

16th October 2024

Dear Parents, Carers and members of our community,

I hope you are well and your child has settled into the start of the new school year.

We are writing to provide you with an important update regarding admissions at Upton Cross Primary School. We strongly urge you to read this letter in full and to participate in our consultation using the link detailed below.

Formal Consultation on Admission Arrangements for September 2026

In recent years, we have seen significant population changes, both locally and nationally, in part due to falling birth rates. This has had a negative impact on schools as they are funded based on the number of pupils they have. If you do not have full classes in each year group, then you are still having to pay for staff, utilities (including heating and electricity) and other costs, with less funding.

This issue has been particularly impacting Upton Cross, which operates across two sites at Churston Avenue and Kirton Road. Therefore, in collaboration with Newham Council we have decided to review all available opportunities to ensure children in Newham continue to access excellent education whilst supporting the financial stability of Upton Cross and other local schools.

As part of this planning, we are launching an admissions consultation for Upton Cross Primary School.

On the 16th October we will be launching a formal consultation with parents, carers, staff and our wider community regarding Upton Cross' admission arrangements for 2026. The consultation will run for 6 weeks from 16th October to 27th November.

Admissions Arrangements - Pupil Admission Number

In collaboration with Newham Council, Upton Cross Primary School is proposing to permanently reduce the pupil admission number from 120 to 60 pupils for Reception Year admissions from September 2026.

Our long-term goal is to only run Upton Cross Primary School from the Churston Avenue site. The change to the pupil admission number from 120 to 60 will enable us to move to only be based at one site for all the pupils within the next five years.

Our leading priority remains ensuring that our pupils and every child has access to the very best education, opportunities and support so they fulfil their potential. This includes making considerations to keep the impact on current staffing arrangements to a minimum where possible.

The full details are on the next page. No decisions have yet been made, but we wanted to share an update for your awareness.

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We are not proposing to make any changes to the over-subscription criteria however we are proposing that from 2026-2027 the home to school measurement point used for the tiebreaker situation will now be the Churston Avenue school gate. This will be used as defined in the [Newham Admissions booklet](#).

Plans for September 2025

Ahead of the proposed changes to admissions for 2026, we are also proposing a number of plans to reorganise our year groups and classes from September 2025.

To facilitate the long-term goal of running the school from a single site to support the financial stability of Upton Cross and local schools, we are also proposing to temporarily cap the number of pupils to 60 in reception for the academic year 2025 to 2026.

Reception Class

This will mean that the Reception intake for 2025/2026 can solely be based at Churston Avenue, instead of across two separate sites.

Nursery and Year 1, 2 3 and 4

We are also proposing that all Nursery and Year 1 to Year 4 classes are also located at Churston Avenue from September 2025

Year 5 and 6

We are proposing that all Year 5 and Year 6 classes are based at Kirton Road.

Ivy Class

Pupils in Ivy class (our specialist class) will remain at the Kirton Road site until a purpose-built classroom is created for them at Churston Avenue.

The proposal will have a number of benefits for our community, including:

- All year groups will be in the same building, meaning that our Year leads and class teachers can work together to support children in their learning and development.
- Our Year 5 and Year 6 pupils will have a transition experience of moving to the Upper Key Stage 2 building which will help them as they prepare for secondary school education

We have already undertaken extensive planning to ensure this would be feasible and have been working closely with the local authority throughout this process.

We also believe this to be a necessary next step to safeguard the future of our school and the education of children across Newham.

Responses to the consultation can be made through the online survey [here](#) or on our website www.uptoncross.newham.sch.uk. We are keen for this to be a constructive and open forum and very much encourage all parents to share their views and feedback.

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It is important to note that no decisions have been made and we place great value on the views of all our community. We kindly ask that you provide any feedback on the consultation proposal so we can take all views into consideration.

We have included a FAQ document that will hopefully answer any questions you may have.

Once the consultation process is complete, we will share further information on any next steps, as and when these are confirmed. We will also endeavour to keep you updated throughout the process.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in contact.

Thank you once again for your ongoing support.

Yours faithfully,

Gary Wilkie
Chief Executive Officer
Learning in Harmony Trust

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Upton Cross Consultation FAQs for Parents and Carers

This document is aimed at helping parents understand the proposed changes and the reasons for making the changes.

1. Why is the school proposing to reduce the admission numbers to 60?

This is because there are too many empty spaces at Upton Cross and a number of other local primary schools. Reducing the number of spaces to 60 will help the school because:

- Having two full classes of 30 helps the school financially. Operating only partially full classes is inefficient and a financial drain. We are funded on the number of pupils that attend and not our maximum capacity.
- Having an admission limit of 60 means that in a few years, the school will be able to be based solely at the Churston Avenue site. This will have the following benefits:
 1. Running two sites is very expensive, especially when pupil numbers are low. By moving to one site, we will have more funding to reinvest in our pupils' education.
 2. All children and staff from the same year group will be on the same site, which will have additional benefits for their learning and development.
 3. It will help to have a single school community based in the same space.
 4. Because in the longer term Kirton Road will no longer provide any physical capacity for Upton Cross Primary School children, other schools in this area will benefit from having additional children attend their school. This will make them more viable in the future.

2. When will all year groups move to the Churston Avenue site?

The proposal is that:

- From September 2025, Nursery, Reception and Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 will be based at Churston Avenue.
- Ivy class and Year 5 and 6 will remain at Kirton Road. They will then move into Churston Avenue when there is the space to accommodate them. This could take up to five years. So all children will be based at the Churston Avenue site from 2030-31 at the latest.

3. Does this mean that my children will need to move sites?

- If your child is currently in Year 4 at Kirton Road, they will stay at Kirton Road for Year 5 and 6. If your child is in nursery, reception and years 1-3 at Kirton Road, they will move to Churston Avenue next year.

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- For the next few years, children finishing Year 4 at Churston Avenue will move to Kirton Road for Year 5 and 6 until there is enough space at Churston Avenue to accommodate all year groups.

4. How will this affect my child's education?

- Our leading priority remains ensuring that our pupils and every child has access to the very best education, opportunities and support so they fulfil their potential.
- This change will ensure we are able to safeguard the future viability of our school while also maintaining the high standard of education we are delivering for every child.
- Additionally, as all year groups will be in the same building this means that our Year Leads and class teachers can work together to support children in their learning and development.
- We will be able to bring together the best resources from both sites into one space.
- Our children will also be in larger year groups and will benefit from working with and learning from one another, while they build collaboration skills with their peers.

5. Will my child be in a different class or have a different teacher?

- Your child's teacher will change at the end of the year, as it does every year.
- Additionally, our staff will continue to work together to ensure a smooth transition between school years.

6. What will happen to the facilities at the Kirton Road site?

At the moment, part of the Kirton Road site is used by Connaught Special School. They will continue to use the site for the Autumn term 2025. Discussions are currently taking place with the local authority to enable us to make a decision about the long-term future of the site.

7. How will this affect school drop-off, pick-up, and transport?

- Some families may have slightly further to travel to get to school, we will be providing support to our community as we look to make this change.
- In the first instance, families with siblings on different sites may have to make additional logistical planning to ensure all children arrive at school on time.
- To address this we will be working with parents to look at the possibility of a walking bus between the sites and also of a slightly staggered start and end of the school day.
- We have asked a question in our consultation survey about what support parents might need and we welcome your suggestions.

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9. How will the school support the children through these changes?

- We will be working with the children in assemblies to help understand the changes.
- We will provide pastoral care for any pupils who may experience anxiety over the move.
- We will arrange visits to the new site for children who move from one site to the other.
- We will make sure that we communicate with parents and children to provide regular updates and answer any concerns.
- We will make sure that staff are fully briefed on any specific medical needs or allergy information for any children moving to a different site as part of the transition.

10. Will the changes impact class sizes?

We hope to minimise the impact on class sizes. No classes up to Year 2 will have over 30 children in them, but there may be the need in exceptional circumstances to have a couple more children in a class in Years 3-6. This is not uncommon in other schools too as they manage issues regarding falling roles. This will not impact on the high quality of education we deliver our children, and in the exceptional circumstances there are classes over 30, we will ensure there is sufficient staffing to support children in their learning and development. .

11. What should I do if I have specific concerns or questions?

If you have any concerns about the changes, you should as an initial step participate in the consultation process. The school will be following up and addressing any individual concerns raised as part of this process where individuals have provided their contact details.