The existing Governing Body of Squirrels Heath Junior School would become the Governing Body of the primary school.

The Local Authority would encourage Squirrels Heath Junior School Governing Body to consider all opportunities whereby Governors of the infant school could join the primary school Governing Body. This could be through reconstitution, not filling current vacancies, or appointment of Associate Members. This would help ensure a good balance and complementary skills set.

What will be the impact of the proposed amalgamation on staff?

Staff would continue in their roles as the two schools become one all-through primary school. The proposed changes may present opportunities for staff who would have more opportunities for professional development and would be able to gain greater understanding and experience of working in a primary school environment. The employer will remain Havering Council, so there will be no need for a transfer of employment to take place under the Transfer of Undertaking and Protection of Employment Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2014) (TUPE).

No existing member of staff would be required to change their contract of employment by working across both schools. The proposed change would not constitute a break in service or affect staff terms and conditions in any way.

The local authority knows the process of bringing two schools together as one can be unsettling for staff. As with any process of change, the interests of staff must be considered carefully, and all staff and their unions would be consulted. The local authority's Human Resources team would work closely with school staff throughout the transition.

Will the standard of education that the two schools currently provide be affected if they become one school?

Squirrels Heath Infant School was inspected and judged to be 'Good' by Ofsted in December 2019. The inspection acknowledged that Leaders have developed a curriculum which supports pupils to become independent and inquisitive learners that pupils feel safe here and that parents said that they feel welcomed into the school and that staff are approachable.

Squirrels Heath Junior School was inspected and judged to be 'Good' by Ofsted in June 2024. The evidence gathered during the inspection suggested that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The judgement also recognised that Teachers have strong subject knowledge and that the way the school develops pupils' character is exceptional, with behaviour a strength across the school.

The Local Authority believes that learning and progress will be improved if the two schools are amalgamated to become a single 'all through' primary school. The amalgamation will build on the positives already identified and would provide a base for a more collaborative approach towards delivering an outstanding standard of education for all children.

Where will the proposed primary school located?

The proposed primary school would be located on the existing site of the Infant and Junior Schools. The primary school would need as many classes as there are currently in the Infant and Junior schools. The established primary school will have greater flexibility to use the facilities across its site more effectively.

Funding

School budgets are largely based on pupil numbers. Squirrels Heath Infant and Squirrels Heath Junior Schools currently receive lump sum funding as separate schools. Should the amalgamation proceed, the new 'all-through' primary school would eventually receive one lump sum. Funding protection would be applied to enable the school to achieve the economies of scale from being one larger primary school.

Assuming this is agreed and the proposal took effect from 1 September 2025, the following funding protection would be applied.

- In the 2025/26 financial year the newly amalgamated school would receive 100% of the two lump sums.
- In the 2026/27 financial year the school would receive 85% of the two lump sums.
- In the 2027/28 financial year the school would receive 70% of the two lump sums.
- In the 2028/29 financial year the school would receive one lump sum.

The amalgamation of the two schools would lead to one larger budget across a single school and lead to cost savings in certain areas.

What is the timescale for the process?

Description	Timescale
Pre- Publication Consultation Feedback and views expressed by all interested parties during this consultation will be considered and included in a report for the council to consider and decide whether to take the proposal forward to the statutory stage of the process.	Opens 24 February 2025 Closes 24 March 2025
Publication (Statutory proposal/notice) If the council decides to proceed with the statutory stage of the process, then a statutory notice will be published.	Friday 25 April 2025
Representation (formal consultation) This notice would provide an opportunity for comments or objections to be made.	4 weeks following the date of the statutory notice publication
Decision The Local Authority would consider responses to the statutory notice and make the final decision whether to agree the proposal or not.	June 2025
Implementation Single primary school opens if the proposal is agreed.	September 2025

How do I respond to this consultation?

You can state whether you support this proposed amalgamation or not by completing the consultation response form online by scanning the QR Code or by clicking on the link below;

<https://consultation.havering.gov.uk/education/squirrels-heath-amalgamation>



A meeting has been arranged for staff of both schools to discuss the proposals with representatives of the governing bodies and Havering Council officers. Please see below for details of the meeting

Date: **Monday 10th March 2025**

Time: **4:30pm – 5:30pm**

Location: Squirrel Heath Infant School, Sallisbury Road, Gidea Park, RM2 5TP

A meeting has been arranged for parents/carers of both schools to discuss the proposals with representatives of the governing bodies and Havering Council officers. Please see below for details of the meeting

Date: **Monday 10th March 2025**

Time: **6:00pm – 7:30pm**

Location: Squirrel Heath Junior School, Sallisbury Road, Gidea Park, RM2 5TP

This will be an opportunity to seek any further clarifications on the proposal.

In the meantime, if you have any other questions regarding this proposal, please call Pooneeta Mahadeo; School Organisation Manager on 01708 431092 or email; schoolsorganisation@havering.gov.uk.

This e-consultation document is being sent electronically to all parents/carers, governors, teachers and support staff of Squirrels Heath Infant School and Squirrels Heath Junior School.

Electronic copies will also be sent to all the borough schools/academies including special schools, teaching and staff trade unions representing teachers and other staff at the school, ward members, MPs, Church Dioceses, all primary schools governing boards/academy trusts, all early years' providers, community groups, other local authorities, trade unions and professional associations.