

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF CALDERDALE
EDUCATION AND INSPECTIONS ACT 2006

Proposals to close Cragg Vale J & I School and to enlarge and change the age range of Calder High School to create an all-through School

PART 1

Notice is given in accordance with section 15(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that The Borough Council of Calderdale, The Town Hall, Halifax HX1 1UJ intends to discontinue Cragg Vale J & I School, Cragg Vale, Hebden Bridge, HX7 5TG on 31 August 2017.

PART 2

Notice is given in accordance with section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that The Borough Council of Calderdale, The Town Hall, Halifax HX1 1UJ intends to enlarge Calder High School, Brier Hey Lane, Mytholmroyd, Hebden Bridge, HX7 5QN to create an all-through school with effect from 1 September 2017.

Calder High School's current status as a Learning Trust will be unaffected by these proposals.

These two proposals are linked. Neither proposal will proceed in isolation.

Calder High School will have an admission number for pupils joining the school for the first time of 15 pupils for entry into the Primary phase of provision (4 years to 11 years); total places for this phase: 105. Calder High School will have an admission number for pupils joining the school for the first time of 217 pupils for entry into the secondary phase of provision (11 years to 16 years); total places for this phase: 1160.

Sixth form admissions are unaffected by these proposals.

Pupils will not be displaced as a result of these proposals. Pupils on roll at Cragg Vale J & I School will automatically transfer to Calder High School and transport arrangements will be in accordance with Calderdale's Home to School Transport Policy.

All statutory requirements to consult in relation to these proposals have been met.

This notice forms part of the full proposal. Copies of the full proposal may be viewed or downloaded from the Authority's website:

<http://www.calderdale.gov.uk/education/schools/admissions/>

Alternatively a copy may be requested by writing to the address shown below or by telephoning 01422 392617.

Within four weeks from the date of publication of this proposal (by 9 February 2017), any person may object or make comments in support of the proposal by sending them to Calderdale MBC, Access and School Planning, Ground Floor, Northgate House, Northgate, Halifax, HX1 1UN.

Signed:

Head of Democratic & Partnership
Services

Publication Date:

13th January 2017

Full Proposal

Linked proposal to close Cragg Vale J & I School and to enlarge and change the age range of Calder High School to create an all-through school

The Borough Council of Calderdale, The Town Hall, Halifax, HX1 1UJ proposes to discontinue Cragg Vale J & I School, Hebden Bridge, HX7 5TG, a Community School, on 31 August 2017 and enlarge and change the age range of Calder High School, Brier Hey Lane, Mytholmroyd, Hebden Bridge, HX7 5QN, Foundation School to create an all through school with effect from 1 September 2017.

These proposals are linked. No single proposal will proceed without all proposals proceeding.

Reason for Closure

Cragg Vale J & I School building suffers from extensive condition and suitability issues that require the school to be moved off this site as soon as possible.

Building Condition Issues

The Education Funding Agency (EFA) commissioned a Property Data Survey for Cragg Vale J & I School in February 2014 following the Local Authority's Priority School Building Programme (PSBP) bid. This confirmed the Local Authority's asset management plan status for the school that the condition of the building is poor.

Those surveys identify significant costs to rectify condition issues including, retaining walls in poor structural order where there has been recent movement requiring re-construction work, large areas of re-pointing work required to retaining and boundary walls, ingress of water and long standing damp issues causing damage to the fabric of the building including rotten joists, and recent roofing issues leading to loose masonry.

Further, there is now a need for a total re-wire of the building and a need to replace the heating system throughout the school and replace the current fan convectors, steel and cast iron radiators.

Building Suitability Issues

The following findings are taken from a Local Authority suitability survey carried out in 2010 that to this point the Local Authority has been unable to improve;

The two classrooms used for teaching key stage 2 pupils are both inadequate in size. Only a thin partition wall separates these two classrooms, sound travelling between the two classrooms can distract pupils and inhibit teaching and learning.

The assembly hall is small, only 114 square metres and has a multi-purpose use which reduces the area considerably. The hall space also contains the school library, an ICT resource, a TV area and is used as a storage base. It is also used for dining purposes, assemblies and for teaching music, drama and PE lessons. The DfE recommend a space of 140 square metres for PE in a school of this size.

The current staff facilities and administrative facilities are inadequate;

- the administrative/school office is 9.8 square metres and is a shared space, it also doubles as the head teacher's office;

- the staffroom is small only 10.1 square metres;
- only one staff WC exists of 4.1 square metres which is also the only disabled WC provision;
- there is no caretaker's room/maintenance area exists; the caretaker shares the cleaner's store which is an inappropriate size only 2.8 square metres;
- there is no interview/meeting, no small group rooms, no SEN base, no practical resource area for art, technology, craft, or food bay; and no medical Inspection/Sick bay exists.

The lack of appropriate storage is a key issue, extra storage is recommended in classrooms for teaching, in specialist practical areas and for administrative purposes.

Only two small circulation areas exist within the building, a total of 25.4 square metres, both corridors are narrow and inappropriate. The main school entrance and foyer area are both small, only 3.6 square metres. The entrance is unseen from the administrative office and is a security issue. The main entrance is at the back of the building and is not ideal.

The school has no playing fields. This restricts the school's ability to deliver outdoor PE curriculum. There is inadequate car parking and extra space is recommended in any solution.

Pupil Numbers and Admissions

Cragg Vale J & I School is a small rural school with a current admission number of 10. As at October 2016 the number of pupil had reduced to 54.

Calder High School has an admission number of 232. As at October 2016 there were 976 pupils on roll for Key Stages 3 and 4, plus a further 150 pupils attending the sixth form.

The proposals would see the creation of an all-through school with a published admission number of 15 for the primary phase and 217 for the secondary phase within the all through school with arrangements for sixth form being unchanged.

Admission Arrangements – Oversubscription Criteria

In the event of oversubscription priority will be awarded for admission to residents of Cragg Vale. This will be achieved through the following oversubscription criteria.

1. Pupils who are in public care (children looked after) or pupils who were previously looked after but ceased to be so because they became adopted or became subject to a child arrangements or special guardianship order.
2. Pupils living within the defined priority (catchment) area who have a brother or sister (including step/half brothers and sisters) permanently resident in the same household and currently attending the school (excluding pupils in their final year).
3. Other pupils living within the defined priority (catchment) area.
4. Those pupils who do not qualify under Categories 1-3 who have a brother or sister (including step/half brothers and sisters) permanently resident in the same household and currently attending the school (excluding pupils in their final year).

5. Other children (distance)

If there is over-subscription within any category, then pupils will be admitted in the order of proximity of the pupil's permanent home to the school.

Distance will be calculated using a straight line measurement from the pupil's permanent home to the closest designated school gate.

Distance will be calculated using the Local Authority's GIS system (Geographical Information System). To ensure consistency applies, all measurements will be carried out using the Local Authority's GIS system and no other method of measuring distance will be considered.

Each property has a coordinate taken from Ordnance Survey ADDRESS-POINT data. This is the point which distance measurements will be taken from.

The catchment area will be drawn around the current site where Cragg Vale School is the closest school for local residents.

Displaced Pupils

All pupils currently attending Cragg Vale J&I School are guaranteed a place at the proposed through school provision at Calder High.

Impact on the Community

The proposal involves a move from the current Cragg Vale site to the new Calder site. The educational provision will be very much enhanced as a consequence of this move however it is recognised that for some families this will mean a longer journey each day.

With unlimited budget the current school site might have been refurbished and buildings repaired however this would not have addressed issues around suitability. Additional external play areas/green play areas could not be provided, and the existing envelope could not have been reconfigured to create a school that fits current building design guidance.

Given the current issues and constraints of the existing school site alternative options were extremely limited and it is the view of the Local Authority that this provides the best solution for the local community. A straightforward closure and dispersal of local children would be an easier solution but would not provide a fair and equitable solution for the current or future pupils residing in Cragg Vale.

Rural Primary Schools

The Local Authority has had due regard to the considerations included in Section 15 (4) of The Education and Inspections Act 2006 in bringing forward these proposals. This notice details the key considerations required under this statute.

Balance of denominational provision

These proposals do not alter the balance of denominational provision in the area.

Maintained nursery schools

These proposals do not involve any nursery provision.

Sixth form provision

Sixth form provision will continue on site. The current building in which Calder High's sixth form pupils receive their education will be converted to provide the primary phase of the amalgamated provision.

A new block will be created on the current school site to accommodate the sixth form pupils as part of these linked proposals.

A viability study has been conducted to show how this can be achieved. A full detailed feasibility will follow should these proposals proceed. This will involve full stakeholder and planning consultation processes to reaching design freeze for the final construction phase.

Special educational needs provision

As well as the poor condition and general suitability issues faced at Cragg Vale School, the current site is not suitable or accessible for many pupils with Special Educational Needs.

The proposed new accommodation will be fully DDA compliant and will open up this provision to pupils who might otherwise be excluded from this due to the physical constraints of the current site.

Travel

The Calder High site provides the nearest available, affordable and viable option for the accommodation of Cragg Vales pupils and is the only realistic long term solution that would see the continuance of this provision as part of an amalgamation with Cragg Vale.

This is 2.5 miles walking distance from the current site and is likely to create some additional travel for pupils resident in Cragg Vale although this will be offset in less travelling for pupils resident in the Mytholmroyd area who would otherwise have travelled in the opposite direction.

The Local Authority has a policy which supports pupils who travel over 2 miles or for families on low income who might require support with home to school travel arrangements. The policy allows for discretionary awards through a stage 1 appeal process where consideration can be given to families adversely affected by these proposals.

Objectives (including how the proposal would increase educational standards and parental choice)

The objective of these proposals is to provide new accommodation for the pupils of Cragg Vale School. This is to be achieved through an amalgamation (closure of Cragg Vale and the enlargement and change of age range at Calder High School). Pupils attending Cragg Vale will transfer to new accommodation in September 2017.

The new accommodation will be Calder High's current sixth form block which will be remodelled to provide suitable accommodation for primary aged pupils. It will provide a safe and suitable learning environment for the pupils of Cragg Vale who are currently accommodated in poor quality accommodation that is not suited to a modern educational curriculum.

The Benefits of an All-through School

There are many generally accepted benefits of all-through schools. These benefits include;

- Improved continuity and progress from Reception to Key Stage 4 through smoother transition. For example, an all-through school would have common approaches to curriculum planning, assessment, record keeping and target setting. Staff would understand the learning needs of every child and systems would be in place to communicate these to colleagues as the child progresses through the school. Most importantly, the school would have a shared understanding of standards and expectations.
- More flexibility and opportunity to meet individual pupil's needs by tailoring learning experiences. For example, across Year 6 and Year 7 to ensure better learning transition between primary and secondary schooling. It would support children as they come to terms with a wider range of more formal subject teaching and learning.
- A wider range of resources could be shared and common themes developed across the school. This curriculum flexibility can be particularly important for children with special education needs.
- More opportunities for social development, for example, older children could have some appropriate pastoral responsibility for younger children. This can impact positively on children's self-esteem and on behaviour across the school. Vulnerable children and their parents and carers have greater security because staff and provision are more consistent, year on year.
- Work to improve the school would be led by a single leadership team and governing body. So, for example, approaches to English and Maths would be consistent across the age range.
- More opportunity for children to attend the same school as older or younger brothers or sisters.
- Increased opportunity for staff to work in a larger team. This would help the professional development of staff and provide more opportunity to take on new responsibilities.
- Closer contact for parents and carers with school staff over a longer period of time. A more continuous relationship between the school, parents, carers and outside agencies can ensure that all pupils, but particularly those with special educational needs, are supported effectively from Reception through to the end of Year 11 or into sixth form.
- Specialist facilities and teaching such as Drama, Arts and Science would be available for all children.
- A more efficient way of managing the school budget, with fewer costs being duplicated which can maximise resources being spent on teaching and learning.

Effects on other schools, academies and educational institutions within the area

The proposal involves a small measured increase to the published admission number for the primary phase of the amalgamated school. Cragg Vale currently has a PAN of 10 and this proposal would see an increased intake of 15 to support the financial viability of the primary phase of this provision.

The Local Authority's view is that this position is sustainable based on the demographic data it produces around pupil place requirements and demand. A straight forward closure of any provision in this area would leave insufficient provision to meet local demand and would force pupils to travel out of area to find a school place. This is therefore untenable.

Any impact on neighbouring schools should be negligible as the increased numbers are minimal and there is a real prospect that preferencing patterns will change in light of this improved provision and improving levels of attainment in secondary provision at Calder High School. There are pupils currently living in the area but travelling out of area for primary and secondary education and this is likely to reduce as a consequence of these proposals.

Project costs and indication of how these will be met, including how long term value for money will be achieved

The project cost is expected to be in the region of £2 to £2.2 million.

£1.38 million is available as a contribution from the DfE as part of the Local Authority's successful Priority School Building Programme bid. The Local Authority is able to fund the balance of the cost of this project through the sale of the current Cragg Vale site and other capital funding streams.

A statement explaining the procedure for responses; support; objections and comments

A four-week period for representations ending on 9 February 2017 will follow the publication of this statutory notice containing this full proposal. Anybody wishing to make representations, either in support or in opposition to these proposals is able to do so by e-mailing:

cyps.admission@calderdale.gov.uk

All submissions will be compiled and presented to Calderdale's Cabinet for consideration. Responses will be considered and a decision on implementation of these proposals will be reached at the Cabinet meeting on 13 February 2017.