

Consultation on the proposed closure of Charlotte Sharman Primary School in August 2025



Consultation period: 11th February 2025 to 31st March 2025

About the proposals and the school

Charlotte Sharman Primary School is a one form entry (1FE) primary school in the St George's ward of Borough. "1FE" means that there are 30 places available at reception annually. This is sometimes referred to as the school's 'Published Admissions Number' (or "PAN"). Charlotte Sharman is a "Foundation School". This means that the Governors, rather than the Council own the building and land the school is situated on. They are also the admissions authority and employ staff at the school. The council are responsible for funding the school.

For place planning purposes, the school is situated in Council's "Planning Area 1" (PA1) – Borough, Bankside & Walworth. The school has struggled to recruit to reception and overall numbers have fallen considerably in recent years. It is for this reason the Council are considering a range of options for the future of the school, including permanent closure. This consultation will allow us to evaluate these options and the effects of closure.

The Council proposals

Charlotte Sharman Primary School was, until 2019, a 2FE primary school (PAN of 60), when, due to falling rolls, the PAN at the school was reduced by 60 to 30. Despite this, rolls have remained low at the school. Reception numbers fell to 12 in 2024-25 and are estimated to remain at a similar level (or lower) in 2025-26 and for the foreseeable future. As school funding is based on the number of children on roll, resources available for the school are reducing. It is a core principle of the Council to protect the LA's high quality of education - this may be compromised where the cost of staff, equipment and enrichment activities becomes unaffordable. The school is already operating with a significant financial deficit and this is projected to increase further.

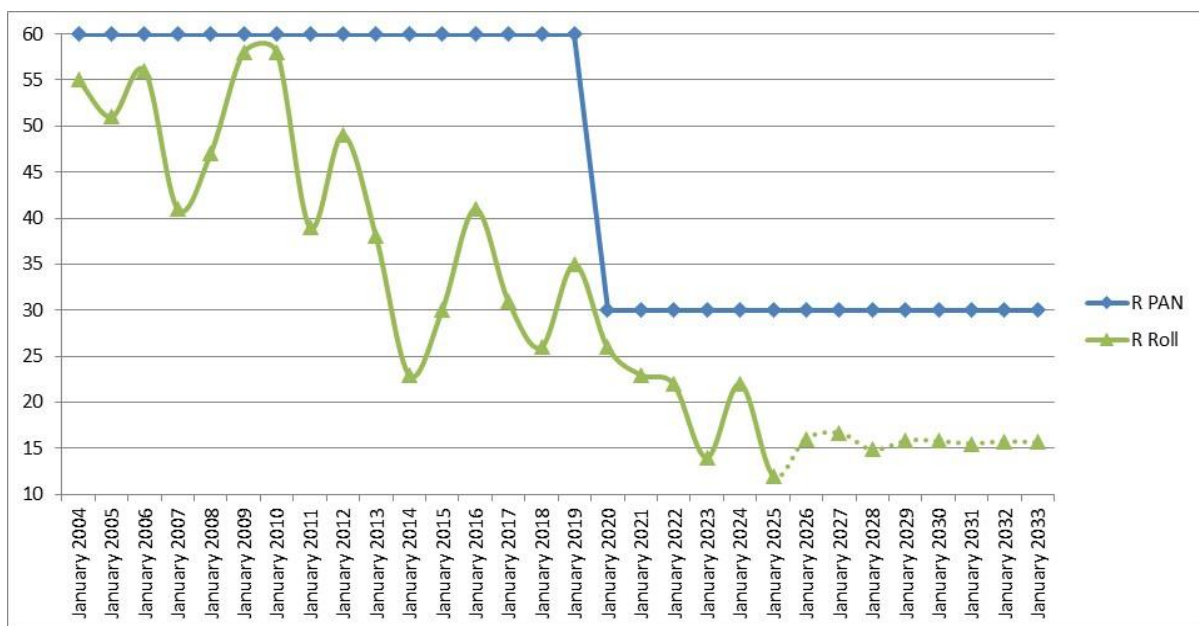
Southwark Council agreed a 'Keeping Education Strong' strategy to address the issue of surplus places in Southwark schools in 2022 and has continued to work with some of the most affected schools to seek solutions. In respect of Charlotte Sharman, options have been explored including a potential amalgamation with a neighbouring school. Other options have not proved feasible.

The Council is now consulting on a proposal to close Charlotte Sharman Foundation Primary School from 31st August 2025.

Falling Rolls

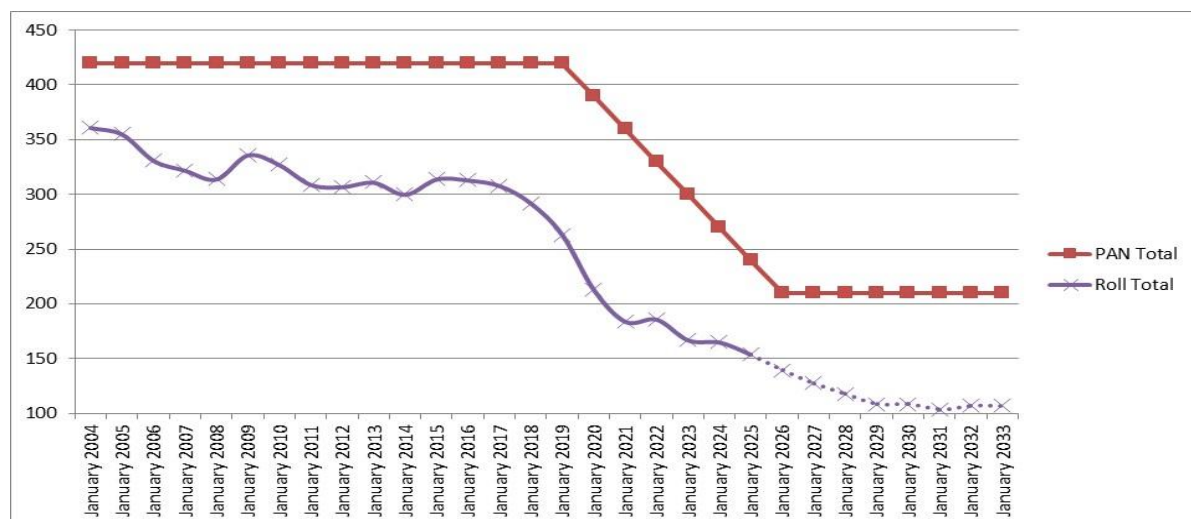
The key factor to consider is the continuing fall in roll and pupil numbers at the school. Overall, the school's rolls at reception have fallen from 41 in 2015-16, to 12 in 2024/25 – a reduction 29 pupils (71%). The roll in 2015-16 across all year groups (R to 6) was 313, and in 2024/25, totalled 152, a reduction of 161 (51%). Vacancies at the schools overall across all year groups have risen from 25% in 2015/2016 to 37% in 2024/2025 – this is despite a PAN reduction at Charlotte Sharman in 2019-20. The school's roll is unlikely to recover based on GLA predictions. Reception figures for the school show a steady decline since 2015/16 and this projecting forward into the future.

Reception Rolls (Green) against Published Admission Number capacity (Blue) – 2004-2025 (actual) and 2026-33 (projected – dotted lines) - were the school to remain open



Whole school rolls show a similar pattern:

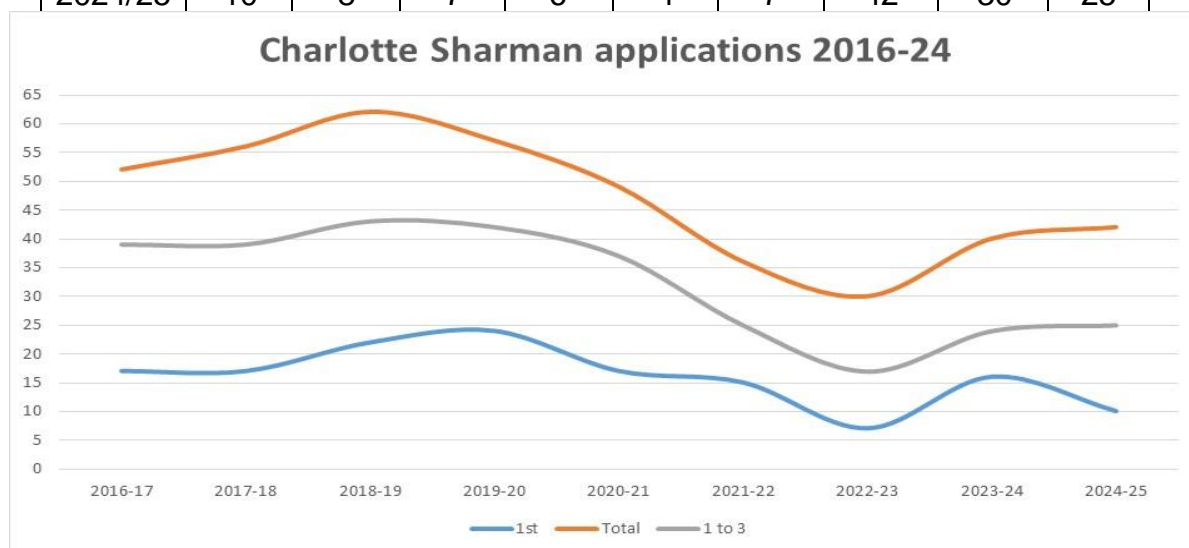
School Rolls (Purple) against PAN (Red) – 2004-2025 (actual) and 2026-33 (projected – dotted lines) - were the school to remain open



Falling numbers of applications and births

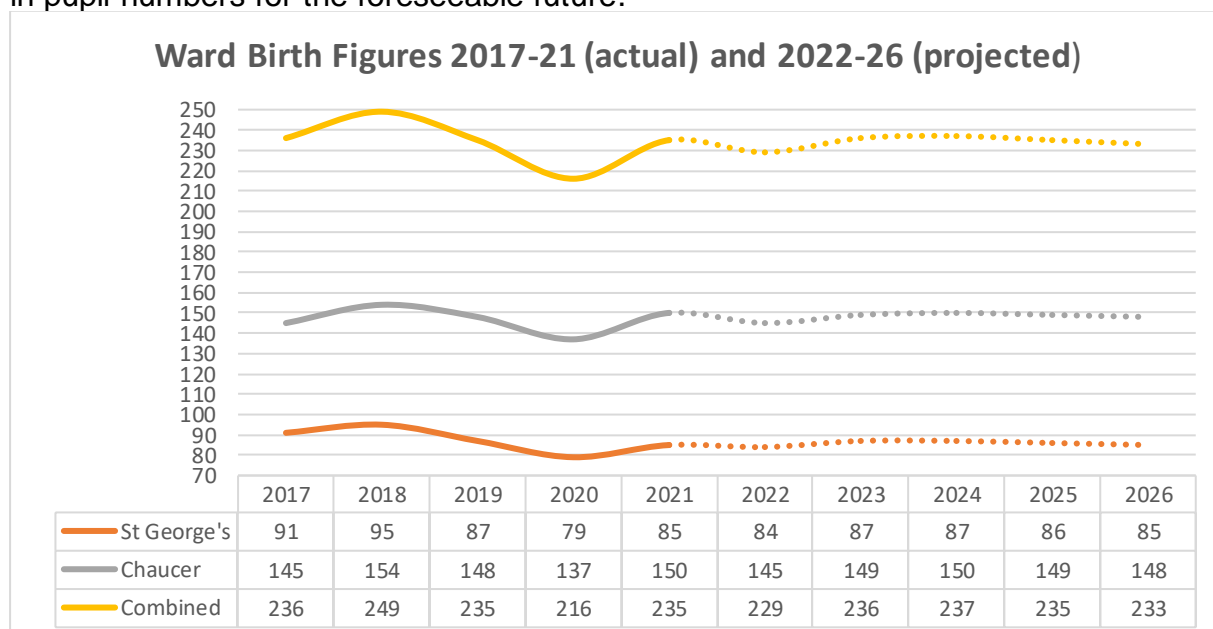
Applications to the school at reception have also fallen considerably. Since 2016, the overall number of applications has fallen from 52 to 42, a reduction of 19%. Similarly, for first preferences, numbers have reduced by 41%, and 1st to 3rd preferences by 36%.

Year	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	Total	PAN	1-3
2016/17	17	9	13	6	2	5	52	60	39
2017/18	17	16	6	8	5	4	56	60	39
2018/19	22	12	9	7	2	10	62	60	43
2019/20	24	8	10	10	4	1	57	60	42
2020/21	17	11	9	5	1	3	49	30	37
2021/22	15	1	9	5	2	4	36	30	25
2022/23	7	7	3	4	3	6	30	30	17
2023/24	16	3	5	10	4	2	40	30	24
2024/25	10	8	7	6	4	7	42	30	25



Birth trends

Births in the St George's ward (where the school is situated) and Chaucer ward – from which two wards the school draws 43% of its pupils come from – are projected to remain at a similar level till the end of the decade, so there is unlikely to be a recovery in pupil numbers for the foreseeable future.



The school is situated in the place planning area 1 (PA1), which covers the Borough, Bankside and Walworth area that has seen a substantial growth in surplus places in Southwark. Presently, there are 216 (8FE) reception places surplus in PA1 - 32% of all available reception places. Overall, Year R to 6 vacancies total 1,137, around 23% of all available places in PA1 schools.

All of these factors above combined mean that pupil numbers at Charlotte Sharman are unlikely to recover in the near future, and that the school is likely to fall further into a state of financial unviability. As schools are funded primarily on a per pupil basis, falling rolls impact on the resources available to support a high quality of education.

The council assessed 6 possible options for the school going forward

Option	Overall appraisal
Option 1 - Keep open with programme of support	Additional support has been provided by headteacher and school business manager from another local school but this has not led to a viable plan for the future of the school.
Option 2: Forming a hard federation with another school or an amalgamation	A hard federation would not substantively address the low rolls the school is presently experiencing and the resulting financial impact. While sharing management and other costs might enable some savings this would not be sufficient to put the school on a viable footing. Potential mergers and amalgamations with other schools have been explored but no suitable option has been identified.
Option 3 - Keep open as an academy	An application to joint a Multi Academy Trust would be a matter for the Governing Body of the School, but a MAT would face the same challenges with making the school viable.
Option 4: Reduction to 0.5FE – that is moving towards having 15 children in each year.	A school with an overall roll of 105 would struggle to be financially viable – and would lack the resilience larger schools have to cover for staff absence and resource deployment. In any event it is unlikely that the school would be full even with this lower roll.
Option 5: Setting the PAN to zero and slow closure over a number of years.	This would allow for a longer period to transfer pupils but with numbers of children attending falling the school's financial position would worsen on top of a significant deficit already projected. This would in turn limit the resources available for education and threaten standards in the school.
Option 6 - Closure of school in August 2025	This would seem to be the only viable option having explored other ways forward.

The statutory closure proposal

Southwark Council as a nominated body, can propose the closure of Charlotte Sharman Foundation Primary School. The council is proposing the closure of the school by 31st August 2025. To do this, the council must follow statutory processes that involve consultation, required by government guidance and legislation. This consultation document has been published by the Council to this end.

Reasons for the proposed closure

After consideration of all the above options for Charlotte Sharman Foundation Primary School Southwark council recommends the closure of Charlotte Sharman Primary from August 31st 2025 to ensure that children are able to access their education in viable schools with resources available to ensure that they can continue to receive a high quality education.

Is there sufficient space at other primary schools for all Charlotte Sharman Primary pupils?

Southwark is confident that all children presently attending Charlotte Sharman Primary School, and all applicants to reception for September 2025 can be accommodated in alternative schools within a reasonable distance. There are currently- in January 2025 - 856 vacancies at 12 Southwark schools within 0.75 miles of Charlotte Sharman – 169 at reception. If places are included at the 4 schools in Lambeth within this distance, this increases to 997 places (and 191 reception).

Statutory requirements

In line with the Department for Education's (DFE) guidance: *Opening and closing maintained schools, Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers, January 2023* and Schedule 2 of the Education and Inspections Act (EIA) 2006 as amended by the Education Act 2011 and The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013 the Local Authority (LA) will be following the statutory process for closing a maintained school which consists of 5 stages

Stage one: consultation - it is a statutory requirement for the Council should consult any parties they think are appropriate before publishing concrete proposals. The consultation will last for until the end of March 2025 to allow the widest possible canvassing of views. The purpose of the consultation is to seek the views of and engage with those that will be directly affected by the proposed closure of Charlotte Sharman Primary School. It is also an opportunity for interested parties to suggest other options for consideration on the proposed closure of Charlotte Sharman Primary School in August 2025.

Stage two: Publication – After the Consultation outlined above, the Council will analyse the results and decide whether to proceed with publication of formal proposals (known as statutory proposals) to close the school. If they do decide to proceed, statutory notices alerting stakeholders to the proposals will be published in the Southwark News, on the Council's website and will be displayed at the entrances to the school. The proposals will invite further comment on the proposed closure plans, and such comments would be made during the next phase, the "representation" period. This would be expected to take place in April 2025

Stage three: Representation – If it is decided to proceed with the publication of statutory proposals, the "representation" period will begin on the date of publication of the statutory proposals and will last for four weeks. This period would be during April 2025 and May 2025. Any person would be able to send objections or comments on the proposal to Southwark Council.

Stage four: decision – Within 2 months of the end of the representation period, the Council's Cabinet must meet to discuss and make a decision on whether or not to close Charlotte Sharman Primary School. Please note that although the initial consultation and the statutory proposals are put forward by the Council, and the governing body are consulted, the decision on whether or not to close the school *must* be made by the Council's Cabinet alone. The Cabinet would be expected make its decision in June 2025.

Stage five: implementation – If the Council's Cabinet decides to close the school this would take effect from 31st August 2025.

Potential Impact of proposed closure on pupils, parents and carers

If the closure is approved for August 31st 2025, Southwark Council has confirmed that there is sufficient capacity at other primary schools in the locality for families to be able to secure an alternative place for their children from September 2025 onwards. While the Council is not pre-empting the outcome of the process, it has ascertained that sufficient capacity exists for all children who wish to take up a place if closure is approved.

Potential Impact of the proposed closure on staff

Southwark Council recognise the significant impact that the proposed closure may have on staff members and are committed to working together with Governors to support staff regarding their current roles and future employment prospects. The collaborative efforts will focus on professional development, career guidance and workshops.

Potential impact of the proposed closure on the Community

Local residents will have the opportunity to express their views during this consultation and any following representation period.

School Places

School roll projections indicate the level of existing and future demand for primary school places across the borough and specifically, in the locality of the school in Borough, Bankside and Walworth. This is regularly reviewed and monitored by the Council, but existing rolls and projections in this area show a suppressed demand at reception and whole school level until at least September 2033.

We are consulting with...

Staff, parents/carers, the local community on the proposed closure of the schools. In addition, we will welcome the views of

- *All schools/admission authorities in Southwark, governing bodies and academy trusts*
- *Neighbouring Councils*
- *Councillors*
- *The SDBE and the Catholic Diocese*
- *Trade Unions*

Consultation period

This consultation will run from 10th February 2025 to 31st March 2025 , during this time you are invited to respond to the Council on its proposal to close the school. There will be meetings at the school and online for you to feed back your views to the school and the Council.

Timetable for decision making (final dates may be subject to change)

Stage	Dates
Stage 1: Statutory Consultation with interested parties	11 th February to 2025 to 31 st March 2025
Stage 2: Publication of statutory proposals (<i>If agreement to proceed is reached, following consideration of responses to the consultation in Stage 1</i>)	April 2025
Stage 3: Representation	April 2025 to May 2025
Stage 4: Cabinet decision	June 2025
Stage 5: Implementation	31 st August 2025

How to give your views:

This consultation allows anyone with an interest to comment or raise any concerns about the proposal to close Charlotte Sharman Primary School in August 2025. We welcome you to complete the questionnaire as detailed below, and to join a consultation meeting that will be held in February 2025 (dates to be notified)

- *Complete the online form at <https://engage.southwark.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/charlotte-sharman>*
OR
- *Complete the form on your phone at the QR code opposite*
OR
- *Complete the form attached and email the response to: questions.education@southwark.gov.uk*

Responses must be completed and returned by **5pm on the 31st March 2025**.

We strongly encourage responses to be submitted electronically either via the online questionnaire or by email where possible. Please request a paper copy of the questionnaire if you are unable to respond online.

What happens next?

After the consultation closing date of **31st March 2025**, responses will be analysed and a consultation report produced. The outcomes report will be shared with the Council and school Governing Body. The Lead Member for Education will then decide whether to publish proposals as a result of responses received and taking into account all perspectives.

Consultation on the proposed closure of Charlotte Sharman Primary Schools

Questionnaire

1) Please tell us whether you support/do not support the proposed closure of Charlotte Sharman Primary School (please tick)

- I support the proposed school closure
I do not support the proposed school closure
I am unsure

2) If you do, or do not support the proposed closure, please tell us why.

3) We are keen to understand how the proposed school closure may affect you. Please use this space to tell us if you are impacted by the proposed school closure and how. What can we do to address any impacts you have mentioned?

4) Do you have any alternative suggestions to any part of the proposal?

About You

We want to receive comments from the broadest range of people possible to reflect the opinion of our community. In order to enable us to assess the degree to which this has been successful, it would be helpful if you could take a moment to complete the section below. The Governing Body will ensure that any data provided will be protected against loss or misuse. Your information will not be retained or shared with any other parties and will be destroyed in line with relevant destruction policies and processes.

Please tell us who you are (please tick)

- Member of staff at Charlotte Sharman Primary School
- Member of staff at another school
- School Governor at Charlotte Sharman Primary School
- School Governor at another school
- Parent/carer of a child/children at Charlotte Sharman
- Parent/carer of child/children at another school
- Local resident
- Prefer not to say
- Other (Please specify) _____

If you live in Southwark, which Community Area do you live in? Please choose one)

- Bermondsey Borough & Bankside Camberwell Dulwich
- Elephant & Castle Nunhead Peckham Rotherhithe Walworth
- Other (please state) _____ Not applicable Prefer not to say

Age (please tick)

- Under 16 16-17 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54
- 55-64 65-74 75-84 85-94 95+ Prefer not to say

Which of the following best describes your ethnic background? (please tick)

- White British White Irish White European
- Other White Mixed White & Black Caribbean
- Mixed White & Black African Mixed White & Asian
- Other Mixed background Asian or Asian British: Indian
- Asian or Asian British: Pakistani Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi
- Asian or Asian British: Chinese Other Asian or Asian British Background
- Black or Black British: Caribbean Black or Black British: African
- Other Black/Black British Arabic
- Prefer not to say Other (*please specify*) _____

Do you consider yourself to have a disability? (please tick)

- No Yes Prefer not to say

If the above question is "yes", please specify your disability (please tick)

- Physical/mobility Hearing/Visual impairment Hearing impairment
- Mental Health Learning disability Long term illness Other
- Prefer not to say

What is your sex as recorded at birth (please tick)

- Male Female Other Prefer not to say

Is your gender now the same as recorded at birth?

- Yes No Prefer not to say

If no, how would you describe your gender identity?

- Transgender Non-binary Other Prefer to self-describe Prefer not to say

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation

Heterosexual/Straight Lesbian/gay woman Gay man/homosexual Bisexual
Other (please specify) _____ Prefer not to say

What is your religion or belief?

Christian Sikh Hindu Muslim Jewish Buddhist No religion
Other (please specify) Prefer not to say

Approximately, what is your annual household income?

Under £15,000 £15,000 to £29,999 £30,000 to £44,999 £45,000 to £59,999
£60,000 to £74,999 £75,000 to £89,999 £90,000 or above Prefer not to say

What is your current housing situation?

I own my home outright I am buying my home with the help of a mortgage
I rent from a Housing Association Shared Ownership I rent from the Council
I am the home owner of a Council property I rent from a private landlord
I live with family/friends rent free Other (please specify) _____
Prefer not to say