

**Cabinet**

**15 January 2025**



**Proposal to Amalgamate Horndale County Infant and Nursery School with St Francis C of E (Aided) Junior School on 1 September 2025 to become a newly named all through C of E (Aided) Primary School**

**Key Decision: CYPS/2025/001**

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**Report of Corporate Management Team**

**John Pearce, Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services**

**Councillor Ted Henderson, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services**

**Electoral division(s) affected:**

Aycliffe North and Middridge.

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To seek Cabinet approval to amalgamate Horndale County Infant and Nursery School and St. Francis C of E (Aided) Junior on 1 September 2025 to create a newly named all through C of E (Aided) Primary School taking account of the Local Authority's duties as prescribed in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to secure sufficient places and to ensure good outcomes for all children and young people in the local area.

**Executive summary**

- 2 Horndale County Infant and Nursery School is located in Newton Aycliffe, providing education for children aged between 3 and 7 years old. It is a community school maintained by the local authority. In October 2022, the school received a 'Good' rating from Ofsted. Its numbers have been declining over a number of years and the school featured in the 12 July 2023 July Cabinet report - Maintained Schools Budget Plans and Permission to Set Deficit Budgets.

- 3 Horndale County Infant & Nursery School required over £45,000 in financial support to address the deficit issues from 2023/24 and to set a budget for 2024/25 that is forecast to bring the reserves back into surplus. This has been made possible through the DfE school deficit grant, which was a one-off allocation for last year. It is not sustainable to rely upon future grants to balance the school's budget.
- 4 St. Francis Church of England (Aided) Junior School is located adjacent to the Horndale building, sharing vehicular entrances and car parking spaces. The school provides education for children 7-11 years old. It was rated Good in its last Ofsted Inspection which took place on 12 June 2024.
- 5 St Francis C of E (Aided) Junior School is in a good physical condition with no immediate capital priorities, it currently has surplus places allowing some of the classes from Horndale school to be accommodated on the main school site.
- 6 Newton Aycliffe is served by a number of primary schools which makes parental/carer choice very wide and strong. All of the nearby schools are 'Ofsted' Good, and the majority have surplus places. They include RC diocesan primary schools under Bishop Hogarth and seven other all though primary schools all within a 2 mile radius.
- 7 In a report dated 29 May 2024, relevant background information on Horndale County Infant and Nursery School and St. Francis C of E (Aided) Junior School, was provided, to enable a full understanding of possible options for the future provision of education in the part of Newton Aycliffe where the two schools are located.
- 8 It was agreed by the Corporate Director on 5 June 2024, to use delegated powers to agree the start of a proposal to amalgamate Horndale County Infant and Nursery School and St. Francis C of E (Aided) Junior on 1 September 2025 to create a newly named all through C of E (Aided) Primary School.
- 9 Following the completion of the initial consultation process, the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services approved the issuing of a statutory notice proposing to amalgamate Horndale County Infant and Nursery School and St. Francis C of E (Aided) Junior on 1 September 2025 to create a newly named all through C of E (Aided) Primary School.
- 10 As a result of the outcome of this consultation process the Governing Body of St Francis C of E (Aided) Primary school approve the proposed change in age range and agree to the Local Authority issuing the statutory proposal (from the Governing Body) on their behalf.

- 11 The statutory notice was issued on 4 November 2024. During the 4-week statutory representation period, no comments were received.
- 12 As part of the statutory process there are a range of factors that must be considered by Cabinet as the decision maker. These are covered in paragraphs 31 to 37 of this report.

### **Recommendation**

- 13 Cabinet is recommended to:
  - a. Agree to amalgamate Horndale County Infant and Nursery School and St. Francis C of E (Aided) Junior School on 1 September 2025 to create a newly named all through C of E (Aided) Primary School.

## Background

- 14 Horndale County Infant and Nursery School is located in Newton Aycliffe, providing education for children aged between 3 and 7 years old. It is a community school maintained by the local authority. In October 2022, the school received a 'Good' rating from Ofsted. Its numbers have been declining over a number of years and the school featured in the 12 July 2023 July Cabinet report - Maintained Schools Budget Plans and Permission to Set Deficit Budgets.
- 15 The forecast financial position for Horndale is outline in the table below (note that a negative figure for reserves reflects a surplus position and a positive figure reflects a deficit):

<b>Horndale Infants</b>	<b>24/25 Budget</b>	<b>25/26 Estimate</b>	<b>26/27 Estimate</b>
Gross Expenditure	664,222	688,958	701,239
Gross Income	-633,830	-654,380	-663,380
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>30,392</b>	<b>34,578</b>	<b>37,859</b>
Reserves brought forward	-30,392	0	34,578
Use of reserves	30,392	34,578	37,859
<b>Reserve balance</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>34,578</b>	<b>72,437</b>

- 16 Horndale County Infant & Nursery School required over £45,000 in financial support to address the deficit issues in 2023/24 and to set a budget for 2024/25. This has been made possible through the DfE school deficit grant, which was a one-off allocation for last year and it is not sustainable to rely upon future grants to balance the school's budget.
- 17 The forecast financial position of St. Francis CE Junior is outlined in the table below (note that a negative figure for reserves reflects a surplus position and a positive figure reflects a deficit):

<b>St. Francis CE Junior</b>	<b>24/25 Budget</b>	<b>25/26 Estimate</b>	<b>26/27 Estimate</b>
Gross Expenditure	940,727	967,472	985,706
Gross Income	-930,210	-886,242	-889,242
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>10,517</b>	<b>81,230</b>	<b>96,464</b>
Reserves brought forward	-162,311	-151,794	-70,565
Use of reserves	10,517	81,230	96,464
<b>Reserve balance</b>	<b>-151,794</b>	<b>-70,565</b>	<b>25,900</b>

- 18 As the proposed amalgamation will occur after 1 April 2025, for the 2025/26 financial year Horndale and St. Francis will be funded as separate schools.
- 19 This means that in the 2025/26 financial year each school will, for example, receive the lump sum element of school funding (this was £134,400 per school in 2024/25) for the full year, even though Horndale will cease to exist in September 2025.
- 20 At the point of proposed amalgamation, the funding for Horndale will be absorbed into St Francis.
- 21 For 2026/27, pupil-led formula funding would be unaffected by amalgamation, but an all through primary school would receive an enhanced lump sum for that year.
- 22 St. Francis Church of England (Aided) Junior School is located adjacent to the Horndale building, sharing vehicular entrances and car parking spaces. The school provides education for children 7-11 years old. It was rated Good in its last Ofsted Inspection which took place on 12 June 2024.
- 23 St Francis C of E (Aided) Junior School is in a good physical condition with no immediate capital priorities, it currently has surplus places allowing some of the classes from Horndale school to be accommodated on the main school site.
- 24 Newton Aycliffe is served by a number of primary schools which makes parental/carer choice very wide and strong. All of the nearby schools are 'Ofsted' Good, and the majority have surplus places. They include RC diocesan primary schools under Bishop Hogarth and seven other all through primary schools all within a 2-mile radius. See attached Appendix 3.
- 25 The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places in the right locations to meet demand. It is responsible for promoting a good supply of strong schools through planning, organising, and commissioning places in a way that raises attainment, increases diversity, encourages collaboration between schools and promotes community cohesion. When potential financial liability is a factor in a school not being in a position to deliver an effective curriculum, it becomes incumbent on a local authority to take steps to resolve in the best interests of pupil outcomes.
- 26 Officers believe that educational improvement and community cohesion can most effectively be brought about by amalgamating Horndale County Infant and Nursery School and St. Francis C of E (Aided) Junior

into one all through C of E (Aided) Primary School on 1 September 2025.

- 27 Officers believe this recommendation provides the best future option for the children and families in this area of Newton Aycliffe based on educational outcomes, pupil numbers, and sustainable finances.
- 28 In undertaking this process, the Council has referred to the Department for Education (DFE) guidance – “Making significant changes (‘prescribed alterations’) to maintained schools Statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers January 2023”. This guidance states that the decision-maker (in this case the Cabinet) needs to be satisfied that appropriate fair and open local consultation has been carried out and that the proposer (in this case the Council’s Education Service) has given full consideration to all the responses received. The decision-maker should not simply take account of the numbers of people expressing a view. Instead, they should give the greatest weight to responses from those stakeholders likely to be most affected by a proposal – especially parents and carers of children at the affected school(s).
- 29 An initial, non-statutory consultation on a proposal to amalgamate Horndale County Infant and Nursery School and St. Francis C of E (Aided) Junior School on 1 September 2025 to create a newly named all through C of E (Aided) Primary School, was held between 9 September and 20 October 2024. A meeting with the staff of both schools was held on 10 September 2024 and with Governors of both schools on 12 September 2024. A live event was held over Microsoft Teams on 19 September for parents and carers, the wider community and other stakeholders to hear the proposal explained by senior council officers and for them to ask questions and express views.
- 30 The responses to the consultation were received and considered by officers in the Council. Of the 31 respondents, 90%, strongly agree or agree with the proposal, 1 respondent strongly disagreed with it, and 2 neither agreed nor disagreed with it.
- 31 In summary, the main concerns expressed by the responded who strongly disagreed with the proposal was on the basis of religious schools perpetuating social division.
- 32 Those strongly agreeing felt the proposal was the correct one to support long term financial viability and expressed views that it is likely to positively impact the educational experience of the children affected.

## **Decision to Issue a Statutory Notice**

- 33 After considering all of the consultation responses received, the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services agreed to publish proposals to amalgamate Horndale County Infant and Nursery School and St. Francis C of E (Aided) Junior on 1 September 2025 to create a newly named all through C of E (Aided) Primary School. A statutory notice was therefore published on 4 November 2024.
- 34 Once a proposal is published there follows a statutory 4-week representation period during which comments can be made. These must be sent to the Local Authority. Any person can submit representations, which can be objections or expressions of support. The representation period is the final opportunity for people and organisations to express their views about the proposal. Once the representation period has closed (7 December 2024), a decision on the proposal must be made by the decision-maker (in this case the Cabinet) within 2 months, i.e. by 5 February 2025.

## **Responses to the proposal published on 7 November 2024 (The Statutory Notice Period)**

- 35 No responses were received by the end of the 4-week statutory notice period.

## **Decision-Making Process - Factors to be considered by Cabinet**

- (a) Education standards and diversity of provision
- 36 Decision makers should consider the quality and diversity of schools in the relevant area and whether the proposal will meet or affect the needs of parents, raise local standards and narrow attainment gaps.
- (b) Equal Opportunity Issues
- 37 Cabinet must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which requires them to have 'due regard' to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination;
  - advance quality of opportunity;
  - foster good relations between people with a protected characteristic and those without that characteristic
- 38 Cabinet should be satisfied that the proposal has shown a commitment to providing access to a range of opportunities which reflect the ethnic and cultural mix of the area in which a school is located, whilst ensuring

that such opportunities are open to all. The cultural mix in the communities of Newton Aycliffe is the same and educating pupils in an all through primary school will bring about educational improvement for children by them being educated in a larger, more sustainable school.

- 39 An equality impact assessment (Appendix 2) has been carried out on this proposal. It is evident that there would be limited impact on protected groups of pupils.

(c) Travel and Accessibility

- 40 Horndale County Infant and Nursery School and St. Francis C of E (Aided) Junior School are approximately 20 yards apart. There will therefore be no impact on travel and accessibility if the proposal is agreed.

(d) Funding

- 41 The decision maker should be satisfied that any land, premises or necessary funding required to implement the proposal will be available and that all relevant local parties (e.g. trustees of the school, diocese or relevant diocesan board) have given any agreements required for this. Work identified to St. Francis C of E (Aided) Junior School to make it appropriate for an all through C of E (Aided) Primary School will be made available from the Council's School Capital Allocation.

- 42 When considering the proposal to amalgamate Horndale County Infant and Nursery School and St. Francis C of E (Aided) Junior School into one all through C of E (Aided) Primary School on 1 September 2025, Cabinet must consider:

- The likely effect of the proposal on the local community. This proposal will have a positive effect on children and their families by providing a more effective education in a larger, more viable single establishment that can offer a broader curriculum and sustain educational standards.
- Educational standards at the school and the likely effect on standards at neighbouring schools; The most recent Ofsted inspection of 12 June 2024 judged the school to be 'Good'.
- Any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the closure of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase; St. Francis Church of England (Aided) Junior School is located adjacent to the Horndale building, sharing vehicular entrances and car parking spaces therefore there will not be any increase in the use of motor vehicles.



- Any alternatives to the closure of the school. There are no viable alternatives to keep both schools open operating as separate Infant and Junior settings.

## **Conclusion**

- 43 As evidenced through this report, the proposal to amalgamate Horndale County Infant and Nursery school and St Francis C of E (Aided) Junior School to create a newly named all through C of E (Aided) Primary School from the 1st September 2025 will have a positive impact for students their families and the community. The key objectives of the proposal are to improve educational outcomes for pupils, maintain the best future option of a school for the children and families in this area and to maintain a long term financially viable school.
- 44 Schools need to be sustainable to meet the challenges in a rapidly changing educational environment. The objectives of this proposal are to significantly enhance the quality of education provision for children within the local community whilst ensuring the curriculum breadth is enhanced.
- 45 Officers believe this recommendation provides the best future option for the children, the school, and the communities it serves based on educational outcomes, pupil numbers, site issues and sustainable and equitable finances.
- 46 Should Cabinet agree to the amalgamation of Horndale County Infant and Nursery School and St Francis C of E (Aided) Junior school into an all through C of E (Aided) Primary school, will enable pupils to be educated in a larger and financially more viable school rather than in a very small school where curriculum and staffing could be limited.
- 47 No responses were received to the statutory notice.

## **Background Papers**

- Delegated Decision Reports dated 5<sup>TH</sup> June 2024 and 24 October 2024  
Corporate Management Team Report dated 29 May 2024  
'Options for the future of Horndale County Infant and Nursey School and St Francis C of E (Aided) Junior School to create a newly named all through C of E (Aided) Primary school from the 1 September 2025.  
Consultation document distribution list – September 2024  
Public notice: 'Proposal to to amalgamate Horndale County Infant and Nursery School and St. Francis C of E (Aided) Junior on 1 September 2025 to create a newly named all through C of E (Aided) Primary School;'

**Author(s)**

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

The actions described in this report are intended to comply with the Council's duty to exercise its functions with a view to promoting high standards and the fulfilment of each pupil's learning potential in accordance with S13A of the Education Act 1996.

### **Finance**

Arrangements for school funding are determined by statutory regulation.

Under current statutory regulations, formula funding in the financial year 2025/26 for the two schools would not be adjusted for the in-year amalgamation would not result in a significant change in funding for other schools. For 2026/27, pupil-led formula funding would be unaffected by amalgamation, but an all through primary school would receive an enhanced lump sum for that year.

The pupil-led element of formula funding that would otherwise be allocated to Horndale County Infant and Nursery School, would be allocated to the schools to which the pupils were admitted following closure. The revenue and capital balances of the existing schools would transfer to an all through primary school.

The closure of Horndale County Infant and Nursery School as part of the amalgamation proposal will enable pupils to be educated in a larger and financially more viable school rather than in a very small school where curriculum and staffing could be limited.

There will be costs associated with work required to the building of St. Francis C of E (Aided) Junior School. These will be funded from the LA's School Capital allocation.

There may be costs associated with any redundancies.

### **Consultation and Engagement**

Consultation has been carried out in accordance with DfE statutory guidance. The approach to consultation is described in the report.

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

Although doing nothing and leaving the school as it is may initially be favoured by some parents who tend to view the closure of any school in a negative manner, the fact is that because of its very small size it is likely to become unviable in the future if action is not taken in a planned way.

The proposal to amalgamate Horndale County Infant and Nursery School and St. Francis C of E (Aided) Junior School is expected to bring about educational improvement for children by them being educated in a larger, more sustainable school.

The focus on improved education outcomes is seen as a positive experience in a child's education and ensures that children who are protected under the Equality and Diversity/Public Sector Equality Duty can maximise their potential.

The main groups affected are children attending Horndale County Infant and Nursery School, St. Francis C of E (Aided) Junior School, their families and staff. An Equality Impact Assessment is attached as Appendix 2. Should the proposal to amalgamate proceed, alternative provision at non-faith schools is available for parents who require this. We will ensure that any pupil with a SEND plan, or who requires reasonable adjustments, will be considered within the planning of the proposal. We will work closely with class teachers and families to ensure any needs are met. Once the option is finalised the equality impact assessment will be updated to determine potential impact on staff and/or pupils and any required mitigations.

### **Climate Change**

Any work to the building of St. Francis C of E (Aided) Junior School will contribute towards lower carbon emissions.

### **Human Rights**

Human rights are not affected by the recommendation in this report.

### **Crime and Disorder**

No impact.

### **Staffing**

Both governing bodies are committed to maintaining the current workforce across both schools where possible. Staffing decisions for the 2024/25 academic year will be made with this in mind and temporary contracts used to address short term staffing needs.

### **Accommodation**

Should Horndale County Infant School close, the building will be considered for alternative education opportunities in line with the needs of CYPS. To accommodate all of the children on the St Francis site, transitional arrangements may be needed in addition or instead of additional capital adjustments to the St Francis building. The amalgamation would have no impact upon pupil or staff travel.

**Risk**

A key risk is that as a consequence of actions taken by the County Council (including the failure to make timely interventions), pupils and students do not receive an adequate education. There is an additional risk of reputational damage if the council does not appear to be able to resolve the problem of schools operating with significant and sometimes increasing budgetary difficulties and allows some schools to set deficit budgets whilst requiring other schools to balance their budgets.

**Procurement**

There would be a potential termination of a school meals contact with Chartwells from the infant school to cater for all of the children on one site.

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## Appendix 2: Durham County Council Equality Impact Assessment

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The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) requires Durham County Council to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people from different groups. Completion of this template allows us to provide a written record of our equality analysis and demonstrate due regard and must be used as part of decisions making processes with relevance to equality.

Please contact [equalities@durham.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@durham.gov.uk) for any necessary support.

### Section One: Description and Screening

<b>Service/Team or Section</b>	Children and Young People Service
<b>Lead Officer</b>	David Wall Education Provision and Inclusion Lead Officer
<b>Subject of the impact assessment</b>	Proposal to amalgamate Horndale County Infant and Nursery School and St. Francis C of E (Aided) Junior School on 1 September 2025 to create a newly named all through C of E (Aided) Primary School.
<b>Report date (Cabinet/CMT/Mgt team etc)</b>	Delegated Decisions 5 June 2024 and 24 October 2024.
<b>MTFP Reference (if relevant)</b>	
<b>Start Date</b>	September 2024.
<b>Review Date</b>	At various planned stages within the development of the proposal.

### Subject of the Impact Assessment

Please give a brief description of the policy, proposal, or practice as appropriate (a copy of the subject can be attached or insert a web-link)

The purpose of this equality impact assessment is to determine the potential possible impacts in relation to the options put forward for the future provision of education, in relation to pupils attending Horndale County Infant and Nursery school and St Francis C of E (Aided) Junior school.

#### Background

Horndale County Infant and Nursery School is located in Newton Aycliffe, providing education for children aged between 3 and 7 years old. It is a community school maintained by the local authority. In October 2022, the school received a 'Good' rating from Ofsted. Its numbers have been declining over a number of years and the school featured in the 12 July 2023 July Cabinet report - Maintained Schools Budget Plans and Permission to Set Deficit Budgets.

St. Francis Church of England Aided Junior School is located adjacent to the Horndale building, sharing vehicular entrances and car parking spaces. The school provides education for children 7-11 years old. It was rated Good in its last Ofsted Inspection which took place on the 12<sup>h</sup> June 2024.

St Francis C of E (Aided) Junior School is in a good physical condition with no immediate capital priorities, it currently has surplus places allowing some of the classes from Horndale school to be accommodated on the main school site.

The current predictions for both schools indicate no growth up to 2027/28.

School	Capacity	Projected Rolls					
		NOR 2023/24	NOR 2024/25	NOR 2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Horndale Infants School	216	57	61	56	62	63	66
St Francis C of E Junior School	164	99	85	82	71	72	76

This EIA considers the two options outlined within the report, and the potential impact of each:

**Option 1:**

Do nothing, retaining the current education arrangements of both schools in the hope that additional pupils enrol. This decision would pose a number of challenges around appropriate allocation of education resources and an effective curriculum delivery. Reputational damage could affect the success of a future amalgamation and it must be acknowledged that both governing bodies are aware of this. It is for this reason that they and the Diocese are prioritising a joint solution at the earliest possible opportunity.

**Option 2:**

Consult on a proposal to remove the URN (Unique Reference Number) from Horndale County Infant & Nursery School, formally closing the school and extending the age range of St. Francis C of E (Aided) Junior School from 7 – 11 to 2 – 11 to create an all through C of E Primary School. The age range of St. Francis This option will enable children to be more effectively educated on one site in a larger, more viable establishment that can offer a broader curriculum and sustain educational standards.

The preferred option was to amalgamate Horndale County Infant and Nursery School and St. Francis C of E (Aided) Junior School into one all through C of E (Aided) Primary School. A public consultation process on the closure of the school was undertaken.



Who are the main people impacted and/or stakeholders? (e.g., general public, staff, members, specific clients/service users, community representatives):

General Public, Governors, Staff, Parents, Pupils, Primary schools within the area, Elected Members, MPs, Neighbouring Schools, Trade Unions, Diocese, Department for Education, Community Groups, Parish Councils, Residents' Associations, AAP Board, Neighbouring Authorities, CAS/DCC Staff

### Screening

Is there any actual or potential negative or positive impact on the following protected characteristics<sup>1</sup>?

Protected Characteristic	Negative Impact Indicate: Yes, No or Unsure	Positive Impact Indicate: Yes, No or Unsure
Age	Unsure (depending on option selected)	Unsure (depending on option selected)
Disability	Unsure (depending on option selected)	Unsure (depending on option selected)
Gender reassignment	N	N
Marriage and civil partnership ('eliminate discrimination' employment only)	N/A	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	N/A	N/A
Race	Unsure (depending on option selected)	Unsure (depending on option selected)
Religion or Belief	Unsure	Unsure
Sex	Unsure (depending on option selected)	Unsure (depending on option selected)
Sexual orientation	N	N

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics>

Please provide **brief** details of any potential to cause discrimination or negative impact. Record full details and any mitigating actions in section 2 of this assessment.

#### Overall impact on pupils

Overall, there may be impacts on all pupils who currently attend Horndale County Infant and Nursery School and St. Francis C of E (Aided) Junior School, depending on the agreed final option. Positive impacts are likely to occur with improved teaching and learning facilities which will allow increased opportunities for greater social interaction and breadth of experiences, resulting in a positive impact on pupils should option 2 be agreed.

#### Overall impact on staff

There may be staff reductions if option 2 is implemented.

#### **Age**

##### Pupils

There will be no impact as primary education will still be available.

##### Staff

There may be impact in relation to staff reductions, as a result of option 2 being implemented. A full staff profile will be included should option 2 be agreed to further assess impact.

#### **Disability**

##### Pupils

There are no expected impacts associated with the proposal. Any proposed changes will ensure that all children's needs are met, and any planned changes will ensure that plans are put into place for pupils with SEND plans to help minimise any potential unsettlement.

##### Staff

There are no potential impacts on staff in relation to the options proposed.

**Sex**

## Pupils

There are no potential negative impacts associated with the proposal.

Positive impacts could occur through the options as the pupils will have the opportunity to make new friends and become part of a wider friendship group.

## Staff

There are no potential impacts on staff in relation to the options proposed. A full staff profile will be included should option 2 be agreed to further assess impact.

**Religion**

## Pupils

There may be a potential impact in terms of families, who do not wish their child to attend a faith school. Consideration needs to be given to pupils and families; were this may have an impact.

Please provide **brief** details of positive impact. How will this policy/proposal promote our commitment to our legal responsibilities under the public sector equality duty to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation,
- advance equality of opportunity, and
- foster good relations between people from different groups?

We recognise the need to treat all those involved in the review fairly; in particular we have had regard to the named 'protected' characteristic and our specific duty to carry out our discussions and decision making in ways that eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations; for people who share a relevant protected characteristic; and those who do not.

### **Evidence**

What evidence do you have to support your data analysis and any findings?

Please **outline** any data you have and/or proposed sources (e.g., service user or census data, research findings. Highlight any data gaps and say whether or not you propose to carry out consultation. Record your detailed analysis, in relation to the impacted protected characteristics, in the following section of this assessment.

An initial, non-statutory consultation was carried out on the proposal to amalgamate Horndale County Infant and Nursery School and St. Francis C of E (Aided) Junior on 1 September 2025 to create a newly named all through Cof E (Aided) Primary School was held between 9 September and 20 October 2024.

A meeting with the staff of both schools was held, as well as an event for parents and the wider community. The responses to the consultation were received and considered by officers in the Council. Of the 31 respondents strongly agree or agree with the proposal, one respondent strongly disagreed with it, and 2 neither agreed nor disagreed with it.

In summary, the main concerns expressed by the respondent who strongly disagreed with the proposal was on the basis of religious schools perpetuating social division. Those strongly agreeing felt the proposal was the correct one to support long term financial viability and expressed views that it is likely to positively impact the educational experience of the children affected.

### Screening Summary

On the basis of this screening is there:	Confirm which refers (Y/N)
Are you proceeding to full impact assessment (sections 2&3 of this template) based on the screening (section 1) information provided?	Y

### Sign Off

Lead officer sign off:	Date:
Equality representative sign off (where required): S Tracey, Equality Manager	Date: 09.12.24

If carrying out a full assessment please proceed to section two.

If not proceeding to full assessment, please ensure your screening record is **attached to any relevant decision-making records or reports**, retain a copy for update where necessary, and forward a copy to [equalities@durham.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@durham.gov.uk)

If you are unsure of assessing impact, please contact the corporate equalities team for further advice at [equalities@durham.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@durham.gov.uk)

## Section Two: Data analysis and assessment of impact

Please provide details of impacts for people with different protected characteristics relevant to your screening findings. You need to decide if there is or likely to be a differential impact for some. Highlight the positives e.g., benefits for certain groups, advancing equality, as well as the negatives e.g., barriers for and/or exclusion of particular groups. Record the evidence you have used to support or explain your conclusions and any necessary mitigating actions to ensure fair treatment.

Protected Characteristic: <b>Age</b>		
What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?	Record of evidence to support or explain your conclusions on impact.	What further action or mitigation is required?
<p>In terms of the options proposed:</p> <p>There is no potential impact in terms of age, as the proposal would still provide education to the required age range.</p> <p>In terms of staff implications there may be an impact in terms of the proposed options implemented.</p>		<p>Consultation with young people and parents/carers to understand further the potential issues the options bring.</p> <p>Ensure that any proposals in relation to staff, will require further detailed evidence of proposed implications based on the option preferred. At that time the EiA will be updated to include staff data. We will ensure that HR policies and processes will be implemented to ensure fair treatment..</p>

		<p>Regular correspondence with pupils, and with parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of changes and able to support their children.</p> <p>If required, all school-based staff will be supported by the relevant school policies and procedures.</p>
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**Protected Characteristic: Disability**

What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?	Explain your conclusion considering relevant evidence and consultation	What further action or mitigation is required?
At present there is no potential impact in terms of disability for pupils, as current data shows that there are no pupils attending the school with a disability. We need to consider future proofing of the school, to ensure that any future	We will update the EIA with pupil and staff data- in respect of current disability and SEND data held on record.	We will ensure that any pupil with a SEND plan, or who requires reasonable adjustments, will be considered within the planning of the proposal. We will work closely with

disabled pupil may be able to access education. Ensure that any pupil with SEND plan, receives support and necessary adjustments. No impact as the pupils on roll do not have a disability or mobility issues.

class teachers and families to ensure any needs are met.

In terms of staff implications, once the option is finalised we will revisit this EIA to determine possible impact on staff. At that point we will ensure that HR policies and processes are followed to ensure fair treatment for all staff and implement any reasonable adjustments if and when required.

**Protected Characteristic: Gender reassignment**

What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?

Explain your conclusion considering relevant evidence and consultation

What further action or mitigation is required?

No potential impact

**Protected Characteristic: Marriage and civil partnership ('eliminate discrimination' employment only)**

What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?

Explain your conclusion considering relevant evidence and consultation

What further action or mitigation is required?

No impact

**Protected Characteristic: Pregnancy and maternity**

What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?

Explain your conclusion considering relevant evidence and consultation

What further action or mitigation is required?

No potential impact. However, we will ensure that this is monitored to ensure



that any affected staff are considered fairly in the proposed options.		
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**Protected Characteristic: Race**

What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?	Explain your conclusion considering relevant evidence and consultation	What further action or mitigation is required?
No potential impact in terms of pupils or staff.  We will ensure that the EIA is updated to include monitoring data of pupils and staff.		Update EIA to include monitoring data of pupils and staff.

**Protected Characteristic: Religion or belief**

What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?	Explain your conclusion considering relevant evidence and consultation	What further action or mitigation is required?
There may be a potential negative impact in terms of families, who do not wish for their child to attend a faith school.		Were necessary we will provide, support and advice in relation to individual families, who do not wish their child to attend a faith school, to perhaps offer alternative solutions.

**Protected Characteristic: Sex**

What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?	Explain your conclusion considering relevant evidence and consultation	What further action or mitigation is required?
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The proposal is not expected to have a potential impact in terms of sex.

Once the option has agreed, we will update the EIA to include data in terms of staff, in terms of any future staffing requirements.

The EIA will be revisited and updated with relevant data, to ensure that any future staffing implications are fully considered. HR policies and processes will be followed to ensure fair treatment.

Protected Characteristic: **Sexual orientation**

What is the actual or potential impact on stakeholders?

Explain your conclusion considering relevant evidence and consultation

What further action or mitigation is required?

No potential impact

**Section Three: Conclusion and Review**

**Summary**

Please provide a brief summary of your findings; a summary of any positive and/or negative impacts across the protected characteristics, links to the involvement of different groups and/or public consultation, mitigations and conclusions made.

From the process of equalities impact assessment, it is evident that there would be minimal or no potential actual impact on protected groups of pupils, and staff.

Will this promote positive relationships between different communities? If so, how?

**Action Plan**

Action	Responsibility	Timescales for implementation	In which plan will the action appear?
As part of the consultation process ensure that we engage with all young people and families to understand the impact.			
Ensure this EIA is updated as the proposal develops			

Regular correspondence with pupils, and with parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of changes and able to support their children.			
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**Review and connected assessments**

Are there any additional or connected equality impact assessments that need to be undertaken? (If yes, provide details)	
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When will this assessment be reviewed?	As and when the proposal develops.
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Please also insert this date at the front of the template	
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**Sign Off**

Lead officer sign off:	Date:
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Equality representative sign off (where required):	Date:
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S Tracey, Equality Manager	09.12.24
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## Appendix 3: Planning Area 16: Newton Aycliffe

PLANNING AREA 16: NEWTON AYCLIFFE																			
SCHOOL	Type	Nursery	Capacity	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031	2031-2032	2032-2033	2033-2034	2034-2035	2035-2036	2036-2037	2037-2038	2038-2039
Stephenson Way Academy	P	Y	385	315	300	298	289	280	269	263	264	270	274	274	273	273	273	273	273
St. Joseph's RCVA Primary, Newton Aycliffe	P	Y	150	90	85	78	75	76	73	69	68	69	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
Aycliffe Village Primary	P		196	157	151	146	140	139	135	131	126	125	126	126	126	126	126	126	126
Byerley Park Primary	P		210	204	200	201	199	201	197	196	193	195	202	203	203	203	203	203	203
Horndale Infant	I	Y	216	54	61	61	62	62	64	64	63	63	63	63	63	63	63	63	63
St Francis Junior School	J		164	111	94	91	82	76	80	79	82	82	84	84	84	84	84	84	84
Vane Road Primary	P		420	410	412	406	404	396	390	389	384	380	383	385	389	389	389	389	389
Sugar Hill Primary	P	Y	420	412	408	401	397	391	388	385	381	378	380	385	389	389	389	389	389
St. Mary's RCVA Primary, Newton Aycliffe	P		210	179	171	171	179	177	176	177	175	177	178	178	179	179	179	179	179
Woodham Burn Primary	P		330	241	228	215	215	209	208	207	192	194	196	196	196	196	196	196	196
<b>PA total</b>			<b>2701</b>	<b>2173</b>	<b>2110</b>	<b>2068</b>	<b>2042</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1960</b>	<b>1928</b>	<b>1933</b>	<b>1956</b>	<b>1964</b>	<b>1972</b>	<b>1972</b>	<b>1972</b>	<b>1972</b>	<b>1972</b>