

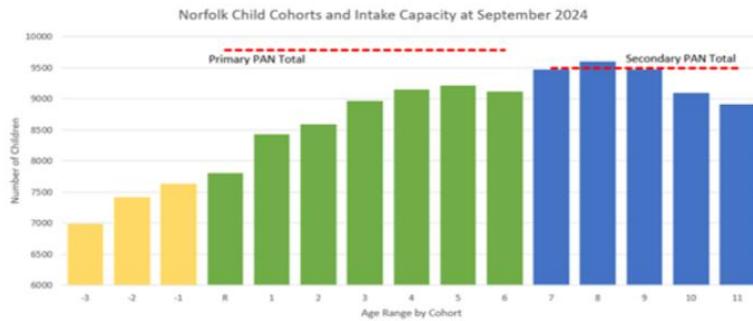
## Consultation on a proposal to amalgamate Corpusty Primary School with Gresham Village School and Nursery or Reepham Primary and Nursery School

We, Synergy Multi-Academy Trust, are looking for your views, as members of the School Community, on the proposal discussed in this document.

### A. Context

1. The number of children in Norfolk is rapidly reducing. This poses significant challenges for schools, as funding for schools is based upon the number of children they have in school on Census dates.

### Norfolk school age population change



- Current PAN total 10K, cohorts will fall below 7000
- School of all sizes and types need to plan for smaller intakes
- The potential to attract children from out of area reduces and becomes less predictable
- The School Sufficiency Plan provides the detail on areas of greatest decline

Some change to the landscape of schools is inevitable and the LA is seeking to manage this change in such a way that it delivers best overall outcomes for children in their communities.



(Slide from NCC)

2. The number of children attending Corpusty Primary School has reduced significantly, due to a reduction in the number children in catchment. The chart below shows in the total column the reduction in the number of pupils attending Corpusty Primary School each year, from 2011 to 2025. At present there are 31 children on roll at the School.

### Numbers on Roll

Year	Yr R	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6	Total
2011/12	13	16	15	11	16	12	16	99
2012/13	14	13	16	16	11	16	12	99
2013/14	15	15	14	13	14	12	16	99
2014/15	14	16	16	14	13	17	13	103
2015/16	15	14	15	15	13	14	17	103
2016/17	7	17	16	15	17	13	15	100
2017/18	9	7	17	15	11	15	12	86
2018/19	14	7	6	15	15	9	11	77
2019/20	5	13	7	6	12	12	6	61
2020/21	8	5	10	4	6	10	11	54
2021/22	3	5	2	5	4	3	8	30
2022/23	3	3	4	2	5	3	5	25
2023/24	5	4	3	4	3	5	3	22
2024/25	9	5	4	3	3	4	5	33

3. The number of children likely to attend Corpusty Primary School in the future continues to decrease.

The chart below shows the projected continuation in the decline in pupils living in Corpusty Primary School catchment area.

For example, in 2025 / 2026 we can see that there are 41 children living in catchment. This number includes children who are Educated at Home, attend Private Schools or attend Specialist SEND Schools. The number of children actually attending the School is 31 in 2025/2026.

### Catchment data

Year	New houses	0	1	2	3	Yr R	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6	Yr 7	Yr 8	Yr 9	Yr 10	Yr 11	Total
2025/26	0	3	1	6	5	5	7	5	4	8	7	5	7	3	6	10	8	41
2026/27	18	0	3	1	6	5	5	7	5	4	8	7	5	7	3	6	10	41
2027/28	20	0	0	4	2	7	6	6	8	6	5	9	8	5	7	3	6	47
2028/29	0	0	0	0	4	2	7	6	6	8	6	5	9	8	6	8	4	40
2029/30	0	0	0	0	0	5	3	7	6	6	8	6	5	9	8	6	8	41
2030/31	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	3	8	7	7	9	7	5	9	8	6	44
2031/32	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	5	3	8	7	7	9	7	5	9	8	40
2032/33	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	5	5	3	8	7	7	9	7	5	9	38
2033/34	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	5	5	5	3	8	7	7	9	7	5	36
2034/35	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	8	7	7	9	7	33
2035/36	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	8	7	7	9	35

4. There is currently a two class structure at Corpusty Primary School with children in years Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 taught together and another class with children in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 together. There is an Executive Headteacher and Executive Deputy Headteacher, who both also work across other schools.
5. The number of children attending Corpusty Primary School is projected to continue to fall. Using the catchment data compared with actual numbers on roll data, the number of pupils attending Corpusty is going to continue to decline.

**Current and projected NOR per year group (October 2025)**

Year Group:	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
<b>2025-2026</b>	3	9	5	5	4	2	3	31
<b>Predicted</b>								
<b>2026-2027</b>	4	3	9	5	5	4	2	32
<b>2027-2028</b>	3	4	3	9	5	5	4	33
<b>2028-2029</b>	2	3	4	3	9	5	5	31
<b>2029-2030</b>	2	2	3	4	3	9	5	28
<b>2030-2031</b>	2	2	2	3	4	3	9	25
<b>2031-2032</b>	2	2	2	2	3	4	3	18
<b>2032-2033</b>	2	2	2	2	2	3	4	17

6. Additional homes in North Norfolk generate additional children at a rate of approximately 4-6 children for every 100 homes, over a period of five years from building completion, meaning that the development proposed in the catchment area will not have a significant impact on the number of children attending Corpusty Primary School
7. There are a number of key factors that we have to consider when reviewing the sustainability and effectiveness of small schools. These may not all apply to Corpusty Primary but have been considered as part of this proposal.
  - **Educational Isolation:** Small schools in remote areas often face limited access to high-quality teaching staff, professional development and cultural opportunities. This can restrict children's exposure to diverse experiences and reduce the school's capacity for improvement.
  - **Staffing Challenges:** With minimal staff and numbers of children, children may be taught in mixed-age groups, which can affect curriculum delivery and specialist support.
  - **Community Strengths:** These schools often serve tight-knit communities, fostering strong relationships and a sense of belonging. Children may benefit from more individual attention and a nurturing environment.
  - **Limited Extracurricular and Cultural Exposure:** Due to geographic and financial constraints, pupils may have fewer opportunities for enrichment activities, trips, or engagement with broader cultural experiences.
  - **Recruitment and Retention Issues:** Teacher shortages and infrastructural challenges (e.g. transport, housing) make it difficult to attract and retain staff, which can affect consistency and quality of education.
  - **Academic Enrichment:** Having a smaller number of staff means there are fewer specialist staff to teach specialist subjects, which can make academic excellence more challenging. This, alongside a smaller number of pupils, can also reduce access to extracurricular activities which support academic enrichment.
  - **Mixed-age teaching:** common in very small schools, can complicate curriculum delivery and assessment.
  - **Attainment:** School size accounts for approximately 10-15 percent of the variability in pupil attainment.

8. The low numbers of children attending Corpusty Primary School mean that it is financially unviable in its present structure. Pupil numbers are not expected to increase. Whereas the School has been able to remain open in recent years through reducing its number of classes and through sharing a senior leadership team in its federation, further cost cutting measures are considered unviable. Reducing staff further would, we believe, significantly negatively impact the School's ability to provide a good standard of education.

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
<b>Income</b>	<b>442,349</b>	<b>416,684</b>	<b>410,869</b>
<b>Expenditure if no action was taken</b>	<b>518,485</b>	<b>520,466</b>	<b>531,811</b>
<b>Deficit (in year, each year, if no action was taken)</b>	<b>76,136</b>	<b>103,782</b>	<b>120,942</b>
<b>Deficit % of income (In year)</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>29%</b>

Within the years 2025 to 2028 the cumulative deficit will be £300,860.00

#### B. What is the proposal?

We are seeking views on the following proposals, namely that Corpusty Primary School amalgamates with either Gresham Village School and Nursery or Reepham Primary and Nursery School.

<b>Option 1 Amalgamation with Gresham Village School and Nursery</b>	<b>Option 2 Amalgamation with Reepham Primary and Nursery School</b>
The Corpusty Primary School site closes from 1 <sup>st</sup> September 2026, with a view to developing the site and opening it in approx. 12 months' time, to provide a bespoke curriculum for children with Special Educational Needs.	The Corpusty Primary School site closes from 1 <sup>st</sup> September 2026, with a view to developing the site and opening it in approx. 12 months' time, to provide a bespoke curriculum for children with Special Educational Needs.
Children who attend Corpusty Primary from out of Corpusty Primary School catchment areas attend their catchment school. (13 children)	Children who attend Corpusty Primary from out of Corpusty Primary School catchment areas attend their catchment school. (13 children)
<b>Children who live in Corpusty Primary School catchment area and attend Corpusty Primary School attend Gresham Village School and Nursery (18 children)</b>	<b>Children who live in Corpusty Primary School catchment area and attend Corpusty Primary School attend Reepham Primary and Nursery School (18 children)</b>
Children who live in Corpusty Primary School catchment area and attend Corpusty Primary School receive free transport to Gresham Village School and Nursery for the remainder of their primary school years.	Children who live in Corpusty Primary School catchment area and attend Corpusty Primary School receive free transport to Reepham Primary and Nursery School for the remainder of their primary school years.
	Reepham Primary and Nursery School classrooms are developed to include a Nurture Provision "The Nest"
<b>Note:</b> Parents / Carers will need to apply to admissions to move schools. This cannot be done automatically as part of this consultation process. We will support all parents with this process when required.	

To ensure parents and carers are fully informed, both Gresham Village School and Nursery and Reepham Primary and Nursery School will be holding Open Mornings on the following times and dates. Please use the emails listed below to book a place.

Reepham Primary and Nursery School	9.30am - 11.00am	26 <sup>th</sup> January 2026
	<a href="mailto:office@reephamprimary.org.uk">office@reephamprimary.org.uk</a>	
	Parking available on the roadside	
Gresham Village School and Nursery	9.00am - 11.00am	3 <sup>rd</sup> February 2026
	<a href="mailto:office@greshamvillage.org.uk">office@greshamvillage.org.uk</a>	
	Parking available in the car park 50m from school and roadside	

Following the feedback received and the decisions taken, parents and carers will be informed of the outcome and a thorough transition process will be implemented for the children. This will include additional activities for children with Special Educational Needs and / or disabilities.

### **C. Consultation Process**

**This consultation is being shared with you to seek your views regarding option 1 and option 2 as detailed above.**

The public consultation will open on 13 January 2026 and close at 4.00pm on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2026. Written representations must be received by this date to be taken into consideration.

#### **Public meetings**

Public meetings will take place to provide those in attendance with the opportunity to hear about the proposal, ask questions about the proposal and express their views about the proposal. Notes will be taken of questions and views expressed during the meetings and these will be fed into the decision making process. In attendance will be senior representatives from Synergy Multi Academy Trust and Senior Leaders from Corpusty Primary School.

Public meetings will take place at the following times at school. Admittance is only allowed if a place has been booked in advance. There will be NO ADMITTANCE without a prior booking.

The purpose of these meetings is to enable attendees to ask questions regarding the process.

Meeting 1:	9.00am – 10.00am	Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> January 2026
Meeting 2:	9.00am – 10.00am	Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2026
Meeting 3:	9.00am – 10.00am	Friday 30 <sup>th</sup> January 2026
Meeting 4:	9.00am – 10.00am	Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2026

Bookings can only be made by emailing the school office: [office@corpustyprimary.org.uk](mailto:office@corpustyprimary.org.uk) and must include the names of all attendees.

Following this, you will be sent an email confirmation.

Please be prepared to show this confirmation on arrival, as numbers are limited in each meeting. Without this confirmation attendance may not be permitted.

#### **D. Responding to the consultation**

1. In addition to the notes made in the public meetings, written responses using the form at the end of this document will be offered during the process, these should be submitted:
  - By email to: [CEO@synergymat.co.uk](mailto:CEO@synergymat.co.uk)
  - Or through the online survey:

[Consultation regarding the amalgamation of Corpusty Primary School – Fill in form](#)

- Hard copies of the form can be dropped off at the school office at Corpusty Primary School

The deadline for responses is 4.00pm on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2026. No responses will be accepted after this time.

#### **2. Consultation report**

At the end of the consultation period, the CEO of Synergy Multi Academy Trust will produce a consultation report including all responses, which will be considered by the Trust Board. If the Trust Board decide to proceed with the proposed amalgamation following consultation, a business case will be written and submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) Regional Director for them to consider, in line with the required process.

#### **E. Implementation date**

- The proposal to amalgamate the schools, if accepted, would be implemented from September 2026.
- Following this date, the site will be made secure and an additional business case will be written and presented to the DfE to enable the Corpusty site to be prepared and opened to provide bespoke curriculum opportunities for children from the local area who have high levels of Special Educational Needs.

#### **F. Why are these changes being proposed?**

The proposed changes are driven by:

1. A significant reduction in the number of pupils attending Corpusty Primary School.
2. Only 31 children currently attending Corpusty Primary School.
3. Only three pupils started in Reception in September 2025 at Corpusty Primary School with potentially four starting in September 2026.
4. All the pupils who currently attend Corpusty Primary School could be accommodated by Gresham Village School and Nursery
5. All the pupils who currently attend Corpusty Primary School from within Corpusty Catchment area could be accommodated by Reepham Primary and Nursery School.
6. Forecasts indicate that there will be no increase in pupil numbers over the next five years.
7. The low number of pupils at Corpusty Primary School makes providing opportunities for these children very difficult. E.g. Sports Teams
8. Due to very low numbers on roll, a forecast cumulative deficit of £300,860 is projected by August 2028.
9. Children at Corpusty are educated in a two-class structure, which given the number of pupils should be a one class structure. This is not suitable for all children.

## **G. Educational benefits**

- a. There are currently two classes in Corpusty Primary School with three/four year groups in each class; this causes difficulty in appropriate curriculum sequencing and providing appropriate levels of challenge for all children, and is also extremely challenging for a teacher. All pupils in catchment at Corpusty Primary School could join the existing classes at Gresham Village School and Nursery. All pupils who attend Corpusty Primary School and live in Corpusty catchment area could fit into Reepham Primary and Nursery School, alleviating these concerns.
- b. Reepham Primary and Nursery School has its own SENDCo, who leads that provision across the School. The SENDCo at Gresham Village School and Nursery is based there two days a week and also works another two days per week across Antingham & Southrepps, Corpusty and Foulsham Primary Schools. By bringing the schools together onto one site (either site) the SENDCo will be able to provide a greater level of support to all pupils and their families, as they will have more visible and regular access to them.
- c. Amalgamating the schools should enable all pupils to benefit from more effective teaching and learning, greater opportunities for pupils to learn with peers of their own age and more targeted, age-related teaching. The social and educational benefits of being part of a larger cohort of are also very significant.
- d. Corpusty Primary School was last inspected under the previous Ofsted framework in June 2022, where it achieved a Good grade in all areas. Changes to the Ofsted framework in September 2025 have raised the threshold to achieving a Good grade, which is particularly demanding for small schools. A report by TES (Feb 2023) found that post pandemic only 56% of schools with under 120 pupils achieved a Good grade by Ofsted carrying out a routine Section 5 inspection). Corpusty Primary School was one of these schools.

## **H. Staff**

- a. A single amalgamated school will allow for all pupils to be taught by permanent members of staff.
- b. Historically, the recruitment of teachers for positions where they are expected to teach across three/four year groups within a single class has proved difficult relative to single and two year group classes.
- c. If, following consultation, the proposal is approved then the Trust will engage with members of staff to explore the options and opportunities for them moving forward. This process may result in a redundancy situation but we are confident that many at risk of redundancy could be redeployed within the local area to fill existing vacancies within Trust schools situated within a 15-mile radius of Corpusty Primary School.

## **I. Pupils**

- a. If, after consultation, the proposal goes ahead then a Pupil Placement exercise will be undertaken by the Local Authority for parents of Corpusty Primary School pupils to express a preference for a school place.
- b. All current Corpusty Primary School children who reside within a Synergy Trust school catchment area will be guaranteed a place within a Synergy Trust School. Please use the response below to provide your preferences.
- c. All pupils who attend Corpusty Primary School who live outside Corpusty Primary School catchment and in Synergy Trust Schools catchment will be given priority in their applications. This includes

Gresham Village School and Nursery / Reepham Primary and Nursery School – whichever school Corpusty is not amalgamated with and Antingham & Southrepps Primary School and Astley Primary School.

d. Should the proposal go ahead, any parents who have stated a preference for Corpusty Primary School for Reception in 2026 will be contacted by the Local Authority.

**J. Viability**

- a. The annual funding received by Corpusty Primary School is insufficient to cover minimum budgeted costs. The School does not have any reserves and the actual annual expenditure exceeds the income received.
- b. As expenditure is minimal, and Corpusty is in budget deficit, additional investment opportunities are limited, including capital and infrastructure work required to create a modern teaching environment.
- c. Opportunities to share resources with other schools already exist but are no longer sufficient with a falling pupil roll, as funding is based on the number of pupils within a school.
- d. Due to the low roll and increasing costs across the sector, the 3yr budget forecast for Corpusty Primary School is between 2025 and 2028 is a cumulative deficit position of £300,860.00.
- e. In a small school it is harder to absorb in year overspends, as they represent a greater proportion of total income. An amalgamation would provide opportunities for reducing duplicated expenditure incurred maintaining two sites.
- f. Corpusty Primary School receives approximately £45,000 of additional High Needs SEND funding from Norfolk County Council. This funding would continue and be paid to the school Corpusty Primary School amalgamates with, to continue to support those pupils.
- g. The amalgamation will not leave the site unused. The amalgamation will provide the opportunity to use the site for a specialist provision for pupils with special educational needs.

**K. What alternatives options have been considered?**

The Trust has considered other options available in this situation. Alternatives that have been considered or undertaken are listed below:

Federation with another school	A soft federation model is already in place with an Executive Headteacher and Executive Deputy Headteacher already in place across Corpusty and two other schools, to spread costs.
Academisation into a Trust	Already in place
Amalgamation with another school	Preferred option
Closure	Dismissed
No change	This is not a viable option due to the low roll

The Trust has carefully considered the options available to it and believes that the amalgamation of two schools is in the best interests of educational provision in the area.

The Department for Education rural schools' presumption lists six areas that must be considered in deciding to close a rural school:

- 1) Alternatives to closure including federation with another local school; conversion to academy status and joining a multi-academy trust;** These have already been undertaken.
- 2) Does the school provide local community services and facilities e.g., childcare facilities, family and adult learning, healthcare, community internet access etc;** Corpusty Primary School does not currently offer these services and limited physical capacity on the site would prevent this from being offered in the future.

**3) What are the transport implications i.e., the availability, and likely cost of transport to other schools and sustainability issues;** Based upon a post code analysis and in school data of pupils currently on roll at Corpusty Primary School, many pupils currently arrive by car due to the remote location of the School. There are some pupils who will be affected by a longer travel to school and the Trust will seek to work with these families on an individual basis.

**4) The size of the school and whether it puts the children at an educational disadvantage e.g., in terms of breadth of curriculum or resources available;** The low roll will make providing a good education harder to achieve and place pupils at an educational disadvantage compared to their peers at other schools.

**5) The overall and long-term impact on the local community of the closure of the village school and of the loss of the building as a community facility:** The strong ambition, pending DfE approval, is to continue to utilise the site for Special Educational Needs provision. Funding for such facilities is significantly different to mainstream school provision.

**6) Wider school organisation and capacity of good schools in the area to accommodate displaced pupils;** By amalgamating, all pupils within a Synergy School catchment area will be allocated a school place, negating any effect on wider school reorganisation. Synergy schools in the vicinity include: Reepham Primary & Nursery School, Gresham Village School and Nursery, Astley Primary School, Cromer Junior School, Fakenham Infant School and Nursery, Fakenham Junior School, Antingham & Southrepps Primary School, Mattishall Primary School, Litcham (Primary Phase), Foulsham Primary School and Bawdeswell Primary School.

#### **L. Who will be consulted?**

The list below records the stakeholders that must be consulted, as stated in DfE guidance. These will all receive the formal consultation paperwork.

1. Parents / Carers of pupils at Corpusty Primary School.
2. Staff at Corpusty Primary School.
3. Staff at Reepham Primary School and Gresham Village School.
4. Chairs of Governors at all Synergy Trust Schools.
5. All Synergy Trust School Heads
6. Local School Heads
7. CEOs of Trusts with Local Schools
8. Norfolk County Council and Childrens Services
9. Steff Aquarone (MP)
10. Unions: NAHT, NASUWT, ASCL, NAHT, NEU, Unison
11. Parish council

## Response form

Consultation on a proposal to amalgamate Corpusty Primary School with either:

Gresham Village School and Nursery

Or

Reepham Primary and Nursery School

And change the catchment area in line with the school with which the amalgamation takes place.

Please let us know what you think of our proposal.

1. How far do you agree or disagree with our proposal to amalgamate Corpusty Primary School with Gresham Village School and Nursery from 31<sup>st</sup> August 2026?

Please tick one box.

Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither agree or disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please give the main reasons for your answer:

2. How far do you agree or disagree with our proposal to amalgamate Corpusty Primary School with Reepham Primary and Nursery School from 31<sup>st</sup> August 2026?

Please tick one box.

Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither agree or disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please give the main reasons for your answer:

3. How far do you agree or disagree with our proposal to change the catchment area of Gresham Village School and Nursery to include the catchment of Corpusty Primary School, from 31st August 2026?

Please tick one box.

Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither agree or disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please give the main reasons for your answer:

4. How far do you agree or disagree with our proposal to change the catchment area of Reepham Primary and Nursery School to include the catchment of Corpusty Primary School, from 31st August 2026?

Please tick one box.

Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither agree or disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please give the main reasons for your answer:

Is there anything else that you would like to raise relevant to this consultation?

We would like to hear from many different people, as your views help us to decide whether we make these changes. We will process your personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations, which means that we will not give your personal data to any third parties. Your comments will be anonymous - your name or anything that could identify you will not be included in any report. However, we cannot guarantee that this information will be withheld if it is requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

Please tell us who you are. Eg: Parent / Carer, Member of Staff, School Governor.	
What is your postcode?	

You can tell us your views by returning your completed form by any of the following means:

- By email to: [ceo@synergymat.co.uk](mailto:ceo@synergymat.co.uk)
- Or through the online survey:

[Consultation regarding the amalgamation of Corpusty Primary School – Fill in form](#)

Hard copies of the form can be dropped off at the Corpusty Primary School office.

This consultation ends at 4.00pm on the 10<sup>th</sup> February 2026