

Bleasdale Church of England Primary School

Key Factors for Consideration

This appendix sets out the key factors which have been taken into consideration in relation to this proposal.

Pupil Numbers and Admissions

Bleasdale Church of England Primary School has seen a reduction in the number of pupils on roll from 16 in January 2014 to 2 in September 2018. There are no pupils in Reception, Year 1, Year 2 or Year 3 and there were no admissions to the school in September 2018.

Whilst the pupil numbers have declined in this rural area, Bleasdale's numbers have fallen to a greater extent than those in the other schools. With only 2 pupils currently on roll and one of these pupils set to leave at the end of 2018/19 academic year and no significant housing planned for the area, this position is unsustainable.

Whilst pupil numbers in the area have declined over recent years, the capacity within the other 2 schools in the planning area would provide sufficient capacity for the Bleasdale pupils (one of whom will leave at the end of the 2018/19 academic year). The combined capacity of the other 2 schools is 105, to be compared against total number on roll of 60 pupils. Based on current and projected pupil numbers, there should be sufficient places in all cohorts of the other 2 schools to accommodate the pupils if Bleasdale Primary School were to close, one of which is also a Church of England school. The nearest school is over 2 miles away so there may be a transport impact for future pupils in the area.

In the next 5 years, just 17 new houses are expected to be completed which may impact upon the schools within the Bleasdale, Calder Vale and Claughton Planning area of the Wyre District. This is expected to yield approximately 3 pupils for the whole area. Neither the emerging Local Plan nor the available housing data show any additional housing planned for the area which may impact upon future numbers at this school.

As a consequence of the reductions in pupil numbers, the financial resources available to the school have declined and these will be considerably lower from April 2019, when the school's funding will be based on the two pupils on roll in October 2018.

Financial Viability

The school has sufficient funding to continue to operate in 2018/19 but with only 2 pupils would go into an irrecoverable deficit from 1 September 2019. Staff numbers are already at floor levels and minimal non-staffing costs are already at the lowest practicable level.

Without adequate funding the educational provision in the school would decline.

The authority expansion policy may offer support to any maintained primary school that admits pupils from a closing school. Schools shall receive the following support from the growth fund for the year in which the pupil is admitted:

i. Maintained primary schools – shall receive funding for each pupil admitted into any year group from the date deemed by the authority to be the date of transfer of all pupils due to the closure of a school to the end of the financial year at the equivalent rate per pupil as applied within the primary growth fund;

School Performance

The alternative schools in the area are either good or outstanding. Bleasdale Primary School is currently good but it may be difficult to retain that rating if the school were to stay open with such a small number of pupils.