

MATTERS TO BE SPECIFIED IN SECTION 19 PROPOSALS FOR ALTERATIONS TO A SCHOOL

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

1. Contact details

The proposal to close Pinfold Primary School, Pinfold Lane, Scarisbrick, L40 8HR and expand Kingsbury Primary School by creating a satellite provision on the site of Pinfold Primary School is published by Lancashire County Council, the relevant local authority. Pinfold Primary School is voluntary aided. The local authority can be contacted at the following address: Education, Quality and Performance Service, Room 2:27, Lancashire County Council, PO Box 100, County Hall, Preston, PR1 0LD.

2. Description of alteration and evidence

This proposal is for the expand Kingsbury Primary School by creating a satellite provision on the site of Pinfold Primary School.

Kingsbury Primary School is a special school for pupils with generic learning difficulties, catering for pupils aged 2-11, and is rated Outstanding (Ofsted).

We are proposing to develop additional classrooms in the Pinfold Primary School building. Kingsbury Primary School is 6.9 miles away from the Pinfold Primary School site. Proposing to repurpose this site, the local authority would be utilising a building which may otherwise remain empty.

The local authority has a duty to provide sufficient school places and the decision was taken to repurpose the site as a satellite provision for Kingsbury Primary School rather than proceed with the free school presumption process. By repurposing as a satellite provision, the additional special school places required will be available sooner.

Kingsbury Primary School would be responsible for the education of any children that are taught on the Pinfold Primary School site, and they would receive the same teaching and support as they would if they were taught at Kingsbury Primary School. This 'satellite' provision and will be governed and managed by the governing body and senior leadership team of Kingsbury Primary School.

Increase the number of places

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.

Providing additional classrooms in the Pinfold Primary School building would create up to 20 special school places for primary age children with special educational needs. All pupils attending the school at either the Kingsbury Primary School site or the Pinfold Primary School site would have education, health and care plans.

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.

3. Objectives

This objective of this proposal is to permanently increase special school provision to make sure we have enough special school places for all children and young people with special educational needs who need them.

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.

Children and young people already attending Kingsbury Primary School will remain on roll and should not experience any change in class size because of the increase to approved numbers.

Key teachers and support staff for each class will remain with the pupils in their class in the 'satellite' unit as they do at Kingsbury Primary School now. Specialist staff will move between Kingsbury Primary School and the Pinfold Primary School site as required.

4. Effect on other local education institutions

The proposal arises due to a fall in pupil numbers and the associated impact on the educational and financial viability of Pinfold Primary School.

Pupil Numbers and Admissions

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.

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.

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 are for Kingsbury Primary and will be funded by the High Needs budget and managed through Kingsbury School as per all other pupils.

5. Project Cost and value for Money

The local authority has concerns that Pinfold Primary School is no longer viable. This is due to the low pupil numbers and the future financial viability of the school. The local authority is satisfied that an alternative school place can be secured for the pupil affected by the proposed closure within a reasonable travelling distance.

6. Impact on the community

The local authority recognises that the closure of a school can impact on the wider community, particularly when this is a rural school as is the case with this proposal.

The local community has access to a Parish Hall, which is located across the road from the school. If the school was to close, the local authority is satisfied that the local community would continue to have access to suitable community facilities.

Between 15 January to 9 February 2024, at the request of the governing body, the initial consultation took place. During this consultation period, a total of 4 responses were received by members of the community. In addition, a consultation event was held at the school on 29 January 2024. At this event, 9 interested parties attended.

At the event, people 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

7. Implementation

It is proposed to close Pinfold Primary school on 19 April 2024. As of January 2024, the school had one pupil on roll. This child is due to move to specialist provision.

It is proposed to open the satellite provision to Kingsbury Primary school on 22 April 2024. As of January 2024, the capacity at Kingsbury Primary School was 120 and the school was oversubscribed. There is a need for extra provision of special school places in the area. (See s15 proposal: Closure of Pinfold Primary School)

8. Procedure for responding to the consultation

Within four weeks from the date of publication of this proposal, 19 February 2024, any person may respond, support, object to or make comments on the proposal by posting them 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.

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