

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE
CORPORATE DIRECTOR MEETING WITH EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

7 February 2023

Proposal to amalgamate Caedmon College Whitby and Eskdale School

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Executive Member approval to consult on a proposal, requested by the federated Governing Board of the Whitby Secondary Partnership, to amalgamate Caedmon College Whitby and Eskdale School resulting in the technical closure of Eskdale School and the Eskdale site, and increase the planned admission number for the amalgamated school, now requested with effect from 1 September 2024.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Whitby Secondary Partnership was formed in July 2019, bringing together the governing bodies of the two secondary schools in the town, Caedmon College Whitby and Eskdale School, to form a single Governing Board responsible for both schools. Eskdale School is an 11-16 school and Caedmon College Whitby is an 11-19 school. The Whitby Sixth Form, although technically part of Caedmon College Whitby, serves both schools. An Executive Headteacher is responsible for both schools and works with two Heads of School and two Senior Leadership Teams.
- 2.2 Eskdale School, now an 11-16 school, extended its age range from an 11-14 middle deemed secondary school from September 2016. Caedmon College Whitby is an 11-19 school formed by the amalgamation of Whitby Community College and Caedmon School in 2014.
- 2.3 Eskdale School operates from a single site on the east side of Whitby. Caedmon College Whitby's 11-16 provision mainly operates from the Normanby Site (formerly Whitby Community College) and the Whitby Sixth Form is based on the Scoresby Site (formerly Caedmon School), both on the west side of the town.
- 2.4 In February 2016, North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) consulted on proposals to reorganise secondary education in Whitby by amalgamating Eskdale School and Caedmon College Whitby through the technical closure of Eskdale School and the associated enlargement and expansion of Caedmon College Whitby. Both schools still had separate governing bodies and leadership at this time, and Eskdale School was an 11-14 middle deemed secondary school. In April 2016, the County Council suspended further decision-taking on the proposal to amalgamate Caedmon College Whitby and Eskdale School. This followed the publication of the Government White Paper 'Educational Excellence Everywhere' which had set out the expectation that by the end of 2020, all schools would be academies or in the process of becoming academies and by the end of 2022, local authorities would no longer maintain schools. Subsequent experience has shown that the conversion of schools to academy status has not progressed as quickly as envisaged in the Government's 2016 ambitions. The 'Education for All Bill' was withdrawn in October 2016
- 2.5 In March 2022 the Government published their Schools White Paper reiterating their desire for a fully academised system. Currently this Bill is not progressing through

parliamentary process. However, the Governing Board of the Whitby Secondary Partnership recognise that it would need to resolve its finances before any future application to join a multi-academy trust in accordance with Department for Education expectations.

On 13 December 2022 the Governing Board of the Whitby Secondary Partnership decided to ask North Yorkshire County Council to commence a consultation process on their proposal to amend the structure of the Whitby Secondary Partnership. Their initial proposal was that Caedmon College Whitby and Eskdale School amalgamate from 1 September 2023, however following further consideration, the Governing Board now request that NYCC consult on the amalgamation taking place from 1 September 2024.

3 CURRENT CONCERNS

- 3 The Governing Board set out three linked factors as the reasons for their proposal to amalgamate Caedmon College Whitby and Eskdale School: low pupil numbers, significant financial challenges at both schools and an imperative to give the best education and curriculum to the young people of Whitby. These are set out below.

Pupil numbers

- 3.1 The Whitby Secondary Partnership 11-18 Capacity has approximately 2080 school places. Numbers of secondary aged pupils have been falling steadily across the catchment area over the last 10 years (see Table 1 below). There are currently 406 pupils on roll at Eskdale, with a capacity of 550, and 783 pupils on roll at Caedmon College, with a capacity of 1530. There is therefore a surplus of over 40% of places in Whitby.

Table 1

	Eskdale	Caedmon 11-16	Whitby Sixth Form 16-18	Caedmon 11-18	Whitby Total 11-16	Whitby Total 11-18
2010/11	303	936	320	1256	1239	1559
2011/12	303	912	324	1236	1215	1539
2012/13	280	880	314	1194	1160	1474
2013/14	291	814	309	1123	1105	1414
2014/15	294	768	316	1084	1062	1378
2015/16	300	772	311	1083	1072	1383
2016/17	302	748	265	1013	1050	1315
2017/18	408	649	205	854	1057	1262
2018/19	513	582	169	751	1095	1264
2019/20	499	570	176	746	1069	1245
2020/21	481	606	163	769	1087	1250
2021/22	456	621	175	796	1077	1252
2022/23	406	647	136	783	1053	1189

Finance

- 3.2 The Federation currently operates two separate budgets. Operating two schools across three sites brings a significant financial cost. Both school budgets have numerous financial challenges that need to be addressed. Each school is subject to a Notice of Financial Concern. This notice is issued by the Local Authority to governing boards where, in the opinion of officers, actions need to be taken to safeguard the financial position of the local authority or the school. Under Local Management of Schools, schools are responsible for their own budgets. It is for heads and governors to

determine at school level how to optimise the use of resources and maximise value for money.

Standards and Curriculum

- 3.3 The Governing Board view the proposal as offering the opportunity to deliver a broader curriculum offer with wider opportunities and development of skills to meet the need of students and the local community. They believe that any strategy to address the low pupil numbers and financial challenges without moving to become one school across two sites would hamper educational and curriculum improvement. Continuing to spend disproportionate amounts of their budget on premises costs across three sites would divert valuable budget away from the delivery of high-quality education.
- 3.4 Caedmon College Whitby was last inspected by Ofsted in February 2022, this was an initial (section 8) inspection. The reported outcome was that there has been no change to the school's overall judgement of good, however the evidence gathered suggested that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out at that time, and so the next inspection will therefore be a graded (section 5) inspection. The previous full Ofsted inspection took place in February 2017 which judged all outcomes to be good.
- 3.5 Eskdale School was last inspected by Ofsted in November 2022. The reported outcome was that there has been no change to the school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection, however, the evidence gathered suggested that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection. The previous full Ofsted inspection took place in November 2017 which judged all outcomes to be good.

4.0 THE GOVERNING BOARD'S PROPOSAL

- 4.1 At its meeting on 13 December 2022 the Governing Board decided to ask the County Council to commence a consultation process on their proposal to amend the structure of the Whitby Secondary Partnership.
- 4.2 The Governing Board's proposal to NYCC is:
1. That the Local Authority should amalgamate Caedmon College Whitby and Eskdale School.
 2. This would result in the technical closure of Eskdale School.
 3. The Eskdale School site is declared surplus to school requirements and is returned to Local Authority management.

Their proposal initially was that Caedmon College Whitby and Eskdale School amalgamate from 1 September 2023, however following further consideration, the Governing Board now request that the amalgamation takes place from 1 September 2024.

Amalgamation is a proposal to technically close one school (in this Eskdale School) and enlarge an existing school (in this case Caedmon College Whitby), to accommodate all pupils. The remaining school would retain its original registration number and age range.

There is an opportunity to rename Caedmon College Whitby as part of this reorganisation process, and this is something governors propose to do ahead of the amalgamated school's proposed opening on 1 September 2024.

5.0 INITIAL ANALYSIS OF THE GOVERNING BOARD'S PROPOSAL

Educational and Curriculum Improvement

- 5.1 Amalgamation on to two sites would offer the opportunity to redirect resources from maintaining premises to delivering the curriculum. A summary of the Whitby Secondary Partnership's vision for education states: *Education is everything and delivering a Quality First Provision for the community of Whitby and surrounding areas is our number one priority. This proposal will allow recent developments and the strengths that have been seen in both schools to not only continue as the newly amalgamated school, but to be accelerated to achieve greater educational and personal outcomes. The combined strengths of the two schools will give a firm foundation to achieve greater educational and personal outcomes for our students and therefore the community. It will enhance the quality and choice of academic and vocational education for the future of our young people, providing a platform for a stronger, more sustainable education to support our students in achieving their chosen goals.*
- 5.2 Initial curriculum modelling suggests that the amalgamated school would have 7-8 classes of around 23-24 pupils in each year group within Key Stage 3, and 9 classes in each year group within Key Stage 4. The amalgamated school would operate a two-week timetable based on 50 periods, as is currently the practice at both schools. With amalgamation, the Ofsted judgement attached to the school that is technically closing is effectively lost, and in future the enlarged school would receive a single inspection and judgement.

Staff

- 5.3 The Governing Board is clear that whilst the amalgamation would be a technical closure of Eskdale School, it will provide opportunities for staff across both schools. The amalgamation would involve the creation of a new staffing model to fit the needs of a newly enlarged and amalgamated school. A staff consultation would be undertaken, and Governors will be communicating the next steps to staff during February.

Governance

- 5.4 The existing Federated Governing Board would be expected to remain in place through to the implementation of the decision if agreed. The Federated Governing Board would then be disestablished from 31 August 2024 and a newly constituted Governing Board would be set up for the newly named single school from 1 September 2024.

Admissions

- 5.5 Existing pupils at both schools would automatically be placed on roll at the amalgamated school. Parents/carers of current Year 6 children who are due to start secondary education in Whitby in September 2023 would not need to take any action regarding their existing school admissions application, for which the deadline was 31 October 2022. It is anticipated that the final decision on the amalgamation proposal

will be made in June 2023 in advance of the secondary school application round for parents/carers of current Year 5 pupils due to transfer to secondary school in September 2024. Further advice will be provided to parents/carers as becomes necessary and in accordance with any decisions made.

- 5.6 The existing shared catchment area of Caedmon College Whitby and Eskdale Schools would continue to be used for the amalgamated school.
- 5.7 The proposal would require an increase in the published admissions number (PAN) for the amalgamated school. The PAN is the number of school places that the admission authority must offer in the age group at which pupils will normally be admitted to the school (Year 7). The current PAN for Eskdale School is 110 and for Caedmon College Whitby is 184. It is proposed to increase the PAN for the newly amalgamated school to 240. Further details about PANs are set out in Appendix 2.

Premises

- 5.8 It is proposed to operate the newly amalgamated school from September 2024 on two sites, the Normanby site for 11-16 pupils currently accommodated both on this site and at Eskdale, and the Scoresby site, mainly for the sixth form.
- 5.9 Given current forecasts, including the likely demand from new housing, there would appear to be sufficient secondary places available in the amalgamated 11-18 school, and sufficient places to accommodate all 11-16 pupils on the Normanby site (see Appendix 1 and 2). It should be noted that the Normanby site has operated with significantly more pupils previously. In 2002/3, for example, there were more than 960 pupils on roll at the site, which was then a 14-18 school.
- 5.10 Nonetheless, it will be important to ensure that arrangements are in place to meet the increased number of pupils and staff on the Normanby site. This will include a review of access arrangements for pedestrians, cyclists, buses and cars, but noting (as in 5.13 below) that an increase in transport services is not expected. From an accommodation perspective the initial analysis suggests there would be sufficient teaching spaces to suit the curriculum, but some ancillary modifications may be needed. Further work will be undertaken to confirm the position and any potential capital costs. The schools' meals provider has confirmed that they have no concerns regarding catering for the increased numbers on the Normanby site if the amalgamation went ahead, as they feel the existing kitchen could readily accommodate this and they would work to ensure a smooth transition.
- 5.11 As part of the proposal the Governors would declare the Eskdale site surplus to educational requirements and the site would be returned to NYCC management. Decisions about the future use of the Eskdale site would be taken after determination of the amalgamation proposal. These would need to include consideration of the Eskdale Community 3G flood-lit pitch on the school site.

Transport

- 5.12 There are currently 11 home to school transport services that serve the two schools. Nine of these services are shared and serve both schools. Two services only serve Eskdale School, these are one taxi, and one feeder bus from the railway station.
- 5.13 As pupil eligibility currently stands, the proposed amalgamation and technical closure of the Eskdale site would require 10 home to school transport services to serve the amalgamated school. The home to school transport taxi service currently serving only

Eskdale School would instead serve the Normanby site, so there would be one additional home to school transport vehicle accessing this site.

- 5.14 Arrangements for onward travel to school from the railway station for those pupils that travel on the Esk Valley line would need to be reviewed in light of the proposed changes. This could result in a small reduction to the transport costs and vehicle requirements for secondary aged pupils in Whitby. However, this review of onward travel to school from the railway station would need to be undertaken alongside a review of eligibility, which would continue to be determined in line with the Council's home to school transport policy.

Finance

- 5.15 Amalgamating the two schools across two sites would lead to savings on the premises costs at the Eskdale site. School budgets are funded largely by pupil numbers so the amalgamated school would have a larger combined funding allocation. However, the combined funding allocation for the amalgamated school would be smaller than the funding allocations for the two separate schools because there would be the loss of lump sum related funding, although transitional funding will be provided during the initial 19-month period of the amalgamation to assist with the reduction in this funding.
- 5.16 The estimated premises costs, excluding Rates, of £297k associated with the operation of the Eskdale site would be saved on the closure of the site. It is anticipated that the additional pupils on the Caedmon College - Normanby site would result in additional premises costs associated with utilities and cleaning of £84k for that site. On this basis, the indicative net saving on premises costs in respect of the amalgamation of the two schools is £213k on a full financial year basis.
- 5.17 The school lump sum funding of £128k, which is received by each school in their annual funding allocation, would cease for the Eskdale School budget - as with other Eskdale's school funding allocation - on the amalgamation of the two schools. However, transitional funding protection arrangements are provided which would allow for the balance of the lump sum to be retained from the point of amalgamation for the remainder of the financial year that amalgamation takes place and provide an additional £89.6k in addition to the £128k school lump sum funding received through the amalgamated school budget in the next financial year after the point of amalgamation.
- 5.18 The table below seeks to exemplify, other things being equal, the reduction in the lump sum and the estimated financial savings arising from the closure of the Eskdale site.

Financial Year	Caedmon Lump Sum (£k)	Eskdale Lump Sum (£k)	Amalgamated School Lump Sum (£k) [^]	Total Lump Sum (£k)	Premises Saving – Eskdale site (£k) ^{***}	Estimated Additional Premises Costs – Amalgamated School (£k) ^{***}	Net Premises Saving (£k) ^{***}
2024-25	128	128*	-	256	(173)	49	(124)
2025-26			217.6**	217.6	(297)	84	(213)
2026-27			128	128	(297)	84	(213)

* For the financial year 2024/25, Eskdale would retain 5/12th of the lump sum, but the Amalgamated School would retain 7/12th of the lump sum in transitional arrangements.

** For the financial year 2025/26, the Amalgamated School would retain 85% of the lump sums of the two individual schools.

*** Figures represent 2024-25 estimated prices

^ Figures represent 2023-24 National Funding Formula figures

- 5.19 The table shows that over the three-year period 2024 through to 2027, the reduction in lump sum funding for secondary education in Whitby would amount to £166.4k. However, this would be offset by estimated premises savings over the same period amounting to £550k. This would result in a net financial gain of £383.6k on these two factors. The impact of the lump sum reduction and the closure of the Eskdale site would result in an ongoing estimated annual net gain of £85k. The figures are based on the 2022-23 revised forecasts submitted by the school and the 2023-24 Department for Education (DfE) National Funding Formula (NFF) funding allocations and may change as a consequence of any national changes in DfE funding policy.
- 5.20 Further additional savings are likely to be able to be made through efficiencies in staffing, procurement and other costs by the amalgamated school over time. However, whilst an amalgamated school offers the potential for further savings compared to a federated structure, this paper does not include estimates of further savings pending the Governing Board decision on the final operating structure and required staffing establishment for the amalgamated school. Any savings identified from the operating model will assist an amalgamated school to address the inherited financial position.

Transition

- 5.16 Transition planning will focus on curriculum planning, staffing structures, finances and ensuring a smooth transition for students, particularly the most vulnerable. It will build on the joint working already established between the two schools. Elements of the curriculum in Eskdale and Caedmon College are already similar, however the proposed amalgamation would provide greater opportunities for curriculum development with a broader, more relevant curriculum being available to all students. The school would be better able to ensure that all students are taught by experienced subject specialist staff who can share and grow their passion and enthusiasm for their subject. It is a key priority of the newly amalgamated school to deliver curriculum pathways that will enable students to continue study through year 7 to year 13, including by establishing clearer progression routes from options at KS4, into KS5 and by offering competitive and relevant subjects with links to not only higher education, but also to apprenticeships and local business providers.

Summary

- 5.17 In summary, the Governing Board's proposal to amalgamate Caedmon College Whitby and Eskdale School appears to offer an opportunity to address the low pupil numbers, significant financial challenges at both schools, and the imperative to secure the best education and curriculum for the young people of Whitby. It is recommended that the views of parents, staff, local residents and other stakeholders are sought, which would enable further analysis of the proposals to be undertaken.

6.0 CONSULTATION PROCESS AND TIMESCALE

- 6.1 Should a decision be made to initiate a consultation on the proposed amalgamation of Caedmon College Whitby and Eskdale School by the technical closure of Eskdale School and the enlargement and renaming of Caedmon College Whitby to form a single school, a period of six weeks of consultation is proposed. An indicative timetable is set out below. The process will follow the DfE statutory guidance for opening and closing

and making significant changes to maintained schools.¹ A consultation document is currently being drafted. Separate staff consultations would take place.

6.2 The final decision on closure would be taken by the Executive (or by the Executive Member for Schools if there are no objections during the representation period).

6.3 Suggested key dates are shown below:

Approval to Consult by Executive Member	7 February 2023
Consultation opens (4 weeks)	20 February 2023
Public meetings	8 March 2023
Consultation closes	31 March 2023
County Council's Executive considers consultation response	18 April 2023
Executive decision to publish statutory notices	18 April 2023
Publication of statutory notices	27 April 2023
Representation period starts (4 weeks)	27 April 2023
Representation period ends	25 May 2023
Final decision by County Council's Executive	20 June 2023
Proposed date from which Eskdale School would technically close and the newly named amalgamated school would begin to operate	31 August <u>2024</u> & 1 September <u>2024</u>

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 The Executive Member for Education and Skills is recommended to agree consultation on a proposal, requested by the federated Governing Board of the Whitby Secondary Partnership, to amalgamate Caedmon College Whitby and Eskdale School resulting in the technical closure of Eskdale School and the Eskdale site, and increase the planned admission number for the amalgamated school with effect from 1 September 2024.

Stuart Carlton
CORPORATE DIRECTOR – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE.

Action AgreedExecutive Member
Date:

Action RequestedCorporate Director
Date:

Background Reports
None

¹ DfE, Opening and closing maintained schools. Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers (November 2019) and Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools. Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers (October 2018).

List of Appendices:

1. Pupil numbers and future forecasts
2. School capacities

Appendix 1

Pupil numbers and future forecasts from 23/24 onwards

	Eskdale 11-16	Caedmon 11-16	Whitby Sixth Form* 16-18	Caedmon 11-18	Whitby Total 11-16	Whitby Total 11-18
2011/12	303	912	324	1236	1215	1539
2012/13	280	880	314	1194	1160	1474
2013/14	291	814	309	1123	1105	1414
2014/15	294	768	316	1084	1062	1378
2015/16	300	772	311	1083	1072	1383
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2019/20	499	570	176	746	1069	1245
2020/21	481	606	163	769	1087	1250
2021/22	456	621	175	796	1077	1252
2022/23	407	647	140	787	1054	1194
2023/24	371	666	143	809	1037	1180
2024/25	342	690	154	844	1032	1186
2025/26	316	679	161	840	995	1156
2026/27	307	681	156	837	988	1144
2027/28	326	657	143	800	983	1126
2028/29	322	651	145	796	973	1118
2029/30	315	636	146	782	951	1097
2030/31	308	621	145	766	929	1074
2031/32	304	613	142	755	917	1059
2032/33	299	604	138	742	904	1041
2033/34	293	591	139	730	884	1023
2034/35	282	590	134	724	882	1016

* Sixth form numbers are projected based on the average 'stay-on rate' for the past 3 years

Note: Outstanding planning permissions and existing Local Plan allocations for new housing could generate an additional 62 secondary-aged children based on the standard pupil yield factor applied for all North Yorkshire schools.

Assessing the Capacity of Schools

The capacity of a school is the number of pupil places it can accommodate. DfE statutory guidance¹ describes the method of assessing the net capacity of maintained mainstream schools. For secondary schools, the net capacity is based on the number, size and type of teaching spaces, and includes a 'utilisation factor' (equivalent to the average proportion of time that any workplace is in use) linked to the age range of the school. The method also allows some flexibility to suit the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs and admission arrangements.

Published Admissions Number

The published admissions number (PAN) is the number of school places that the admission authority must offer in the age group at which pupils will normally be admitted to the school (Year 7).

A PAN of 240 is proposed for the amalgamated school to provide reasonable headroom over the anticipate demand for places, and as a multiple of 30 which is commonly applied.

Current PAN and Net Capacities

School	Age Range	PAN	Net Capacity
Eskdale School	11-16	110	550
Caedmon College Whitby (Normanby and Scoresby sites)	11-18	184	1530

Maximum PANs and Net Capacities

School	Age Range	Maximum PAN	Maximum Net Capacity ²
Eskdale School	11-16	118	590
Caedmon College Whitby (Normanby and Scoresby sites)	11-18	258	1698
Amalgamated School (Normanby site)	11-16	225	1125
Amalgamated School (Scoresby site)	16-18	N/A	483
Amalgamated School across Normanby and Scoresby sites	11-18	258	1698

¹ <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20040118061401/http://www.dfes.gov.uk/netcapacity/>

² The site capacity for the amalgamated school age range 11-18 across the two sites differs from the total of the separate site capacities for 11-16 and 16-18 due to a different utilisation factor used in the net capacity calculation following the DfE statutory guidance. There may be some slight variation of capacities when final room usages are agreed.