

MATTERS TO BE SPECIFIED IN SECTION 18 PROPOSALS FOR ALTERATIONS TO SCHOOLS

Extract of Schedule 2 to The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools)(England) Regulations 2013 (as amended)

1. Contact details

The proposal to discontinue the post 16 sixth form provision delivered by Carr Hill High School and Sixth Form Centre, Royal Avenue, Kirkham, PR4 2ST, by permanently lowering its age range from 11-18 years to 11-16 years with effect from 31 August 2019, is published by Lancashire County Council, the relevant local authority. Carr Hill High School and Sixth Form Centre is a community school. The local authority can be contacted at the following address: Sarah Hirst, Learning and Skills Service, Room C24, PO Box 100, County Hall, Preston, PR1 0LD, Lancashire.

2. Description of alteration and evidence

This proposal is for the closure of Carr Hill High School and Sixth Form Centre's (the school) sixth form by permanently lowering its age range from 11-18 years to 11-16 years. The school will remain open and unchanged for secondary school provision.

Participation in Education or Training

When the school approached the local authority to discuss the future of its sixth form provision, there were only 97 students in the sixth form, with 52 in Year 12 and 45 in Year 13. This compares to the sixth form being funded for 245 students only three years ago. A number of the students currently in Year 12 are on one year courses so there is the potential for the school to only have around 30 students in Year 13 in 2018/19 if those on one year courses choose not to progress. However, any current Year 12 students who wish to continue into Year 13 at the school will be able to do so and will be supported by the school throughout the remainder of their programme.

The table below shows the student number and funding allocations the school has received from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) in recent years:

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Student Numbers	232	189	245	207	152	145
Funding	£1,044,655	£866,471	£1,032,776	£912,155	£684,912	£622,735

The average ESFA student number allocation for the school sixth forms and academies in Lancashire was 236 in 2014/15, 225 in 2015/16, 217 in 2016/17 and 209 in 2017/18. This shows that the school's student numbers have been below average in the last three years and, with 97 students on roll at present, are significantly below the average level in the current year.

The school has undertaken a lot of work to promote its sixth form provision by working with local 11-16 schools and designing its curriculum offer to appeal to more young people but, unfortunately, this has not had the desired impact. To date, the school has not had any applications for the 2018/19 academic year.

Of the school's 2016 school leavers, 33.5% chose to progress into the sixth form. The significant majority, 64.2%, chose to progress to a further education or sixth form college. With only 52 students currently in Year 12, it can be seen that the proportion of young people choosing to continue into the school's sixth form is reducing. The main colleges being accessed were Cardinal Newman College, Preston's College and Blackpool and the Fylde College, indicating that young people are willing to travel out of the district to access post 16 provision.

The DfE's statutory guidance, Making 'Prescribed Alterations' to Maintained Schools, published in April 2016, sets out the following guidelines which should be considered for proposals to open new sixth form provision:

- School to be rated as Good or Outstanding by OfSTED.
- The quality of pre-16 education must be good or outstanding.
- The proposed sixth form will provide places for a minimum of 200 students.
- The proposed sixth form will, either directly or through partnership, offer a minimum of 15 A level subjects.
- There is a clear demand for the new sixth form (including evidence of a shortage of post 16 places and a consideration of the quality of L3 provision in the area).
- The proposed sixth form is financially viable (there is evidence of financial resilience should student numbers fall and the proposal will not impact negatively on 11-16 education or cross-subsidisation of funding).

As can be seen from the information provided, the school would not meet a number of the current criteria for adding a sixth form, as the DfE has strengthened the requirements. The school's current provision is significantly different from these requirements in the following areas:

- The minimum number of students – the minimum required under the DfE guidelines is 200 places and the school currently has 97 students.
- The need for a clear demand for the provision – the information in this report shows that there is a reducing interest from students in progressing to the school's sixth form and that the provision on offer is, in the main, available at post 16 providers in neighbouring areas.
- For the sixth form to be financially viable – there is a concern that running courses for a small number of students is not financially viable, with the costs exceeding the income received from the ESFA for the sixth form provision.

Educational or Training Achievements

The school was last inspected by OfSTED in October 2012 and the outcome for Overall Effectiveness was 'Good'. Whilst it was acknowledged that the sixth form was good and that students were achieving well, it went on to say that the academic and vocational courses available at the time did not always meet students' needs closely enough. The report said that the curriculum in the sixth form was in need of further development.

Using the most recent information from the DfE's 2016 Performance Tables, there are some issues with the quality of provision being delivered through the sixth form. In terms of the both A level and Academic qualifications, the school is below average in terms of the average points score (APS) per entry and is below average for the progress headline measure. This means that the students accessing this provision at the school made less progress, on average, than students across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 4. For Applied General qualifications, both the APS and the progress measure are average.

Range of Educational or Training Opportunities Available

The curriculum offer for the sixth form in the 2017/18 academic year consists of 14 A levels and five Diplomas. The school has confirmed that, based on the group sizes at the start of the 2017/18 academic year, only four courses across Year 12 and 13 are financially viable. It is expected that the curriculum offer in 2018/19 would be reduced due to lower numbers and fewer courses being financially viable.

Of the courses being offered by the school, the significant majority are available at alternative providers within the neighbouring areas. For those courses where there is not a direct match at another provider, comparable alternatives are offered within the same curriculum area.

The alternative providers within the neighbouring areas are as follows: Cardinal Newman College, Preston's College, Blackpool and the Fylde College, Blackpool Sixth Form College and Myerscough College. These providers are between nine and 11 miles from the school. With regard to OfSTED ratings, three are 'Outstanding', one is 'Good' and one is 'Requires Improvement'.

From reviewing the data of where the students who attended the school's sixth form in 2015/16 were from, the majority were from the following wards in Fylde: Warton-with-Westby, Freckleton East, Kirkham North, Kirkham South and Medlar-with-Wesham. Young people from these wards not attending the sixth form at the school accessed post 16 provision at a range of providers, consisting of one school sixth form, 10 colleges and three training providers. Of the participants not accessing the school's sixth form, almost 60% accessed provision at three colleges: Cardinal Newman College, Preston's College and Blackpool and the Fylde College. As can be seen from the paragraph above, these are within reasonable travelling distance from the school so young people will be able to access alternative post 16 provision.

Conclusion

As the number of 16-19 year olds attending the school is low and reducing and there are a number of alternative post 16 providers in the neighbouring areas offering comparable provision, the local authority does not believe that there will be an adverse impact on participation should the school not offer sixth form provision in the future.

3. Objectives

The objective of this proposal is to permanently lower the age range of the school from 11-18 years to 11-16 years with effect from 31 August 2019, through the closure of the sixth form.

There is limited interest from young people in attending the sixth form, which has a narrowing curriculum offer and low and reducing student numbers. There are also some concerns around the performance of the sixth form as their progress for A level and Academic qualifications is below the national average. This means that the students accessing this provision at the school made less progress, on average, than students across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 4.

As the secondary element of the school is unaffected by this proposal, the number of young people accessing the sixth form is reducing, and the wide range of alternative providers in the district, the closure of the sixth form is not expected to have an adverse impact on the community.

4. Effect on other local education institutions

As the proposal is to close the sixth form provision at the school, there is not expected to be any adverse impact on other local post 16 providers.

There will be capacity in the neighbouring areas for all young people to be able to access post 16 provision within a reasonable travelling distance. The closest alternative post 16 providers measured by a car journey from the school are:

Cardinal Newman College	8.8 miles
Preston's College	8.8 miles
Myerscough College	9.5 miles
Blackpool Sixth Form College	10.8 miles
Blackpool and the Fylde College	11.1 miles

5. Project Costs and Value for Money

The final DfE criteria for opening a new sixth form is for it to be financially viable. There is a concern that the reducing number of students in the sixth form at the school means that it is not financially viable and keeping the sixth form open does not demonstrate value for money. The school has confirmed that, based on the group sizes at the start of the 2017/18 academic year, only four courses across Year 12 and 13 are financially viable.

The overall financial position of the school would be improved by permanently lowering its age range from 11-18 years old to 11-16 years old. At present, the 11-16 part of the school is providing a significant financial subsidy to the sixth form as it is not financially viable on its own. The reducing student numbers in the sixth form going forward will only exacerbate this position.

6. Implementation

It is proposed to close the school's sixth form on 31 August 2019.

When the school approached the local authority to discuss the future of its sixth form provision, there were only 97 students in the sixth form, with 52 in Year 12 and 45 in Year 13. This compares to the sixth form being funded for 245 students only three years ago. A number of the students currently in Year 12 are on one year courses so there is the potential for the school to only have around 30 students in Year 13 in 2018/19 if those on one year courses choose not to progress. However, any current Year 12 students who wish to continue into Year 13 at the school will be able to do so and will be supported by the school throughout the remainder of their programme.

7. Procedure for responding to the consultation

Following publication of this proposal on 18 December 2017, any person may respond, support, object to or make comments on the proposal by posting them to Sarah Hirst, Learning and Skills Service, Room C24, PO Box 100, County Hall, Preston, PR1 0LD. Responses can also be emailed to sarah.hirst@lancashire.gov.uk. To be considered as part of the decision making process to determine the proposal, responses must be received no later than 2 February 2018.