

MATTERS TO BE SPECIFIED IN SECTION 15 PROPOSALS TO DISCONTINUE A SCHOOL (Education and Inspections Act 2006)

Extract of Schedule 2 to The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) (England) Regulations 2013:

Contact details

1. The name and contact details of the LA or governing body publishing the proposal, and the name, address and category of the school proposed for closure.

Cumbria County Council. School Organisation Team, Parkhouse Building, Baron Way, Kingmoor Business Park, Carlisle CA6 4 SJ.
The school to be closed is Ravenstonedale Endowed School, Ravenstonedale, Kirkby Stephen CA17 4NQ (DfE number 909/3062). The category of the school is voluntary controlled non-denominational.

Implementation

2. The proposed closure date or, where it is proposed that the closure be implemented in stages, the dates of, and information about, each stage.

Closure would be effective on 10 April 2015.

Objectives and reason for closure

3. The objectives of the proposal and the reason why closure of the school is considered necessary.

The objective of the proposal is to improve the standard of education on offer to the children of Ravenstonedale and the surrounding area. Following an Ofsted visit in April 2014 the school was placed in Special Measures. By the end of October 2014 there were no children on the school roll with little prospect of a recovery of numbers in the foreseeable future. Most children from the Ravenstonedale area have chosen to attend other rural schools in the surrounding area. There is sufficient capacity in these schools to accommodate children from the Ravenstonedale catchment area for the foreseeable future.

Pupil numbers and admissions

4. Information on the numbers, age range, sex and special educational needs of pupils (distinguishing between boarding and day pupils) for whom provision is currently made at the schools.

Ravenstonedale Endowed School is a 4 to 11 year old co-educational primary school. At the end of October 2014 there were no pupils on roll at the school.

Displaced Pupils

5. Details of the schools at which displaced pupils will be offered places, including:

- a) any interim arrangements;
- b) the alternative provision for children recognised by the LA as reserved for children with special needs; and
- c) in the case of special schools, alternative provision made by LAs other than the authority which maintains the school.

- a) Children who formerly attended Ravenstonedale Endowed School have already chosen to attend other schools from the surrounding area including Kirkby Stephen Primary School, Orton C of E School, Tebay Community Primary School and Sedbergh Primary School. Following the closure of the school, children from the area will be offered places in Kirkby Stephen Primary School where there is sufficient capacity to accommodate children from the Ravenstonedale catchment for the foreseeable future.
- b) Not applicable.
- c) Not applicable.

Impact on the Community

6. A statement and supporting evidence about the impact on the community and any measures proposed to mitigate any adverse impact, including details of the extended services the school offered and what is proposed for these services once the schools have closed

All 22 of the children of primary school age living in the catchment area of Ravenstonedale Endowed School are now attending other schools. Only two children started the autumn 2014 term at the school, both of whom live outside the catchment area. These children have also now secured alternative provision. There are four other schools within a radius of 11 miles from Ravenstonedale School which currently receive children from the area – this is likely to improve the sustainability of those schools involved.

The closure of the school is likely to increase journey times for children. For those children whose journey to the new catchment, or next nearest school, is above the statutory safe walking distance of 2 miles for under 8 year olds and 3 miles for 8+ year olds, provisions under Cumbria County Council's Home to School Transport Policy will apply.

On closure the school building will revert to its owner, the Ravenstonedale Educational Foundation.

Inevitably, the closure of a long-established school will impact on the life of the village. Consultation responses on the closure indicated a desire from some residents to see the building remain in use as an educational facility and, whilst the building is not in county council ownership, discussions have been held with an early-years provider in the area, who has shown an interest in taking over the building. This would support the county council in meeting its statutory duties whilst maintaining a thriving setting in the village.

Balance of denominational provision

7. Where the school has a designated religious character, a statement about the impact on parental choice in the area.

Not applicable.

Rural Primary Schools

8. Where a proposal relates to a rural primary school a statement (as required by section 15(4) of the EIA 2006) that the LA or the governing body (as the case may be) has considered:

- a) the likely effect of closure of the school on the local community;
- b) the availability, and likely cost to the LA, of transport to other schools;
- c) any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the closure of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase; and
- d) any alternatives to the closure of the school.

- a) The LA has considered the likely effect of closure of the school on the local community. Effects will be limited as currently all primary school aged children from the area have chosen alternative schools outside the Ravenstonedale catchment area. (But see Section 6, above.)
- b) The LA has considered the availability, and likely cost to the LA, of transport to other schools. Additional vehicles, and cost to the LA, will be required to alternative schools in the event of the closure of Ravenstonedale School.
- c) The LA has considered any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the closure of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase. The provision of transport by the LA will likely reduce the use of motor vehicles.
- d) The LA has considered alternatives to the closure of the school. However, with no pupils in attendance and no prospect of significant change in the foreseeable future Ravenstonedale Endowed School is not considered viable.

Maintained nursery schools

9. Where a proposal relates to the closure a maintained nursery school, a statement setting out:

- a) the LA's assessment of the quality and quantity of alternative provision compared to the school proposed to be closed and the proposed arrangements to ensure the expertise and specialism continues to be available; and
- b) the accessibility and convenience of replacement provision for local parents.

Not applicable.

Provision for 16-19 year olds

10. Where the school proposed to for closure provides sixth form education, how the proposals will impact on:

- a) the educational or training achievements;
- b) participation in education or training; and
- c) the range of educational or training opportunities, for 16-19 year olds in the area.

Not applicable.

Special educational needs (SEN) provision

11. Where existing provision that is recognised by the LA as reserved for pupils with special educational needs is being closed, a statement as to how the LA or the governing body (as the case may be) believes a proposal is likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of the educational provision for these children.

Not applicable.

Travel

12. The proposed arrangements for travel of displaced pupils to other schools.

Details of the proposed arrangements are contained in section 6.4 of the 'Consultation on the proposed closure of Ravenstonedale Endowed School and re-designation of its catchment area' Cabinet report which can be found at the link below as item 129.

<http://councilportal.cumbria.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=117&MId=7584&Ver=4>

It is envisaged that a significant proportion of pupils who would have attended Ravenstonedale Endowed School in the future will be eligible for home to school transport to neighbouring schools, the costs of which will be met by the LA under the terms of its Home to School Transport Policy.

Consultation

13. Decision-makers will need to be assured that consultation has taken place, and that the statutory process has been adhered to. Therefore proposals should include the results of that consultation.

A formal consultation process was held between 27 October and 21 November 2014 with regards to the proposed closure of Ravenstonedale Endowed School and the re-designation of its catchment area.

Those consulted included the local community (including parents of former pupils), school staff, the school governing body, the trustees of the Ravenstonedale Education Foundation, surrounding primary schools, the Roman Catholic and Church of England diocese, local Trade Unions, the local Member of Parliament, district and parish councils and Eden Local Committee

A 'drop-in' session was held on 6 November 2014 to which there were approximately 30 attendees.

As well as the distribution of hard copy and email versions of the consultation information, all documentation was available on Cumbria County Council's website and a press release was made.

There were 23 responses to the consultation questionnaire. Of those that responded to the question, 72% agreed that there was no alternative to the closure of Ravenstonedale Endowed School. Of those that responded to the proposal to re-designate Ravenstonedale catchment area entirely to Kirkby Stephen Primary School 45% agreed. Further details are contained in the Cabinet report and its appendices which can be found at the link below as item 129.

<http://councilportal.cumbria.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=117&MId=7584&Ver=4>