

# Equality Analysis Toolkit

The proposed closure of Pinfold Primary School and the expansion of Kingsbury Primary School by creating a satellite provision on the site of Pinfold Primary School

For Decision Making Items

April 2024



### **Question 1 - What is the nature of and are the key components of the proposal being presented?**

The proposed closure of Pinfold Primary School, Scarisbrick, 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.

As defined by the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory guidance, 'Opening and closing maintained schools: Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers' (November 2019), the local authority is both the proposer and the decision-maker for this type of proposal and must carry out a statutory consultation process before a decision on the closure of a maintained school is made. The reason for the proposal 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.

If the proposal is approved, the school would close with effect from 19 April 2024, reopening as a satellite provision for Kingsbury Primary School with effect from 22 April 2024.

### **Question 2 - Scope of the Proposal**

Is the proposal likely to affect people across the county in a similar way or are specific areas likely to be affected – e.g., are a set number of branches/sites to be affected?

There are currently no children attending the school site who would be impacted by the decision. There is one pupil on roll. Parents have chosen to elective home education at this time; however, a place is available for this pupil at Kingsbury Primary School. Any children who would wish to attend Pinfold Primary School can be accommodated by local schools no more than 2.3 miles away.

### **Question 3 – Protected Characteristics Potentially Affected**

Could the proposal have a particular impact on any group of individuals sharing protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, namely:

- Age
- Disability including Deaf people
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race/ethnicity/nationality
- Religion or belief
- Sex/gender
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage or Civil Partnership Status

And what information is available about these groups in the County's population or as service users/customers?



No disproportionate adverse impact is anticipated on pupils as a result of this proposal. The protected characteristics most affected are age (young people) and disability (pupils with special educational needs and disabilities) who, it is anticipated, may experience a positive impact from the proposal, if approved.

**However, there is a possibility that staff currently employed at Pinfold Primary School may be adversely impacted by the proposal.**

#### **Question 4 – Engagement/Consultation**

How have people/groups been involved in or engaged with in developing this proposal?

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.

A formal consultation was held between 19 February 2024 and 15 March 2024. During this period, a public consultation event was held at Pinfold Primary School between 10am and 12noon on 8 March 2024, at which there were no attendees. There were also no responses received online or by post.

#### **Question 5 – Analysing Impact**

Could this proposal potentially disadvantage particular groups sharing protected characteristics and if so which groups and in what way? This pays particular attention to the general aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty:



- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation because of protected characteristics;
- To advance equality of opportunity for those who share protected characteristics;
- To encourage people who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life;
- To contribute to fostering good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not/community cohesion;

The pupil currently at the school is scheduled to transfer to Kingsbury Primary School so should not be affected by the proposal. Any potential future pupils can be adequately placed in local schools no more than 2.3 miles away therefore there are sufficient school places for all in the local area.

It is possible that staff – who are more likely to be women given the profile of the Education and Children's Services workforce, may be adversely impacted by the closure of the school, if approved. Should the site be re-opened as a satellite provision for Kingsbury Primary School it may not be known if staff would have or would wish to take up roles at the new provision or how soon these may be available so there is a potential adverse impact for the staff affected, possibly 3 employees.

If the proposal is approved and the site reopens as a satellite for Kingsbury Primary School this should provide up to 20 additional places locally for children with special educational needs and disabilities in the West Lancashire area. Many of these children are likely to meet the definition of disability in the Equality Act 2010 and will also be in the age (young people) protected characteristics group. This provision would advance their equality of opportunity to have specialist educational provision in the area closer to their home than might otherwise have been available. This could also increase their ability to participate in local activities so increasing their participation in local public life and may also contribute to the fostering good relations aim of the Public Sector Equality Duty as they can maintain local connections with friends, family and in recreational activities/groups.

### **Question 6 –Combined/Cumulative Effect**

Could the effects of this proposal combine with other factors or decisions taken at local or national level to exacerbate the impact on any groups?

This proposal combines the closure of Pinfold Primary School, Scarisbrick and repurposing the building as a satellite site to Kingsbury Primary School, Skelmersdale.

A decision to close Pinfold Primary School and repurpose the site as a satellite provision for Kingsbury Primary School supports the county council in its duty to provide sufficient specialist school places.

### **Question 7 – Identifying Initial Results of Your Analysis**

As a result of the analysis has the original proposal been changed/amended, if so please describe.



No changes or amendments have been made to the original proposal as a result of the consultation outcomes.

### **Question 8 - Mitigation**

Will any steps be taken to mitigate/reduce any potential adverse effects of the proposal?

The local authority has processes in place to assist staff affected by the closure decision, should it be taken, which would assist them in securing alternative posts or retraining if desired.

If the decision is taken to close the school, the local authority will work with the school to ensure that there is a smooth transition in the repurposing of the school.

### **Question 9 – Balancing the Proposal/Countervailing Factors**

This weighs up the reasons for the proposal – e.g., need for budget savings; damaging effects of not taking forward the proposal at this time – against the findings of the analysis.

The small size of the school is the cause for concern regarding its future and the resulting impact on both educational and 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.

There are currently no children attending the school site who would be impacted by the decision. There is one pupil on roll. Parents have chosen to elective home education at this time; however, a place is available for this pupil at Kingsbury Primary School. Any children who would wish to attend Pinfold Primary School can be accommodated by local schools no more than 2.3 miles away.

It is acknowledged that there may be an adverse impact on staff who are more likely to be women given the profile of staff in this work area, should the proposal be approved, but it is hoped that this can be mitigated to some degree. The reasons for the proposal are outlined above.

It is anticipated that, should the proposal be approved, and satellite provision be established on the site, there could be positive impacts for some children who have special educational needs and disabilities – many of whom would meet the disability protected characteristic and all would be in the age (younger person) protected characteristics group – by increasing the number of places available to them in the local area.



### **Question 10 – Final Proposal**

In summary, what is the final proposal and which groups may be affected and how?

The proposed closure of Pinfold Primary School 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.

If the proposal is approved, the school would close with effect from 19 April 2024, reopening as a satellite provision for Kingsbury Primary School with effect from 22 April 2024.

There are currently no children attending the school site who would be impacted by the decision.

### **Question 11 – Review and Monitoring Arrangements**

What arrangements will be put in place to review and monitor the effects of this proposal?

Once a decision has been taken to close the school, the local authority is legally obliged to implement the proposal.

Equality Analysis Prepared By: Kirsty Roberts/ Jeanette Binns

Position/Role: Project Manager/ Equality Act & Equality Analysis Lead

Equality Analysis Endorsed by Line Manager and/or Service Head: Aby Hardy

Decision Signed Off By; Aby Hardy, Head of Service Education Improvement

Cabinet Member or Director:

For further information please contact

Jeanette Binns – Equality & Cohesion Manager

[Jeanette.binns@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:Jeanette.binns@lancashire.gov.uk)

