

Equality Analysis (EA)

Section 1 – General Information (Aims and Objectives)

Name of the proposal including aims, objectives and purpose
(Please note – for the purpose of this doc, ‘proposal’ refers to a policy, function, strategy or project)

Planning for School Places 2019/20

Amalgamation of Redlands and Smithy Street schools

This Equalities Impact Assessment concerns the proposal to amalgamate Redlands and Smithy Street Primary Schools, whereby Smithy would close, and its pupils would transfer to Redlands, which would expand to accommodate Smithy pupils (should their parents choose to take up a place there). A new school would therefore be created.

Tower Hamlets has a great tradition of excellent education; it values the important role that schools have in increasing the life chances of its children. However, the borough is now in a position where there is the need for longer term planning to maintain the success and future sustainability of its schools.

Demand for school places is driven by population growth and housing development. Although population growth in Tower Hamlets is among the fastest in the country, it has not translated into the expected increased demand for primary school places. Falling birth rates, changing resident demographics and young families migrating out of the borough have resulted in a significant surplus of primary school places in some areas of the borough. As of January 2019, there is a 6.5% surplus in primary school places (1656 are unfilled). This is over the recommended 5% surplus that urban local authorities are recommended to operate with. The 5% surplus is designed to allow local authorities to meet their statutory duty to provide sufficient school places, yet still enable parents to have some choice of schools.

The impact of falling rolls in certain areas of the borough, reductions in education funding and schools in financial deficit, present a number of challenges. It has therefore been necessary to consider making changes that will ensure we have the right provision in the right place at the right time going forward. Provision that can be well resourced and is of high quality will enable schools to continue to thrive and offer the opportunities that children deserve: a strong curriculum with excellent teaching, enriching activities and a joyful experience at primary school.

In the Stepney catchment area, where Smithy Street and Redlands are located, there are currently 840 reception places available. As of January 2019, 110 places, equating to four FTE classes, were unfilled. Projections indicate this will increase to 141 unfilled places by 2027. The review aims to safeguard the high-quality provision that exists within our schools and is being developed in collaboration with school leaders and other key stakeholders.

The work is being planned and supported through the LA’s work with the Tower Hamlets Education Partnership (THEP), which plays a key role in enabling schools to meet the challenge of ensuring that all children and young people in Tower Hamlets achieve the best possible outcomes and can flourish if schools are working in effective partnerships.

Ultimately, access to good quality school places is essential to raising achievement and addressing poverty and inequality in the long term. The reorganisation of school provision and

See Appendix A

Current decision
rating



the development of new schools in certain areas of the borough should have a positive impact on all groups by improving accessibility, increasing parental choice and promoting inclusive education.

Conclusion - To be completed at the end of the Equality Analysis process

(the exec summary will provide an update on the findings of the EA and what outcome there has been as a result. For example, based on the findings of the EA, the proposal was rejected as the impact on a particular group was unreasonable and did not give due regard. Or, based on the EA, the proposal was amended, and alternative steps taken)

Based on the findings of the EA, the proposal is robust. The proposal ensures increased equality of opportunity regarding improved educational outcomes for all Smithy Street and Redlands pupils. This should ensure that these pupils will leave primary education with a robust education, and having had the opportunity to participate in enriching extra-curricular activities

EA completed by: Elizabeth Freer
(officer completing the EA)

EA signed off by: Terry Bryan
(service head)

Date signed off: 6th March 2020
(approved)

Service area:
SPP

Team name:
Children and Culture

Name and role of the officer completing the EA:
Elizabeth Freer, Strategy and Policy Manager

Section 2 – Evidence (Consideration of Data and Information)

What initial evidence do we have which may help us think about the impacts or likely impacts on service users or staff?

The following evidence has been considered:

Engagement evidence

The schools’ governing bodies have undertaken an initial, informal consultation with their communities after forming a steering group consisting of Chairs, deputy Chairs and Headteachers from both schools. They have been supported by an independent consultant. Since July 2018, when the schools were first identified as being “in scope” for review by the local authority, they have met regularly. Both governing bodies agreed to consult in the first half of the Autumn Term 2019, and shared this information with parents and staff, as well as circulating a letter about the review to all parents. A consultation document, agreed with the local authority, was circulated via email, paper versions and placed on the school websites. The following meetings have been held:

Smithy Street:

Staff on 30th and 3rd October 2019

Parents on 24th and 25th September 2019

Children discussed the proposal in assemblies held on 23rd and 30th September

Redlands:

Staff on 7th October and 9th October

Parents on 24th and 25th September 2019

Children discussed the proposal in assemblies held on 30th September and 8th October 2019

Other Evidence

Ofsted reports

Pupil projections

School census data of Redlands and Smithy Street and London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Demographic data held on current staff and pupils at Redlands and Smithy Street

Section 3 – Assessing the Impacts on the Equality Groups

Please refer to the guidance notes and evidence with sources how your proposal impacts upon the equality groups and our Equality Duty (for information on the Public Sector Equality Duty, please refer to guidance notes).

Remember -

You must act to eliminate any potential negative impact which, if it occurred would breach the Equality Act 2010. In some situations, this could mean abandoning your proposed change as you may not be able to take action to mitigate all negative impacts.

When you act to reduce any negative impact or maximise any positive impact, you must ensure that this does not create a negative impact on service users and/or staff belonging to groups that share protected characteristics.

Reports/stats/data can be added as an Appendix.

Equality Groups	Impact			Reason(s)
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	
	What impact will the proposal have on specific groups of service users or staff?			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please add a narrative to justify your claims around impacts and, • Please describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion as this will inform decision making
Protected characteristics				
Age	X			<p>Changing schools during any phase of education can be viewed as possibly disruptive. To ease any possible disruption, the change is proposed to take place between academic years. This will allow the current Year 6 pupils to continue to attend their current school before they transition to secondary school, thereby minimising any potential disruption. It also reduces the amount of pupils affected, as the 120 pupils in year 6 at Smithy and Redlands (60 at each school) will have moved on. Children in Year 2 preparing for SATs will be able to take the tests at their current school in a familiar environment.</p> <p>As the purpose of this proposal is to ensure that all children in the borough have access to sustainable, high quality education, there is a clear benefit for all Smithy Street pupils who are currently at a school which Ofsted</p>

have recently judged to “Require Improvement”, dropping from “Outstanding”. Ofsted, the regulatory body and sole arbiter of quality, identified that “pupils have gaps in their knowledge. They do not achieve as well as they should.” Conversely, Redlands is graded “Good” with pupils “making strong progress in phonics, mathematics and writing”.

11% of pupils at Redlands achieve at a higher standard in reading, writing and maths, compared to 7% at Smithy Street. However, the progress score for maths at Smithy Street is higher than at Redlands, meaning Redlands pupils will benefit from the experience and knowledge Smithy Street staff have. Combining staff and pupils from both schools should enhance the current offer at Redlands, as staff will bring with them additional skills and share best practice.

In the formal consultation period, the issue of Ofsted grades and suitable leadership was raised. As the head of Redlands will be leaving having resigned, the current head of Smithy Street will become the Head for the new Stepney Park School if the proposal is approved. Parents asked for clarity around measures that have been put into place to ensure there is not a subsequent drop of standard for the existing Redlands pupils who will be joined by a school requiring improvement.

In September 2019, Ofsted introduced a new inspection framework. Smithy Street was the first primary school Tower Hamlets to be inspected under this new framework and was judged to “require improvement” having previously been an outstanding school. In fact, 97% of the previously outstanding primary schools inspected in London during the initial period of new framework ‘dropped’ in their previous Ofsted judgement. Smithy Street was among the 27% that fell into the category of requiring improvement.

In Key Stage 1 in 2019, 78% of pupils at Smithy Street achieved the expected standard at the end of Yr2. This is 3% above the national average. In Key Stage 2 in 2019, outcomes in reading at the end of year 6 were above the national average at both the expected (76% compared to 73%) and higher standard (28% compared to 27%). Progress in reading from KS1 to KS2 is above average compared to schools nationally.

Smithy Street has performed above both national and the local authority averages in the combined measure (reading, writing and maths) for the past three years at the end of KS2. Smithy Street three-year average is 76% compared to LA at 71% and national at 64%.

Although pupil outcomes for reading are strong, the inspection team found some inconsistencies in the school, particularly in the way the school taught phonics in Reception and year 1. Since the inspection, the leaders at

Appendix 4 – EA Redlands and Smithy Street Amalgamation | 2020

				<p>school have made changes and the teaching of phonics and systems and procedures put in place are now robust.</p> <p>Since its Ofsted inspection Smithy Street has been working with the Tower Hamlets Education Partnership (THEP) to ensure that the areas identified for improvement are being addressed. The headteacher and leaders at Smithy Street School are now working with the leaders at Redlands to ensure that the quality of education will be good for all pupils in amalgamated school.</p> <p>Both schools have been experiencing a decline in pupil numbers from 2015 onwards. In 2015, Redlands received 144 applications, declining to 98 in 2019, representing a decrease of almost 32%. Smithy Street received 174 applications in 2015, compared to 121 in 2019, a decrease of just over 30%. As a school's financial position is based on the number of children on roll, operating at capacity is imperative to ensure there is the budget to offer a rich curriculum, as well as extra-curricular activities. Joining the two schools will ensure this is possible and therefore improve the already comprehensive offer at Redlands, such as bike training, cooking lessons, running its own newspaper and a woodland school offer for nursery children. Representations received during the formal consultation process asked for reassurance that the Redlands' offer would continue. There is no plan at this stage for the cost of current activities to increase or for provision to be reduced.</p> <p>The impact on staff, who will also join together to form one staffing structure, will be minimal as there are no redundancies owing to natural wastage. During the informal consultation, parents at both schools identified that joining the two schools will lead to increased staffing levels and other resources, sustainable finances and increased potential for school improvement. Staff fed back similar reasons, and identified that staffing structures might change. However, staff at both schools have enjoyed also the impact of working more closely. By joining together the two schools, pupils and staff, this will lend itself to the creation of a new staffing structure, with more senior positions. This will create more opportunities for career progression, especially for BAME staff who are currently under-represented in senior leadership roles.</p>
Disability	X			<p>There are 57 pupils on roll with identified Special Educational Needs/Disabilities (SEND) at Redlands, 10 of whom have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). At Smithy Street, there are 59 children with identified SEND, 18 of whom have an EHCP. No children are in receipt of SEND transport. Although children with SEND may be particularly "disadvantaged" by a change of school, the transition will be eased by the change occurring over the summer holidays. Of the 59 Smithy Street pupils, 6 are in Year 6, so will have moved on to secondary school, as would the 13 year 6 pupils at Redlands.</p>

Appendix 4 – EA Redlands and Smithy Street Amalgamation | 2020

			<p>The new school will have a robust, inclusive approach to supporting children with SEND, and teach children with SEND alongside their peers, planning lessons to cater for the needs of all children.</p> <p>In order to make sure any unknown special needs are picked up early, all pupils will be assessed within their first half term at school, as is the norm at Redlands currently. There are, and will continue to be, regular assessment and monitoring procedures, including the review of termly assessments, which continue throughout the children’s time at school to look out for any special needs that may develop later.</p> <p>Joining the two schools together will also maximise resources and ensure that all pupils with SEND have access to enhanced provision through the expertise that exists across both schools, and particularly at Redlands where a Speech and Language Therapist is employed to work in school one day a week and an Educational Psychologist is also brought in to work in school. As and when needed, the new school will continue to work with St. Joseph’s Hospice and other local charitable organisations to offer therapeutic support for children, e.g. play therapy for children suffering from significant loss. It will also continue to make best use of local charities such as ‘Stepney Relief in Need’ who offer financial support to families in order for them to access specific resources.</p> <p>Annual Reviews for students with EHCPs will be brought forward to ensure their needs are being met and will continue to be met. The progress for students with SEND will be regularly reviewed. Support with transitions and integration into Redlands will be offered by the Parent and Family Support Service.</p> <p>As both sites will continue to be used (current entrances are 0.2 miles apart) and accessibility increased, there is minimal impact on pupils and families. The local authority has planned capital investment to ensure that access across both sites is improved and it supports the particular requirements of children with SEND. During the informal consultation period, parents also identified that joining the schools would lead to increased play space. It is unclear whether those parents have children with SEND, but increased access to more space will benefit all children. Using both sites will allow optimal use of classrooms, thereby freeing up budget for other uses.</p>
Sex		X	<p>Redlands and Smithy Street have a similar gender breakdown, with slightly fewer girls than boys: 46% of pupils identify as female at Redlands and 48% at Smithy Street. Therefore, amalgamating the two schools will have a neutral impact – the school demographic will remain similar in terms of gender.</p> <p>More females than males are employed at both schools, as is the case with most primary schools in the borough. However, as no staff members will face redundancy, and staff at both schools have expressed they</p>

Appendix 4 – EA Redlands and Smithy Street Amalgamation | 2020

			are enjoying working closely with one another, there is no negative impact from the proposal to amalgamate.																																																
Gender reassignment		X	No impact identified.																																																
Marriage or civil partnership		X	No impact identified.																																																
Religion or belief		X	No impact identified - information on religion is not collected as neither school are faith provisions, but instead are non-denominational.																																																
Race		X	<p>Redlands and Smithy Street have a very similar pupil demographic in terms of ethnicity, as evidenced below (data from school census 2018, which is the last validated data available currently)</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="background-color: #4F81BD; color: white;">Ethnicity</th> <th style="background-color: #4F81BD; color: white;">Redlands</th> <th style="background-color: #4F81BD; color: white;">Smithy Street</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Any Other Asian Background</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">5</td></tr> <tr><td>Any Other Ethnic Group</td><td style="text-align: center;">8</td><td style="text-align: center;">15</td></tr> <tr><td>Any Other Mixed Background</td><td style="text-align: center;">0</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>Any Other White Background</td><td style="text-align: center;">13</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>Bangladeshi</td><td style="text-align: center;">378</td><td style="text-align: center;">373</td></tr> <tr><td>Black - Any Other Black African Background</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td><td style="text-align: center;">5</td></tr> <tr><td>Black - Somali</td><td style="text-align: center;">14</td><td style="text-align: center;">18</td></tr> <tr><td>Chinese</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td></tr> <tr><td>Indian</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td></tr> <tr><td>Pakistani</td><td style="text-align: center;">9</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td></tr> <tr><td>Vietnamese</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">0</td></tr> <tr><td>White - British</td><td style="text-align: center;">0</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td></tr> <tr><td>White and Asian</td><td style="text-align: center;">5</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>White and Black African</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">0</td></tr> <tr><td>Total</td><td style="text-align: center;">441</td><td style="text-align: center;">431</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Joining the schools will not cause any significant changes to the pupil demographic of the new school. Both schools have a similar proportion of pupils with English as an additional language so will be able to share best</p>	Ethnicity	Redlands	Smithy Street	Any Other Asian Background	3	5	Any Other Ethnic Group	8	15	Any Other Mixed Background	0	2	Any Other White Background	13	2	Bangladeshi	378	373	Black - Any Other Black African Background	4	5	Black - Somali	14	18	Chinese	1	1	Indian	1	4	Pakistani	9	1	Vietnamese	3	0	White - British	0	3	White and Asian	5	2	White and Black African	2	0	Total	441	431
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Appendix 4 – EA Redlands and Smithy Street Amalgamation | 2020

practice with how to support children who are bi/multi-lingual. All children upon reaching Key Stage 2 will have access to Spanish lessons, thereby enhancing their language skills and abilities.

As with pupils, staff have a very similar demographic in terms of ethnicity:

Ethnicity	Redlands	Smithy Street
Bangladeshi	29	33
Indian	1	1
Pakistani	1	0
Any Other Asian Background	1	1
Black Caribbean	2	0
White and Asian	1	2
White and Black Caribbean	0	1
Any Other Mixed Background	1	0
White - British	23	19
White - Irish	3	0
Any Other White Background	5	0
Any Other Ethnic Group	0	1
Information Not Yet Obtained	7	9
Grand Total	74	67

As there will be no redundancies, but instead increased opportunities for career progression into more senior roles, there is no negative impact on staff. BAME staff, who are currently under-represented in senior positions, will therefore have an increased opportunity to move into said roles.

Sexual orientation		X		No impact identified. No data on sexual orientation collected.
Pregnancy or		X		No impact identified. No data collected.

Appendix 4 – EA Redlands and Smithy Street Amalgamation | 2020

maternity				
Other				
Socio-economic	X			Approximately 19% of pupils at Smithy Street are eligible for Free School Meals, compared to the slightly higher proportion of 25% at Redlands. BBC Children in Need have given Redlands School a grant to support their breakfast club, and the charity Magic Breakfast provides Redlands School with free bagels, cereals and fruit juice. The current children at Smithy Street will be able to access this if the schools amalgamate. Bringing together the two schools will allow the new school to develop extended provision, such as breakfast and afterschool clubs, and increase the amount of extra-curricular activities and trips pupils have access to.
Parents/Carers		X		As previously mentioned, most parents who responded to the information consultation by returning forms are positive about the amalgamation, stressing the importance of maintaining a high standard of education was paramount to any change being successful. Their concerns focused around the cost of a new school uniform, the risk of becoming too big a school and the need to maintain a Redman’s Road entrance. The decision about a new uniform is being undertaken by the governing bodies, which may choose to offer financial assistance. The new school will be bigger in terms of roll, as it will be a 3 form entry school, instead of the current 2 form entry school at both sites. However, this also brings with it the benefits of more staff, and a bigger site. Therefore, the main difference will be more space and more support for the most vulnerable. Both the Smithy Street entrance and the current Redlands School entrance will be available to families. However, the main entrance will be in Smithy Street.

Section 4 – Statutory Duties

Tick the relevant box(es) to indicate whether the proposed change will adversely impact on the Council’s ability to meet any aspect of the Public Sector Duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010:

- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who belong to protected groups
- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Fostering good relations between people who belong to protected characteristic groups

If the proposed change adversely impacts on the Council’s ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties set out above, mitigating actions must be outlined in the Action Plan in Section 5 below.

Section 5 - Action Plan

As a result of these conclusions and recommendations what actions (if any) **will** be included in your business planning and wider review processes (team plan)? Please consider any gaps or areas needing further attention in the table below the example.

Example

Recommendation	Key activity	Progress milestones including target dates for either completion or progress	Officer responsible	Progress
1. Better collection of feedback, consultation and data sources 2. Non-discriminatory behaviour	1. Create and use feedback forms. Consult other providers and experts 2. Regular awareness at staff meetings. Train staff in specialist courses	1. Forms ready for January 2020 Start consultations Jan 2020 2. Raise awareness at one staff meeting a month. At least 2 specialist courses to be run per year for staff.	1.NR & PB 2. NR	

Your action plan

Recommendation	Key activity	Progress milestones including target dates for either completion or progress	Officer responsible	Progress

Section 6 – Monitoring

Have monitoring processes been put in place to check the delivery of the above action plan and impact on equality groups?

Yes? No?

Please state how this will be undertaken.

Appendix A

Equality Assessment Criteria

Decision	Action	Risk
<p>As a result of performing the analysis, it is evident that a risk of discrimination exists (direct, indirect, unintentional or otherwise) to one or more of the nine groups of people who share <i>Protected Characteristics</i>. It is recommended that the use of the policy be suspended until further work or analysis is performed.</p>	<p>Suspend – Further Work Required</p>	<p>Red</p> 
<p>As a result of performing the analysis, it is evident that a risk of discrimination exists (direct, indirect, unintentional or otherwise) to one or more of the nine groups of people who share <i>Protected Characteristics</i>. However, a genuine determining reason may exist that could legitimise or justify the use of this policy.</p>	<p>Further (specialist) advice should be taken</p>	<p>Red Amber</p> 
<p>As a result of performing the analysis, it is evident that a risk of discrimination (as described above) exists and this risk may be removed or reduced by implementing the actions detailed within the <i>Action Planning</i> section of this document.</p>	<p>Proceed pending agreement of mitigating action</p>	<p>Amber</p> 
<p>As a result of performing the analysis, the policy, project or function does not appear to have any adverse effects on people who share <i>Protected Characteristics</i> and no further actions are recommended at this stage.</p>	<p>Proceed with implementation</p>	<p>Green:</p> 