

Stanford Infant and Junior Schools

Consultation Analysis and Recommendation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Total responses: 224 survey responses plus 11 email submissions, including a collective response from the staff at Stanford Infant School and a joint Governing Board statement from Stanford Infant and Stanford Junior Governors. Consultation ran from 29th September – 16th November 2024.

Proposal: Closure of Stanford Junior School and change of age range at Stanford Infant School from 4-7 years to 4-11 years, creating a single all-through primary school on two sites from September 2026.

Rationale: No Ofsted concerns at either school. Combined deficit £466,000 (Infants £278k, Juniors £188k). Infant deficit £100k higher supports closure of Junior and age range extension. Junior PAN already set for 2026; variation would require OSA approval.

Recommendation: Proceed to Statutory Notices. Governing Bodies' extensive analysis supports merger as optimal long-term solution.

Q1: "Merging the two schools will provide a more seamless and positive educational journey for children"

| Response | Count | Percentage |
|------------------------|-------|------------|
| Disagree (Ratings 1-2) | 102 | 45.5% |
| Neutral (Rating 3) | 26 | 11.6% |
| Agree (Ratings 4-5) | 96 | 42.9% |

Q2: What opportunities do you think a merged school could bring for children, staff and the community?

- Seamless Transition & Continuity:** Most frequently cited opportunity. Improved educational continuity, eliminating Year 3 transition, better curriculum alignment, consistent tracking of children's progress across primary years.
- Financial Savings & Efficiency** - Eliminating duplicate leadership positions, consolidating administrative functions, reducing governance costs, economies of scale. Some doubts about whether savings would materialise or be absorbed by two-site costs.
- Shared Resources & Facilities** - Pooling facilities (forest school, specialist spaces), specialist teaching staff, educational resources, learning platform subscriptions. Staff collaboration on curriculum development.
- Career Development for Staff** - Varied career pathways, opportunities to develop expertise across Reception to Year 6, more leadership progression opportunities, cross-phase working. More prominent in parent than staff responses.
- Community Benefits** - Simpler arrangements for families with children in different year groups, unified PTFA, strengthened community connections.

Q3: What concerns or risks do you feel need to be addressed if the schools were to merge? Do you have any suggestions for how these could be addressed?

- 1. Staff Concerns: Job Security, Morale, Workload** - most frequent concern. Deep anxiety about job security and inevitable redundancies. Schools already short-staffed. Emotional toll on staff wellbeing. Risk of losing passionate, dedicated staff. Particular concern for non-teaching staff.
- 2. Impact on Children & Education** - Disruption during transition, particularly Years 1-2. Loss of specialised early years focus. Risk of priorities shifting toward Year 6 SATs at expense of developmentally appropriate practice for younger pupils. Challenge to transition claims: currently 78 of 81 children (96%) transition smoothly.
- 3. Loss of School Identity & Culture** - Two schools have different cultures - this is valuable. Infant school has nurturing, intimate atmosphere. Davigdor merger warning: outstanding infant school merged, lost distinctive culture, standards declined, Ofsted fell to Requires Improvement.
- 4. Communication & Transition Management** - Staff felt insufficiently consulted. Calls for clear, transparent communication. Managing change requires dedicated time, support, resources. Concerns about rushed planning.
- 5. Two-Site Operational Challenges** - How can leaders effectively serve two sites? Travel time reduces visibility. Neither site has space for all Reception - Year 6. Difficulty creating genuine cohesion when physically separated.
- 6. Financial Transparency Concerns** - No published financial modelling comparing merger vs federation. No breakdown of £120k savings. Combined deficit £180k but savings only £120k = £60k shortfall. PE Premium loss of £16k. No Equality Impact Assessment, no governor minutes available to view since July 2024.

Q4: As the school governors work to protect the future of these schools and keep them at the heart of the community, please share what you value most about them.

- 1. Quality of Staff & Teaching** - Most valued aspect. Dedication, skill, passion of teachers and support staff. Staff who know each child as individual, create safe learning environments. Personal relationships staff build with children and families seen as irreplaceable.
- 2. Community Spirit & Connections** - Strong sense of community, schools as genuine community hubs. Active PTAs vital to cohesion. Truly neighbourhood schools where children and families know each other.
- 3. Caring & Nurturing Environment** - Warm, supportive, child-centered atmosphere. Children treated as individuals. Focus on wellbeing and emotional development alongside academic achievement. Nurturing approach creates confidence and resilience.
- 4. Educational Standards & Curriculum** - Broad curriculum beyond literacy and numeracy including arts, music, PE, outdoor learning. Focus on developing rounded individuals. Children excited about learning.

Q5: "Do you support the proposal to merge Stanford Infant and Stanford Junior Schools into a single all-through Primary School (Reception to Year 6)"?

| Response | Count | Percentage |
|----------|-------|------------|
| Yes | 96 | 42.9% |
| No | 102 | 45.5% |
| Not sure | 26 | 11.6% |

Q6: "Please let us know in what capacity you are answering this survey"

| Response | Count | Percentage |
|--------------|-------|------------|
| Parent/Carer | 147 | 65.9% |
| School Staff | 38 | 17% |
| Resident | 20 | 8.9% |
| Governor | 10 | 4.5% |
| Other | 8 | 3.3% |
| No answer | 1 | 0.4% |

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Community opinion is narrowly divided (45.5% oppose, 42.9% support, 11.6% unsure). However, the Governing Bodies have determined through extensive analysis of 23 factors that merger represents the best long-term solution.

Recommendation: Proceed to Statutory Notices for closure of Stanford Junior School and change of age range at Stanford Infant School to 4-11 years from September 2026. While concerns are significant, they represent implementation challenges rather than reasons to reject the proposal. The combined £466,000 deficit is unsustainable, and the Governing Bodies' determination that merger is the optimal solution provides clear direction.

