

## Pre-publication Consultation on the proposed closure of

Ann Bernadt Nursery School 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024

Statutory consultation period: 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023- 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023

### About the school

Ann Bernadt Nursery School is one of five maintained nursery schools in the Southwark and is in Peckham. The school is situated in Southwark's School Planning Area 3 (PA3) - Peckham. The school's current Ofsted rating is 'Good'.

In recent years, the school has struggled to fill the 160 places it was able to admit each year prior to staffing restructures. This academic year, starting September 2023, 15 children have so far taken up nursery places, 47 joined the school the previous year under a new reduced staffing structure. Ann Bernadt now has a capacity of 59 across the school, 45 places are currently filled with 14 places empty - 24% of the school, which is above the Southwark average vacancy level of 17%.

This low level of admissions has had a considerable financial effect on the school over the years, which has led to a substantial and growing in year financial deficit. School funding is driven by pupil numbers. The more pupils a school has, the more funding it receives.

Unused school places have an immediate cost for schools through reduced budgets, as well as affecting the overall viability and quality of education standards at the school. In terms of births in Peckham ward, numbers have reduced from 2018-2021 by 11 per annum (6%) and are projected to reduce further by 9% by 2027/8. The drop in births in the immediate locality, make it unlikely that pupil numbers will ever recover at Ann Bernadt.

Table 1 below shows the falling number of applications that Ann Bernadt has received each year since 2016.

*Table 1: Applicants*

| Year      | E2 | N1 | N2 | Total |
|-----------|----|----|----|-------|
| 2016/2017 | 3  | 61 | 59 | 123   |
| 2017/2018 | 0  | 42 | 74 | 116   |

|           |   |    |    |    |
|-----------|---|----|----|----|
| 2018/2019 | 0 | 45 | 54 | 99 |
| 2019/2020 | 0 | 14 | 70 | 84 |
| 2020/2021 | 0 | 22 | 45 | 67 |
| 2021/2022 | 0 | 23 | 32 | 55 |
| 2022/2023 | 0 | 26 | 45 | 71 |

## The Proposal

The governing body as the body responsible for Ann Bernadt Nursery School is proposing closure of the school by August 2024 and has resolved to commence the statutory process that closure involves. The Local Authority (LA) supports this action. This consultation document and the attached Frequently Asked Questions document have been published by the governing body.

## Reason for the proposed closure

The governing body has reached the view that Ann Bernadt Nursery School can no longer remain financially viable. There are several reasons contributing to this position:

- *the numbers on roll have fallen consistently over the past six years resulting in reduced funding which the school receives based on pupil numbers*
- *The reduced funding has moved the school budget into deficit over the past six years with the school now in significant debt. It is unlikely the school will be able to pay off this debt*
- *The circumstances have made it inevitable that the school will incur further debt if it remains open*
- *Reduced funding will have impact on staffing and resources, which will limit the school's ability to continue to provide the high quality of education that the children in the school community need and deserve.*

Because of the above, the school will be hampered in its capacity to deliver the broad and balanced curriculum that it would be reasonable to expect of a maintained nursery school now and in the immediate and longer-term future.

## Statutory requirements

In line with the Department for Education's (DFE) guidance: [Opening and closing maintained schools, Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers, November 2019](#), Part 2 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 governing body 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 governors to consult any parties they think are appropriate before publishing concrete proposals. The consultation will last for 6 weeks 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 Ann Bernadt Nursery School.

It is also an opportunity for interested parties to suggest other options for consideration on the proposed closure of Ann Bernadt Nursery School in August 2024. This period will run from **18<sup>th</sup> October 2023 to 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023**.

### 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 governing body's plans, and such comments would be made during the next phase, the 'representation' period. This period will run during December 2023

### 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 will run from **8<sup>th</sup> January 2023 to 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024**. 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 will meet to discuss and decide on whether to close the school. Please note that although the initial consultation and the statutory proposals are put

forward by the school's governing body, the decision on whether to close the school must be made by the Council. The Council would make its decision on **5<sup>th</sup> March 2024**.

### **Stage five: Implementation**

If the Council's Cabinet decides to close the school, this would in effect be by the **31<sup>st</sup> August 2024**.

### **Impact of the closure on pupils, parents and carers**

If the closure is approved for August 2024, the local authority has confirmed that there is sufficient capacity within neighbouring provision to accommodate the children who will not be moving on to Reception class in primary school.

There are two maintained nursery schools located within walking distance of Ann Bernadt. [Nell Gwynn Nursery school](#) ([approximate distance and walking time](#) 0.9 miles and 18 minutes), which is the federation partner of Ann Bernadt Nursery school and Grove Nursery school ([approximate distance and walking time](#) 0.3 miles and 6 minutes).

There are also two maintained primary schools that have teacher led nursery provision within walking distance. [Oliver Goldsmiths Primary school](#) ([approximate distance and walking time](#) 0.3 miles and 5 minutes) and [Brunswick Park Primary school](#) ([approximate distance and walking time](#) 0.5 miles and 10 minutes).

In addition, there is a choice of Private, Voluntary and Independent providers in the local area who offer early years provision. [Further information may be found on the Family Information Service website pages](#).

### **Impact of the closure on Staff**

Southwark Council will work collaboratively to seek to redeploy as many staff as possible, into alternative positions in other schools within Southwark. Alternatively, staff will be supported through a programme of redundancy.

### **Community**

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

## Early Years Places

Early years provider projections indicate sufficiency of early years places across the Borough and specifically, within the Peckham area for the next eight years, even if Ann Bernadt Nursery School closes. This will continue to be reviewed and monitored by the local authority (please see the section above entitled ‘Impact of the closure on pupils, parents and carers’)

## We are consulting with

Staff, parents/carers, the local authority, and the local community on the proposed closure of the school. In addition, we would welcome the views of

- *All schools and 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 **18<sup>th</sup> October 2023 to 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023**, during this time you are invited to respond to the governing body on its proposal to close the school.

## Consultation Timetable

| Stage   | Dates   |
|---|---|
| <b>Stage 1</b><br>Statutory Consultation with interested parties  | <b>18<sup>th</sup> October 2023 to 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023</b> |
| <b>Stage 2</b><br>Publication of statutory proposals- if thought fit following consideration of responses to the consultation in Stage1 | <b>December 2023</b>  |
| <b>Stage 3</b><br>Representation  | <b>8<sup>th</sup> January 2023 to 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024.</b> |
| <b>Stage 4</b><br>Cabinet decision  | <b>5<sup>th</sup> March 2024</b>                                    |
| <b>Stage 5</b><br>Implementation  | <b>31<sup>st</sup> August 2024</b>                                  |

### How to give your views:

This consultation allows anyone with an interest to comment or raise any concerns about the proposal to close Ann Bernadt Nursery School in August 2024. We welcome you to complete the questionnaire as detailed below and share your views about the proposal.

Please choose one of the following options to share your views

- [Complete the online questionnaire here](#)
- Write to: Headteacher, Ann Bernadt Nursery School, 29 Chandler Way, London, SE15 6DT
- Complete the form attached and return to the school office
- Email a response to: [questions.education@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:questions.education@southwark.gov.uk)
- Scan the following QR code and complete the form



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 from the school office if you are unable to respond online.

Responses must be completed and returned by **5pm on the 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

### What happens next?

After the consultation closing date of **6<sup>th</sup> December 2023**, responses will be analysed, and a consultation report produced. This will be presented to the Strategic Director of Children's & Adults' Services to consider the outcome of the consultation and to decide whether to publish a statutory notice and proposals and start the representation period on the proposed school closure.

The outcomes report will be shared with the governing body and Southwark Council, Education Department. The results of this consultation will also be published on the school's webpage and Southwark Council's website.

# Consultation on the proposed closure of Ann Bernadt Nursery School

## Questionnaire

**PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN YOUR RESPONSE BY 5.00PM 6<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2023**

### Question one

Please tell us whether you support or do not support the proposed closure of Ann Bernadt Nursery School

|  | Please tick |
|--|-------------|
| I support the proposed school closure        |             |
| I do not support the proposed school closure |             |
| I am unsure                                  |             |
| I am not affected by the proposed closure    |             |

### Question two

If you **do not** support the proposed closure, please tell us why

### Question three

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?

**Question four**

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.

**Question five**

Please tell us who you are

|  | <b>Please tick</b> |
|--|--------------------|
| Governor at Ann Bernadt                          |                    |
| Governor at another school                       |                    |
| Member of staff at Ann Bernadt                   |                    |
| Member of staff at another school                |                    |
| Parent/carer of a child/children at Ann Bernadt  |                    |
| Parent/carer of child/children at another school |                    |
| Local resident                                   |                    |



|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Prefer not to say      |  |
| Other (Please specify) |  |

### Question six

Please tell us how you identify

|                         | Please tick |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Female                  |             |
| Male                    |             |
| Non-binary              |             |
| Transgender             |             |
| Prefer to self-describe |             |
| Prefer not to say       |             |

### Question seven

Please tell us your age

|                   |  | Please tick |
|-------------------|--|-------------|
| Under 19          |  |             |
| 19-25             |  |             |
| 26-34             |  |             |
| 35-44             |  |             |
| 45-54             |  |             |
| 55-64             |  |             |
| 65+               |  |             |
| Prefer not to say |  |             |

### Question eight

Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?

|                                     |  |   |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Arabic                              |  | Asian or Asian British: Indian          |  |
| Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi |  | Asian or Asian British: Pakistani       |  |
| 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           |  | White British                           |  |
| White European                      |  | White Irish                             |  |
| Other white                         |  | Mixed white and Asian                   |  |
| Mixed white and black African       |  | Mixed white and black Caribbean         |  |
| Other mixed background              |  | Prefer not to say                       |  |

Other- Please specify

### Question 9

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

|     | Please tick |
|-----|-------------|
| No  |             |
| Yes |             |

### Question 10

If you answered 'yes' to question nine, please specify your disability

|                       | Please tick |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| Mobility              |             |
| Visual impairment     |             |
| Hearing impairment    |             |
| Mental Health         |             |
| Learning disability   |             |
| Prefer not to say     |             |
| Other- please specify |             |