

Statutory Proposal to close Raine's CofE Foundation School

1. Contact details

Name and address of Local Authority publishing the proposal:

Tower Hamlets Council, Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London, E14 2BG

Name, address and category of school proposed to be discontinued:

Raine's Foundation School, Approach Rd, Bethnal Green, London, E2 9LY
(Voluntary Aided School)

2. Implementation

Date on which it is proposed to close the school: 31 August 2020

It is proposed to implement the closure as follows:

- No Year 7 pupils would be admitted for 2020 (Parents who have expressed a preference for this year have been informed of the proposal for closure in 2020 before the Autumn term secondary transfer admissions round in 2019).
- Years 8, 9, 10, 11 allocated to Oaklands School, Old Bethnal Green Rd, London E2 6PR for September 2020. Parents can apply for their children to attend alternative schools.
- There are currently no Year 12 pupils on roll.

3. Reason for closure

The proposal arises due to a fall in pupil numbers and the associated impact on the educational and financial viability of the school. The School is being recommended for closure due to underlying sustainability issues relating to its considerable and unrecoverable cumulative budget deficit at 1 April 2019 of £0.91m, very low pupil numbers and admission patterns that have seen a substantial decline in applications over the previous eight-year period:

Raine's	1st Pref	2nd Pref	3rd Pref	4th Pref	5th Pref	6th Pref	Total	PAN	Offers*
2011	96	106	107	46	34	36	425	150	150
2012	71	94	90	56	22	37	370	150	114
2013	63	61	72	46	37	28	307	150	102
2014	65	85	74	57	33	36	350	150	95
2015	62	64	62	44	24	22	278	150	89
2016	57	55	57	28	36	23	256	150	88
2017	62	54	37	37	30	13	233	150	91
2018	49	65	40	26	25	11	216	150	72
2019	29	23	35	17	13	16	133	150	36

PAN = Planned Admissions Number

*Offers made to Raine's applicants on National Offer Day (1st March)

NB. Not all applicants would be offered a place at Raine's as the majority secured a place at a higher preference School

The School's position is further exacerbated by being in the Ofsted category of 'Requiring Improvement' since November 2015 with below standard GCSE results.

A seven-week period of public consultation, including meetings with staff, governors, parents and other interested parties was undertaken from 10th June to 31st July 2019 in relation to whether the Council should publish this notice and propose to close Raine's School and move students to Oaklands School from the 2020/21 academic year. The consultation documents and responses can be viewed [here](#).

4. Pupil numbers and admissions

The numbers of pupils for whom provision is currently made at the school:

Raine's Foundation is a co-educational voluntary aided school for pupils aged 11 to 19. The school has a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 150 for each year group, giving a total of 1050 places. As at 4 November 2019 the school has 217 pupils on roll.

5. Displaced pupils

There are currently 217 pupils on roll: 0 in Year 7, 40 in Year 8, 57 in Year 9, 2 in Year 10, 74 in Year 11, 0 in Year 12 and 44 in Year 13 (November 2019).

This proposal is being considered alongside a parallel proposal to expand Oaklands School. It is considered that the proposals are interrelated and therefore the plan is for provision to be made to accommodate all displaced pupils at Oaklands School, Old Bethnal Green Road, London, E2 6PR (under that parallel proposal). During the informal consultation it was indicated that some families have preferences for other local schools and/or may live closer to other schools. Some schools in the surrounding areas have vacancies in some year groups and the Local Authority will endeavour to meet parental preferences for school places, where possible.

The local authority will continue to monitor the projected need for future school places and propose changes, if required, to ensure sufficient places are available in its area. However, given the parallel proposal and plan to use an expanded Oaklands for displaced pupils, it is not anticipated that the closure of Raine's will cause a shortage of secondary school places elsewhere in the local authority's area if that proposal were to be approved.

Where pupils do not wish to take up a place at Oaklands, they also have the option of applying for other schools in the Local Authority's area. The Council will support those applications, where students meet the admissions criteria and where there is sufficient space at the relevant school. The same applies to the Urswick School in Hackney at which the local authority and Diocese have agreed there will be priority consideration given to displaced pupils from Raine's who meet the Urswick School church admissions criteria should the proposals pass. Urswick School is geographically nearby to Raine's and therefore a potential option for some pupils to attend.

6. Impact on the community

Raine's School does not directly provide community access to its facilities.

The building at Approach Road, E2 is currently rented to an external organisation to run community sports activities outside of school hours. This organisation will be provided with the opportunity to continue to run its provision out of a nearby alternative school with similar sports facilities.

There may be an impact on the community as the particular composition of students attending Raine's, and their parents and guardians, will no longer exist at the school.

However, these students and their parents have the opportunity to continue to socialise as a community through secondary educational provision at Oaklands School.

Parental choice will be comparatively diminished by the removal of Raine's as an option to select. However, insofar as parents are concerned to obtain Christian or CofE educational provision for their children, there remain options within both Tower Hamlets (Sir John Cass, Bishop Challoner, and Canary Wharf – on which please see section 8 below) and in Hackney (Urswick School). Sir John Cass is a very popular school and therefore children from Raine's are unlikely to obtain a place there. However, there is greater space available at the other schools.

7. Rural primary schools

Not applicable.

8. Balance of denominational provision

The local authority is under an obligation to consider the impact on the balance of denominational provision in the area before it determines the outcome of school closure proposals. Raine's is a CofE school. Were Raine's to close then a CofE secondary school option would continue to be available in Tower Hamlets at Sir John Cass Foundation. It is noted that this is a popular school and is often oversubscribed therefore is not an option for all Raine's current pupils. There is however other faith school places accessible in Tower Hamlets at Bishop Challoner and Canary Wharf secondary schools.

Oaklands is a non-denominational School. However, were the proposal to be passed then steps would be taken to ensure that former Raine's pupils who wished to practice their religion could secure chapel time at the school.

As there is another CofE secondary school as well as other faith schools in Tower Hamlets and surrounding areas, the proposed closure will have minimal impact on the balance of denominational school provision in the local authority's area.

There has been a significant decline in the number of applications for children from CofE primary schools to Raine's over recent years and this mirrors the decline in the borough's Christian population as evidenced by the last national census, where Tower Hamlets had the lowest proportion of Christian residents nationally: 30 per cent compared with a national average of 59 per cent.

Raine's has a Planned Admission Number of 1050, but it is currently operating with 217 pupils on its roll, and had 526 students on its roll prior to an original consultation was conducted to consider issuing this statutory notice.

9. Maintained nursery schools

Not applicable.

10. Sixth form provision

Pupils currently in Year 11 will have the option to continue their 6th form studies at Oaklands or transfer to other 6th form provisions and this will be co-ordinated with support from the staff at Raine's School and the LA.

There is a greater provision of educational opportunities at Oaklands because of its size and viable funding model.

11. Special Educational Needs provision

Raine's School does not provide educational provision recognised by the local authority as being reserved for children with special educational needs. There are 43 pupils on roll who have been identified as having special educational needs, of which there are 5 pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan.

At Oaklands there is a Special Educational Needs dedicated department that assists students with a range of educational requirements. The proposal is therefore expected to improve special SEN provision.

12. Travel

Distance for home to school travel for the 217 pupils in Years 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 13 currently attending the Raine's ranges from 0.07 to 13.7 miles.

The table below gives the travel distances for these same pupils to Oaklands School.

Travel to Oaklands School	Number of pupils	% of pupils
Up to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile	9	4%
Between $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 mile	42	20%
Between ¹ -2 miles	92	42%
Between ² -3 miles	46	22%
More than 3 miles	28	13%
Total pupils	217	100%

It is recognised that these displaced pupils will need to make new journeys to school and may need to travel slightly further to Oaklands. However, in the majority of cases the journey to the new school will be less than 2 miles. Eligibility for support with home to school transport will be determined in line with the local authority's home to school transport policy, which can be accessed via this link: [School Travel Support](#).

Increased car use (compared to that for Raine's) is unlikely under the proposal (and parallel proposal to expand Oaklands) due to the distance to Oaklands being walkable for similar proportions of (and most) students. Where that is not the case, there are bus routes and support under the school transport policy set out above which would prevent individual families from needing to use cars. The distance between the Raine's and Oaklands school sites is 0.6 miles. Therefore, the difference under the proposal is negligible.

13. Procedure for making representations (objections and comments)

Within four weeks from the date of publication of this proposal any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by:

Email: school.organisation@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Post: School Organisation and Place Planning Manager
Pupil Services and School Sufficiency
Tower Hamlets Children's and Culture
Town Hall
Mulberry Place
5 Clove Crescent
E14 5BG

Closing date for responses is 2nd December 2019 at midnight.

We will not be able to consider any responses received after this date. All responses received during the representation period will be published on the Council's website in mid-January 2019. The website address is: www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/rainesfoundationschool.