

Statutory proposals for school closures

As set out in the Establishment and Discontinuance Regulations the information below **must** be included in a proposal to close a school:

Contact details

Proposal, published by North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall, Northallerton, DL7 8AE, to discontinue:

Skelton Newby Hall Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Skelton on Ure, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 5AJ, from 31 August 2023.

Skelton Newby Hall Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a 3-11 Church of England Voluntary Controlled primary school in North Yorkshire.

Implementation

It is proposed to close the school from 31 August 2023.

Reason for closure

There are two key concerns: 1) Falling roll 2) Maintaining the quality and breadth of education for all year groups

Falling roll

The critical concern is the fall in pupil numbers, which would inevitably result in an inability to provide the necessary breadth of curriculum experience and would also irrevocably undermine the schools future financial position.

The number of children at Skelton Newby Hall CE VC Primary School has been falling over the past few years. At the beginning of September 2021, there were 15 pupils on roll in the school plus two children in nursery. This was well below the capacity of the school which could accommodate around 52 pupils. Marketing of the school has been a collective effort by governors, staff and parents though this has not had a long-term result. At the start of this academic year in September 2022, there has been a further fall in numbers and the school had 9 statutory aged and one nursery child remaining on roll. In February 2023, only one pupil (year 6) remains on roll at Skelton Newby Hall CE VC School and is educated at Sharow CE VC School (Federated with Skelton Newby Hall CE VC School) alongside year group peers. In these circumstances, it would be difficult to sustain quality education.

Maintaining quality and breadth of education for all year groups

The small size of the school and the very small number of pupils in each year group will limit the range of personal and academic challenges for pupils including

opportunities for child-initiated play and interaction in early years. This is particularly the case now with only one pupil in total at the school and who is now educated at Sharow CE VC School.

The School was last inspected by Ofsted in March 2020, when there were 20 pupils on roll. The overall effectiveness was judged to be 'Requires Improvement' as were the four key judgements on the quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development and leadership and management. The arrangements for safeguarding were judged to be effective.

Sharow Primary School was last subject to a full Ofsted inspection in 2016 and judged to be 'Good' overall. A monitoring (section 8) inspection took place in December 2021. The report states that the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high (as 'Good') if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full graded (section 5) inspection.

The Ofsted Education Inspection Framework, introduced in September 2019, places significant weight on curriculum provision. Delivering a curriculum that has 'breadth and ambition' is a particular challenge for a very small school. For example, the National Curriculum for PE states that "pupils should be taught to play competitive games (for example, cricket, football, hockey, netball, rounders)". When the pupil count was in single figures (ranging in age from 5 to 11) it was very difficult for the school to provide meaningful opportunities for competitive sport. Teams were created only when the School was able to combine with another school, usually the federated school, or the School attended organized sports festivals so that children could compete in mixed teams created at such events.

One of the aims of English curriculum is that pupils 'are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate'. High quality age-appropriate debate is challenging to stimulate and maintain within a small number of pupils.

The Financial Position

Pupil numbers determine the school budget. The latest financial forecast submitted to the County Council for Skelton Newby Hall CE Primary School indicates that the school will have an accumulated budget surplus position of £109.2k at the end of the 2022/23 financial year, £94.1k at the end of the 2023/24 financial year and £55.6k at the end of the 2024/25 financial year. The funding calculation in the forecast is based on 15 pupils in October 2021, 9 pupils in October 2022 and 11 pupils in October 2023. The position will be significantly worse now there is only one pupil at the school (Year 6 who will transition to secondary school at the end of this academic year) and there appears to be no reasonable prospect of recovery. The likely position of no pupils on roll at the October 2023 census, means that the School would not receive any per pupil funding for the 2024/25 financial year.

Pupil numbers and admissions

The numbers (distinguishing between compulsory and non-compulsory school age pupils), age range, sex, and special educational needs of pupils (distinguishing between boarding and day pupils) for whom provision is currently made at the school.

As at 27 February 2023, there is currently one pupil on roll at the school of compulsory school age

	Pupil numbers	PAN
Reception	0	7
Year 1	0	7
Year 2	0	7
Year 3	0	7
Year 4	0	7
Year 5	0	7
Year 6	1	7
Totals	1	

The school's age range is 3-11 years, and provision is available for boys and girls. There is no boarding provision. Information on special educational needs of pupils is not provided as this would contravene the Data Protection Act. With only one remaining pupil on the school roll this is significantly lower than the capacity of the school which is designed to accommodate around 52 pupils.

Displaced pupils

A statement and supporting evidence about the need for school places in the area including whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils.

Details of the schools or further education colleges at which pupils at the school to be discontinued will be offered places, including—

- a) any interim arrangements;
- b) the provision that is to be made for those pupils who receive educational provision recognised by the local authority as reserved for children with special educational needs; and
- c) in the case of special schools, the alternative provision made by local authorities other than the local authority which maintain the school.

Details of any other measures proposed to be taken to increase the number of school or further education college places available in consequence of the proposed discontinuance.

- a) No interim arrangements have been necessary

There are five other North Yorkshire primary schools within reasonable travelling distance with places available currently. Across the area there are places available for the one remaining pupil currently on roll at Skelton Newby Hall CE VC School.

The nearest school to Skelton Newby Hall CE Primary School is Kirby Hill CE VC Primary School. Kirby Hill CE VC has spaces in all year groups and was rated 'Good' by Ofsted.

There are also places available at Boroughbridge Community School, Roecliffe CE Academy, Dishforth Airfield Community and Sharow CE VC. These schools were all judged 'Good' or 'Outstanding' in their last Ofsted.

Revised school catchment area arrangements that would apply, in the event of closure, from 31 August 2023

It is proposed that should Skelton Newby Hall CE VC close, Kirby Hill CE VC Primary School, as the nearest alternative school and also a CE school, would be the appropriate choice to adopt the existing Skelton Newby Hall catchment area as an addition to its existing area in the event of a closure.

Parents have a right to express a preference for any school and, in the case of community and voluntary controlled schools, the relevant Local Authority is the admissions authority and will meet that preference provided there are vacant places or the school is happy to admit above the published admission number. In the case of Voluntary Aided schools, the governing body decide the conditions for admission to their particular school. Where a child attends a school which is not their normal school or nearest school, parents are normally responsible for making transport arrangements.

- b) This is a mainstream primary, and therefore, not a school that is reserved for providing to pupils with special educational needs
- c) This is a mainstream school, and therefore, not a special school that is reserved for providing to pupils with special educational needs

Impact on the community

A statement and supporting evidence about the impact on the community of the closure of the school and any measures proposed to mitigate any adverse impact.

In some communities the school is the only meeting space. Skelton on Ure has a Reading Room which has capacity for 40. The Reading Room is a valuable resource for the village and is available for hire to groups. It has a large modern well-equipped kitchen. The existing school facilities are not currently used by the community.

The school has close links with the parish of Skelton cum Newby. St Helen's Church is located in the village of Skelton cum Newby and nearby Christ the Consoler Church located in the estate grounds of Skelton Newby Hall. The school uses the local church for collective worship and educational activities. The school hosts a number of school events at Christ the Consoler with kind permission from The Churches Conservation Trust.

The village pub at Skelton on Ure is currently closed but campaigners are looking to save the pub as a community hub for the whole area.

The school site is owned by the Skelton Newby Hall Estate and leased to the school. Future use of the school site and buildings will be taken by the owners after the closure proposal has been determined.

There is no planned housing development in the school's catchment area as part of the Harrogate Local Plan.

Whilst the impact on the wider economic and social sustainability of the community is an important consideration, the key consideration is to determine whether the proposal is in the best interests of children's education.

Rural primary schools

Where proposals relate to a rural primary school designated as such by an order made for the purposes of Section 15 (Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA), a statement that the local authority or the governing body (as the case may be) considered Section 15(4) EIA.

Skelton Newby Hall CE VC is designated as a rural school under the Designation of Rural Primary Schools (England) Order. The School Organisation regulations and guidance contain a presumption against closure of rural schools, and it is a requirement that proposers must consider the effect of the discontinuance of any rural primary school on the local community. The statutory guidance specifically states that 'This does not mean that a rural school will never close, but the case for closure should be strong and a proposal must be clearly in the best interests of educational provision in the area.' The guidance states that when producing a proposal, the proposer must carefully consider:

- the likely effect of the closure of the school on the local community;
- the proportion of pupils attending the school from within the local community i.e. is the school being used by the local community;
- educational standards at the school and the likely effect on standards at neighbouring schools;
- the availability, and likely cost to the LA, of transport to other schools;
- whether the school is now surplus to requirements (e.g. because there are surplus places elsewhere in the local area which can accommodate displaced pupils, and there is no predicted demand for the school in the medium or long term);
- any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the closure of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase; and
- any alternatives to the closure of the school.

These are examined in turn below.

The likely effect of closure of the school on the local community

Please see the section above 'Impact on the Community'

The proportion of pupils attending the school from within the local community i.e. is the school being used by the local community

There is currently one pupil on roll and this pupil lives in the catchment area of the school.

There are 26 primary aged children who reside in the Skelton Newby Hall CE VC catchment area who attend a North Yorkshire maintained school (October 2022 Census, Department of Education). Six pupils residing in the school catchment area attended Skelton Newby Hall CE VC School in autumn 2022.

The availability, and likely cost to the LA, of transport to other schools

If the school closed, there would be a potential additional cost to the Local Authority in providing transport to other schools in future. Free home to school transport would be provided for entitled pupils within the enlarged catchment area in accordance with the County Council's Home to School Transport policy. The County Council's Home to School transport policy sets out that free school transport will be provided to the catchment school or nearest school to a child's home address if it is over the statutory walking distances set out by law. This is:

- Two miles for children under eight years of age;
- Three miles for children aged over eight; or
- where the route to the catchment or nearest school is not safe to walk accompanied by a responsible adult.

If the nearest catchment or nearest school is full, transport will be provided, in accordance with the authority's transport policy, to the nearest school with places available.

As the only pupil currently on roll at Skelton Newby Hall School will move to secondary education before the proposed closure date, there would be no immediate transport costs.

Any pupils living in the current Skelton Newby Hall catchment area applying for school places at other local schools after the closure would be assessed under the home to school transport policy at the appropriate time. As such future transport costs cannot be estimated.

Children from low income families (children entitled to free school meals or whose parent are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit) have additional eligibility criteria for additional home to school transport and details are available on the County Council's website at <http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/article/26071/School---travel-support>

Whether the school is now surplus to requirements (e.g. because there are surplus places elsewhere in the local area which can accommodate displaced pupils, and there is no predicted demand for the school in the medium or long term)

There are 5 primary schools within a 4.5 mile radius of Skelton Newby Hall School by road:

- Kirby Hill CE VC
- Boroughbridge Community Primary School
- Roecliffe CE Academy
- Dishforth Airfield Community Primary
- Sharow CE VC (federated with Skelton Newby Hall)

Kirby Hill CE VC

- 2.4 miles by road from Skelton Newby Hall
- Rated Good by Ofsted in December 2021
- Capacity 150
- 103 pupils on roll
- Forecast 105 pupils + 23 from housing by 2025/26 (Outstanding permissions)

Boroughbridge Community School

- 2.8 miles by road from Skelton Newby Hall
- Rated Good by Ofsted in July 2022
- Capacity 252
- 184 pupils on roll
- Forecast 199 pupils +141 from housing by 2026/27 (Outstanding Permissions)

Roecliffe CE Academy

- 4 miles by road from Skelton Newby Hall
- Rated Good by Ofsted in November 2017 (pre-conversion to Academy status)
- Capacity 72
- 72 pupils on roll
- Forecast 60 pupils +3 from housing by 2026/27 (Outstanding Permissions)

Dishforth Airfield CP Primary School

- 4.1 miles from Skelton Newby Hall by road
- Rated Outstanding by Ofsted in December 2021
- Capacity 189
- 85 pupils on roll
- Forecast 74 pupils +1 from housing by 2026/27 (Outstanding Permissions)

Sharow CE VC

- 4.3 miles from Skelton Newby Hall by road
- Rated Good by Ofsted in December 2021
- Capacity 99
- 93 on roll
- Forecast 85 pupils +20 from housing by 2026/27 (Outstanding Permissions)

The view of the Local Authority is that there are surplus places in the local area which can accommodate displaced pupils. Eight of the nine pupils on roll at the start of term in September 2022 have now found places and transferred to other local schools. Currently there is only one pupil on roll at Skelton Newby Hall CE VC and this pupil (year 6) is educated at Sharow CE VC School with peers as has been the case since September 2022.

Any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the closure of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase

It is not considered that there would be significant additional car use given the small number of pupils who would be affected by the closure.

Any alternatives to the closure of the school

The Governing Body and officers from the County Council and Diocese have explored alternatives to the closure of the school.

It is considered that there is no potential for the school to convert to academy status or to join a multi-academy trust because it would not meet tests of due diligence due to its small size.

The school is currently federated with Sharow CE VC since 2012. Both schools share the same Executive Headteacher. The federation maximises available opportunities to bring together pupils to share activities and learning opportunities.

The consultation process has not brought forward any suggestion for alternative partnership arrangements with any other school.

Balance of denominational provision

Where the school has a religious character, a statement about the impact of the proposed closure on the balance of denominational provision in the area and the impact on parental choice.

Skelton Newby Hall CE VC is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School. The LA is under an obligation to consider the impact on the proportion of church places before it determines the outcome of school closure proposals.

- The nearest Church of England school, 2.4 miles from Skelton Newby Hall CE VC is Kirby Hill CE VC Primary School.
- There is also a Church of England school at Roecliffe CE Academy Primary School which is 4 miles away.
- There is also a Church of England School at Sharow CE VC (Federated with Skelton Newby Hall) which is 4.3 miles away.

The Diocese is supporting the LA with the consultation and given the availability of places at other local Church of England schools has expressed no specific concerns about the impact on proportionality of places in this area.

Maintained nursery schools

Not applicable

Sixth form provision

Not applicable

Special educational needs provision

The existing provision at Skelton Newby Hall CE VC Primary School is not reserved for pupils with special educational needs.

Travel

Details of length and journeys to alternative provision.

The proposed arrangements for travel of displaced pupils to other schools including how the proposed arrangements will mitigate against increased car use.

Eligibility for home to school transport will be determined in line with the County Council's current home to school transport policy and procedures based on each child's home address and individual circumstances.

Where a child attends a school which is not their normal school or the nearest school, parents are normally responsible for making transport arrangements.

The County Council's home to school transport policy that pupils up to the age of 8 would normally be eligible for free home to school transport if they live more than 2 miles from their normal area school (or 3 miles for those over the age of 8). Parents can always express a preference for a school other than their normal area school, however, they would usually be responsible for making transport arrangements. Eligibility is assessed on an individual basis taking into account the child's home address.

North Yorkshire County Council's Home to School transport policy states that 'Transport will be arranged so that children will not normally spend more than 1 hour 15 minutes travelling to a secondary school or 45 minutes to a primary school. Journey times might need to be longer than this in some more rural areas and where road or weather conditions mean that these times are not practical.' This is in line with statutory guidance from the Department for Education. The journey time for children living within the current Skelton Newby Hall CE VC Primary School catchment area would depend on which other school they attended and their home address. The nearest schools are:

Kirby Hill CE VC (2.4 miles from Skelton Newby Hall CE VC), approximate travel time 5 minutes away. Boroughbridge Community School (2.8 miles away, approximate travel time 8 minutes away). Roecliffe CE Academy (4 miles away, approximate travel time 9 minutes away), although this school has reached its published admission number in some year groups, there is capacity in other year groups. Dishforth Airfield Community School (4.1 miles away, 9 minutes approximate travel time. Sharow CE VC (4.3 miles away, approximate travel time 10 minutes away).

Procedure for making representations (objections and comments)

Within four weeks from the date of publication of this proposal, any person may object

to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to Corporate Director-Children and Young People's Service, North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall, Northallerton, DL7 8AD, or by email to schoolorganisation@northyorks.gov.uk by 5pm on 27 April 2023.

Consultation

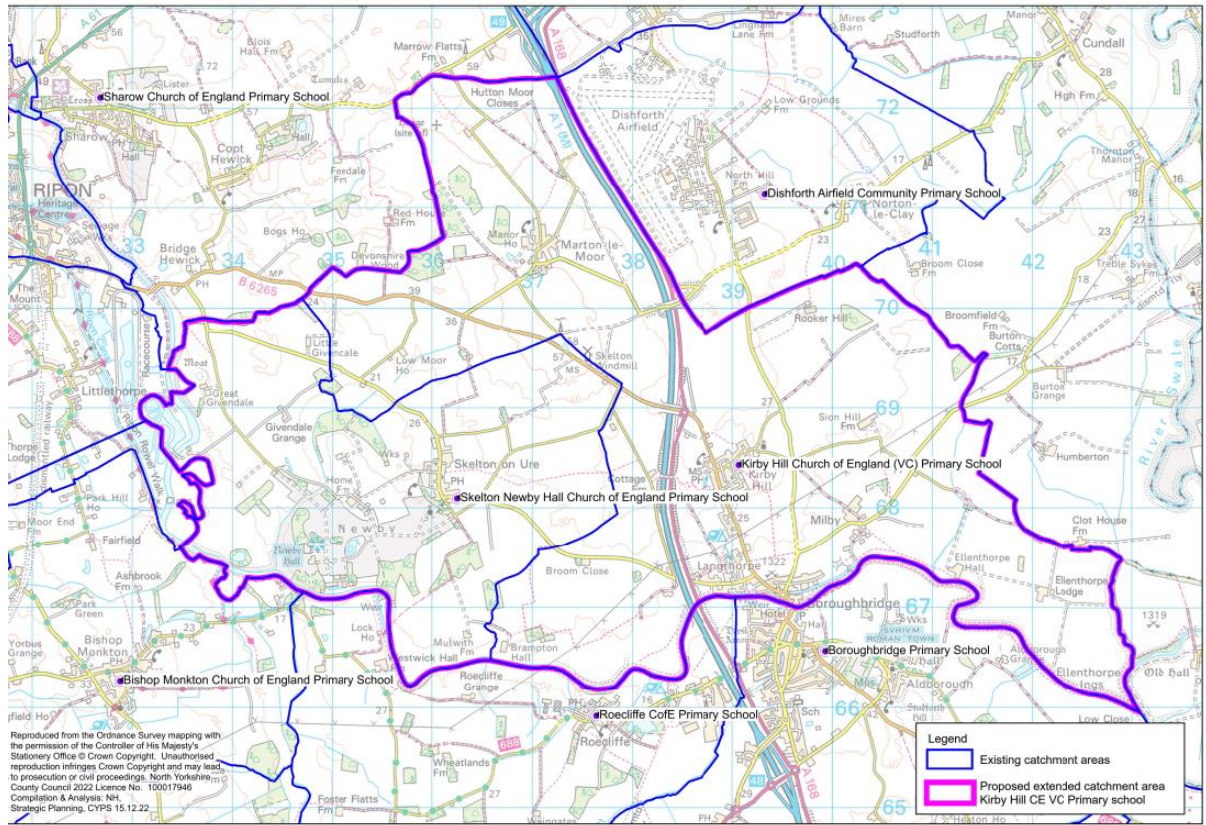
The decision to consult on closure was taken by the Executive Member for Schools on 13 December 2022 following a request from governors. A consultation paper setting out the proposal was sent to parents of pupils on roll, staff at the school as well as other interested parties and individuals. A copy of the consultation paper is included in Appendix 2 and a list of the consultees is included in Appendix 3. The consultation period ran from 6 January 2023 to 24 February 2023. A public meeting was held on the 17 January 2023, a note of the meeting is attached as Appendix 4. There have been 50 consultation responses received (Appendix 5).

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Statutory Notice**
- Appendix 2: Consultation Paper**
- Appendix 3: List of the Consultees**
- Appendix 4: Note of the Public Consultation Meeting**
- Appendix 5: Consultation Responses**
- Appendix 6: Equality Impact Assessment**
- Appendix 7: Climate Change Impact Assessment**

Below is a map of the proposed catchment area which forms part of this Statutory Proposal.

Proposal to close Skelton Newby Hall CE VC Primary School - current catchment area and proposed extended catchment areas for Kirby Hill CE VC Primary School



NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
Proposal to Cease to Maintain a School
Skelton Newby Hall Church of England (Voluntary
Controlled) Primary School

Notice is given in accordance with section 15(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall, Northallerton, DL7 8AE, intends to discontinue Skelton Newby Hall Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School, Skelton-on-Ure, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 5AJ on 31 August 2023.

The proposal also includes revised school catchment area arrangements that would apply, in the event of closure, from 1 September 2023.

Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained from: Corporate Director - Children and Young People's Service, North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall, Northallerton, DL7 8AE and are available on the County Council's website at www.northyorks.gov.uk.

Within four weeks from the date of publication of this proposal, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to Corporate Director - Children and Young People's Service, North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall, Northallerton, DL7 8AE, by 5pm on 27 April 2023.

Signed: B. Khan
Assistant Chief Executive
(Legal and Democratic
Services)
Publication Date: 30 March 2023