# London set to lose more than 30 primary schools amid falling pupil numbers and rising costs



London is facing a mounting crisis in primary education as more than 30 primary schools across the capital are set to close or merge before the next academic year. This troubling trend is the culmination of shifting demographics, with declining pupil numbers driven by families moving out of the city, falling birth rates, and broader socioeconomic pressures such as rising living costs, Brexit, and the lasting impact of the Covid pandemic.

The closures are spread across several boroughs, with Southwark notably losing eight schools since 2022. Among these are Charlotte Sharman and St Mary Magdalene primary schools, which are slated to close by the end of August. The decline in enrolment has left these schools unable to maintain full capacity, a crucial factor for ensuring educational standards and securing funding, as highlighted by local councillors. Despite strong efforts from communities to prevent these closures, the downward pupil trend appears irreversible in the short term.

Hackney faces a similar predicament, where four primary schools are closing due to a sustained drop in the number of school-aged children. Two further schools are planning mergers, as the Council grapples with maintaining quality education amid shrinking class sizes and financial viability challenges. This aligns with wider national concerns, with over 90 primary schools in England either closing or at risk due to being significantly under-enrolled.

Neighbouring Islington has also seen closures, with Highbury Quadrant and St Jude & St Paul's Church of England primary schools shutting after occupancy fell to around 50%. The borough, like Hackney and Southwark, has experienced a marked decline in birth rates over the past decade, exacerbating the issue of school sustainability.

Beyond these boroughs, other London areas such as Lambeth and Hackney have reported substantial school cuts, underscoring a broader pattern of demographic shifts affecting urban education. London Councils have acknowledged the challenge, stressing ongoing efforts to support local schools and develop solutions that keep the remaining institutions financially stable while maintaining educational quality.

The amalgamation and closure of schools in London represent a significant challenge for the capital’s education system, both in securing adequate local provision and in preserving standards. The trend is unlikely to reverse in the immediate future, given the persistent social and economic forces influencing family decisions about where to live and raise children.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/comment/podcasts/school-closure-crisis-london-uk-education-b1237988.html), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2023/dec/16/primary-schools-in-england-close-merge-and-shrink-as-pupil-numbers-fall), [[7]](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2023/may/29/more-90-primary-schools-in-england-to-close-or-face-closure-for-lack-of-pupils)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/primary-school-closures-southwark-charlotte-sharman-st-mary-magdalene-b1226661.html), [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/london-schools-closures-southwark-peckham-elephant-castle-b1234013.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[6]](https://news.hackney.gov.uk/four-primary-schools-in-hackney-will-close-next-september-due-to-the-ongoing-decrease-in-the-number-of-school-aged-children//)
* Paragraph 4 – [[5]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cp348dzk4neo)
* Paragraph 5 – [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2023/dec/16/primary-schools-in-england-close-merge-and-shrink-as-pupil-numbers-fall), [[6]](https://news.hackney.gov.uk/four-primary-schools-in-hackney-will-close-next-september-due-to-the-ongoing-decrease-in-the-number-of-school-aged-children//)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/comment/podcasts/school-closure-crisis-london-uk-education-b1237988.html), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2023/dec/16/primary-schools-in-england-close-merge-and-shrink-as-pupil-numbers-fall), [[7]](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2023/may/29/more-90-primary-schools-in-england-to-close-or-face-closure-for-lack-of-pupils)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.standard.co.uk/comment/podcasts/school-closure-crisis-london-uk-education-b1237988.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/primary-school-closures-southwark-charlotte-sharman-st-mary-magdalene-b1226661.html> - Southwark's Charlotte Sharman and St Mary Magdalene primary schools are set to close on August 31 due to declining pupil numbers, attributed to families moving out of the capital. Despite community efforts to keep them open, the closures mark the seventh and eighth in the borough since 2022. Councillor Jasmine Ali emphasized the importance of full schools for maintaining high educational standards and securing necessary funding.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/london-schools-closures-southwark-peckham-elephant-castle-b1234013.html> - Southwark Council has confirmed the closures of Charlotte Sharman Primary School and St Mary Magdalene Church of England Primary School, becoming the seventh and eighth schools to close in the borough since 2022. The decision follows a significant decline in pupil numbers, influenced by families relocating from London. The council aims to ensure high-quality education in sustainable schools despite these challenges.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2023/dec/16/primary-schools-in-england-close-merge-and-shrink-as-pupil-numbers-fall> - Primary schools across England are closing, merging, or reducing in size due to declining pupil numbers, influenced by falling birth rates and family upheavals from rising costs, Brexit, and Covid. London boroughs are particularly affected, with Hackney and Lambeth announcing substantial cuts and closures. London Councils stated that boroughs are working to support local schools and find solutions to keep them financially viable.
5. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cp348dzk4neo> - Two primary schools in Islington, Highbury Quadrant and St Jude & St Paul's CofE Primary School, are set to close at the end of the summer term due to falling pupil numbers, with occupancy at about 50%. This follows similar closures in neighbouring Hackney, attributed to a 20% fall in the birth rate between 2012 and 2022, leading to concerns about the future of primary education in the area.
6. <https://news.hackney.gov.uk/four-primary-schools-in-hackney-will-close-next-september-due-to-the-ongoing-decrease-in-the-number-of-school-aged-children//> - Hackney Council has decided to close four primary schools—De Beauvoir Primary School and Randal Cremer Primary School—due to a significant decrease in pupil numbers. Additionally, two schools will merge onto other sites. The closures aim to address the ongoing decline in the number of school-aged children, with projections indicating a continued decrease impacting the financial viability and quality of education in Hackney.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2023/may/29/more-90-primary-schools-in-england-to-close-or-face-closure-for-lack-of-pupils> - Over 90 primary schools in England are set to close or are at risk of closure due to being more than two-thirds empty, influenced by falling birth rates and families moving out of urban areas. The closures are particularly prevalent in cities and towns, with 88 primary schools in England being more than two-thirds empty last year, leaving them in danger of closure.