



Horton-in-Ribblesdale C of E (VA) Primary School



Consultation Document

**Proposal to close Horton-in-Ribblesdale Church of
England Voluntary Aided Primary School with
effect from 7 April 2017**



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E-mail

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September 2016

Dear Parent / Guardian,

The school's Governing Body has unfortunately been unable to recruit a full time Head to start in January 2017. In the absence of any leadership arrangements beyond this term the governing Body has very reluctantly taken the decision to initiate a consultation process about closing the school with effect from 7 April 2017.

We assure you that this decision was not taken lightly, and only after much deliberation and a considerable amount of time and effort had been spent in exploring a range of other possibilities. In all of these discussions, the best interests of the children in the school are at the forefront of our thinking. However, following advice from North Yorkshire County Council and the Diocese of Leeds, it was with great sadness that we finally came to the decision that to start the consultation process was the only viable way forward at the present time.

We know that this will raise many questions about the future, and so we are holding a Public Meeting at the school on Thursday 6 October at 6.30pm, to which all parents, staff and members of the local community are invited.

Enclosed with this letter please find a Consultation Document and a timeline for the process. The document gives a lot more information, and also details about how to respond to the consultation if you would like to. This could be a personal response, and/or one on behalf of any organisation that you represent.

Meanwhile, please be assured that until a final decision is taken, lessons in school will proceed as normal, and there will be the full range of other exciting events and activities for the children to take part in. Everything is being, and will be, done to keep their best interests at heart during this process.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Nick Breare
Chair of the Governing Body

Mrs Jo Lister
Interim Executive Headteacher



Horton-in-Ribblesdale C of E (VA) Primary School

September 2016

This paper sets out details of a proposal to close Horton-in-Ribblesdale Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School with effect from 7 April 2017. It gives the background to the proposal. There will be a public meeting on:

Thursday 6 October at 6.30pm

at Horton-in-Ribblesdale CE VA Primary School



The Current Position

The Governing Body of Horton-in-Ribblesdale Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School has decided to consult on a proposal to close the school.

The Governors have worked closely with staff from the Diocese of Leeds and North Yorkshire County Council. They consider that the closure is necessary to secure the interests of current and future pupils from the school because pupil numbers have fallen to a level where it will be difficult to continue to provide a high quality of

education for pupils in the long term.

The Governing Body has not reached this decision lightly and has already considered alternatives, such as working with other schools to make sure that good standards of teaching and learning will be available for all pupils.

The previous three-school collaboration with Clapham CE VC Primary School and Austwick CE VA Primary School has been dissolved. There is currently no substantive Headteacher in post at the school. Interim leadership support is

being provided by the Headteacher from Austwick CE VA Primary School and previously by the Headteacher from Rathmell CE VA Primary School but these interim arrangements will come to an end at Christmas. The governing body has attempted to recruit a replacement Headteacher but unfortunately no applications were received. It is not considered sustainable to continue with interim arrangements into the future even if such arrangements could be put in place.

There are four key concerns: 1) Very low pupil numbers; 2) Breadth of curriculum experience; 3) The school's financial position; 4) Leadership.

Pupil Numbers

The number of children at Horton-in-Ribblesdale School has been falling gradually over the past few years. There are now only 18 pupils on roll (including the nursery). The school is designed to accommodate up to 60 pupils. Forecasts indicate that these numbers will not recover significantly in the longer term and may reduce still further.

In these circumstances, it is difficult to preserve the quality of education.

Breadth of Curriculum

As numbers fall, it is increasingly difficult to provide the remaining pupils with access to the full range of experiences they need.

The most recent Ofsted inspection was in December 2010 which deemed the school to be Outstanding. At this time there were 36 pupils on roll.

However, as numbers have fallen further since then, the school governing body, the

Diocese of Leeds and North Yorkshire County Council have become concerned that pupils will not have access to the full range of experiences they need, particularly opportunities for working and playing with children their own age. For example, when there are only one or two children in a year group, it is difficult for pupils to share and compare the same work.

There is now only one child in Key Stage 1 and no new Reception children joined the school in September.

It is likely to become increasingly difficult to meet children's educational and social needs even with the existing partnerships with other local schools in the cluster. These concerns about being able to preserve the quality and breadth of the curriculum are the key concerns arising from the rapid decline in pupil numbers.

The Financial Position

Pupil numbers determine the school budget. With these lower numbers, and a reduced budget, the school may have to further reduce staff.

Examination of the predicted financial position has led to concerns about the school's ability to preserve the quality of education. The school is predicting an in-year financial deficit for 2017/18 and 2018/19, leaving a deficit of £10,000 to carry-forward. Changes to school funding formulas are likely to make the school even more financially vulnerable and the Local Authority will have increasingly limited ability to provide on-going financial support to schools in this position.

Leadership

In spite of a concerted attempt by

governors to recruit a substantive Headteacher this has not proved possible and given the very low number of pupils entering the school it is considered that a further attempt is unlikely to be successful. The current interim arrangements cannot continue into the future. It has not been possible to identify another school locally that would be prepared to share a Headteacher. Without secure leadership the school's outstanding record is at risk

The Proposal

For the reasons outlined above it is proposed that Horton-in-Ribblesdale CE VA Primary School should close with effect from 7 April 2017.

The next nearest local school, 5 miles from Horton-in-Ribblesdale, is Austwick CE VA School. This is also a Voluntary Aided Church of England 3-11 primary school which currently has 45 pupils on roll and has places available.

There are also places available at Giggleswick Primary School and Settle CE VC Primary School approximately six miles and a similar travelling time by road. These schools may be nearer for some current pupils.

It is proposed that the catchment area of Austwick CE VA Primary School would be expanded to include the current Horton-in-Ribblesdale catchment area.

The last published Ofsted inspection of Austwick School was made in November 2007. This report judged the school as Outstanding. An interim assessment in 2011 concluded that this performance had been sustained.

For any children currently at the school,

North Yorkshire County Council would work with each family to try to meet their individual preferences for other schools.

Eligibility for home to school transport will be determined in line with the County Council's current home to school transport policy and procedures based on each child's home address and individual circumstances.

Parents have a right to express a preference for any school and, in the case of community and voluntary controlled schools, the relevant Local Authority is the admissions authority and will meet that preference provided there are vacant places or the school is happy to admit above the published admission number. In the case of Voluntary Aided schools, the governing body decide the conditions for admission to their particular school. Where a child attends a school which is not their normal school or nearest school, parents are normally responsible for making transport arrangements.

North Yorkshire County Council's Admissions Team is always happy to give advice to parents – please contact Jill Wilson 01609 534825 or Lisa Herdman 01609 534953.

Staff

A separate consultation process, including a staff meeting, will run in parallel with the consultation on the closure proposal

The Building

The school playing field is owned by the County Council, but the school building is not. Decisions about disposal of the site and buildings would be taken by the owners of the site after the closure

proposal has been determined.

What Happens Next?

Your views about this proposal are welcomed. You can either complete and return the attached response sheet, or submit an online response

Paper responses should be returned to North Yorkshire County Council, who are administering this consultation on behalf of the governors of the school, at the address below:

FREEPOST RTKE-RKAY-CUJS

Horton-in-Ribblesdale

Strategic Planning

North Yorkshire County Council

County Hall

NORTHALLERTON

DL7 8AE

Online responses may be submitted by following this link:

<https://consult.northyorks.gov.uk/snapwebhost/s.asp?k=147454114300>

The closing date for responses is **Friday 21 October 2016**. All responses to the consultation received by this date will be considered by the School's Governing Body in November 2016.

If the Governing Body decides to proceed with the closure proposal, then statutory notices would be published in the local press. These notices provide a further four weeks for representations to be made. A final decision would be made by North Yorkshire County Council's Executive Committee in January 2017. If agreed the

school would close on 7 April 2017.

Key Dates

All dates are subject to approvals at each stage.

Consultation opens	26 Sept 2016
Public meeting	6 Oct 2016
Consultation closes	21 Oct 2016
Governing body considers consultation response	2 Nov 2016
Statutory Notices published	18 Nov 2016
Representation period ends	16 Dec 2016
Staff consultation period	11 Oct-17 Nov 2016
Final decision by NYCC	31 Jan 2017
School closure	7 April 2017

**Horton-in-Ribblesdale Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary
School
Horton-in-Ribblesdale
Settle
North Yorkshire
BD24 0EX**

A consultation on whether the school should be closed

Observations and/or suggestions:

Interest/Status

e.g. Parent/Governor/Teacher/Community

Name of School

Signed

Date:

Name (Block Capitals)

Address:

.....

.....

Postcode:

To help us assess whether we have provided clear information, please let us know whether you found this consultation easy to understand? YES/NO

Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

.....

Under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, responses to the consultation may be published on the County Council's website where it may be accessed by members of the public.

Please send this response sheet to the following "FREEPOST" address. You do not need to use a postage stamp.

FREEPOST RTKE-RKAY-CUJS
Horton-in-Ribblesdale
Strategic Planning
North Yorkshire County Council
County Hall
NORTHALLERTON
DL7 8AE

Or go to:

<https://consult.northyorks.gov.uk/snapwebhost/s.asp?k=147454114300>

and submit your response there

To be received by no later than **Friday 21 October 2016**