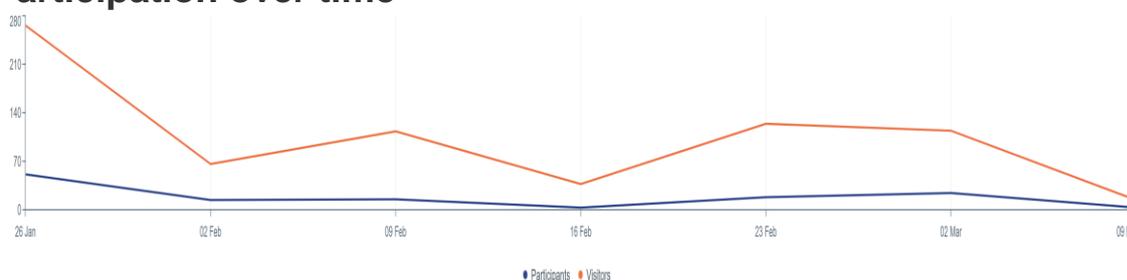


Middle Street Primary School – Proposed Closure Summary of Consultation Responses

Participation Metrics

Metric	Value
Visitors	713
Phase participants	128
Participation rate	18.0%
Surveys submitted	128
Completion rate	94.8%

Participation over time



Demographics & Audience

Did you ever live in care when you were a child or young person?

Name	Count	Distribution
Yes	1	1%
No	59	46%
Don't know	0	0%
Prefer not to say	0	0%
No answer	68	53%

Year of birth

Name	Count	Distribution
0-9	2	2%
10-19	4	3%
20-29	5	4%
30-39	10	8%
40-49	19	15%
50-59	14	11%
60-69	12	9%
70-79	2	1%
80-89	1	1%
90+	1	1%
No answer	58	45%

Gender

Name	Count	Distribution
Male	20	16%
Female	54	42%
Unspecified	1	1%
No answer	52	41%

Place of residence

Name	Count	Distribution
Adelaide	0	0%
Bevendean	1	1%
Brunswick	2	2%
Central Hove	5	4%
Coldean	1	1%
Elm Grove	1	1%
Fiveways	2	1%
Goldsmid	2	1%
Hangleton	1	1%
Hanover	3	2%
Hove Park	0	0%
Hollingdean	1	1%
Hollingbury	1	1%
Kempton	3	2%
Knoll	0	0%
Marina	1	1%
Moulsecoomb	0	0%
North Laine	10	8%
North Portslade	0	0%
Patcham	0	0%
Poets' Corner	3	2%
Preston Park	5	4%
Queen's Park	1	1%

Regency	5	4%
Rottingdean	0	0%
Round Hill	2	1%
South Portslade	1	1%
Stanmer	0	0%
West Saltdean	0	0%
West Hill	5	4%
Westbourne	0	0%
Westdene	0	0%
Whitehawk	5	4%
Wish	2	1%
Woodingdean	1	1%
Somewhere else	8	6%
No answer	56	44%

What is your age?

Name	Count	Distribution
0 to 15	0	0%
16 to 24	5	4%
25 to 34	9	7%
35 to 44	17	13%
45 to 54	23	18%
55 to 64	6	5%
65 to 74	5	4%
75 to 84	0	0%
85 plus	0	0%
Prefer not to say	1	1%
No answer	62	48%

Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health condition or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

Name	Count	Distribution
Yes, a lot	5	4%
Yes, a little	8	6%
No	53	42%
Prefer not to say	4	3%
No answer	58	45%

If you do have a health condition, illness or disability please select it from the list below

Name	Count	Distribution
Not applicable. I do not have a health condition, illness or disability	33	26%
Autism/autistic spectrum disorder or condition	3	2%
Developmental (e.g. affecting motor, cognitive, social, language)	0	0%
Hearing (e.g. D/deaf, partial loss)	2	1%
Learning disability	0	0%
Learning difference (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD)	3	2%
Long-term physical illness/health condition (e.g. cancer, diabetes)	4	3%
Mental health difference / condition (e.g. depression, schizophrenia)	1	1%
Physical difference (e.g. condition limiting basic physical activities)	1	1%
Sight (e.g. blindness, partial sight loss)	0	0%
Speech and language	0	0%
Visible difference with a disabling and/or discriminatory impact	1	1%
Prefer not to say	1	1%
Other	4	3%
No answer	76	59%

What best describes your sex?

Name	Count	Distribution
Female	47	37%
Male	17	13%
Prefer not to say	2	2%
No answer	62	48%

What best describes your gender?

Name	Count	Distribution
Female	45	35%
Intersex	0	0%
Male	18	14%
Non-binary	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Prefer not to say	2	2%
No answer	63	49%

Is your gender different from your sex assigned at birth?

Name	Count	Distribution
Yes	2	2%
No	56	44%
Prefer not to say	2	1%
No answer	68	53%

How would you describe your ethnic origin?

Name	Count	Distribution
Asian / Asian British: Bangladeshi	0	0%
Asian / Asian British: Chinese	0	0%
Asian / Asian British: Indian	0	0%
Asian / Asian British: Pakistani	0	0%
Asian / Asian British: Other	2	2%
Black / Black British: African	0	0%
Black / Black British: Caribbean	0	0%
Black / Black British: Other	0	0%
Mixed: Asian and White	2	2%
Mixed: Black African and White	0	0%
Mixed: Black Caribbean and White	0	0%
Mixed: Any other mixed / multiple ethnic background	1	1%
White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British	46	36%
White: Irish	2	1%
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0	0%
White: Roma	0	0%
White: Other	7	5%
Other Ethnic Group: Arab	1	1%
Prefer not to say	2	1%
No answer	65	51%

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

Name	Count	Distribution
Asexual	2	2%
Bisexual or Bi	3	2%
Gay or Lesbian	3	2%
Heterosexual or 'straight'	50	39%
Queer	0	0%
Prefer not to say	1	1%
Other	2	2%
No answer	67	52%

Do you currently provide unpaid care or support to family members, friends, or others because of illness, disability, mental health needs, or age-related needs

Name	Count	Distribution
Yes, I provide substantial unpaid care (20+ hours per week)	7	6%
Yes, I provide regular unpaid care (5-19 hours per week)	4	3%
Yes, I provide occasional unpaid care (less than 5 hours per week)	3	2%
No, I do not currently provide unpaid care	47	37%
Prefer not to say	4	3%
No answer	63	49%

If you do care for someone, please state who you care for.

Name	Count	Distribution
Not applicable / I do not care for anyone	26	20%
Parent	5	4%
Child with special needs	5	4%
Partner / Spouse	0	0%
Other family member	5	4%
Friend	0	0%
Other	0	0%
No answer	88	68%

What is your religion or belief?

Name	Count	Distribution
I have no particular religion or belief	30	23%
Buddhist	0	0%
Christian including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations	7	5%
Hindu	0	0%
Jain	0	0%
Jewish	1	1%
Muslim	2	2%
Pagan	0	0%
Sikh	0	0%
Agnostic	2	2%
Atheist	10	8%
Other philosophical belief	2	2%
Prefer not to say	2	1%
Other religion	0	0%
No answer	72	56%

What is your legal marital or registered civil partnership status?

Name	Count	Distribution
Never married and never registered in a civil partnership	13	10%
Married	33	26%
In a registered civil partnership	2	2%
Divorced	5	4%
Formerly in a civil partnership which is now legally dissolved	0	0%
Separated but still legally in a civil partnership	0	0%
Separated but still legally married	0	0%
A surviving member of a legally registered civil partnership	0	0%
Widowed	0	0%
Prefer not to say	2	2%

Are you currently or have you previously served in the UK armed forces?

Name	Count	Distribution
No	58	45%
Yes, current serving or previously served in regular armed forces	1	1%
Yes, current serving or previously served in reserve armed forces	0	0%
Prefer not to say	0	0%
Other	0	0%
No answer	69	54%

Is a member of your close family currently or have previously served in the UK armed forces?

Name	Count	Distribution
No	53	41%
Yes, current serving or previously served in regular armed forces	4	3%
Yes, current serving or previously served in reserve armed forces	1	1%
Prefer not to say	1	1%
Other	0	0%
No answer	69	54%

Are you a refugee or asylum seeker?

Name	Count	Distribution
No	57	44%
Yes, I have been recognised as a refugee by the UK government	0	0%
Yes, I am seeking asylum	0	0%
Other	1	1%
Prefer not to say	0	0%
No answer	70	55%

Questions

Total 128 responses

Page 1: Your views on the proposals

127/128 responses

1. Do you agree with the proposal to close Middle Street Primary School?

127/128 responses

Answer	Count
1 - Strongly disagree	98
2 - Disagree	10
3 - Neither agree <u>or</u> disagree	6
4 - Agree	5
5 - Strongly agree	8
-	1

This document summarises the responses received through the Your Voice consultation portal and via direct email submissions. The thematic summaries below draw on responses submitted through the portal; two additional written submissions received by email and the consultation events.

Themes from the Consultation Portal

1. The school's history, ethos and educational quality.

Attendees expressed strong attachment to the school and spoke about the qualities that had led them to choose it. The small, family atmosphere, inclusive culture and the particular suitability of the environment for children with additional needs were all highlighted. Consultees noted that outcomes at the school had historically been strong and that the school had provided a high standard of education. A number of respondents reflected on family members across different generations having attended the school. The school's status as the oldest primary school in Brighton was frequently cited, and a number of respondents reflected on family connections spanning multiple generations.

The school's identity as a non-faith, secular school in a central location was also highlighted as a distinctive and valued feature, particularly by families for whom this had been an important factor in choosing it. Many respondents emphasised the school's diversity and its creative spirit as qualities that set it apart from other provision in the city, and noted that it is the only non-faith, centrally located primary school in Brighton. For a number of families these characteristics had been the decisive reason for choosing the school

2. The circumstances leading to the school's current position.

There was a concern that the school's situation had been caused or compounded by events within the school's recent history including protracted employment issues, high staff turnover, and the resulting periods of leadership instability rather than by any inherent unviability of the school or its community. A related but distinct concern was raised about financial oversight: consultees questioned how the school had been permitted to accumulate a significant deficit without earlier intervention, and

whether adequate monitoring had been in place at either LA or governing body level. Consultees called for acknowledgement and accountability of the Council's responsibility for its oversight and for greater transparency about the events that had led to this point.

There was also a widely held view that the consultation and closure process had been handled in a way that was rushed and poorly communicated, and that the resulting instability had itself contributed to families leaving the school, further worsening the roll position. Several respondents suggested that the Council's actions may have been short-sighted, and questioned whether the process had been conducted with a view to financial or property considerations rather than educational ones. Officers acknowledged the depth of feeling expressed and confirmed that lessons would be reflected upon.

3. The range of options considered.

There were questions raised at consultation meetings as to whether all alternatives to closure had been fully explored and concern was expressed that parents had not been given sight of the options earlier in the process. Officers explained that the IEB had considered a range of options including federation, academisation and standalone models and confirmed that full details were available through the IEB's published minutes.

A number of respondents also questioned whether the timeframe over which the decision had been developed was sufficient given the significance and permanence of the outcome, and whether further time and active support might have allowed a different picture to emerge.

4. Impact on pupils, particularly those with SEND.

Concerns were raised about the disproportionate impact of closure on pupils with special educational needs, and whether alternative schools would be able to replicate the level of support currently provided. Consultees requested that educational psychology support be made available to pupils during the current period of uncertainty, not only at the point of transition. More broadly, respondents highlighted the impact of the closure process on the wellbeing, mental health and educational progress of current pupils, and on the continuity of support for vulnerable families.

5. Communication.

A recurring concern was that communication from both the previous headteacher and the IEB had been insufficient. Parents described feeling uninformed and, in some cases, having had to rely on social media and rumour rather than official communications. Officers acknowledged these concerns and confirmed that IEB minutes were published on the school website.

In addition to the concerns already noted, several respondents specifically highlighted the reassurance given to parents during the autumn term that closure was not imminent, followed shortly afterwards by the announcement of the proposal. This sequence of events was raised as a particular source of hurt and distrust and compounded the broader sense among some consultees that they had not been kept honestly informed.

6. The school's city centre location and the loss of provision for central Brighton families.

A significant number of responses raised concerns specific to the school's location and community school status, noting that Middle Street serves families living in the city centre who depend on a school within walking distance, and that its closure, following that of St Bartholomew's CoE Primary School, represents a further reduction in accessible central provision. Concerns were also raised about the implications for young children being required to travel further, and about the additional pressure this would place on already oversubscribed neighbouring schools. A formal submission from Living Streets Brighton and Hove Group specifically addressed the active travel and sustainability dimensions of consolidating provision away from where city centre families live.

7. The future use of the school site.

A distinct concern raised by several consultees related not to the closure itself but to what would follow from it. Several respondents expressed apprehension that the building would be sold for private development, and some suggested that the site's potential value may have been a factor in the decision to propose closure rather than to pursue alternatives. Calls were made for the building to be retained for community or educational use, and for transparency about the Council's intentions for the site.

8. Views in support of closure.

A minority of respondents expressed support for the proposed closure. Those doing so tended to cite the school's financial unviability and low pupil numbers as the principal reasons, and some acknowledged the sadness of the situation whilst nonetheless concluding that closure was inevitable given current circumstances. The importance of ensuring the sustainability of other schools across the city was also a factor for support.

9. Community readiness and the potential for recovery.

A number of respondents offered a more forward-looking perspective, contending that the conditions for a genuine recovery were now in place. They noted that the current parent community was positive, engaged and actively committed to rebuilding the school's reputation. Evidence of wider community and business goodwill was cited in support of this view, with respondents pointing to practical support already secured from local organisations as an indication of the confidence that existed in the school's potential.

Respondents in this group argued that the school's one form entry size meant that supporting its continuation would not come at a cost to other provision in the city, and that a successful recovery story could have significant value both for the school's community and for the Council's wider standing. Some expressed concern that the decision was being made before sufficient time had been allowed to test whether the school could turn its position around under the current leadership arrangements.

10. Local authority capability and the quality of support provided to the school.

Concerns were raised, informally and on the basis of partial knowledge, about the adequacy of support provided by BHCC to the school in managing a complex set of circumstances over an extended period. Questions were raised about the capability

and capacity of officers to support schools facing serious employment and safeguarding matters and whether the advice and guidance available to the school had been consistent with national frameworks and sufficient to enable the school to manage the situation safely and effectively.

It was also suggested that the volume and nature of complaints experienced by the school had been exacerbated by the circumstances described, and that the school had not been given the level of support it needed to manage those complaints within other exceptional pressures.

3. Please let us know your connection to the school.

126/128 responses

Answer	Count
Parent/carer of a pupil at the school	39
Parent/carer of former pupil at the school	18
Local resident	18
Former pupil at the school	12
Prefer not to say	11
Former member of staff from the school	8
Member of staff at the school	6
School Governor in the city	4
Responding on behalf of an organisation	2
-	2
Prospective parent/carer	1
Councillor/Elected Representative	0
Member of staff at another city school	0
Other	7