



Consultation Document

**Proposals to amalgamate
Grove Road Community Primary School and
Woodfield Community Primary School, Harrogate**

from 1 September 2022

Grove Road Community Primary School and Woodfield Community Primary School, Harrogate

November 2021

This paper sets out proposals by North Yorkshire County Council to amalgamate Grove Road Community Primary School and Woodfield Community Primary School in Harrogate. This would mean that Woodfield Community Primary School would become part of Grove Road Community Primary School from 1 September 2022 with both school sites remaining open. As part of the amalgamation there would need to be a technical closure of Woodfield Community Primary School as a separate entity and the enlargement of premises and expansion onto the Woodfield site of Grove Road Community Primary School.

The Governing Bodies of both Grove Road and Woodfield schools have asked North Yorkshire County Council to carry out this consultation.

Both Governing Bodies see this as an exciting opportunity to enhance the facilities of Grove Road School, organising sustainable education across both sites aiming for the best possible provision for all pupils, and importantly ensuring that the Woodfield site continues to be used for education of the wider community.

This paper gives the background to the proposals. There will be an in-person public meeting on: **Monday 10 January 2022 at 6.30 pm at Woodfield Primary School.**

There will also be a virtual (on-line) public meeting on **Monday 17 January 2022 at 6.30 pm**. If you wish to be part of this virtual meeting could you please let us know by emailing schoolorganisation@northyorks.gov.uk and joining instructions will be provided.

Background

Grove Road Community Primary School serves much of High Harrogate. The school is currently operating at capacity. Woodfield Community Primary School serves Woodfield and parts of the Bilton area of Harrogate. The school has been under-subscribed for a number of years.

Grove Road Community Primary School was last inspected by Ofsted in June 2018 through a short inspection, which judged the school to continue to be good. This followed a more detailed inspection in 2014.

Woodfield Community Primary School was inspected by Ofsted in January 2020, who found the overall effectiveness to be inadequate and the school became subject to special measures. Any maintained school that is judged inadequate by Ofsted is required to become a sponsored academy. The Regional Schools Commissioner has been unable to secure an Academy Trust to sponsor Woodfield School due to viability concerns. Where a school would not be viable as an academy, it is expected the local authority will close the school and that the Secretary of State can direct them to do so if necessary.

Since January 2020, there have been considerable changes in staffing at Woodfield School. The current acting executive headteacher and acting head of school took up leadership at the

start of the summer term 2020. The latest monitoring visit by Ofsted to Woodfield School in June 2021 found that leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures, and that the local authority's statement of action and the school's action plan were both fit for purpose. It is important to recognise the efforts of all those who have been involved in this improvement journey.

However, the current arrangements can only be temporary and the absence of an academy sponsor means that Woodfield School faces an uncertain future. Therefore work began earlier this year to assess how education provision within the Woodfield community could be preserved. The current proposals for amalgamation have been developed by members of the school governing bodies and LA officers. The two governing bodies carefully considered the proposals before autumn half term, and both agreed to ask the County Council to start this consultation on the amalgamation of Woodfield and Grove Road Community Primary Schools.

Pupil Numbers

As at November 2021 there are 49 pupils of mainstream school age at Woodfield Community Primary School and 292 pupils at Grove Road Community Primary School. Both schools also offer nursery provision for children aged 3 and 4. Pupil numbers in each year group (as at November 2021) are set out below.

Year group 2021-22	Grove Road School	Woodfield School
Reception	40	6
Year 1	37	2
Year 2	40	11
Year 3	41	4
Year 4	43	12
Year 5	47	3
Year 6	44	11
Total	292	49

Places for children currently attending Woodfield School would be made available through the amalgamation with Grove Road. Parents could also express a preference for any alternative school.

As part of the amalgamation proposals, it is proposed to increase the Published Admission Number (PAN) of Grove Road Community Primary School from 40 to 50. The PAN is the number of school places that must be offered in reception each year.

If the proposals went ahead, there would be 350 primary school places available across the two sites of the amalgamated Grove Road School. As there are currently 280 primary school places available at Grove Road, and 150 at Woodfield, this would be an overall reduction of 80 places. Given current forecasts, including the likely demand from new housing in the catchment areas, and patterns of parental preference, there would appear to be sufficient primary places available in the local area. Birth rates in the district are falling, and pupils living in the Woodfield and Grove Road catchment areas attend a wide variety of primary schools. There would be scope to increase the PAN at Grove Road School at a later date, if required and subject to consultation.

The Financial Position

Grove Road School has produced a long-term financial forecast to explore the viability of the amalgamation proposal. This model suggests that where the PAN is set at 50, the financial position can be sustainable over the long term. This is dependent on both pupil numbers and the level of staffing and there will always be some degree of uncertainty in any school financial forecast over the longer term.

Should the amalgamation go ahead from 31 August 2022, any deficit on the Woodfield School budget on that date would be absorbed by the County Council.

The Proposal

It is proposed to amalgamate Grove Road Community Primary School and Woodfield Community Primary School from 1 September 2022. As part of the amalgamation there would need to be a technical closure of Woodfield Community Primary School as a separate entity, and the enlargement of premises and expansion onto the Woodfield site of Grove Road Community Primary School.

If this proposal went ahead, Grove Road Community Primary School would operate as a split site school:

- From September 2022, all Nursery children would be based at the current Woodfield site (Grove Road Nursery); all Year Reception to Year 6 pupils would be based at the current Grove Road site.
- All families of children currently attending Woodfield school and who choose to join Grove Road Community Primary School can be accommodated at the existing Grove Road site
- From September 2023, all Nursery children and Reception pupils (2023 cohort) would be based at the current Woodfield site (Grove Road Early Years); all Year 1 to Year 6 pupils would be based at the Grove Road site.
- Growth is expected to continue so that eventually Grove Road Early Years and Grove Road Key Stage 1 would be located at the current Woodfield site and Grove Road Key Stage 2 would be accommodated at the current Grove Road site.

Some Targeted Mainstream Provision would also be based at the current Woodfield site, in addition to that already available on the Grove Road site. Targeted Mainstream Provision offers enhanced levels of specialist support over and above that usually available in mainstream schools, to provide an appropriate environment and personalised support for children and young people with SEND, who are able to access mainstream learning.

Additional capacity would be available on the Grove Road site for specialist provision such as Thrive (social and emotional wellbeing), science, humanities and drama.

Both Governing Bodies see this as an exciting opportunity to enhance the facilities of Grove Road School, organising sustainable education across both sites aiming for the best possible provision for all pupils, and importantly ensuring that the Woodfield site continues to be used for education of the wider community.

Staff

The County Council is the employer for staff at both Grove Road Community Primary School and Woodfield Community Primary School and the Governing Bodies will seek to protect employment as far as possible for staff currently employed at Woodfield. A separate HR consultation process for staff and their professional associations will commence in the spring

term and the Governing Bodies will most likely propose an internal transfer of staff from Woodfield to Grove Road, following Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) principles.

Alternative options for Woodfield Primary School

Any maintained school like Woodfield that has been judged inadequate by Ofsted is required to become a sponsored academy. The Regional Schools Commissioner has been unable to secure an Academy Trust to sponsor Woodfield School due to viability concerns.

Where the Secretary of State considers that a school would not be viable as an academy, it is expected that the local authority will close the school and the Secretary of State can direct them to do so if necessary. Any alternative proposal to close the school and cease education provision on the Woodfield school site would be consulted on separately.

An academy order can also be revoked where a school has been re-inspected by Ofsted and judged Good or Outstanding, and the Secretary of State is satisfied that the improvement can be sustained without the support of a strong sponsor. As noted above, while Ofsted has recognised the improvements that have been made at Woodfield, the current leadership arrangements can only be temporary.

What Happens Next?

Your views about this proposal are welcomed. You can either complete and return the attached response sheet, or submit an online response.

Paper responses should be returned to North Yorkshire County Council at the address below:

FREEPOST RTKE-RKAY-CUJS
Grove Road and Woodfield
Strategic Planning
North Yorkshire County Council
County Hall
NORTHALLERTON
DL7 8AE

Online responses may be submitted by following this link:

<https://consult.northyorks.gov.uk/snapwebhost/s.asp?k=163671352052>

The closing date for responses is 28 January 2022

All responses to the consultation received by this date will be considered by the County Council's Executive committee on 22 February 2022.

If the County Council's Executive decides to proceed, then statutory proposals would be published on 3 March on the County Council's website and statutory notices placed in the local press and on the school gates. These statutory proposals would provide a further four weeks for representations to be made. A final decision would then be made in April 2022 by the County Council's Executive (or by the Executive Member for Education and Skills, if there were no objections to statutory proposals). If agreed, the schools would amalgamate from 1 September 2022.

Anticipated key dates

All dates are subject to approvals at each stage.

Consultation opens	2 December 2021
Public meetings	
In-person public meeting	Monday 10 January 2022 at 6.30 pm at Woodfield Primary School
Virtual (on-line) public meeting	Monday 17 January 2022 at 6.30 pm online
Consultation closes	28 January 2022
County Council's Executive considers consultation response	22 February 2022
Statutory Proposals published (4 weeks for representations to be made)	3 March – 31 March 2022
Final decision by County Council's Executive (or the Executive Member for Education and Skills, if there are no objections to the statutory proposals)	April 2022
Amalgamation takes place	1 September 2022

**Grove Road Community Primary School and Woodfield
Community Primary School, Harrogate
Consultation on proposals to amalgamate**

Observations and/or suggestions:

Please do not disclose any personal data in your response

Interest/Status

e.g. Parent/Governor/Teacher/Community

Name of School

Signed

Date:

Name (Block Capitals)

Address:

.....

.....

Postcode:

To help us assess whether we have provided clear information, please let us know whether you found this consultation easy to understand? YES/NO

Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

.....

Under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, responses to the consultation may be published on the County Council's website where it may be accessed by members of the public. Your personal details will not be published.

Please send this response sheet to the following "FREEPOST" address. You do not need to use a postage stamp.

FREEPOST RTKE-RKAY-CUJS
Grove Road and Woodfield Schools
Strategic Planning
North Yorkshire County Council
County Hall
NORTHALLERTON
DL7 8AE

Or go to:

<https://consult.northyorks.gov.uk/snapwebhost/s.asp?k=163671352052>

and submit your response there

To be received by no later than 28 January 2022

We are collecting this information for the purpose of gathering views on the proposal. Your personal data will not be published or passed to any other organisation unless a legal obligation compels us to do so. We may contact you to discuss your views further. For more information about how your personal data is handled at North Yorkshire County Council please visit: www.northyorks.gov.uk/privacy

Proposals to amalgamate Grove Road Community Primary School and Woodfield Community Primary School, Harrogate

Frequently asked questions

What does amalgamation mean?

An amalgamation is the process of joining Grove Road Community Primary School and Woodfield Community Primary School together. It is different to a merger or federation because we are not creating a new school, or working together as two schools. Woodfield Community Primary School would become a part of Grove Road Community Primary School.

How does this happen?

The Woodfield school site would become part of Grove Road from 1 September 2022. This means that there would be one school (Grove Road Community Primary School) operating across two sites. As part of the amalgamation, Woodfield Community Primary (as it is now) would close and places for children currently attending Woodfield would be made available through the amalgamation with Grove Road.

Why does it need to happen?

Woodfield Community Primary School was judged Inadequate by Ofsted at inspection in January 2020. Any maintained school like Woodfield that has been judged inadequate by Ofsted is required to become a sponsored academy. The Regional Schools Commissioner has been unable to secure an Academy Trust to sponsor Woodfield School due to viability concerns.

Where a school would not be viable as an academy, it is expected that the local authority will close the school and the Secretary of State can direct them to do so if necessary.

Why amalgamate and not just close?

Both governing bodies recognise that the Woodfield site is a valuable asset to the local community for educational purposes and by pursuing an amalgamation they can secure its future for the benefit of local children. The amalgamation ensures education provision remains located in the heart of the Woodfield community.

Why Grove Road and not another local school?

Grove Road has a good Ofsted rating and is in close proximity to families whose children currently attend Woodfield Community Primary School. Grove Road has already successfully welcomed many families who previously attended Woodfield and leaders from Grove Road worked with Woodfield school in 2020 and at the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Both schools have a similar ethos in relation to inclusive education.

Why is this proposal exciting for Grove Road?

The sites are within a mile of each other, which would make it easy to facilitate movement between locations during the school day. This creates an exciting opportunity to enhance the facilities of Grove Road Community Primary School, organising sustainable education across both sites, aiming for the best possible provision for all pupils, and importantly ensuring that the Woodfield site continues to be used for education of the wider community.

Why are the proposals being put forward now?

The latest Ofsted monitoring report of Woodfield Community Primary School in July states that “Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures” and it is important to recognise the efforts of all those who have been involved in this improvement journey. However, the current arrangements can only be temporary and the absence of an academy sponsor means that Woodfield School faces an uncertain future. These proposals would keep education provision within the Woodfield community.

What are the timescales?

Public consultation runs from 2 December to 28 January. Parents will be provided with a consultation document containing further details about the proposals and a response form for their views. There are public consultation meetings where parents of children at both schools can find out further information, ask questions, and put forward their views.

On 22 February, the County Council’s Executive committee will consider all the responses to the consultation and decide whether to proceed with the next step of the proposal. This would involve publishing statutory proposals on the County Council’s website and putting statutory notices in the local press and on the school gates. This would give a further four weeks during March for representations to be made. A final decision would then be made by the County Council’s Executive in April, and if agreed, Woodfield school would close on 31 August and Grove Road would assume use of the site currently occupied by Woodfield school from 1 September 2022.

Where have these proposals come from?

The proposals have been developed by members of the school governing bodies and LA officers over several months. The two governing bodies carefully considered the proposals before the autumn half term, and both agreed to ask the County Council to start a consultation.

How would the proposals work practically?

Our initial plans, to be considered as part of the consultation, are:

- From September 2022, all Nursery children would be based at the current Woodfield site (Grove Road Nursery); all Year Reception to Year 6 pupils would be based at the current Grove Road site.
- All families of children currently attending Woodfield school and who choose to join Grove Road Community Primary School can be accommodated at the existing Grove Road site
- From September 2023, all Nursery children and Reception pupils (2023 cohort) would be based at the current Woodfield site (Grove Road Early Years); all Year 1 to Year 6 pupils would be based at the Grove Road site.
- Growth is expected to continue so that eventually Grove Road Early Years and Grove Road Key Stage 1 would be located at the current Woodfield site and Grove Road Key Stage 2 would be accommodated at the current Grove Road site.

What if I have children at both sites?

The intention is to have a walking bus, across the iron bridge to the back of the Woodfield playing field, that enables parents to drop their child at either school and then children who need to will be able to walk safely to the other site accompanied by school staff. We will look at the timings of the school day to ensure that parents who choose to drop off or collect children from both sites are able to do so. Grove Road school also have wrap around care provision that will continue to be available from 7:30am to 5:30pm. Other opportunities, including clubs, will be looked at closely across both sites.

We'd welcome parents' ideas and views as part of the consultation process.

How would the amalgamated school meet the needs of my child?

The school would work closely with parents, as both Grove Road and Woodfield Schools do now, to meet the needs of individual children. The school would ensure early identification of needs and appropriate support in school and with partner agencies and services as required.

What if I want to move my child to another school?

We would encourage you to share your concerns with your child's Headteacher in the first instance.

There will be opportunities for children and their families to visit Grove Road school and meet key staff as part of the proposal, however if parents feel it would be

beneficial, families are invited to contact the school for an earlier visit. Of course, parents may wish to explore a transfer to another school in the area. If so, please see the information about applying for an in-year school place at:

<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/changing-schools-and-year-applications>

The County Council's School Admissions Team can be contacted by email or telephone. Email: schooladmissions@northyorks.gov.uk Tel: 01609 533679

What about admissions for Reception for September 2022?

Parents can apply to either Grove Road or Woodfield School this year to join Reception in September 2022, and if the amalgamation goes ahead, from September 2022, Reception children would be educated at the current Grove Road school site. Children who join the school as part of the September 2023 Reception intake would be based at the current Woodfield site and would remain there until the end of their Year 2.

The deadline for making an application to join reception in September 2022 is 15 January 2022:

<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/apply-place-primary-or-secondary-school>

How can parents get involved?

The public consultation period runs from 2 December to 28 January. You can send your ideas by online response form or post. There are public consultation meetings, where you can find out more information, ask questions, and put forward your views.

What if I have any concerns now?

Please contact:

Margaret Beagle, Grove Road Chair of Governors via cofg@groveroad.northyorks.sch.uk

Janet Booth, Woodfield Chair of Governors via cofg@woodfield.northyorks.sch.uk

Mr Parkhouse via headteacher@groveroad.northyorks.sch.uk

Mr Atkinson and Miss Marwood via headteacher@woodfield.northyorks.sch.uk