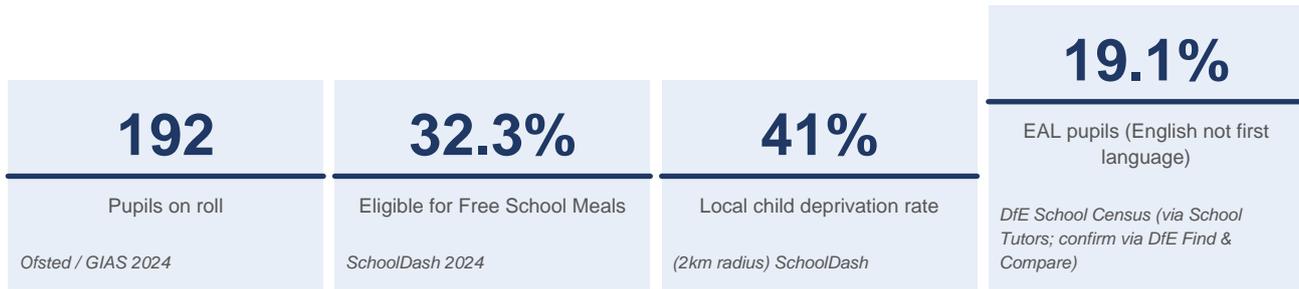


SECTION 1 — SCHOOL PROFILE: WHO IS AFFECTED



Middle Street’s free school meal rate of 32.3% is notably higher than the 29.3% average across the ten nearest comparable schools (SchoolDash, 2024), indicating a more socioeconomically vulnerable intake than the immediate peer group. The 41% child deprivation rate within a 2km radius places the school’s catchment among the more deprived areas of central Brighton. Nearly one in five pupils speaks English as an additional language, underlining the need for multilingual communications during transition. Note: EAL and absence figures should be confirmed against DfE Find and Compare Schools data.

SECTION 2 — BRIGHTON & HOVE SCHOOL CLOSURE CONTEXT

Middle Street is the latest in a series of Brighton & Hove primary school closures driven by falling pupil numbers. The city has experienced significant demographic change, with a 22% drop in children aged 0–4 between the 2011 and 2021 censuses (ONS Census 2021; cited in B&HCC; School Closure Consultation, Nov 2023).

The Council’s own forecasts project Reception year demand will fall from approximately 1,970 in 2025 to just 1,787 by 2027 — a drop of nearly 200 places in two years. The city already has over 25% surplus primary capacity.

In this context, closures are likely to continue. Middle Street is not an isolated incident but part of a pattern. The case for a replicable, transparent monitoring framework is therefore not only relevant to this closure — it applies to every future closure the Council will face.

Date	Event
2021	Council report projects 1 in 5 city primary places to be surplus by 2025
Nov 2023	Consultation opens on closure of St Bartholomew’s and St Peter’s
Mar 2024	Council votes to close both schools from Aug 2024
2025	651 projected surplus Reception places city-wide
2026	662 projected surplus Reception places; Middle Street closure
2027	DfE data suggests demand may fall to only 1,787 Reception pupils

Sources: Brighton & Hove City Council school closure consultation documents; DfE admissions data; 2021 Census.

SECTION 3 — DEPRIVATION CONTEXT: CENTRAL BRIGHTON

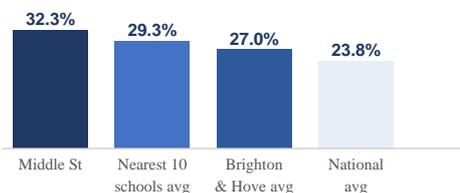
Brighton & Hove has the highest level of income deprivation and employment deprivation of any Local Authority in Sussex. The city contains 15 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the most deprived 10% nationally.

One LSOA in St Peter’s and North Laine ward — the ward in which Middle Street sits — was identified in the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation as having 80% of children living in income deprivation, the second highest concentration in England (B&HCC; IoD 2019 Briefing, December 2019).

Brighton & Hove also had the third highest rate of homelessness in England at the time of the last major assessment (1 in 78 residents; Shelter, 2021 — the most recent published figure), nearly double the national rate. This is directly relevant to family stability during school transitions: families with insecure housing face compound disruption.

Source: Brighton & Hove IoD 2019 Briefing (B&HCC; Dec 2019); Sussex Community Foundation Tackling Poverty Report; Shelter 2021 (most recent available).

Free School Meal eligibility — comparative



Higher FSM rates signal greater household financial pressure and a reduced ability to absorb transition costs (transport, uniforms, childcare changes).

SECTION 4 — EVIDENCE: TRANSITION RISK FOR VULNERABLE PUPILS

A substantial body of published UK research demonstrates that unplanned or poorly supported school transitions carry measurable risks for wellbeing and attainment — risks that fall disproportionately on SEND pupils and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. The following findings are directly relevant to the Middle Street cohort.

Finding	Source	Relevance to Middle Street
SEND pupils experience significantly lower wellbeing and higher rates of exclusion during school transitions than peers	<i>Dr C. Bagnall, Parliament Written Evidence (2024); Education Endowment Foundation (2019)</i>	Middle Street serves a catchment with above-average SEND need; transition support is not optional
The attainment gap between SEND pupils and peers is twice as large as the gap between FSM pupils and peers	<i>Education Endowment Foundation (2019)</i>	32.3% FSM + elevated SEND need compounds risk; both groups require proactive monitoring
Pupils from low socioeconomic backgrounds show greater ambivalence about transition and are at higher risk of exclusion in first years at new school	<i>Bagnall et al. (2023), University of Manchester Policy Blog</i>	Majority of Middle Street catchment falls within high-deprivation LSOAs; early pastoral intervention is evidenced as effective
Difficulties with school transitions are associated with lower educational outcomes, school drop-out, increased depression and anxiety	<i>Multiple systematic reviews incl. Beaton & Quach (2023), ScienceDirect</i>	These are long-term outcomes — the case for monitoring does not end at the point of transfer
Attendance rate at Middle Street is recorded as below the national average, indicating existing vulnerability in the pupil cohort prior to closure	<i>DfE Find and Compare Schools — verify current figure at get-information-schools.service.gov.uk</i>	A cohort with existing attendance challenges is at heightened risk during the disruption of an unplanned school closure

SECTION 5 — THE SCHOOL BUILDING: CONTEXT FOR FUTURE USE DECISIONS

Brighton & Hove's own forecasts show Reception demand falling from 1,970 in 2025 to a possible low of 1,787 in 2027 — but the DfE cautions that only 90% of forecast children will require a place, introducing meaningful uncertainty. Demographic trends are not permanent. The 22% drop in the 0–4 age group recorded in 2021 reflects a specific period; housing development, migration patterns and birth rates can shift materially over a 10–15 year horizon.

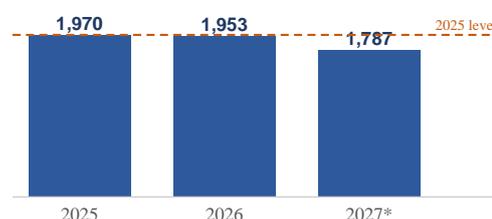
The Council's childcare sufficiency assessment (September 2025) found that demand for places for children with SEND continues to rise, while many early years providers report being unable to meet it. Affordable, accessible space in central Brighton for early years or SEND-specialist provision is in short supply.

The precedent set by St Bartholomew's closure (2024) is instructive: the Council established a transition board with parent representation and additional funding for uniform costs. Successful outreach to parent communities is impactful and approaches like this can be built upon in new ways, such as committing to long-term community use and maintenance of the school building.

Source for transition board: *ITV Meridian / Brighton & Hove City Council news release, 5 March 2024.*

Sources: *B&HCC; School Closure Consultation docs (Nov 2023); B&HCC; Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Sept 2025; B&HCC; School Admissions report to Children, Families & Schools Committee, Oct 2023 (forecast accuracy: 96–99% since 2015).*

Projected Reception year pupils requiring a place, B&HCC



* DfE data suggests 2027 demand may be as low as 1,787. Council forecasts have been 96–99% accurate since 2015.

Childcare gaps identified in B&HCC; Sufficiency Assessment (Sept 2025)

- Rising demand for SEND childcare places, with many providers unable to meet it
- Very limited flexible and emergency childcare availability across the city
- Only 23% of providers open before 8am (down from 48% in 2023)
- Central Brighton identified as an area of higher unmet early years need

These gaps point to potential community uses for the Middle Street building during any interim period.

All data cited in this document is drawn from publicly accessible sources including Brighton & Hove City Council published reports, Ofsted / DfE school data, the 2021 Census, published academic research, and the Sussex Community Foundation. The EAL proportion and attendance figures should be verified against the DfE Find and Compare Schools tool (get-information-schools.service.gov.uk). This document accompanies a five-minute deputation to Brighton & Hove City Council Cabinet, March 2026.