

Governing Body of Rathmell CE VA Primary School



Consultation Document

Proposal to close Rathmell Church of England

Voluntary Aided Primary School

from 31 August 2017

Dear Parent/Guardian

This letter is part of a formal procedure the Governing Body at Rathmell has very reluctantly embarked on. As most of you will have learned before you read this, we are consulting towards the closure of Rathmell CE Primary School with effect from August 31st 2017.

As you will know, we have not taken this decision lightly, but rather it follows much deliberation and exploring of the range of possibilities. The decision has been made unanimously by all governors, with the best interests of the children in school now and in the foreseeable future at the forefront of our thinking.

We know this will raise many questions about the future, many of which we have spent many hours over ourselves. Some of these questions will have been addressed in the process of informing everyone immediately affected, however as part of the process we are holding a meeting to which all are welcome from the local and school community on Thursday March 2nd at 6pm at the school.

Enclosed with this letter please find the formal Consultation Document required of us which gives a timeline for the process we are initiating as well as a good deal of information on the school's current and projected situation. It explains how to respond on your own behalf or on behalf of an organisation for which you are an authorised representative.

We are very proud of the quality of education and the ethos of our school and wish to celebrate and maintain both for as long as possible. As has always been the case, children at our school will be taking part in lessons and events and activities designed to give them the best educational experience to the end of this academic year and to prepare them for the next academic year wherever that is for them.

Governors have taken this decision with deep sadness and without pressure from either the Diocese or the Local Authority, in response to financial and social factors beyond the control of any of us. We greatly value the support of our parents and local community, and look to work together for the best for our children.

Yours sincerely

Hilary Young, Chair of Governors, on behalf of the Governors of Rathmell CE VA Primary School

Rathmell C of E (VA) Primary School

February 2017

This paper sets out details of a proposal to close Rathmell Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School with effect from 31 August 2017. It gives the background to the proposal. There will be a public meeting on:

Thursday 2nd March 2017 at 6pm

at Rathmell CE VA Primary School



The Current Position

The Governing Body of Rathmell Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School has decided to consult on a proposal to close the school. This decision has been made unanimously.

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.

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

There are two concerns:

- 1) Very low pupil numbers
- 2) The school's financial position

Pupil Numbers

The number of children at Rathmell CE VA Primary School has been falling gradually over the past few years. There are now only 19 pupils on roll and these are projected to fall to just 15 in September. The school is designed to accommodate up to 63 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.

The most recent Ofsted inspection was in June 2013 when there were 41 children on roll. In September, there are forecast to be only 4 children in Class 1. It will become increasingly

difficult to meet children's educational and social needs even with the existing partnerships with other local schools in the cluster.

The Financial Position

Pupil numbers determine the school budget. With these lower numbers, and a reduced budget, the school will have to further reduce staff. To continue for even one more year will inevitably result in dramatic changes to our work. To continue beyond that will result in an illegal deficit budget, with no reasonable prospect of recovery.

The Proposal

For the reasons above it is proposed that Rathmell CE VA Primary School should close with effect from 31 August 2017.

The catchment area of another local school will be extended to include the current Rathmell School catchment area. The results of this consultation will be taken into account in the final designation.

For children currently at Rathmell School, North Yorkshire County Council will work with each family to try to meet their individual preferences for other schools regardless of the catchment area defined, and Rathmell School staff and governors are committed to supporting families in their choice of school and in making a smooth transition.

There are places available at Long Preston Endowed Voluntary Aided School, Settle CE VC Primary School

and Giggleswick Community Primary School. All these schools have been judged 'Good' (as has our school) at their most recent published OFSTED inspections, and will work with Rathmell School to enable smooth transition for our children.

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 decides 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 Vickie Hemming-Allen 01609 535481 or Lisa Herdman 01609 534953.

Staff

A separate consultation process, including a staff meeting, is running in

parallel with the consultation on the closure proposal.

The Building

The school building is not owned by the County Council. Decisions about disposal of the school site and buildings will be taken by the owners of the site after the closure proposal has been determined. The matter needs to be referred to the Secretary of State. Rathmell School Trustees will act in the best interests of the children of the current Rathmell School catchment area in any matters for which they are responsible.

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
Rathmell
Strategic Planning
North Yorkshire County Council
County Hall
NORTHALLERTON
DL7 8AE

Online responses may be submitted by following this link:

[Please respond here](#)

The closing date for responses is **24 March 2017**. All responses to the consultation received by this date will

be considered by the School's Governing Body in April 2017.

If the Governing Body decides to proceed with the closure proposal, then statutory notices would be published in the local press in May. 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 June 2017. If agreed the school would close on 31 August 2017.

Key Dates

All dates are subject to approvals at each stage.

Consultation opens	Fri 17 February 2017
Public meeting at the school	Thu March 2 nd At 6:00 pm
Consultation closes	Fri 24 March 2017
Governing body considers consultation response	April 2017
Statutory Notices published (4 weeks for representations to be made)	May 2017
Final decision by NYCC	June 2017
School closure	31 August 2017

