

Frequently Asked Questions for Parents/carers of pupils at Winterton Primary School

Introduction

Norfolk County Council is currently consulting on a proposal to close Winterton Primary School and extend the catchment to Hemsby Primary School, with effect from December 2018.

The consultation on the proposed closure of Winterton Primary School was brought forward as a request from the Interim Executive Board of the school on 16th May 2018.

The proposal to close Winterton Primary School is based on;

- There is no sustainable governance model, including no viable Multi-Academy Trust solution
- There is no sustainable leadership
- There is no sustainable budget, due to the pupil numbers at the school.

Therefore it is difficult to deliver and sustain quality education for children now and in the future.

Frequently Asked Questions

The first consultation event took place on Friday 15th June and we said that we would produce information on the questions raised and the answers given at the meeting. In some areas, we have updated this information and this is clearly indicated below.

Frequently asked questions	Our response at the meeting
Are there spaces in other schools?	<p>Yes, our analysis across this area, shows there are sufficient places in neighbouring schools to accommodate children from Winterton, if the proposal was agreed. However, we are aware that the number of places per year group, is changing on a daily basis, as Winterton parents are already looking at other schools.</p> <p>Updated information – Whilst we cannot pre-empt the outcome of the consultation or promote a particular outcome, we are aware that parents are keen to know the number of places per school and year group. We would advise parents to contact our Admissions Team on 01603 638036 and they will be able to provide individual parents with clear advice about the processes for application and the places potentially available in the surrounding areas.</p>

<p>Why close at 31st December when Year 6 will have one term at one school and move</p>	<p>It is never easy to make a proposal to close a school and it is not taken lightly. We have been asked by the Interim Executive Board to undertake this consultation as all other options have been looked at. We appreciate the concerns you are raising about having only one term in the next academic year (especially for Yr 6 with their SATs), but we have to undertake the consultation process; informal and statutory, and this takes time. We therefore cannot finish this before September 2018. Sadly the school is in the position of not having a sustainable budget, leadership or governance and is unlikely to be able to stay open until the end of July 2019, unless major changes are made e.g. closing the nursery, moving from 3 to 2 classes, that will have a detrimental effect on pupils' education.</p>
<p>Will we be able to have all our children at the same school?</p>	<p>We will ensure that this happens.</p> <p>Updated information; Over-subscription rules for admission to school can include "siblings" living at the same address to give some priority. Wherever possible when allocating school places the Local Authority will endeavour to offer places for all children in a family. If this is not possible the parent will be contacted to discuss the potential school offers and what can be done to assist. There is no published arrangement for processing applications for siblings.</p>
<p>Will there be free transport, will there be a chaperone, will it apply to other schools if can't get into Hemsby?</p>	<p>We said that each case for school transport is assessed separately. We acknowledged that the distance between Hemsby and Winterton was under 2 miles. However when school re-organisation takes place, such as school closure, the County Council will consider whether transport provision should be made to affected pupils, <u>at the time the school organisation change is made</u>. The level and duration of any transport assistance will be determined by the County Council.</p> <p>Updated information; We have asked colleagues in School Transport to undertake the assessment of the walking routes between Hemsby and Winterton.</p>
<p>Why close rural school when others much smaller manage to stay open</p>	<p>We explained that Norfolk has many rural schools, but there is only one other school, smaller than Winterton, which operates as a standalone school i.e. doesn't have any collaborative arrangement. All schools whatever their size need to be sustainable. We measure this in terms of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership • Governance • Standards • Finance. <p>Most schools have entered into a collaborative arrangement, such as a Partnership, Federation or Academisation, with a</p>

	shared headteacher. A stand-alone school tends to become vulnerable if one or more of these 4 come at the same time. Unfortunately for Winterton, at least three of these areas, Leadership, Governance and Finance are not sustainable.
NCC should/could have done more to support our school	We said that Norfolk County Council has been working with the school, looking for solutions, since 2016. Many options have been explored, but sadly no sustainable option for governance, leadership or the budget have been found.
Lots of houses to be built, what is the impact	We explained that Norfolk County Council has a statutory duty to secure sufficient pupil places to meet the demands of the school-age population, 4-16. Our Local Growth Investment Plan sets out how we will meet the need for new places. The school age population continues to grow across Norfolk, through demographic change and the impact of new housing. We are aware of the number of houses set out in the Local Plan and work closely with the District Councils. However, it is not clear as yet what the type of housing will be and whether it will have many children. Our assessment is that there is capacity across the area for current Winterton children. There is likely to be pressure on the area in the future, but there is still capacity within other schools for at least the next 5 years. We constantly monitor the housing growth.
How can we keep the school open?	We said that the school would need more pupils. Currently Winterton has 51 pupils for September 2018. We estimate the school needs a minimum of 70 – 75 children. In addition, we need to find a partnership arrangement with another school/s. However we explained that all the academies in the local area had been approached by the Department for Education, but no-one wanted to proceed.
Why have we only just found out that a multi-academy trust option has ended, why did they pull out?	We explained that the Department for Education have had discussions with Academy Trusts and that they take into account a number of factors; governance, leadership, standards and finance when making their decision and informing the County Council and Interim Executive Board. We agreed to ask why the Academy Trusts had turned Winterton down, but please be aware that they do not have to tell us.
Distribution of the document – why was this delivered by my child to me at the end of school?	We explained the proposal document was sent to the parent/carer of every pupil at Winterton and Hemsby schools. The schools distributed this for us, to ensure that everyone got this at the same time, as we felt it was important that this happened rather than rely on the postal system, which would be our usual method.