



Stanford Junior & Infant Schools



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Wednesday 13th November 2025

Dear Richard

CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO MERGE STANFORD INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS

Joint response from the Governing Boards of the two schools

Introduction

The Governing Boards of Stanford Infant School (SIS) and Stanford Junior School (SJS) have been working together through a Joint Working Committee to explore the best structural option for the future of our schools. Both schools are rightly proud of their history, identity and achievements. However, we must also face the significant demographic and financial challenges that are affecting primary schools across Brighton & Hove and beyond.

Our focus has been on identifying a sustainable structure that protects and enhances the quality of education, supports our staff, and provides stability for children and families for years to come. Having carefully considered the evidence, and with input from staff, leadership and stakeholders, we believe that merging the two schools from September 2026 into a single all-through primary school on two sites offers the best long-term solution and as such this has been our proposal to you. We believe that by merging into one school we can remove significant duplicative work which would enable us to reduce leadership headcount, and therefore costs. We have been challenged in the consultation to consider that Federation is preferable. We still cannot see that Federation could remove the workload that merging would and therefore the necessary cuts to headcount would still take place and would leave less staff to do more work.

We are part-way through the consultation process and have held meetings with staff and with the wider public. We have listened closely to the views expressed so far and we currently remain of the view that merger is the best way forward. Both governing bodies will, however, meet after the consultation concludes to decide whether anything raised in the consultation leads us to believe that a change of approach is necessary.

This note explains the governing bodies' original proposal to merge the schools.

Qualitative Case for Merger

To measure the qualitative considerations, we undertook a multi factor analysis of 23 elements drawn from the NGA and from the experience of Hertford School, comparing merging with federating, and ran the exercise with the Governing Boards and the Leadership teams in both schools to determine the best outcome for our schools in qualitative terms. The result was that the majority believed merging was the better choice.

1. A Seamless Educational Journey for Children

- A merged school would provide a **single, coherent pathway from Reception to Year 6**, reducing disruption at the transition from Year 2 to Year 3.
- Families would benefit from the reassurance that their child has a guaranteed place in Year 3, avoiding uncertainty and anxiety at a critical stage.
- Curriculum and pedagogy could be aligned across all year groups, ensuring continuity in teaching and learning, as well as more consistent support for vulnerable children and those with additional needs.

2. Stronger and More Consistent Leadership

- A merged school would have one Head Teacher, one Senior Leadership Team and one Governing Body. This provides clarity of accountability and direction, enabling more effective strategic planning and operational delivery.
- Leadership could focus on long-term school improvement across all year groups, rather than navigating the complexities of two separate institutions.
- Professional development opportunities for staff would be broadened across a larger single organisation, helping with recruitment, retention and career progression.

3. Unified School Community

- Parents, carers and staff would be part of one school community, reducing any sense of 'them and us', strengthening collaboration and creating shared purpose.
- Children would identify as part of one larger school, fostering a stronger sense of belonging and continuity.
- Unified policies and practices would simplify matters, from communication to uniform, for families.

4. Opportunities for Enriched Curriculum and Wider Opportunities

- With one staff body, there is greater flexibility to share expertise across year groups, develop subject specialisms, and expand enrichment opportunities.
- Extracurricular activities and clubs could be better-coordinated and accessible across the full primary age range.
- Support staff can work more effectively across sites to meet children's needs.

Financial Considerations

The financial context cannot be ignored. Both schools face structural deficits that are not sustainable even in the short term. Any attempt to address this as stand-alone schools, federated or not, would be to the significant detriment of the quality of education.

- Our analysis suggests that merger will enable us to achieve the long-term budgetary improvements required to ensure a sustainable and strong future for the schools. Crucially, under merger we could achieve this by removing duplication and taking advantage of economies of scale rather than through straightforward cuts.
- A single budget and staffing structure would also allow greater flexibility in deploying resources.
- We believe under merger we would be able to return to cumulative budget surplus within the period required under our licensed deficits whilst maintaining the high-quality education delivered by both schools.

Conclusion

Our shared commitment is to ensure that Stanford Infant and Stanford Junior Schools – together as one – can continue to thrive and provide the highest quality education for local children in the years to come. We have come to the conclusion that merging schools into a single primary school is the best way forward. This proposed model:

- Provides a solid educational journey for children.
- Creates strong leadership and staff development opportunities.
- Builds a unified and resilient community.
- Offers the clearest path to financial stability and sustainability.

Yours sincerely,

(Sent by email)

Lauren Cole
Chair of Governors, Stanford Infant School

Pete Searle
Chair of Governors, Stanford Junior School

(On behalf of both Governing Boards)

