



Review of Primary Education
for Children Living in the
Culgaith and Langwathby Area

A CONSULTATION PAPER

Enquires to:

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Culgaith and Langwathby Schools

Consultation Document Summary

What is Being Proposed?

This consultation document is about the arrangements for primary education for the villages of Culgaith and Langwathby. The suggested change is that Culgaith School becomes an all-through primary school catering for children aged 3 to 11 with no transfer at the end of Year 3 to Langwathby School. Cumbria County Council is carrying out this consultation on behalf of the Culgaith governors. The governors and the county council want to hear your views on the possibility of change.

This suggestion is in no way intended to reflect badly on the good education provided at Langwathby School and, if there is no change to the age range at Culgaith, the schools will simply continue as before. A similar consultation exercise is being undertaken involving the other 'first' school in Cumbria at Armathwaite.

I hope you will take the time to let us know what you think. If you would like any further information in the meantime, please contact Mike Tuer – School Organisation on 01228 226038 or by e-mail: mike.tuer@cumbriacc.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely



Sue Smith
Chair of Governors
Culgaith School



Duncan Fairbairn
Cabinet Member
Children's Services



Julia Morrison
Corporate Director
Children's Services

Background

The arrangements for primary education for the villages of Langwathby and Culgaith, along with nearby communities, are quite unusual. They existed long before the National Curriculum was introduced, and the local system does not fit particularly well within that framework.

The Culgaith governors and the county council feel that the situation should be reviewed.

On this basis, the decision has been taken to consult with those most closely associated with the schools about provision for the future. The aim of the consultation exercise is to gather the views of local communities on whether the present arrangements:

- Are likely to be the most effective in educational terms.
- Could be varied to enhance educational opportunities.
- Represent the best use of available resources.
- Provide the best fit with the wishes of parents.

This paper is aimed at parents, staff, governors and everyone else with an interest or stake in primary education in the area. It is intended as a basis for discussion during the consultations.

In terms of content, the paper:

- Describes briefly the current school provision.
- Sets out the wider context.
- Indicates some important factors to consider.
- Indicates a preferred alternative to the status quo.
- Outlines the consultation and decision-making processes.

The main purpose of this consultative document is to encourage a reasoned debate and to gather your views. It is important that local opinions are expressed so that they can inform decisions when they are eventually taken.



Current Provision

The area is served by two schools; Culgaith C of E Voluntary Aided School and Langwathby C of E Voluntary Controlled School. The location of the two schools and their catchment areas for 4-8 year old pupils are shown on the map in the centre pages.

Culgaith C of E Voluntary Aided School

This is one of just two 'first' schools remaining in the county. It caters for pupils aged between 3 and 8. Most pupils transfer to Langwathby School aged 8, at the end of Year 3. The original school building dates back to 1876 though it was remodelled in 1967. The interior has been remodelled to modern standards. The school has ample outdoor areas to provide for the number and age range of pupils likely to be catered for in an all-through primary school. The school has a pupil capacity of 56. A copy of the school floor plan can be found on the county council website www.cumbria.gov.uk/childrensservices/school-organisation.

The school currently has two classes; one covering Reception and Year 1, and the other for Years 2 and 3, which spans National Curriculum Key Stages 1 and 2. The Nursery pupils are taught in a separate room.

Langwathby C of E Voluntary Controlled School

The school, which is 4.3 miles from Culgaith School, caters for pupils aged 3-11. The Culgaith School catchment area forms part of the Langwathby School catchment area for pupils in Years 4-6. The original building was constructed in 1965 and has been extended a number of times. The school has a pupil capacity of 233. A copy of the floor plan of the school building can be found on the county council website detailed above.

The school is currently organised so that there are seven classes. There are separate Nursery and Reception classes with a further five mixed age classes covering the older age groups. This includes one mixed Key Stage class (Years 2 and 3) and no class contains children from more than two year groups.

The Context

The question of all-through primary provision at Culgaith has arisen several times over the last 30 years. The county council used to maintain several 'first' schools but, over time, all of them have either been closed or have been allowed full primary school status to fit in with the National Curriculum. Consultations have been undertaken from time to time on the future of Culgaith but no changes have been made.

The governors of Culgaith School have made it clear that they would like consideration to be given to it becoming an all-through primary school. Parents have sought a change on several occasions, and the county council has a duty to look into parents' concerns.

Neighbouring Schools

There are eight schools with catchment areas which abut the Culgaith/Langwathby catchments areas. They are all 3/4-11 primary schools. Brief details of these schools can be found on the county council website detailed above.

Some Important Factors to Consider

Educational Issues

Transferring Between Schools at Age 8

The Education Reform Act of 1988 introduced the National Curriculum. Since then, compulsory education in England and Wales has been organised in four Key Stages. Key Stage 1 from 5-7 years and Key Stage 2 from 7-11 cover the years in which most children receive their primary education.

In small schools, mixed age classes are inevitable. Although there are exceptions, schools generally try to avoid mixed Key Stage classes because different programmes of study apply to the different Key Stages. Schools like Culgaith, with only one Key Stage 2 year group and small numbers, clearly do not have this option. It is partly for this reason that since the introduction of the National Curriculum, a reduction in the number of schools in the county taking pupils between 4 and 8 years of age has been actively sought through school reorganisations. There are now just two schools in this category, the other being Armathwaite.



Children's attainment at the end of each Key Stage is formally assessed. As far as Key Stage 1 is concerned, children are assessed through teacher assessment in reading, writing and mathematics. If transfer between schools during the 4-11 primary phase is to happen, these arrangements now, more than ever, make the 'natural' age for this 7, not 8.

Of course, good practice in terms of liaison and planning between schools can minimise difficulties surrounding transfer even where this occurs part way through a Key Stage. All things being equal, however, there is likely to be less risk of disruption where the curriculum for each Key Stage is planned in one setting.

All-Through Primary Schools

The county council has a preference for all-through primary schools as opposed to separate infant and junior schools. This view was formed in the context of the 4-7/7-11 pattern of provision in some of the more urban parts of the county.

But the arguments are also relevant to more rural settings such as the one in which Culgaith and Langwathby are located, in that 4-11 schools offer the opportunity for better continuity of education than systems which rely on pupils' transfer during the primary phase. There is often a dip in academic performance in Years 3 and 4. Some of this is due to changes in the content of the curriculum, expectations and way of teaching but not entirely. It has been judged that much of this is due to both children and teachers taking time to adjust following the pupils' transfer to a new school. Continuity in learning, assessment and tracking of performance are vital to prevent the 'dip'. If teachers know the children and can refer back to the previous teacher to compare performance in Year 2 or Year 3 (for those going into Year 4) it tends to help prevent this.

All-through primaries allow a natural sense of progression for children through their primary education. This is important both in social and curricular terms, and is something on which the National Curriculum places a good deal of emphasis. Provision which is based on as few points of transfer as possible offers clear advantages.

School Performance

General

Summaries of the inspection reports for Culgaith and Langwathby Schools can be found on-line at www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Inspection-reports/Schools. Ofsted reports need to be read in full as each school was inspected under a different framework.

Culgaith School last had a full inspection in October 2008 when it was rated as good with some outstanding areas.

Langwathby CE School was last inspected in February 2010 and was rated as good.

Financial Resources

General

Budgets for running costs – staff salaries, heating, lighting, etc – are devolved to schools, largely on the basis of the numbers of pupils on roll. It follows from this that pupil rolls and finance are inextricably linked.

Approximately 80%-85% of a school's budget is spent on staff. Consequently, fluctuations of any significance in pupil numbers are likely to affect staffing levels. Were the suggested change to be implemented it will mean a loss of pupil-based income to Langwathby School with a similar increase to Culgaith School. As a consequence Langwathby is likely to need to reduce its staffing levels to reflect this.

The Schools' Budgets

Neither school has experienced any particular difficulties in managing its budget. Both schools carried modest levels of surplus at the end of the 2009-10 financial year and are expected to break even at the end of the current financial year. However, the loss of pupils transferring to Langwathby over time will require careful budgetary planning to maintain this situation through the transition, as will the need for Culgaith to plan for additional pupils.



Schools Capacity/Pupil Numbers

The combined pupil roll of the two schools is expected to remain broadly the same over the next three years. Details for each school relating to the status quo and the suggested option for change outlined are provided below. The current capacities of the two schools are also shown.

	Net Capacity	Number on Roll Jan 2011	Projected Pupil Numbers 2011-12	Projected Pupil Numbers 2012-13	Projected Pupil Numbers 2013-14
Option A	Status Quo				
Culgaith	56	34	33	29	26
Langwathby	233	161	155	155	152
Option B	No Transfer from Sept 2011				
Culgaith	56	32	43	48	50
Langwathby	233	161	146	137	128

The pupil and capacity figures exclude nursery pupils and class spaces.

Premises Issues

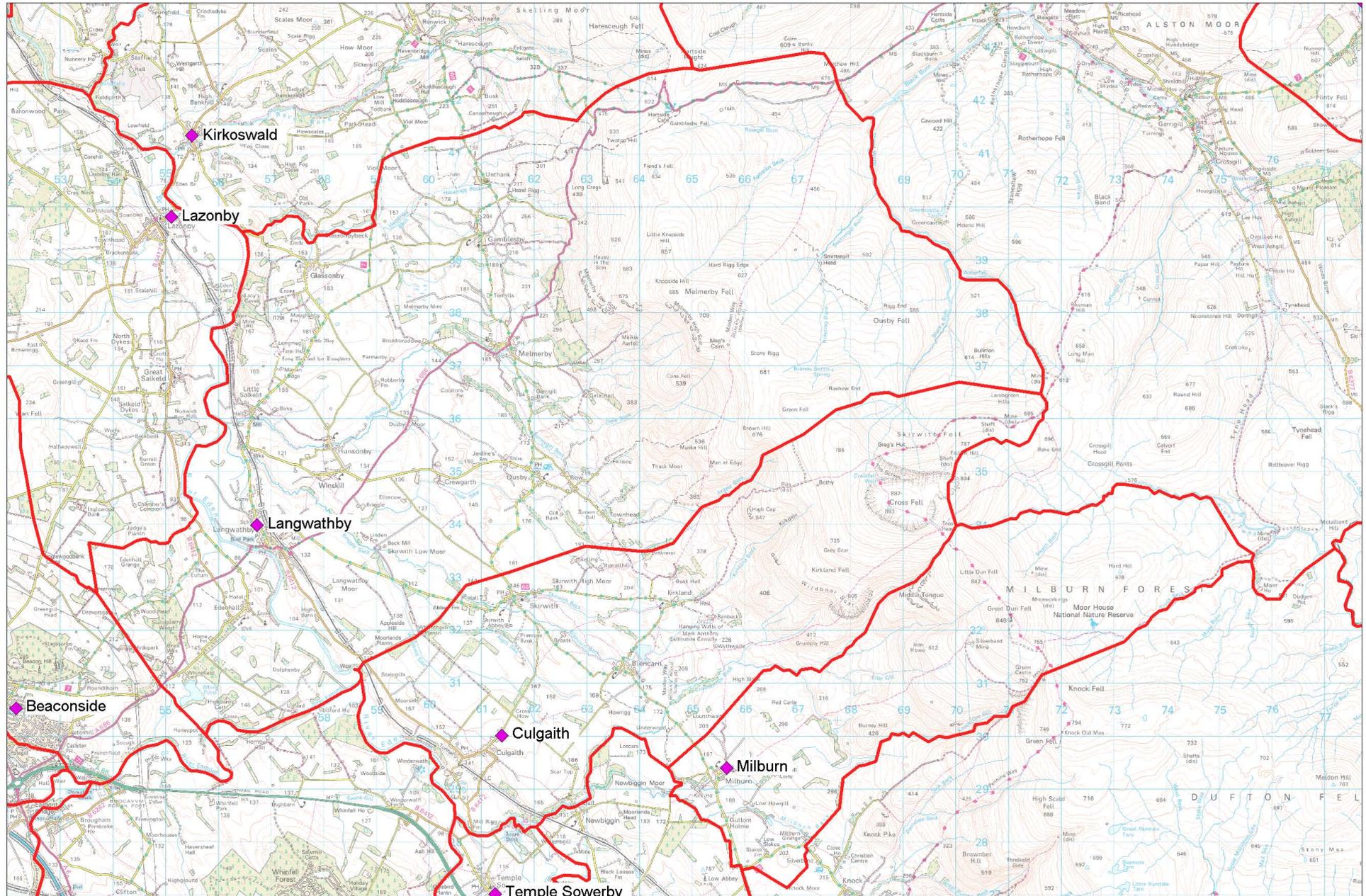
Culgaith School

The school building generally provides well for the existing number of pupils. The premises are able to accommodate a full primary school from age 3-11 without the need for additional buildings, assuming an annual intake of around eight children.

Langwathby School

The school building generally provides well for the existing number of pupils and there is sufficient space to support additional pupils. The loss of pupils transferring in to Year 4 would result in spare capacity at the school.

Culgaith CE School and Langwathby CE School Catchment Areas



Mapping data licensed from Ordnance Survey Crown Copyright 2006. License number 100019596.

Transport Issues

A change in age range at Culgaith would mean there would be no need to provide transport from Culgaith to Langwathby. A number of pupils currently attending Culgaith already have some distance to travel from home to school. For many of those living in the Culgaith catchment area the transfer to Langwathby may result in an increase in travel times, although some may see little difference.

There are other advantages in that savings will eventually accrue in the home to school transport budget.

The Future

General

Option A: The Status Quo

Existing arrangements appear to be working well, with effective liaison between the two schools. To make no change would obviously avoid disruption in the short term.

The governors and the county council believe, however, that transfer at the age of 8 is not desirable educationally. The present situation is anomalous and far from ideal in terms of the National Curriculum. It can place an additional burden on staff and represent something of a challenge as far as planning of the Key Stage 2 curriculum is concerned. It would certainly mean the perpetuation of a class spanning Key Stages 1 and 2 at Culgaith.

Option B: Culgaith School Becoming a 3-11 Primary

Full primary status for Culgaith would be in line with the governors' wishes. It would enhance the continuity of primary education for pupils attending the school. Parents with more than one child may find it easier to relate to one primary school rather than two. It would also reduce the number of pupils being transported and cut the costs involved.



Clearly, any change may require staffing issues to be resolved at both schools. There is likely to be the need to reduce the number of classes taught at Langwathby with a corresponding reduction in staff. The Culgaith governors plan to operate two classes should the change be accepted; one for Key Stage 1 (pupils in Reception, Years 1 and 2) and another for Key Stage 2 (pupils in Years 3-6). Nursery pupils would continue to be taught separately as at present.

Other Possibilities

Governors feel that the change outlined here is in the best interest of children and the county council feels that the options identified above are the most reasonable and realistic at present. Other possibilities have been considered over the years but, for various reasons, are felt to be inappropriate at this time and unlikely to be in the best interests of children. If you feel that there is a different option that should be considered, however, please let us know.

Transition Arrangements

Were a change of age range at Culgaith to be implemented this could take place over a number of years starting in September 2011. At that time no pupils would transfer from Culgaith to Langwathby School and a Year 4 group established at Culgaith. No pupils currently attending Years 4 and 5 at Langwathby School would be allowed to transfer to Culgaith. In September 2012 a Year 5 group would be established and the implementation would be complete when a Year 6 group is established in September 2013.

As Culgaith parents of children in Year 3 will have already indicated which school they wish them to be educated at from September 2011, any offer of a place at Langwathby or elsewhere will be honoured. In those circumstances children who transfer from Culgaith to Langwathby in September 2011 and who would have been eligible to free home to school transport will have that entitlement protected.

Alternatively, should the suggested change to allow Culgaith to become a 3-11 primary school from September 2011 be approved, parents can opt not to transfer their children at that time.

Should parents in future years still wish to transfer their children to Langwathby this would still be possible through the usual arrangements for transfer between schools. However, the authority's general home to school transport policy will apply. That means that no children living in the catchment area for Culgaith would be eligible for free home to school transport if they move after the start of the autumn term 2011.

Currently up to 14 pupils can be admitted each year into Culgaith School, although in practice the number is usually 6-8. Were the suggested change to an all-through primary school to be agreed this would need to be reduced to eight. This would be sufficient to allow all the pre-school age pupils currently living in Culgaith School's catchment area the opportunity of accessing a place there. Admission to the nursery will continue to be in line with the Culgaith Governors' nursery admission policy.

Langwathby currently has a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 30 to the Reception class. The county council does not propose to change the PAN at this time. Admission to the nursery will continue to be in line with the county council's nursery admissions policy.

And Finally

This consultative paper tries to explain the main issues involved simply and quite briefly. Its purpose is to stimulate discussion rather than cover all of the issues exhaustively.

Any request for additional information or clarification should be directed to the School Organisation Team: contact details are given on the front cover.

Details of the consultation arrangements are given below. This is an important issue for everyone involved with the running of the two schools and for parents of both existing and younger children who are due to enter school in the next few years.

We hope that as many people as possible with an interest in primary education in the area will participate in the consultation process. The governors and the county council need your views in order to inform their decisions. Our collective and overriding responsibility must be to ensure the most effective primary education for young people in the area.



Making Changes to Maintained Schools and the School Organisation and Governance Regulations 2009

The provisions of the School Organisation and Governance Regulations mean that, if the governors of a voluntary school propose to change the age range of their school, their proposal must be published in a statutory notice.

There are five stages to the statutory process which must be followed:

Consultation

The issue of this document marks a period of consultation during which the views of any interested parties are sought and which will be considered before any move to the more formal stages of the process.

Publication

Dependent upon the outcome of the consultation, a decision to publish a statutory notice must be made by the governors of Culgaith School.

Representation

Statutory notices for changes of age-range allow a six week period for anyone to submit their comments on the proposals. This is another opportunity for people to express their views either supporting or objecting to the proposals.

Decision

Within two months after the end of the representation period, the county council must make a decision on the proposal.

Implementation

If the proposal is approved there would be no transfer of pupils from Culgaith to Langwathby, in all probability starting in September 2011.



The Consultation and Decision Making Process

Timetable

Consultation	16 February – 16 March 2011
Decision: Culgaith governors consider the results of the consultation and decide whether to publish a Statutory Notice.	Week commencing 28 March 2011
Publication of Statutory Notice by the governors of Culgaith School.	15 April 2011
Closing date for responses to Statutory Notice.	27 May 2011
Decision by Cumbria County Council.	30 June 2011
Possible start of implementation of any changes.	September 2011

Consultation Events

You are invited to attend a consultation event so that you can find out more about the proposals/offer views on the proposals.

Location	Date and time
Culgaith School	Monday 28 February 2011 at 6pm
Langwathby School	Tuesday 1 March 2011 at 6.30pm

There will be separate meetings on these dates for the governors and staff at Culgaith starting at 3.30pm and Langwathby at 3.45pm.



Who We Will Consult

List of those people and organisations that may have an interest in this proposal and to whom the consultation document will be provided:

Headteacher, governors and staff of Culgaith and Langwathby Schools

Families and carers of pupils at Culgaith and Langwathby Schools

Headteachers and governing bodies of schools with adjacent catchment areas to either of the two schools

Chief Executive of Eden District Council

Local Nursery providers

Other members of the public via Cumbrian libraries, Parish Councils and Cumbria County Council website

Church authorities and faith groups in the local area

Cumbria Children's Trust

Trade Unions and Associations



Your Response

As stated earlier in this document, the governors of Culgaith CE School and the county council welcome your views on this proposal and all observations and objections will be considered very carefully before any decision is made to progress any further.

The consultation runs until 16 March 2011 and you can respond by completing the questionnaire in this document or writing separately (No stamp needed) to:

FREEPOST RRBS-RLBG-GZGL
Cumbria County Council
School Organisation
18 Portland Square
Carlisle
CA1 1PE

By Email to:
school.organisation@cumbriacc.gov.uk

On-line at: (Use the link below to complete the questionnaire contained in this document on-line)
<http://www.opinionsuite.com/cumbria/cumbria-county-council>

It is not possible to enter into individual correspondence.

Thank you.

NB: Cumbria County Council will collect all consultation responses and forward these to the Culgaith governors for their consideration before they decide whether to publish formal proposals.



Culgaith and Langwathby Schools

Reply slip – please send by 16 March 2011 to FREEPOST RRBS-RLBG-GZGL, Cumbria County Council, School Organisation, 18 Portland Square, Carlisle CA1 1PE

We need to know which school you are linked with so that we can accurately report back to the council's Cabinet. Please tick appropriate box(es):

Are you a:

	Culgaith	Langwathby	Other (please specify)
Parent/carer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member of Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Governor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify) _____

Do you agree that Culgaith School should have its age range extended to 3-11?

Yes

No

Name Date
(please print)

Address

.....

.....Postcode



Please provide any additional comments below:

