

North Yorkshire Council

Children and Young People's Service

Corporate Director Meeting with Executive Member

24 March 2026

Proposals for revised school organisation arrangements requested by federated governing boards of primary schools in North Yorkshire

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide the Executive Member with information upon which to determine the proposals made at the request of the following federated governing boards, to change their school organisation arrangements: -

- BAWB (Bainbridge, Askrigg and West Burton) Federation
- Reeth and Gunnerside Schools Federation
- The Federation of Middleham (VA) & Spennithorne (VC) CE Primary Schools; and
- The Synergy Schools Federation (Aiskew, Leeming Bar Church of England Primary School and Leeming and Londonderry Community Primary School).

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 This report, together with appendices, provides the background to the publication of statutory proposals about the school organisation arrangements at four federations of schools.

2.2 The report provides information about the response to the publication of the statutory proposals and provides the following recommendations in respect of the determination of the statutory proposals and the agreement of discretionary arrangements for home to school travel which are linked to the proposals:

BAWB (Bainbridge, Askrigg and West Burton) Federation

Statutory Proposals

1. That West Burton Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School should be closed with effect from 31 March 2026
2. That the age range of Bainbridge Church of England Primary should be changed from 3-11 to 3-7 such that it should become Bainbridge Church of England Infant and Nursery School
3. That the age range of Askrigg Voluntary Controlled Primary School should be changed from 4-11 to 7-11, such that it should become Askrigg Voluntary Controlled Junior School
4. That the two remaining schools should have a shared catchment area that comprises an amalgamation of the current catchment areas of the three schools
5. The PAN will be 15 at both Bainbridge Church of England Infant and Nursery School and Askrigg Voluntary Controlled Junior School to reflect the pupil number forecast

Reeth and Gunnerside Schools Federation

Statutory Proposals

6. That the age range of Reeth Community Primary School is changed from 3-11 to 3-7, such that the school becomes Reeth Community Infant School

7. That the age range Gunnerside Methodist (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School is changed from 4-11 to 7-11, such that the school becomes Gunnerside Methodist (Voluntary Controlled) Junior School
8. That the schools should have a shared catchment area, comprising an amalgamation of the existing schools' current catchment areas
9. The PAN will be 15 at each school, to reflect the combined pupil forecast

The Federation of Middleham (VA) & Spennithorne (VC) CE Primary Schools

Statutory Proposals

10. That the age range of Spennithorne Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School be changed from 4-11 to 4-7 such that the school becomes Spennithorne Church of England Infant School
11. That the age range of Middleham Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School be changed from 4-11 to 7-11 such that the school becomes Middleham Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Junior School
12. That the schools would have a shared catchment area, comprising an amalgamation of the existing schools' current catchment areas
13. The PAN will be increased to 20 places at each school
14. That the status of Spennithorne Church of England School is changed from Voluntary Controlled to Voluntary Aided.

Home to school travel discretionary arrangements

15. The Local Authority approves through its discretion a 'nearest gate in the federation' policy for home school transport, which would be conditional upon the federation continuing to provide support with inter-school transport where that is required.

The Synergy Schools Federation

16. That Leeming and Londonderry Community Primary School be closed with effect from 13 April 2026, and be amalgamated with Aiskew Leeming Bar Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School
17. That Aiskew, Leeming Bar Church of England Primary School be enlarged onto the site of the Leeming and Londonderry Community Primary School with effect from 13 April 2026
18. That the schools would have a shared catchment area, comprising an amalgamation of the existing schools' current catchment areas
19. The PAN for the school will be 15.

2.3 This report is supported by several appendices as listed below: -

- Appendix 1: Report of Corporate Director Meeting with Executive Member for Education, Learning and Skills – 11 September 2025
- Appendix 2: Report of Meeting of the Executive Committee – 16 December 2025
- Appendix 3: Statutory proposals and public notices in accordance with sections 15(1), 19(1) and 19(3) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Appendix 4: Climate Change Impact Assessment
- Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Education and Inspections Act 2006 sets out the procedures for making changes to and closing maintained schools.¹ These are detailed in School Organisation regulations and guidance. The regulations and guidance apply to Local Authorities and governing boards proposing changes, and to Local Authorities (including the Council's Executive and Executive Members) acting as decision-makers.
- 3.2 A copy of the report providing detailed information about the background to each of the proposals made by the federated governing boards is included at Appendix 1. On 11 September 2025 the Executive Member considered this report, approved consultations on the proposals identified within the report, and the consultations took place between 22 September 2025 and 7 November 2025.
- 3.3 A copy of the report to the Executive Committee providing detailed information about all the responses that were received is included at Appendix 2. At its meeting on 16 December 2025 the Executive Committee considered this report and approved a recommendation that statutory proposals be published. The statutory proposals were published on 12 January 2026, for four weeks.
- 3.4 In accordance with the DfE's Statutory Guidance for 'prescribed alterations', governing boards of voluntary controlled and aided schools are required to publish statutory proposals in respect to age range. The governing boards of the voluntary schools met in November and December 2025 and confirmed that, subject to the approval of the Council's Executive, they would publish, jointly with the Council on 12 January 2026, the required statutory proposals and notices for their voluntary schools.
- 3.5 A copy of each of the statutory proposals, including all the information required in the school organisation regulations and guidance, is attached as Appendix 3. Statutory notices were placed at the entrances of all the federated schools and published in the Darlington and Stockton Times newspaper, and the complete proposals were published on the Council's website.
- 3.6 Subject to the final approval of the proposals, the Executive also agreed on 16 December 2025 that the following home to school travel discretionary arrangements be approved:
- i) That the Council provides discretionary travel for children, already assessed as eligible for travel *and* on roll at schools on 1 September 2026, within the BAWB (Bainbridge, Askrigg and West Burton) Federation, Reeth and Gunnerside Schools Federation and The Federation of Middleham (VA) & Spennithorne (VC) CE schools for the duration of their education at the schools within the federation, subject to there being no change in their circumstances.
 - ii) That the Council approves through its discretion a 'nearest gate in the federation' policy for home school transport to Reeth and Gunnerside schools, which would be conditional upon the Reeth and Gunnerside Schools Federation continuing to provide support with inter-school transport where that is required.

¹ School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013, School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013, Department for Education statutory guidance Opening and closing maintained schools and Guidance for decision makers October 2024 and Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools Statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers August 2025.

- 3.7 On 12 March, following a further consideration of the issue, the federated governing board of The Federation of Middleham (VA) & Spennithorne (VC) CE schools submitted an additional proposal for consideration, as noted below:

The Local Authority approves, through its discretion, a 'nearest gate in the federation' policy for home-to-school transport. This would be conditional upon the federation continuing to provide support with inter-school transport where this is required.

4.0 ISSUES RAISED IN RESPONSE TO THE STATUTORY PROPOSALS

- 4.1 Following the publication of the statutory notices the Council received no objections to the proposals.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no further capital or revenue implications beyond those identified in 'financial implications' sections of the reports to the Executive Member on 11 September 2025 and the Executive Committee on 16 December 2025, attached as appendices 1 and 2 to this report.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

REGULATIONS AND GUIDANCE

- 6.1 The consideration and determination of school organisation proposals by the Local Authority is set out in regulations and in guidance produced by the Department for Education.² Careful regard has been had to these provisions.
- 6.2 The Education & Inspections Act 2006 section 15 refer to proposals to discontinuance of schools. The statutory guidance refers to closure of schools, for the purpose of this report the term closure has been used.

PRELIMINARY CHECK

- 6.3 The Decision Maker must consider, on receipt of each proposal:
- whether any information is missing
 - whether the published notice of the proposal complies with statutory requirements
 - whether the statutory consultation has been carried out prior to the publication of the notice
 - and whether the proposal is related to other published proposals.
- Having undertaken an audit of these preliminary checks, the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) advises that:
- all information required has been supplied
 - the published notice complies with statutory requirements
 - statutory consultation has been carried out prior to publication of the notice
 - and that the preliminary points for consideration have been dealt with sufficiently to permit the Executive or Executive Members to proceed to determine this proposal.

² School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013, School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013, Department for Education statutory guidance Opening and closing maintained schools and Guidance for decision makers October 2024 and Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools Statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers August 2025.

TYPES OF DECISION THAT CAN BE MADE

- 6.4 In considering school organisation proposals, the Executive (or the Executive Member for Education, Learning & Skills, if there are no objections received during the representation period), as Decision Makers can decide to:
- reject the proposals
 - approve the proposals
 - approve the proposals with a modification
 - approve the proposals subject to them meeting a specific condition.

PROCEDURE FOR THE MEETING

- 6.5 The Executive agreed on 25 September 2007 that in making a decision on school organisation proposals:
- (a) The decision maker must have regard to the Decision Makers' Guidance and to the Executive Procedure Rules laid down in the Council Constitution.
- (b) All decisions must give reasons for the decision, indicating the main factors/criteria for the decision.

7.0 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no Human Rights issues in relation to this decision.

8.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken in respect of these proposals and is attached (Appendix 5).
- 8.2 There are no further implications beyond those identified in the reports to the Executive Member and Executive (appendices 1 and 2).

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 A Climate Change Impact Assessment has been undertaken in respect of these proposals and is attached (Appendix 4).
- 9.2 The assessment concluded that there are no further implications beyond those identified in the reports to the Executive Member and Executive (appendices 1 and 2).

10.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 The recommendations contained within this report will:
- Ensure that the schools referenced above are compliant with the legislation and guidance that govern the arrangements for school admissions and registration
 - Provide a sustainable basis for the continued provision of high-quality education within their local communities; and
 - Establish discretionary arrangements for home to school travel provision in accordance with the proposals received from each federated governing board

11.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 That having undertaken the required preliminary checks, the Executive Member for Education, Learning and Skills resolves that the issues listed above in section 6.2 have been satisfied and there can be a determination of the proposals.

- 11.2 That the following statutory proposals should be determined, and discretionary home to school travel arrangements approved:

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El Mayhew

Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service

Report prepared by: Jon Holden, Head of School Organisation and Transport,
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LIST OF APPENDICES

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