

**Formal consultation on the proposed closure of Pinfold Primary School, Pinfold Lane, Scarisbrick, L40 8HR and the expansion of Kingsbury Primary School by creating a satellite provision on the site of Pinfold Primary School**



**February 2024**

A consultation event in connection with this proposal will be held on Friday 8 March 2024 at Pinfold Primary School, Pinfold Lane, Scarisbrick, L40 8HR

Further information is provided in the booklet.

Produced by Lancashire County Council



# Consultation Document

## What are we proposing to do?

This consultation document is about the future of Pinfold Primary School, Pinfold Lane, Scarisbrick, L40 8HR, including its proposed closure and repurposing as a satellite school to Kingsbury Primary School. We are proposing to expand the number of special school places up to 20 by creating additional classroom in the satellite provision with effect from 22 April 2024.

This document outlines the main reasons for proposing the closure and repurposing the site as a satellite for Kingsbury Special School. This is due to the low number of pupils on roll and concerns around financial viability. In addition to this, there is an increasing need for specialist provision in the area.

This document also identifies the opportunities available in the area for children currently attending Pinfold Primary School to continue their education.

## Foreword

Lancashire County Council has a statutory duty to provide primary and secondary school places to every child of school age living in Lancashire who request one. In achieving this, Lancashire, like many other authorities, face challenges. Changing demographic factors mean that we must constantly review the number and location of the school places we provide and ensure that schools remain educationally and financially viable. We must also respond to national policy change and to the voices of our communities.

Lancashire is a large, diverse authority served by some superb schools and we are committed to improving this excellence by continuing to raise standards and opportunities.

The county council, dioceses and schools work together with parents and other service providers to help our children to be safe, to enjoy and achieve, to be listened to, to belong to the community, and to achieve economic well-being. We want all children and their parents to have pride in their local school and cultivate an appetite for lifelong learning.

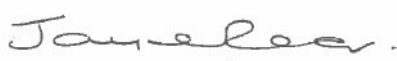
Whilst Lancashire County Council aims to provide schools that meet the needs of our communities wherever possible, on occasion this must be balanced with the educational and financial viability of maintaining a very small school. Unfortunately, this sometimes means we must propose a school closure. At the same time, we have used this as an opportunity to look at how we best meet the educational needs of our communities, and we intend to repurpose the building for a satellite for Kingsbury Primary School.

We hope that you will take a little time during this consultation period to let us know your views on what Lancashire County Council are proposing to do. We will not make a decision until we have carefully considered all responses to this consultation.

Please help us to improve educational provision for Lancashire children.

County Councillor Jayne Rear  
Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Jacqui Old, CBE  
Executive Director of Children's  
Services



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## **PART ONE**

### **Our vision and what we would like to achieve**

Education is a powerful means of transforming and enriching lives and communities. Future success and well-being depend on strong creative partnerships, new ways of working, high expectations and a belief that we all have a part to play and can make a difference together.

Lancashire County Council is committed to improving the quality of educational provision to help raise standards for all learners.

We know that schools can face challenges in meeting pupils' needs, particularly where pupil numbers are falling and that in some cases changes to the pattern of school organisation in an area can help secure the viability of schools, improve opportunities, and raise standards.

On the 7 December 2023, Cabinet gave their approval for a public consultation to take place on the proposal to close Pinfold Primary School and reopen as a satellite for Kingsbury Primary School with effect from April 2024.

There are currently no children attending the school site. Any children who would wish to attend Pinfold Primary School can be accommodated by local schools no more than 2 miles away.

### **What we have done so far**

An initial consultation was held between 15 January 2024 and 9 February 2024. Information was circulated to interested parties, such as neighbours to the school, West Lancashire Borough Council, libraries, parish councils, other local schools, and stakeholders, including the Department for Education. For the consultation, paper questionnaires were made available at the school and online questionnaires could be accessed on Lancashire County Council's website.

There were four responses to the online questionnaire. Due to the limited number of responses, it is not possible to provide a detailed analysis. However,

the responses from the online questionnaire reflected those from the public consultation.

During the consultation period, a public consultation event was held at Pinfold Primary School between 10am and 12noon on 29 January 2024 for any interested parties to ask questions and make comments on the proposal. Representatives of the local authority attended the public meeting and provided information and answered questions.

At the event, nine members of the local community attended. Attendees were asked whether they would be in support of the school closing. Eight of the nine attendees, whilst expressing their sadness, acknowledged what they described as the 'reality' that the school was no longer financially viable with such low pupil numbers. The responses to the questionnaire and the views expressed at the consultation event were comparable. There was a sadness expressed that the closure of the school may be necessary, along with an acceptance that the financial position of the school would become untenable.

The main concerns of the consultation were regarding parking, noise, whether enough had to be done to market the school locally and why children could not be brought in from other areas to make the school viable. There were also concerns that the school was not fit for purpose as a SEND school and being a SEND school would lose the community feel.

The Local Authority response to these concerns is as follows:

- If Pinfold Primary School were to close, there is sufficient capacity in the other three local schools to accommodate any future rise in population. There is no proposed new housing in the area and the fluctuation in the number of families means that there is not a sustainable level of intake for the school.
- The school have endeavoured to attract more pupils through various techniques including for example leaflets, etc., but if other pupils could be attracted to this school, it would leave other schools unsustainable as there are not enough children in the area for the number of schools.
- The playground could be adapted to incorporate parking for home to school transport to drop off and pick up alongside staff parking.
- The children could be collected from home and brought to school on a bus so no parents would be parking outside the school.
- The school is unlikely to be any noisier due to its cohort than when it used to have fifty students.

- Any necessary adaptations would be made to ensure the Pinfold Primary School site is suitable for pupils with generic learning difficulties.
- The children potentially placed at Pinfold from Kingsbury may also be local children and the headteacher has reassured the community that she would be keen to ensure that they are still involved in school life.

## **PART TWO**

### **Formal Proposal**

The proposal is to close Pinfold Primary School in West Lancashire, with effect from 19 April 2024, reopening as satellite provision for Kingsbury Primary School with effect from 22 April 2024.

### **Pupil numbers and forecasts**

Pinfold Primary School is a small, rural community primary school within West Lancashire. The school has seen a reduction in the number of pupils on roll from 46 in September 2014 to four in September 2023.

### **Current numbers**

Whilst the pupil numbers have declined in this rural area, the school's numbers have fallen to a greater extent than those in the other schools. With only one pupil currently on roll and in the process of being transferred to Kingsbury Primary School, and no significant housing planned for the area, this position is unsustainable.

### **Alternative provision**

A vitally important feature of any consultation on the possible closure of a maintained school is the availability of alternative provision for the pupils. Consideration must be given to the types of schools available, the distances that pupils will need to travel, and the standards of provision offered by any receiving schools.

Whilst pupil numbers in the area have declined over recent years, the capacity within the other two schools in the planning area would provide sufficient capacity for the Pinfold Primary School pupil. The nearest school is St Mark's primary school and is 1.5 miles from Pinfold with 51 pupils on roll. The school

has capacity for 105. The closest non-faith school is 2.3 miles away at Ormskirk West End. This school has 93 pupils on roll but has capacity for 210 children. St Mary's Scarisbrick has 87 pupils on roll and capacity for 105 children. This school is 2 miles from Pinfold. Based on current and projected pupil numbers, there should be sufficient places in all cohorts of the other schools to accommodate the pupils if Pinfold Primary School was to close.

The admission numbers and numbers on roll for the two closest schools are as follows:

	Admission No	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
Ormskirk West End	30	16	14	11	9	22	10	10	92
St Marks CEP	15	8	9	6	8	4	9	6	50
Scarisbrick St Mary's	15	15	11	12	12	8	18	14	90
Totals	60	39	34	29	29	34	37	30	232
Available places		21	26	31	31	26	23	30	188

There are sufficient places in all of the year groups at neighbouring schools to admit pupils from Pinfold Primary School.

Should Pinfold Primary School close, there are no current children without provision as the child still on roll at Pinfold is about to be placed on roll at Kingsbury special school.

The standards of education offered by neighbouring schools, as judged by the most recent Ofsted reports are as follows:

- St Mary's Scarisbrick – Requires Improvement
- St Mark's Primary – Good
- Ormskirk West End Primary – Good



Whilst numbers on roll for mainstream continues to fall in this area, the demand for Education health and Care Plans (EHCP) and specialist provision continues to increase.

Kingsbury Primary School is special school for pupils with generic learning difficulties, catering for pupils aged 2-11, rated Outstanding (Ofsted). The current capacity at Kingsbury Primary School is 120. All special schools in Lancashire are currently oversubscribed, including Kingsbury Primary School. Our intention at Lancashire County Council is to repurpose buildings within our portfolio, especially schools. Our proposal to repurpose Pinfold Primary School would provide us with the opportunity to expand the provision offered via Kingsbury Primary School in the timeliest way. The provision would support up to 20 early years foundation stage/ key stage one children, providing access to education in a specialised environment.

By repurposing Pinfold Primary School as a satellite for Kingsbury Primary School, children and young people will be able to attend more localised provision, and this will reduce the dependency in the need to source places in non-maintained and independent special schools.

## **Human Resources**

### **Pinfold Primary School**

Should the proposal be implemented, Pinfold Primary School would close with effect from 19 April 2024. A staff redundancy process would be necessary for staff currently employed at the school. This would be conducted in line with relevant Human Resources policies relating to the different types of staff. Staff will be offered individual meetings where their options will be discussed, and they will be given an indication of any redundancy payment to which they may be entitled. Staff will be offered information about available support.

### **Kingsbury Primary School**

If the creation of the Kingsbury Primary School satellite provision in the Pinfold Primary School site is approved, staff may be required to move between Kingsbury Primary School site and the satellite site. It is not envisaged that this would be problematic for staff affected. The distance between the two sites is 6.9 miles and travel between the two sites would be classed as working time.

Staff have been consulted on the proposal so that any concerns raised can be addressed.

## Financial viability

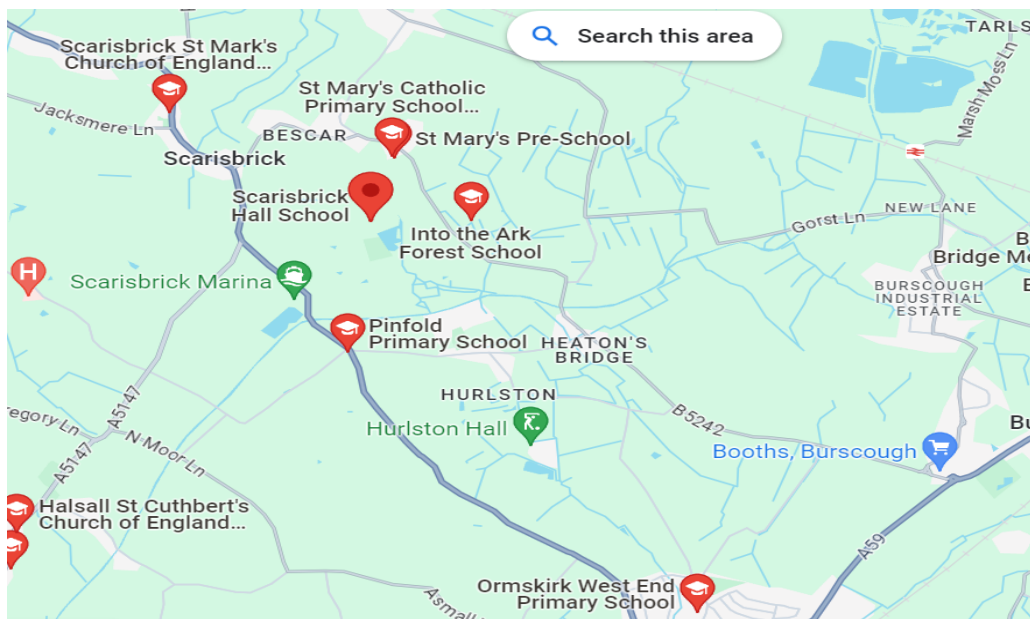
Pinfold primary school has been unable to set a balanced budget for 2023-24 financial year. Current forecast position shows a circa -£13,000 overall deficit at the end of the current financial year. Projections show that this would increase to -£37,000 in 2024-25 and -£69,000 in 2025-26. Staff numbers are already at floor levels and minimal non-staffing costs are already at the lowest practicable level.

The proposed special school places provided through the satellite provision will be funded by the High Needs budget and managed through Kingsbury School as per all other pupils.

## School governors

Due to pupil numbers and the financial position of Pinfold primary school, the school governors approached the local authority to ask for us to consider closing the school. After considering all options, the governors agreed to proceed with a proposal to close the school.

The head teacher and school governors at Kingsbury Special school are in agreement to open a satellite school on the Pinfold site, meeting the educational needs of children in the area.



## Closure of Schools and the School Organisation and Governance Regulations

There is a defined statutory process in the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013 which must be followed before making a decision on the closure of a maintained school. This is supplemented by further guidance on the process published by the Department for Education.

There are five stages to the statutory process which must be followed:

### Consultation

A period of consultation during which the views of any interested parties are sought, and which will be considered before any move to the more formal stages of the process. This took place from 15 January 2024 – 9 February 2024. Details provided above.

### Publication

A decision to proceed to issue a statutory notice must be made by Cabinet. Report can be found here; [Our Council - Issue details - The Future of Pinfold Primary School, Scarisbrick \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

### Representation (CURRENT STAGE)

Statutory notices for school closure define a minimum four-week period for anyone to submit their written comments on the proposal. This enables people to express their views in the form of objections or comments on the proposal. This period will take place from 19 February 2024 – 15 March 2024.

### Decision

Within two months after the statutory notice period ends, the local authority must make a decision on the proposal.

### Implementation

If the proposal is approved, Pinfold Primary School will close with effect from 19 April 2024 and the building will be repurposed to be used as a SEND satellite site for Kingsbury Primary School, 22 April 2024.

## PART THREE

### The consultation and decision-making process

#### Timescales

<b>16 January to 9<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>Stage one</b> – Consultation <b>Complete</b>
<b>February 2024</b>	Urgent Cabinet meeting to consider the results of the consultation and decide whether to publish a Statutory Notice on a proposal to close the school or not <b>Complete</b>
<b>19 February 2024</b>	<b>Stage two</b> – Publication of Statutory Notice
<b>19 February to 15 March 2024</b>	<b>Stage three</b> – Statutory Representation Period (four weeks during term time)
<b>March 2024</b>	<b>Stage four</b> – Final decision by Cabinet
<b>19 April and 22 April 2024</b>	<b>Stage five</b> – Implementation (if approved)

#### Consultation event

You are invited to express your views on the proposal at an event organised at Pinfold Primary School on:

**Friday 8 March 2024 from 10am - 12pm**

You can attend the event without an appointment and officers will be available to answer any questions.



## Who we will consult

**This consultation document will be provided to people and organisations who may have an interest in these proposals. These include the following:**

- Staff, parents/guardians, governors, trustees and pupils of Pinfold Primary School. The views of the pupils at the school will be sought through the school
- Headteachers and chairs of governors of other West Lancashire schools within a five-mile radius of the school
- Voluntary and private nursery providers in West Lancashire within a five-mile radius of the school
- Chief Executive, Leader and members of West Lancashire Borough Council
- Local church authorities and faith groups
- Members of the Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee at Lancashire County Council
- Lancashire County Councillors for West Lancashire
- Scarisbrick Parish Council
- Local Members of Parliament for West Lancashire
- Trade Unions and Associations
- Lancashire Association of School Governing Bodies
- The Secretary of State
- Regional Schools Commissioner
- Ofsted: Her Majesty's Inspector for the area
- The wider community – through West Lancashire libraries and West Lancashire Borough Council.

This document is available on the county website at [www.lancashire.gov.uk/schoolorganisationreviews](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/schoolorganisationreviews) but we can also provide copies of the consultation document to members of the local community on request by contacting [kirsty.roberts@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:kirsty.roberts@lancashire.gov.uk).

## How to share your views

We welcome your views on this proposal and all comments and objections will be considered very carefully before any decision is made to progress any further with this proposal.

The consultation runs until 5pm on 15 March 2024 and you can respond by post to Kirsty Roberts, Asset Management Team, Lancashire County Council,



PO Box 100, County Hall, Preston, PR1 0LD. Responses can also be emailed to [Kirsty.Roberts@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:Kirsty.Roberts@lancashire.gov.uk).

To be considered as part of the decision-making process to determine the proposal, responses must be received no later than 15 March 2024.

We are sorry that, due to the volume of responses we receive when consulting on proposals for schools, we will not be able to acknowledge written responses nor enter into correspondence with interested parties during or after the consultation period. It is important to attend the relevant consultation event if you require clarification or more information on the proposal.

**Thank you**