



## **Full Proposal**

### **Proposal to change the age range of Ox Close Primary School from 4-11 to 3-11 from 1 September 2024 to create a Primary School and to close Oxclose Nursery School as a registered school on 31 August 2024**

#### **1. What is the Proposal?**

This information is the Full Proposal of Durham County Council, County Hall, Durham, DH1 5UJ as the Local Authority to amalgamate Ox Close Primary and Oxclose Nursery Schools into a single primary school in a replacement new build on the Durham Road site of the former Tudhoe Grange Comprehensive School from 1 September 2024. This will be achieved by changing the age range of Ox Close Primary School from 4-11 to 3-11 from 1 September 2024 to create a primary school from that date and by closing Oxclose Nursery School as a registered school on 31 August 2024.

#### **2. The Objectives of the Proposal**

The objectives of the proposal are to ensure that there are enough primary school places across Spennymoor both for the present and future, and to preserve and enhance education provision in the area. Amalgamating the two schools into one Primary School in a replacement new build on the Durham Road site of the former Tudhoe Grange Comprehensive School will lead to a larger and more viable school in a building fit for the delivery of a first class 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum. Ox Close Primary School and Oxclose Nursery School became part of the Ox Close Federation in November 2018 and this arrangement is working well. Amalgamating the two schools into a single primary school is a logical progression from the federation arrangement. Where possible the Council aims to move towards a model of all through Primary Schools instead of separate Infant and Junior Schools. This will lead to establishments able to deliver an effective education to benefit pupils, their families and communities for the long term. Primary Schools have several wider benefits for pupils, parents and staff that separate Infant and Junior Schools do not. Some of these benefits include:

- Attending an 'all through' Primary School reduces breaks in a child's education and removes the need for additional transitions in a child's learning. The fewer moves children have during their school careers, the better they perform;
- Access to education planned across the whole primary age range; this would enable staff to help children make progress from exactly where they left off at the end of the previous year rather than covering learning which has already taken place;
- Access to the full range of facilities for all children aged between 4 and 11 is provided;
- Parents can have closer contact with the school over a larger period of time to help build positive relationships for the benefit of their children;

- Increased opportunities for more professional development of staff which should lead to improved outcomes for children; staff would know all the children better and the school would be able to train all staff to meet their needs more effectively;
- School Inspectors and school leaders will be able to make judgements more accurately about the education children receive when they can see 'the whole picture' within a single Primary School rather than two separate schools.

Ox Close Primary School is judged as 'Good' by Ofsted and Oxclose Nursery School judged as 'Outstanding'. The council believes that amalgamating the two schools will lead to a model of education that benefits children and their families and the proposal will therefore not have any negative impact on the standard of education provided to children in these schools.

### **3. Pupil Numbers and Admissions**

The current capacity of Ox Close Primary School is for 315 pupils. Oxclose Nursery School provides 39 full time equivalent (FTE) nursery places. The capacity for the proposed Primary School will be for 630 pupils with a 52 place (FTE) nursery unit attached. The current number of pupils admitted to Ox Close Primary School at Reception is 45. The proposed number of pupils to be admitted to Reception of the proposed Primary School in September 2024 will be 90. There are currently 298 pupils on roll at Ox Close Primary School and 73 pupils on roll at Oxclose Nursery School. No pupils will be displaced by the proposal, therefore there will be no cost to the Local Authority in respect of transport to other schools.

### **4. The Impact of the Proposal on Other Schools in the Area**

The proposed Primary School would be located on the former Durham Road site of Tudhoe Grange Comprehensive School which is approximately 0.5 miles from the existing site of Ox Close Primary and Oxclose Nursery Schools. The capacity will be for 630 pupils. It is therefore not expected that the proposal would impact on other schools in the area as there will be a shortage of school places in Spennymoor by 2024/25 without additional school places being provided.

### **5. The Impact of the Proposal on the Community**

All services run from the existing schools for the local communities will continue to be provided if the two separate schools become one Primary School on the Durham Road site of the former Tudhoe Grange Comprehensive School. The closure of Oxclose Nursery School as a registered school will therefore not have a negative impact on the local community.

### **6. Consultation**

- (i) A 6 week public consultation was undertaken from 2 November 2020 to 13 December 2020. A consultation document was issued to Governors and staff of Ox Close Primary and Oxclose Nursery Schools. It was

also issued to parents, C of E and RC Dioceses, Spennymoor Town Council, and other schools in the area. A copy of the document was also placed on the Durham County Council website and the websites of Ox Close primary and Oxclose Nursery Schools.

- (ii) Those respondents who supported the proposal felt that it would provide continuity and consistency of provision as well as bringing about smoother transition as staff would be more familiar with children from a young age and all would be on one site. Respondents also felt that a single primary school would enable a better use of resources which would lead to an enhanced education being provided. The proposed new build was in a good location, would provide more and better opportunities for teaching and learning and will ease the pressure on places across Spennymoor in general and at Ox Close in particular. Combining two good schools will benefit the children in both settings. The Federated Governing Body view the proposal in a positive manner as it builds on the working practices implemented by the Federation and provides a rich opportunity for the school to develop
  
- (iii) The main concerns expressed by those not in support of the proposal were: the proposed new build replacement school was too large and in the wrong place thus making it more difficult for them to get a place; the proposal will lead to increased traffic congestion at Durham Road as the proposed location is too far for some pupils to walk; the proposed school is too large and a better solution would be either an additional new build for the size required to address the shortfall in primary school places in Spennymoor, or expansions to existing schools.

## **7. How to Respond to the Proposal**

Responses to the proposal should be made within 4 weeks of the publication of this proposal. Any person may object to or make comments by sending them via the County Council's website at [www.durham.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.durham.gov.uk/consultations) or emailed to [schoolorganisation@durham.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorganisation@durham.gov.uk)

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