

**THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE JAMES CALVERT SPENCE COLLEGE
FEDERATION**

**STATUTORY PROPOSAL FOR THE PROPOSED CLOSURE OF
ACKLINGTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND FIRST SCHOOL**

In accordance with section 15(2) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, this proposal sets out the intention of the Governing Body of the James Calvert Spence College Federation to discontinue the following school with effect from 31 December 2017;

- **Acklington Church of England First School, Acklington Village, Acklington, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 9BW**

Contact Details

Copies of this proposal may be obtained from :
The James Calvert Spence College Federation
Acklington Road, Amble, Northumberland NE65 0NG

Or from The James Calvert Spence College Federation website at **www.jcsc.co.uk**

Acklington Church of England First School is a local authority maintained school.

Implementation.

Acklington Church of England First School is proposed to close with effect from 31 December 2017.

Objectives and reason for closure

The objective of this proposal is to:

- discontinue (close) Acklington Church of England First School with effect from 31 December 2017.

Reasons for closure:

Acklington C of E Voluntary Controlled First School is a very small, rural first school in the Coquet Partnership and is one of two schools that form The James Calvert Spence College Federation and managed by one Governing Body. The other school within the federation is on two sites:

- James Calvert Spence College, Acklington Road, Amble, Northumberland NE65 0NG and South Avenue, Amble, Northumberland NE65 0ND

The Governing Body is consulting on the proposal to close Acklington Church of England First School at the end of December 2017 for the following reasons:

1. There has been a decline in the number of pupils attending the school over a number of years. In May 2017, there were 13 pupils on roll at the school, of whom 6 live in the catchment area. In September 2017, there are 8 students on roll. The capacity of the school is 56. No pupils have joined Reception Class in the school for September 2017. The school is not popular with parents in its own catchment area as a further 27 children who live in the catchment attend other local schools as a result of parental choice.
2. The Governing Body believes that with such small numbers on roll, it is becoming increasingly difficult to provide the broad and balanced curriculum at the school to provide all of the educational, social, emotional and cultural experiences the pupils require and

deserve to ensure they achieve their full academic potential. Moreover the decline in the school's pupil numbers will mean that in the future the school's budget will continue to reduce while the school will continue to have to pay its fixed costs. With just 8 pupils on roll the school will face significant financial challenges.

3. The building is in poor condition and will require significant investment. Since joining the JCS Federation, the other school has heavily subsidised Acklington Church of England First School, without which it would have been financially unviable.
4. There are 5 other first schools within a 7 miles radius, the closest of which is only 1.3 miles away. Of the 33 children who live in the Acklington catchment area, currently only 6 attend the school. There are many available places in the other schools.
5. The Governing Body is proposing the closure of Acklington Church of England First School on the basis that it would be in the best educational interests of the pupils attending the school, in the light of the continuing fall in pupil numbers and the school's financial viability. The school was rated 'Good' by OfSTED at its last inspection in 2012.

The pupils would be re-directed to other local schools should closure be approved (refer to Displaced Pupils below).

Pupil Numbers and Admissions

Acklington Church of England First School

There are currently 8 pupils on roll at Acklington Church of England First School.

The age range of the school is 3-9 and provides education to both boys and girls.

There are currently no pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs/Educational Health Plans enrolled at the school.

Displaced Pupils

In accordance with section 15(2) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, The James Calvert Spence College Federation intends to discontinue (close) the following school with effect from 31 December 2017:

- Acklington Church of England First School, Acklington Village, Acklington, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 9BW

In September 2017, there are 8 pupils enrolled at Acklington Church of England First School, a local authority maintained school. To facilitate this, it is proposed that the following model be implemented in accordance with the following arrangements and timeline:

22 December 2017

- Final day on which pupils remaining on roll at Acklington Church of England First School attend the school.

8 January 2018

- All pupils remaining on roll with Acklington Church of England First School would transfer either to other local first or primary schools according to parental preference and subject to a place being available, in order to coincide with the beginning of the school Spring Term and thereby support educational continuity.

31 December 2017

- Acklington Church of England First School would officially close.

The name and addresses of the closest schools where it is proposed that pupils would transfer, subject to places being available in relevant year groups, are:

- Broomhill First School, Station Road, North Broomhill, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 9UT
- Warkworth C of E First School, Guilden Road, Warkworth, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 0TJ
- Red Row First School, Red Row, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 5AS
- Amble First School, 6 Aidan Rd, Amble, Morpeth NE65 0EQ
- Amble Links First School, Links Ave, Amble, Morpeth NE65 0SA

However, parents would be able to apply for a place at any other appropriate school according to parental preference, subject to a place being available.

Impact on the Community

The site and buildings of Acklington Church of England First School are owned by Northumberland Estates and would revert to their control. At this stage, it is not known what plans the owner would have for the land and building. The school is not popular with parents in its own catchment area with only 6 children attending and the parents of a further 27 children who live in the catchment choosing to send them to other local schools. Therefore, it is not believed that there would be a significant impact on the local community should the school close.

Balance of denominational provision

Should Acklington Church of England Aided First School be approved for closure, there would be a very limited impact on the balance of denominational provision as there are two other schools within the Coquet Partnership with a religious character and another school with a religious character located close the Acklington, but in another school partnership, should parents exercise their preference for their child to continue a faith education:

- Warkworth C of E First School, Guilden Road, Warkworth, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 0TJ (Coquet Partnership)
- Grange View CE VC First School, Grange Road, Widdrington, Morpeth NE61 5LZ (Coquet Partnership)
- Felton C of E Primary School, Mouldshaugh Lane, Felton, Morpeth NE65 9PY (Alnwick Partnership)

However, if Acklington Church of England First School is approved for closure, it is proposed by Northumberland County Council that the catchment area of the school would transfer in part to Broomhill First School as the nearest school to Acklington village, and in part to Warkworth C of E First School as the nearest Church of England school and that parents would be able to apply for a place at those schools.

In any event, parents would be able to apply to any other local first or primary school according to parental preference.

Rural Primary Schools

Acklington Church of England First School falls within the categorisation of a rural primary school as set out in Section 15 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and is listed in the Department for Education's List of Designated Rural Schools 2016.

Maintained nursery schools

There is currently no nursery provision at Acklington Church of England First School.

Provision for 16-19 year olds

N/A - There is no provision for students aged 16 to 19 in Acklington Church of England First School

Special educational provision

There are no pupils on roll at the school with SEN. However, provision for pupils with SEN is provided at the schools set out in 'Displaced Pupils'. There is no provision at the school that is recognised by the local authority as reserved for pupils with SEN.

Travel

- The Council proposes that should the school close, its catchment area should be incorporated in part into the catchment area of Broomhill First School as this is the next nearest school to the Acklington Village community and in part to Warkworth C of E First School as the next nearest Church of England school to Acklington. The Council would guarantee transport to these two schools for eligible pupils, and would provide transport to other schools in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy.
- Journeys for the current pupils on roll to any of the alternative schools proposed would take between 5 to 15 minutes depending on the distance from the individual pupil's and the alternative school selected, although this does not take into account inclement weather or any additional stops to school. However, it is not envisaged that any journey would exceed the Government's best practice guidelines for pupils of primary age to travel no more than 45 minutes each way from home to school and back.
- There would be no anticipated significant increase in car use or in costs to the Council's Home to School Transport budget due to the small number of pupils at the school and existing transportation routes as a result of these proposals.

Consultation

All of the applicable statutory requirements to consult on this proposal in accordance with Section 15(2) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 were complied with during the consultation period that took place between May and June 2017.

For this consultation exercise, around 1000 letters and notifications were distributed to consultees (including parents, staff, pupils, Governors, Local parish councils, the Church of England and Roman Catholic dioceses, early-years providers, the local MP and staff representatives) informing them that a consultation document outlining the proposals was available on the James Calvert Spence College website or in hard copy on request in accordance with statutory requirements.

The Governing Body held separate meetings for staff on 21 June and Governors and parents and members of public on 22 June 2017.

The meetings organised during the consultation exercise allowed consultees attending to the opportunity to make known their views on the proposals and to suggest alternatives, which were noted and considered within the analysis of feedback.

Around 100 responses were received from consultees during the consultation exercise.

Submission of Objections and Comments on Proposals

Within four weeks after the date of publication of these proposals (**i.e. by midnight on Thursday 5 October 2017**), any person may object to or make comments on the proposals by sending their written representations to: **The Interim Director of Children's Services, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF, or by email to Lorraine.Fife@northumberland.gov.uk.**

Signature

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Adrian Dougherty
Chair of Governors