



## **Synergy Schools Federation**

# ***Consultation Document***

**Proposals by the Synergy Schools Federated Governing Board –**

- 1. To Amalgamate Leeming and Londonderry Community Primary School and Aiskew Leeming Bar Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School**
- 2. This would result in the technical closure of Leeming and Londonderry Community Primary School; and**
- 3. To create a single 4-11 primary school on both school sites through the enlargement of Aiskew Leeming Bar Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School, which would be renamed Leeming Church of England Primary School**



# **Leeming and Londonderry and Aiskew Leeming Bar Schools Synergy Schools Federation**

**September 2025**

## **Proposal by the Synergy Schools Federated Governing Board to amalgamate Leeming and Londonderry Community Primary School and Aiskew Leeming Bar Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School from 13 April 2026**

Leeming and Londonderry Community Primary School and Aiskew Leeming Bar Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School work together in the Synergy Schools Federation under the governance of a single federated governing board and this arrangement has ensured that good practice in both schools is shared. The federated governing board have agreed that amalgamating the two schools to create one school across two sites is the next logical step to take and have asked North Yorkshire Council to consult on the proposal.

Synergy Schools federated governing board and North Yorkshire Council have agreed to consult stakeholders on a proposal to create a single primary school serving children aged 4 to 11 and with a governor-led nursery for 2-4-year-olds. This amalgamated school would be created by the enlargement of Aiskew Leeming Bar Church of England (VC) Primary School and the associated technical closure of Leeming and Londonderry Community Primary School. It is proposed that the two schools will amalgamate from 13 April 2026.

The single newly named Leeming Church of England Primary School would continue to work across both school sites.

Please take time to look at the proposals, and then send us your views by the closing date on 7 November 2025. We look forward to hearing from you.

There will be a public meeting on:

**Wednesday 15 October 2025 at 6pm**

At Aiskew Leeming Bar Primary School, 2 Leeming Lane, Leeming Bar, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 9AU

## Background

The villages of Leeming and Londonderry, Aiskew, and Leeming Bar and the areas directly around them are served by two separate small primary schools. .

Aiskew, Leeming Bar Church of England Primary and Leeming and Londonderry Community Primary Schools are part of the Synergy Schools Federation, which is a federation of six primary schools within North Yorkshire. The federation is governed by a single federated governing board and leadership is provided by an executive headteacher. The schools, which have adjacent catchment areas serving the Leeming area, south of Bedale, joined the federation in 2024 and 2021 respectively. Both schools have low numbers of pupils on roll. Aiskew Leeming Bar has a net capacity of 103 places, with 47 pupils on roll in the May 2025 census, while Leeming and Londonderry has a net capacity of 56 places, with 24 pupils on roll in the May 2025 pupil census. Both operate similar two class structures that involve Reception and Key Stage 1 cohorts being educated in one class, and Key Stage 2 children in other classes.

Following the incorporation of Aiskew, Leeming Bar Church of England Primary School into the Synergy Federation work has been undertaken to improve the quality of the education provision within both schools and the federated governing board have undertaken consideration of alternative models for the organisation of the schools to allow for further improvement in learning.

**The federated governing board would like to confirm that their aim is for the proposals to result in only a minimal impact upon the way in which pupils are taught in the school, and that they will work closely with pupils and parents to implement them.**

## Summary of the options considered

The federated governing board have considered the following options for the future organisation of Aiskew, Leeming Bar Church of England (VC) Primary School and Leeming and Londonderry Primary School: -

- Continue as two separate 4-11 primary schools with pupils receiving their education at the school at which they are registered
- Establishing one primary school at one of the existing school sites, eg close Leeming and Londonderry Community Primary School.
- Establishing one primary school to operate from both existing sites

The federated governing board reviewed each of the options and considered a range of criteria, including the potential impact upon teaching and learning, management and financial implications prior to reaching a conclusion about its preferred option.

The table below provides a summary of the options, the issues involved and of the federated governing board's conclusion:

Description	Why was the option Discounted or Recommended?	Result
<b>1. Continue as two separate primary schools.</b>	<p>This option would involve all year groups, from Reception to Year 6, in both schools.</p> <p>An advantage of this option is that no parents are unsettled. However, pupils are taught in whole key stage classes, with multiple year groups in one class and learning with similar aged peers is not improved. Curriculum is more limited than in classes with smaller age-ranges.</p> <p>The federated governing board did not consider that there are sufficient pupils on roll at either school for this to be a viable option, and it was agreed that this would have the potential to have a negative impact upon the quality of the schools' educational provision.</p>	Discounted
<b>2. Become one primary school on one of the sites.</b>	<p>This second option would involve the closure of one school</p> <p>Teaching all pupils in one building with larger peer groups would enable peer group teaching and selection of the site at Aiskew would give pupils better access to outside space. However, the federation board considered that there would not be adequate space on either site for the age range, which would now include nursery aged children.</p> <p>The option would also result in a significant reduction in the revenue received compared to that currently received by the federation which the governing board considered would have a detrimental impact. It would mean that a proposed new structure of four classes would not be affordable.</p>	Discounted.
<b>3. Become one school across two sites.</b>	<p>This option involves amalgamating into a 4 –11 primary school, with a governor led nursery, across the two existing sites, with the technical closure of one school and the expansion onto an additional site of the other school.</p> <p>The federated governing board noted a joint catchment area could be served and that this option would gain split site funding which would result in a smaller reduction in revenue received compared to that lost in option 2. This would mean that the new class structure of four classes could be afforded. With only two-year groups in each class, the school could support a reduced number of year groups and a larger cohort size in each class.</p> <p>With the two sites there would be space to extend provision and run a pre-school.</p>	The federated governing board requested that the Council consider a number of linked proposals arising from their conclusion and, if approved, to undertake the required statutory process to enable them to be implemented.

## **The Federated Governing Board's Proposal**

After careful consideration of all the options, the federated governing board requested that the Council consult on their proposals.

The federated governing board have proposed the following: -

- That Aiskew Leeming Bar Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School and Leeming and Londonderry Community Primary School amalgamate with effect from 13 April 2026
- That this would be achieved through the technical closure of Leeming and Londonderry Community Primary School and the expansion of Aiskew Leeming Bar Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School onto an additional site (the Leeming and Londonderry School site)
- That the school would have a single catchment area, comprising an amalgamation of the existing two schools' current catchment areas
- To establish a Published Admissions Number (PAN) of 15
- To establish a governor-led nursery for 2-4-year-old children.
- That, subject to a governing body process, the Aiskew Leeming Bar Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School would be called Leeming Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School.

The federated governing board have confirmed the intention that Leeming Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School will remain within the Synergy Federation.

Should the proposal be implemented, these changes would take effect from 13 April 2026.

## **The Proposed Technical Closure of Leeming and Londonderry Community Primary School**

Leeming and Londonderry Community Primary School is a rural school. The DfE's guidance (Opening and closing maintained schools. Statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers, October 2024) notes that decision makers are expected to adopt a presumption against the closure of rural schools. However, the guidance confirms that this does not mean that a rural school will never close but that the case for closure should be strong and clearly in the best interests of educational provision in the area.

The school has a capacity for 56 places, with 24 pupils on roll in the May 2025 pupil census.

As noted above, the federated governing board's proposal regarding the closure of Leeming and Londonderry Community Primary School forms part of a series of linked proposals which includes retaining the site for an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and a proposal for the school's catchment area to be combined with the catchment area of Aiskew Leeming Bar Church of England (VC) Primary School. This decision was taken because of the low numbers on the school roll, a desire to provide sustainable classes of similar aged children, and because of issues associated with the transportation of pupils between the respective school sites. The federated governing board considered that the decision was necessary to ensure the continued provision of high-quality education within the federation.

There are 8 other primary schools within the Outer Bedale school place planning area. The table below shows that there is a general surplus of places across the locality.

<b>DfE No.</b>	<b>Outer Bedale Primary School</b>	<b>Net Capacity</b>	<b>NOR 2025 - May</b>	<b>Position 2026/27</b>	<b>-/+ capacity (May 2025)</b>
3001	Aiskew, Leeming Bar CE	103	47	49	56
3337	Burneston CE VA	133	117	137	16
3020	Crakehall CE	106	113	118	-7
2063	Hunton and Arrathorne CP	70	86	90	-16
2040	Leeming and Londonderry CP	56	24	26	32
2166	Leeming RAF CP	280	156	143	124
2133	Snape CP	52	30	25	22
3124	St Nicholas CE, West Tanfield	70	44	47	26
3119	Thornton Watlass CE	51	21	12	30
		<b>921</b>	<b>638</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>283</b>

The council will engage with the parents of all pupils who are registered on Leeming and Londonderry's roll and there is no intention to cease to use the school site under this amalgamation proposal.

### **Why are they proposing change now?**

The governing board believe that the proposed change will combine larger sustainable classes of similar-aged pupils, as described in Option 3 above. They believe the proposed change will build on the work of the Synergy Schools Federation already in place, address low numbers, and that learning can be even better if the classes in each school supports a reduced number of year groups and a larger cohort size.

### **Learning and progress in the primary school's two sites**

The federated governing board has confirmed that pupils would be in class groups with their peers. The proposal has the benefit of greater numbers of children being together in similar age groups and curriculum groups.

Under the proposed new structure, all children would be registered at Leeming Church of England (VC) Primary School, but the governor led nursery and Reception children would initially be taught in the EYFS classes at the current Leeming and Londonderry site. Another 3 classes, consisting of Year 1 & 2 children in one class, Years 3 & 4 in another, and Y5 & 6 children in another, would be taught at the current Aiskew Leeming Bar site. The single primary school would continue to be funded and supported by the local authority with staff employed by the local authority.

Pupils who transfer between the two sites will be supported through a managed transition process.

Under the amalgamation proposal there would also be the flexibility to change the age of transfer between the two sites at the beginning of an academic year, should pupil numbers dictate. However, all pupils will be supported at the point that they are required to transition between the two sites.

Currently each school has a separate Ofsted inspection, but the single school would have a single Ofsted inspection.

An important part of the proposal is that the single primary school would remain part of Synergy Schools, under a single federated governing board and would continue to be led by an executive headteacher. Admissions to the school would continue to be managed by the

local authority in accordance with its admission policy for community and voluntary controlled schools.

### **Admissions Catchment Area**

Under the proposal, the single primary school would serve the two catchment areas currently separately served by each primary school. For this reason, the catchment areas would be merged, with each extended to include the other. These arrangements would be implemented from April 2026 only in the event of the amalgamation restructure and we are consulting on this aspect of the proposal.

### **Home to School Travel**

Eligibility for assistance with home to school travel will be determined in accordance with North Yorkshire Council's Home to School Travel Policy.

All existing pupils who have eligibility for assistance will retain their eligibility subject to there being no change in their individual circumstances.

### **Religious Designation**

Aiskew, Leeming Bar Church of England Primary School would be the continuing school. As a result, the amalgamated school would retain its existing Church of England denominational status and would be a Voluntary Controlled school with a Church of England designation.

The federated governing board have undertaken informal consultation with the Diocese of Leeds during their consideration of the options, and the Diocese will be consulted as part of this consultation.

### **Pupil Numbers and the Planned Admission Number**

The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places available locally to meet the requirements of pupils locally. Utilising projected pupil numbers in 2025/6, including pupils from new open market housing, Aiskew Leeming Bar Church of England Primary School is forecast to have a pupil roll of 47 while Leeming and Londonderry Community Primary School is forecast a pupil roll of approximately 24 pupils. The schools have net capacities of 103 and 56 respectively and 77 and 29 pupils currently living within their respective catchments.

The Published Admission Number (PAN) is the number of school places that the admission authority must offer in each relevant age group of a school. The relevant age group is the age group at which pupils are normally admitted to the school e.g. Reception for a primary school.

Currently, the PAN of Aiskew Leeming Bar is 14 and the PAN of Leeming and Londonderry is 8. It is proposed to that the PAN of the amalgamated school will be 15. This variation is to accommodate combining two Reception intakes, planning for class size 30 legislation in the combined years 1 and 2 class, and takes account of future pupil projections. However, we are consulting on this aspect of the proposal and ask for your view in the response form.



## **Finance**

### Capital Position

Capital investment is not included within the proposal.

### Revenue Position

School budgets are funded largely by pupil numbers so amalgamating the schools would not lead to an increase in revenue funding. The combined revenue funding would be smaller because the lump-sum would cease for Leeming and Londonderry Community Primary School following amalgamation, although transitional funding will be provided during the initial period of the amalgamation. Transitional funding protection arrangements allow for both lump-sums to be retained from the point of amalgamation for the remainder of the financial year that amalgamation takes place and provide 85% of the two lump-sums received in the next financial year.

Based on the amalgamation taking effect on 13 April 2026 (ie the start of 2026/27 financial year), and other things being equal, the Governing Board has determined the optimum funding position, based on best estimates of pupil revenue funding for each financial year, the retention of lump sums for that financial year, the amalgamated school retaining 85% of their lump sums for the financial year 2027/28, and split site funding being subsequently available.

## **Staff**

A separate consultation process, including a staff meeting, is running in parallel with this consultation.

## **Who are we consulting?**

Copies of this consultation document have been sent to all parents of pupils and to staff at the two schools. It has also been distributed to neighbouring schools, councillors, parish councils, professional associations and the local MP.

Your views are important and your response to the consultation will be published on North Yorkshire Council's website to inform the decision-making process. Your personal details, and those of others you may refer to, will not be published.

## **What happens next?**

If the decision is taken to consult further, then statutory notices would be published in the local press. These notices, alongside the required statutory proposals, would provide four weeks for further representations to be made. A final decision would then be taken by North Yorkshire Council's Executive and, if agreed, the proposal would be implemented from Monday 13 April 2026.



## Anticipated key dates

All dates are subject to approvals at each stage.

All dates are subject to approvals at each	22 Sept 2025
Public meeting at Aiskew Leeming Bar Primary School	15 Oct 2025 at 6pm
Consultation closes	7 Nov 2025
North Yorkshire Council's Executive considers consultation responses	16 Dec 2025
Statutory Notices published (4 weeks for representations to be made)	12 January – 6 February 2026
Final decision by North Yorkshire Council's Executive	17 March 2026
Proposed implementation date	Monday 13 April 2026

## How to respond

Your views about this proposal are welcomed. You can either complete and return the attached response sheet or submit an online response.

Paper responses should be returned to North Yorkshire Council at the address below:

FREEPOST RTKE-RKAY-CUJS  
Leeming Schools Strategic Planning  
North Yorkshire Council  
County Hall  
NORTHALLERTON  
DL7 8AE

Online responses may be submitted by following this link:

[Leeming schools consultation survey](#)

## The closing date for responses is 5pm on 7 November 2025

All responses to the consultation received by this date will be considered by the Council's Executive on 16 December 2025.

Responses to the consultation will be published on the Council's website. Your personal details, and those of others you may refer to, will not be published.

# **Leeming and Londonderry and Aiskew Leeming Bar Synergy Schools Federation.**

This is a consultation on proposals to amalgamate Leeming and Londonderry Community Primary School and Aiskew Leeming Bar Church of England (VC) Primary School from 13 April 2026.

We are collecting this information for the purpose of gathering views on the proposal. (Your personal data will not be published or passed to any other organisation unless a legal obligation compels us to do so. Reading our Privacy Notice will help you understand how and why we process your personal data. [www.northyorks.gov.uk/privacy-notices](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/privacy-notices) )

Do you have any comments about the proposal?

(Please do not disclose any personal information in your answer)

Do you have any comments about the proposal to merge the two admissions catchment areas?

(Please do not disclose any personal information in your answer)

Do you have any comments about the increase in PAN (Published Admission Number) to 15?

What is your interest/status? (Parent / Governor / Teacher / Community / Other)	
Please state	

Name of school: (if applicable)	
------------------------------------	--

To confirm your proximity to school and to prevent duplicate responses we are asking you to provide your name and address. This information will be removed from any analysis or reports.	
Name:	
Address:	
Postcode:	

To help us assess whether we have provided clear information, please let us know whether you found this consultation easy to understand? <b>Yes / No</b>

Please send this response sheet to the following "FREEPOST" address. You <u>do not</u> need to use a postage stamp.
FREEPOST RTKE-RKAY-CUJS Leeming Schools Strategic Planning North Yorkshire Council County Hall NORTHALLERTON DL7 8AE
Or to submit your response online go to:  <a href="#">Leeming schools consultation survey</a>
To be received by no later than <b>5pm on 7 November 2025</b>