# Consultation on the proposed closure of Ravenstonedale Endowed School

## What is this consultation about?

This consultation is about the proposed closure of Ravenstonedale Endowed (Community) School, Ravenstonedale, Kirkby Stephen CA17 4NQ and the re-designation of catchment boundaries in the area to accommodate the change.

The proposal is in response to the fact that as at October 2014 there are no children on roll at the school and there is little prospect that numbers will recover in the foreseeable future. Small class sizes affect the viability of a school and its future sustainability in delivering the best possible education to its pupils.

The school's governors have made great efforts to keep the school running on the very low pupil numbers it has been experiencing, but have now taken the very difficult decision to approach the county council to consider and make a decision with regard to the school's future. The governors feel, and the county council agrees, that in these circumstances, it would be appropriate to consult on the permanent closure of the school.

The county council wants to hear your views on this proposal before deciding to make any changes. Please take the time to let us know what you think.

If you would like any further information you can visit our website at:
**www.cumbria.gov.uk/childrensservices/school-organisation**
or email us at **school.organisation@cumbria.gov.uk**
or telephone us on **01228 226013**.

## We are consulting on the following proposal

That Ravenstonedale Endowed School would officially close on 10 April 2015. There would be no further admissions to the school prior to its closure.

The county council cannot, though, simply decide to make changes to schools without first seeking the views of those who may be affected, even when there are no children on the roll. There is a legal process which must be followed before any changes can be made and it is important that the county council hears your views before deciding whether or not to proceed.

## Who is this consultation for?

This document is aimed at staff and governors of Ravenstonedale School, affected parents and anyone else with an interest or stake in education in the area.

## How you can respond to this consultation

Use the form at the back of this consultation document to let us know what you think (an online version can be accessed at **www.opinionsuite.com/cumbria/cumbria-county-council**, or through our website at **www.cumbria.gov.uk/childrensservices/school-organisation**). County council officers will attend the school on Thursday 6 November 2014 between 4:30pm – 6:30pm if you would like to talk to us face to face.

## Background

The sparsely populated nature of rural areas often means that they have small schools. Many rural areas in Cumbria have experienced a decline in school-aged population levels and, because the funding available to a school is linked to the number of children attending, this can add further sustainability pressures to schools which might already be struggling to support themselves. The number of children attending the school has been in decline since 2000 when the number on roll was 65. By September 2013 this number had fallen to 26 and subsequently fell sharply during the 2013-14 academic year. There are currently no children on the school roll (October 2014). Forecasts based on the number of pre-school age children living in the area indicate that the total number on roll is not likely to exceed 1 or 2 children in the foreseeable future. The school has capacity for 56 pupils.

Budgets for running costs (staff salaries, heating, lighting etc.) are devolved to schools largely on the basis of numbers of pupils at the school. Many of these costs are fixed regardless of the number of children at the school. Numbers of children on roll and school finance are inextricably linked.

## More Information

Ravenstonedale Endowed School has been placed in 'Special Measures' following an inspection by Ofsted in April 2014. 'Special Measures' is the legal term used when Ofsted decide that a school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. The full report can be viewed at **http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report**
When a school is found to require Special Measures, the county council must complete an Action Plan, setting out how it intends to support the school to achieve the standards of education required or, alternatively, its intention to close the school and seek alternative provision for children in the area.

The county council, school staff and governors have been working with Ofsted since the publication of the inspection report, with the intention of supporting the school to remain open, but recognising that there may come a point at which it simply becomes unsustainable. The governors have worked to ensure that Ravenstonedale provides the level of education deserving of local children but, with only two pupils on roll at the beginning of term in September, have accepted that this will not be possible.

The two children previously on roll have now found places elsewhere.

## Other schools in the area

The nearest schools, measured from Ravenstonedale School, are Kirkby Stephen (4.6 miles), Tebay (7.3 miles) and Orton (7.6 miles) and some former pupils of Ravenstonedale have already transferred into these schools. Should Ravenstonedale School close the current catchment area would need to be changed. As Kirkby Stephen is the closest school with the capacity to accommodate the numbers of children found in the Ravenstonedale catchment area, it is proposed the current area becomes part of the Kirkby Stephen catchment (see map in this document).

Under the county council's Home to School Transport Policy, free transport is provided to a child's nearest or catchment school if the distance between their home and the school exceeds the statutory walking distance. The statutory walking distance is two miles for children under eight and three miles for older children. The distance is measured by the nearest available walking route. For a route to be considered available it must be one which a child, accompanied by adult, could be expected to walk in reasonable safety. All children living in the current Ravenstonedale catchment area would meet the existing distance/safe walking route criteria for free transport to the new catchment area school.

## What happens next?

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| Drop in session | 6 November 2014 |
| Public consultation ends | 21 November 2014 |
| Cabinet decision to publish statutory notices | 18 December 2014 |
| Publication of statutory notices | 10 January 2015 |
| End of representation period | 9 February 2015 |
| Final Cabinet decision | 26 March 2015 |
| Potential implementation date | 10 April 2015 |

## Have your say

The county council's proposals will be the basis of a period of public consultation as detailed above. This consultation period is a legal requirement even where there are no children on a school's roll.

There will be a drop-in session for staff, governors and the community held at the school on **Thursday 6 November 2014 from 4:30pm – 6:30pm.**

**It is important that we hear your views**

The consultation runs until 21 November 2014 and you can respond by completing the questionnaire in this document, or online, or by writing to:

**Cumbria County Council, School Organisation, Parkhouse Building, Kingmoor Business Park, Carlisle, Cumbria CA6 4SJ.**

You can email: **school.organisation@cumbria.gov.uk.**

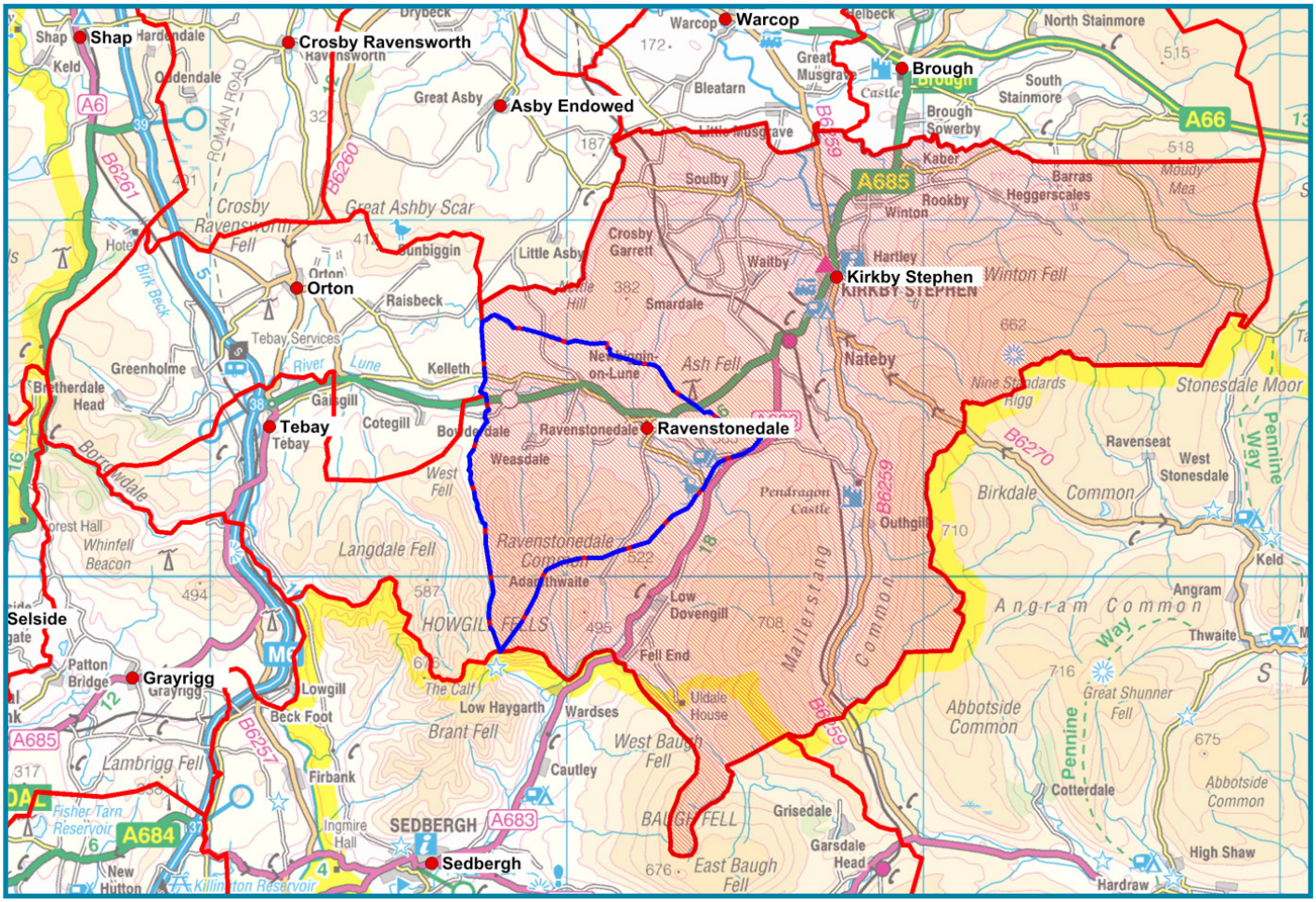
You can complete the questionnaire on-line at:
**www.opinionsuite.com/cumbria/cumbria-county-council**

Further information is available at:
**www.cumbria.gov.uk/childrensservices/school-organisation**

Please note that it is not possible to enter into individual correspondence.

## Catchment Areas

The proposal for the closure of Ravenstonedale Endowed School would also require a change to existing school catchment areas.




On the map above primary school catchment areas are shown in solid red lines and the location of schools are indicated by red dots.

The area shown in the broken blue line is the current catchment area of Ravenstonedale School.

The shaded red area represents a modified Kirkby Stephen School catchment area encompassing Ravenstonedale.

**If you require this document in another format (eg CD, audio cassette, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone 0845 712 57387**

আপনি যদি এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে 0845 712 57387 নম্বরে টেলিফোন করুন।

如果您希望通过母语了解此信息，
请致电 0845 712 57387

**Jeigu norėtumėte gauti šią informaciją savo kalba, skambinkite telefonu 0845 712 57387**

**W celu uzyskania informacji w Państwa języku proszę zatelefonować pod numer 0845 712 57387**

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# Ravenstonedale Endowed School Questionnaire

## Q1 Please indicate your relationship to the school (tick all boxes that apply)

I am a:

- ☐ Parent/carer of a child who has attended Ravenstonedale School
- ☐ Member of staff at Ravenstonedale School
- ☐ Governor at Ravenstonedale School
- ☐ Other

If other has been selected please specify:

## Q2 Given the information contained in this consultation document do you think that there is any viable alternative to the closure of Ravenstonedale Endowed School?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes has been selected please provide further details on the following page

## Q3 Should Ravenstonedale Endowed School close do you agree with the changes to catchment area as shown in this document?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Additional comments may be entered in the space on the following page if required.

Name (please print): _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

_____

Postcode: _____

Please provide any additional comments below

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