

## NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

### STATUTORY PROPOSAL FOR THE PROPOSED CLOSURE OF HERDLEY BANK CHURCH OF ENGLAND AIDED PRIMARY 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 West Tyne Federation to discontinue (close) Herdley Bank Church of England Aided Primary School, Coanwood, Haltwhistle, Northumberland, NE49 0QT with effect from 30 April 2016.

Herdley Bank Church of England Aided Primary School is a local authority maintained voluntary school.

#### **Contact Details**

Copies of this proposal may be obtained from :

The Governing Body  
Herdley Bank Church of England Aided Primary School  
Coanwood  
Haltwhistle  
Northumberland  
NE49 0QT

Or from the school's website at [www.herdleybank.northumberland.sch.uk](http://www.herdleybank.northumberland.sch.uk)

#### **Implementation**

Herdley Bank Church of England Aided Primary School is proposed to close with effect from 30 April 2016.

#### **Objectives and reason for closure**

The objective of these proposals is to discontinue (close) Herdley Bank Church of England Aided Primary School, Coanwood, Haltwhistle, Northumberland, NE49 0QT with effect from 30 April 2016.

Herdley Bank Church of England Aided Primary School is a very small, rural first school in the Haydon Bridge Partnership and is one of four schools that form the West Tyne Federation, which is managed by one Governing Body; the other three schools within the West Tyne Federation are:

- Greenhead CE Primary School  
Greenhead  
Brampton  
Cumbria  
CA8 7HB
- Henshaw CE Primary School  
Henshaw  
Hexham  
Northumberland  
NE47 7EP
- Whitfield CE Primary School  
Whitfield  
Hexham  
Northumberland  
NE47 8JH

The Governing Body is consulting on the proposal to close Herdley Bank Church of England Aided Primary School at the end of April 2016 for the following reasons:

1. There has been a decline in the number of pupils at Herdley Bank Church of England Aided Primary School during the last few years. At the beginning of the school year 2014/15, there were 19 pupils on roll at Herdley Bank Church of England Aided Primary School. However, at the initiation of consultation there were only 8 pupils on roll at the school, all of whom are girls, and the number has now dropped to 6 pupils. No pupils have joined Reception Class in the school this September and there are no pupils in Years 5 and 6.
2. The Governing Body believes that with such small numbers on roll, it will be increasingly difficult to provide a broad and balanced curriculum at the school to provide all of the educational, social, emotional and cultural experiences they require 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 6 pupils on roll the school will face significant financial challenges.
3. The Governing Body is proposing the closure of Herdley Bank Church of England Aided Primary School purely on the basis that this is in the best educational interests of the pupils attending the school, in the light of the fall in pupil numbers and the school's financial viability. The school was rated 'Good' by OfSTED at its last inspection in 2013.

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

### **Pupil Numbers and Admissions**

There are currently **6** pupils on roll at Herdley Bank Church of England Aided Primary School in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4.

The age range of the school is 4-11 and provides education to both boys and girls.

There are currently **0** pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs or additional needs enrolled at the school.

### **Displaced Pupils**

In accordance with section 15(2) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Governing Body of The West Tyne Federation intends to discontinue (close) Herdley Bank Church of England Aided Primary School, Coanwood, Haltwhistle, Northumberland, NE49 0QT with effect from 30 April 2016:

In September 2015, there were 8 pupils enrolled at Herdley Bank Church of England Aided Primary School, a local authority maintained voluntary school; in October 2015 there are 6 pupils enrolled at the school. It is expected that a similar number of pupils would be on roll in September 2016, who would be displaced should the school close.

To facilitate this, it is proposed that the following model be implemented in accordance with the following arrangements and timeline:

#### **24 March 2016**

- Final day on which pupils remaining on roll at Herdley Bank Church of England Aided Primary School attend the school.

**11 April 2016**

- All pupils remaining on roll with Herdley Bank Church of England Aided Primary School would transfer either to one of the other three schools in the West Tyne Federation (see below) or to Haltwhistle Community Campus (lower school), or to another local first or primary school according to parental preference, subject to a place being available, in order to coincide with the beginning of the school Summer Term and thereby support educational continuity.

**30 April 2016**

- Herdley Bank CE Primary School would officially close.

The name and addresses of the schools where it is proposed that pupils would transfer are:

- Greenhead CE Primary School  
Greenhead  
Brampton  
Cumbria  
CA8 7HB
- Henshaw CE Primary School  
Henshaw  
Hexham  
Northumberland  
NE47 7EP
- Whitfield CE Primary School  
Whitfield  
Hexham  
Northumberland  
NE47 8JH
- Haltwhistle Community Campus (Lower School)  
Woodhead Lane  
Haltwhistle  
Northumberland  
NE49 9DP

Greenhead, Henshaw and Whitfield CE Primary Schools also form part of the West Tyne Federation together with Herdley Bank Church of England Aided Primary School. However, parents would have a right to express a preference for any alternative school for their child should approval be given for closure of the Herdley Bank Church of England Aided Primary School.

**Impact on the Community**

The site and buildings of Herdley Bank Church of England Aided Primary School are owned by the Newcastle Diocesan Education Board which is seeking ideas for alternative use of the site should the school be approved for closure. Furthermore, the Herdley Bank Under 5's Group currently provides day care for children under the age of five in the local area and is located on the site of the school; it is envisaged that the Herdley Bank Under 5's Group would consult with the Newcastle Diocesan Education Board on how to continue this provision for the local community should closure be approved.

### **Balance of denominational provision**

Should Herdley Bank Church of England Aided Primary School be approved for closure, there would be no change to the balance of denominational provision as the other three schools within the West Tyne Federation have a religious character and are located in the local area should parents exercise their preference for their child to continue a faith education:

- Greenhead CE Primary School  
Greenhead  
Brampton  
Cumbria  
CA8 7HB
- Henshaw CE Primary School  
Henshaw  
Hexham  
Northumberland  
NE47 7EP
- Whitfield CE Primary School  
Whitfield  
Hexham  
Northumberland  
NE47 8JH

However, if the school is approved for closure, it is proposed by Northumberland County Council that the catchment area of Herdley Bank Church of England Primary School would transfer to Haltwhistle Community Campus (Lower School) and that parents would be able to apply for a place at that school:

- Haltwhistle Community Campus (Lower School)  
Woodhead Lane  
Haltwhistle  
Northumberland  
NE49 9DP

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

### **Rural Primary Schools**

Herdley Bank Church of England Aided Primary School falls within the categorisation of a rural primary school as set out in Section 15 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and listed in the Designation of Rural Primary Schools Order 2015, therefore The School Organisation Regulations governing school closure require that the following matters are considered when the closure of a rural school is proposed. These are:

- The likely effect of the discontinuance of the school on the local community;
- The availability and likely cost to the local education authority of transport to other schools;
- Any increase in use of motor vehicles that is likely to result from the discontinuance of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase and;
- Any alternatives to the discontinuance of the school.

The Governing Body of the West Tyne Federation considered the above matters at their meeting of 20 October 2015, along with alternative proposals to closure of the school. A key issue raised with regard to impact on the local community of closure of the school would be the possible loss of the Herdley Bank Under 5's Group which is located at the Herdley Bank Church of England Primary School site (refer to para. 'Impact on the Community'). It is not envisaged that there would be a significant impact in relation to costs to the Council's Home to School Transport budget should the school be approved for closure as there are currently only 6 pupils on roll and given that there is existing school transport provision in place to other schools in the local area. In addition, it is unlikely that there would be a significant increase in use of motor vehicles should the school be approved for closure.

#### **Maintained nursery schools**

N/A

#### **Provision for 16-19 year olds**

N/A

#### **Special educational provision/Additional Needs**

There are currently no pupils with a statement of Special Educational Needs or with additional needs on roll at Herdley Bank Church of England Aided Primary School.

Provision for pupils with SEN/Additional Needs would be available at the other local schools within the West Tyne Federation and at Haltwhistle Community Campus (lower school).

#### **Travel**

- The Council proposes that should the school close, its catchment area should be incorporated into the catchment area of Haltwhistle Community Campus (lower school), as this is the next nearest school to the community currently served by Herdley Bank Church of England Aided Primary School, and the Council would guarantee transport to Haltwhistle; at the end of Year 4 at Haltwhistle Community Campus (Lower School) pupils would transfer to Haltwhistle Community Campus (Upper School). In any event, all parents have the right to express a preference for an alternative school for their child, and the Governing Body would guarantee admission into one of the other three primary schools in the West Tyne Federation should parents wish to continue to educate their child within a church school. The County Council 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 10 to 25 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 number of 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.
- At the end of Year 8 at Haltwhistle Community Campus Upper School, pupils would transfer to a high or secondary school, according to parental preference. Parents choosing to send their child to another Primary School would still be able to apply for a place at Haydon Bridge High School for Year 7, but transport would normally not be provided by the Council.
- 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 September and October 2015.

During that time, 857 copies of a consultation document outlining the proposals were forwarded to relevant consultees including parents, staff, Governors, local schools that could be impacted, parish councils, Northumberland County Council and early years providers. The consultation documents were also made widely available in accordance with statutory requirements. 29 consultees responded to the consultation, including 11 parents or carers. A meeting for staff was held at the school on 3 September 2015 and a meeting for parents and the public was held at the school on 16 September 2015. The parents and public meeting allowed people the opportunity to make known their views on the proposal and to suggest alternatives. The date and venue of the meeting was published in the Consultation Document and in the local newspaper with an invitation for all interested parties to attend.

Details of the persons and parties consulted, the minutes of the public consultation meeting, and views of the persons consulted are detailed in the report of the Chair of Governors considered at the Governing Body meeting of 20 October 2015.

## Submission of Objections and Comments on Proposals

Within four weeks after the date of publication of the these proposals (**i.e. by midnight on Thursday 19 November 2015**), any person may object to or make comments on the proposals by sending their written representations to: **The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF, or by email to [Lorraine.Fife@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Lorraine.Fife@northumberland.gov.uk).**

Signature

Publication Date: 23 October 2015



Councillor Alan Sharp  
Chair of Governors