

Sedgeford Primary School

Equality Assessment – Findings and Recommendations

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This assessment helps you to consider the impact of service changes on people with protected characteristics. You can update this assessment at any time so that it informs ongoing service planning and commissioning.

For help or more information please contact Neil Howard, Equality & Accessibility Officer, email neil.howard@norfolk.gov.uk, Tel: 01603 224196

Contents

		Page
1.	The purpose of an equality assessment	3
2.	The legal context	3
3.	The assessment process	3
4.	The proposal	3
5.	Who is affected by this proposal	4
6.	Potential impact	5
7.	Accessibility considerations	6
8.	Recommended/mitigating actions	6
9.	Evidence used to inform this assessment	7
10.	Further information and contact details	7
	Guidance notes to help you complete this assessment	8

1. The purpose of an equality assessment

The purpose of an equality assessment is to enable decision-makers to consider the impact of a proposal on different individuals and communities prior to the decision being made. Mitigating actions can then be developed if adverse impact is identified.

2. The legal context

Public authorities have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to consider the implications of proposals on people with protected characteristics. The Act states that public bodies must pay due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act¹;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic² and people who do not share it³;
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it⁴.

The full Act is available [here](#).

3. The assessment process

This assessment comprises two phases:

- **Phase 1** – evidence is gathered on the proposal – looking at the people who might be affected, the findings of related assessments and public consultation, contextual information about local areas and populations and other relevant data. Where appropriate, engagement with residents, service users and stakeholders takes place, to better understand any issues that must be taken into account.
- **Phase 2** – the results are analysed. If the assessment indicates that the proposal may impact adversely on people with protected characteristics, mitigating actions are identified.

When completed, the findings are provided to decision-makers, to enable any issues to be taken into account before a decision is made.

4. The proposal

The proposal is to close Sedgeford Primary School, Ringstead Road, Sedgeford, Norfolk PE36 5NQ from 31 August 2020, due to low numbers of pupils at the school.

Sedgeford Primary (Community) School is a rural school, designated by the Department for Education as rural village, December 2019. There is a presumption against the closure of rural schools. This does not mean that a rural school will never close, but the case for closure should be strong.

Sedgeford Primary School is a small rural school with a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 9 pupils and currently has 14 pupils on roll, as at February 2020, with a capacity of 60 pupils.

Sedgeford Primary School federated in May 2015 with Brancaster CofE VA Primary School and Docking CofE Primary School, to form St. Mary Federation and share a headteacher.

Sedgeford Primary School is judged Requires Improvement by Ofsted in June 2019. There is an Interim Executive Board (IEB) in place and the Chair of the IEB contacted Norfolk County Council on 18 February 2020 reluctantly requesting the Council to consult on closure of the school as;

- There are 13 children at the school from Reception – Year 5. Four of the children are dual registered with Docking Primary.
- The 10 children educated at Sedgeford from Yr2 – Yr5 are in one class, with one teacher and two support staff.
- 5 of the children live in Sedgeford, the others are transported by parents from Heacham.
- There are no admissions anticipated for September.

Catchment information shows that of the 44 children who live in the catchment area, only 5 attend the catchment school of Sedgeford. The school is regularly under-subscribed, and there is a catchment yield of 3 – 5 pupils each year.

5. Who is affected by this proposal?

The proposal will affect adults, children and staff with the following protected characteristics:

People of all ages	NO
A specific age group (please state if so): Primary age children (4 – 11 years) in Sedgeford area	YES
Disability (all disabilities and long-term health conditions)	NO
Gender reassignment (e.g. people who identify as transgender)	N/A
Marriage/civil partnerships	N/A
Pregnancy & Maternity	N/A
Race (different ethnic groups, including Gypsies and Travellers)	NO
Religion/belief (different faiths, including people with no religion or belief)	NO
Sex (i.e. men/women/intersex)	NO
Sexual orientation (e.g. lesbian, gay and bisexual people)	N/A

Provide an analysis of the people who will be affected by the proposal;

Demographics

Norfolk is a large and diverse county and the patterns and picture of population in each part of the county gives us the core picture of the characteristics of the area.

Sedgeford is located within the Docking electoral division. The population of Docking is older than Norfolk as a whole, with 35% of the population aged 65 and over, compared with 24% in Norfolk. General health in Docking is worse than the Norfolk average; 73.9% of people describe their health as good or very good, compared with 79.3% in Norfolk. The gap in life expectancy in Docking males, is 2 years and 4 months below the Norfolk average of 80 years. For women, the life expectancy gap is 2 months above the Norfolk average of 83.5 years.

24% of dwellings in Sedgeford have no permanent residents compared to 15% in Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk and 4% for England. This suggests a large number of second homes and holiday lets.

Changing pupil numbers at Sedgeford

The school has been a small rural school for many years. Recently pupil numbers have declined, see table below. Four pupils attend the school and live in the Sedgeford catchment area, the rest live out of the school catchment area. Forecasts for future children, show a continued trend of low numbers, within the Sedgeford catchment area, of 3 – 5 children per year.

September	Number of pupils
2010	49
2011	48
2012	41
2013	31
2014	32
2015	32
2016	34
2017	35
2018	30
2019	19

The school has the capacity for 63 pupils, from Reception to Year 6. For the last 10 years, the school has been operating under its full capacity.

6. Potential impact

The proposal to close Sedgeford Primary School, if implemented will result in 13 children being displaced and will be offered a school place at different school. Norfolk County Council has reviewed the places available in nearby schools and there are sufficient places for pupils currently at Sedgeford Primary School

The impact of the closure of Sedgeford Primary School will mean a change in the catchment area the children currently living there now and in the future. It is therefore proposed to change the catchment area as follows. Sedgeford catchment currently incorporates two parishes; Ringstead and Sedgford. It is proposed that;

- the children living in the Ringstead parish will be included in the Hunstanton catchment area.
- the children living in the Sedgeford parish will be included in the Heacham catchment area.

These proposed changes are included in the consultation document on the proposed closure of Sedgeford Primary School.

There may be an impact on the school transport budget. It will be dependent on parental preference for school places and where families live. Distances from Sedgeford Primary School to nearby schools are;

Docking Primary, 3.5 miles

Heacham Infants, 2.5 miles

Heacham Junior, 3.2 miles

Hunstanton 4.4 miles

Snettisham 2.6 miles

School transport will be provided free of charge by Norfolk County Council for those pupils who transfer to their nearest or catchment school, where this is beyond the qualifying distance (over 2 miles for under 8's and over 3 miles for older children), as set out in our School Transport Policy.

There is a potential impact on staff employed at Sedgeford Primary School. Work will be undertaken by Human Resources to identify those staff who would be displaced by the implementation of this proposal and support will be given in seeking redeployment, initially within the St Mary's Federation in line with the Code of Practice.

7. Accessibility considerations

Accessibility is a priority for Norfolk County Council.

Norfolk has a higher than average number of disabled and older residents compared to other areas of the UK, and a growing number of disabled young people.

Accessibility to a new school place will be supported by Norfolk County Council's Admissions Team.

For guidance on the minimum and maximum access considerations that could be built into your proposal, please speak with Neil Howard, Equality & Accessibility Officer, email neil.howard@norfolk.gov.uk; Tel: 01603 224196

8. Recommended/mitigating actions

	Action	Lead	Date
1.	Work with staff	Carole Human, HR	Summer Term 2020
2.	Work with parents with children at Sedgeford re admissions	Eric Clarke, Admissions	After Determination July 2020
3.	Individual reviews for children with ECH Plans	SENCO lead	After Determination, July 2020

9. Evidence used to inform this assessment

- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty
- Relevant business intelligence; Local Growth Investment Plan 2020, Health and WellBeing profile 2017, Sedgeford Neighbourhood Plan 2019,

10. Further information

For further information about this equality impact assessment please contact Caroline Money, School Organisation Manager, email; caroline.money@norfolk.gov.uk Tel; 01603 228828



If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact Caroline Money by email on caroline.money@norfolk.gov.uk

¹ Prohibited conduct:

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have, or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a condition, rule, policy or practice in your organisation that applies to everyone disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.

Harassment is “unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual”.

Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act; or because they are suspected of doing so. An employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.

2 The protected characteristics are:

Age – e.g. a person belonging to a particular age or a range of ages (for example 18 to 30 year olds).

Disability - a person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Gender reassignment - the process of transitioning from one gender to another.

Marriage and civil partnership

Pregnancy and maternity

Race - refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Religion and belief - has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (such as Atheism).

Sex - a man or a woman.

Sexual orientation - whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

3 The Act specifies that having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity might mean:

- Removing or minimizing disadvantages suffered by people who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of others;
- Encouraging people who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such people is disproportionately low.

4 Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between people and communities involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to (a) tackle prejudice, and (b) promote understanding.