

MATTERS TO BE SPECIFIED IN SECTION 15 PROPOSALS TO DISCONTINUE A SCHOOL

Extract of Schedule 4 to The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools)(England) Regulations 2007 (as amended):

Contact details

1. The name of the LA or governing body publishing the proposals, and a contact address, and the name of the schools it is proposed that should be discontinued.

Wirral Council, Town Hall, Brighton Street, Wallasey, Wirral, CH44 8ED
Park High School, Park Road South, Birkenhead, Wirral, CH43 4RJ
Rock Ferry High School, Ravenswood Avenue, Rock Ferry, CH42 4NY

Implementation

2. The date when it is planned that the proposals will be implemented, or, where the proposals are to be implemented in stages, information about each stage and the date on which each stage is planned to be implemented.

31st December 2010

Consultation

3. A statement to the effect that all applicable statutory requirements to consult in relation to the proposals were complied with.

All applicable statutory requirements to consult in relation to the proposals were complied with. Public consultations were held during February and March 2010, including a consultation meeting at Park High School on 9th March 2010 and at Rock Ferry High School on 11th March 2010. All statutory consultees were consulted in accordance with the relevant DCSF guidance and statutory requirements.

4. Evidence of the consultation before the proposals were published including:

- a) a list of persons and/or parties who were consulted;
- b) minutes of all public consultation meetings;
- c) the views of the persons consulted;and
- d) copies of all consultation documents and a statement of how these were made available.

See Appendices A and B

Objectives

5. The objectives of the proposal.

To discontinue Park High School and Rock Ferry High School in order to establish an Academy.

Standards and Diversity

6. A statement and supporting evidence indicating how the proposals will impact on the standards, diversity and quality of education in the area.

Park High School had 718 pupils on roll in January 2010 with 43% surplus places. Rock Ferry High School had 540 pupils on roll, with 56% surplus places. The last peak at the two schools was 1,163 pupils at Park in 2004, and 1,222 at Rock Ferry in 2002. There has been a long decline in numbers. This is largely the result of the falling population. Projections indicate that numbers on roll will continue to fall, and surplus places will remain high at both schools over the next five years.

Both schools are part of the Government's National Challenge scheme for schools where fewer than 30% of pupils achieve 5 or more A* to C GCSE's including English and Maths. Although both schools remain below the target in 2009, the GCSE results show a year on year improvement. In the last three years CVA scores show that pupils in both schools made at least the expected rate of progress, with pupils at Park High (2007, 2008) and Rock Ferry High (2008, 2009) making significantly more progress than similar pupils in other schools.

Ofsted reports of these schools are attached as Appendix C.

The University Academy of Birkenhead will be based on both school sites initially, moving to occupy the centrally located Park High site following a transitional period.

Small schools inevitably cost more to maintain than larger schools. Wirral policy says that schools become increasingly more difficult to maintain as they fall below 150 pupils in each year group. It follows that the maintenance of small schools, where this is not necessary, comes at the expense of all other children. In 2009-2010, expenditure per pupil at Park High School was £4,756 and at Rock Ferry High was £5,724 compared with the Wirral average of £4,274. Reducing the number of schools maintained by one saves money for the overall schools budget.

The saving is ring-fenced to the Wirral schools budget, which allows more funding to be spent on all Wirral's children and young people in order to raise standards across the borough.

Provision for 16-19 year olds

7. Where the school proposed to be discontinued provides sixth form education, how the proposals will impact on:

- a) the educational or training achievements;
- b) participation in education or training; and

- c) the range of educational or training opportunities,
for 16-19 year olds in the area.

Not applicable

Need for places

8. A statement and supporting evidence about the need for places in the area including whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils.

All pupils on roll at both predecessor schools are guaranteed a place at the proposed University Academy of Birkenhead. Applications for places at alternative schools will be considered under the terms of the Authority's admission policy procedures, which can be found in the information booklet for parents.

9. Where the school has a religious character, a statement about the impact of the proposed closure on the balance of denominational provision in the area and the impact on parental choice.

Not applicable

Current School Information

10. Information as to the numbers, age range, sex and special educational needs of pupils (distinguishing between boarding and day pupils) for whom provision is made at the school.

Park High School is a mixed sex non-selective secondary school providing 1250 places for day pupils aged 11 to 16.

Rock Ferry High School is a mixed sex non-selective secondary school providing 1,250 places for day pupils aged 11 to 16. A designated SEN unit providing 40 places for statemented pupils is incorporated within the school.

Displaced Pupils

11. Details of the schools or FE colleges which pupils at the school for whom provision is to be discontinued will be offered places, including:

- a) any interim arrangements;
- b) where the school included provision that is recognised by the LA as reserved for children with special educational needs, the alternative provision to be made for pupils in the school's reserved provision; and
- c) in the case of special schools, alternative provision made by LAs other than the authority which maintains the school.

All pupils on roll at the time of the schools' closure are guaranteed a place at the University Academy of Birkenhead. This is intended to be a mixed sex non-selective Academy school providing 750 places for day pupils aged

11 to 16, although in the early years it is recognised that the total number on roll will be higher. The Academy will occupy both existing sites on implementation.

The Sanderling Unit for 40 pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs occupies a Victorian House separate from, but within the grounds of, Rock Ferry High School. As such the facilities offered to the pupils are well below that to be desired for a 21st century school. In particular the unit is not fully accessible to the full range of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities as required by the authority's accessibility strategy.

The Sanderling Unit based at Rock Ferry High School will be replaced by 40 resourced places within the University Academy of Birkenhead. See 20 below.

Pupils may transfer to any local secondary school, subject to availability of places and the admission arrangements published in the Authority's information booklet for parents.

12. Details of any other measures proposed to be taken to increase the number of school or FE college places available in consequence of the proposed discontinuance.

No increase in school or college places is required as a result of these closures.

Impact on the Community

13. A statement and supporting evidence about the impact on the community and any measures proposed to mitigate any adverse impact.

All Wirral schools operate as part of a community of schools, and the Academy is expected to continue in that role. The Sponsors have indicated their commitment to maintaining and enhancing community participation in the Academy.

14. Details of extended services the school offered and what it is proposed for these services once the school has discontinued.

Park High School operates a Breakfast club, as well as various after school sports and other activities for pupils and the wider community including pre-school gymnastics, gifted and talented master classes, outreach and teacher training, boxercise, climbing, adult learning with accredited courses, links with sporting clubs, particular those in Birkenhead Park, and parenting clubs including ADHD workshops, Parenting Puzzle and Family Works.

Rock Ferry High School also offers out of school activities, including football, cricket, rugby and basketball, languages, performing arts and music technology, cookery and trampolining.

The Sponsors of the Academy have indicated their intention to continue and build on extended and out of school services for pupils, and the wider community. The Park site is also expected to house additional social and

health care services as part of an area hub.

Travel

15. Details of the length and journeys to alternative provision.

Pupils currently attending Park High School will continue to attend that site with no alteration to their current journey.

Consequently the table below shows anonymised data for Rock Ferry High School pupils expected to be on roll at September 2010 by national curriculum year. The walking distance to their current site, to the Park High site, and to the nearest non-selective mixed sex secondary school (Bebington High) are shown. The second column indicates whether the pupil would be entitled to free transport to the Park site, based on either Free School Meal status and distance (over 2 miles) or Sanderling Unit attendance which automatically includes free transport. Pupils attending the Sanderling Unit are marked with an asterisk (*).

NCY at Sept 2010	Free Transport to Park site?	ROCK FERRY	PARK	BEBINGTON
7	Yes	0.2	2.4	1.6
7		0.2	2.6	1.7
7		0.3	2.6	1.7
7	Yes	0.3	2.4	1.6
7	Yes	0.3	2.4	1.7
7	Yes	0.3	2.5	1.7
7		0.4	2.3	1.7
7		0.5	2.3	1.6
7	Yes	0.6	2.8	1.8
7		0.6	2.8	1.8
7	Yes	0.6	2.8	1.8
7	Yes	0.6	2.7	1.8
7	Yes	0.7	2.0	2.0
7	Yes	0.8	2.3	2.0
7	Yes	0.8	2.6	2.0
7		0.8	2.0	2.0
7	Yes	0.8	2.8	1.8
7	Yes	0.8	2.9	1.7
7	Yes	0.9	2.9	1.5
7	Yes	0.9	2.9	1.6
7		0.9	2.0	1.3
7		1.0	1.9	2.3
7	Yes	1.0	2.9	1.6
7		1.0	1.9	2.3

7		1.0	1.8	2.2
7		1.1	2.0	1.8
7		1.1	1.7	2.1
7		1.2	1.6	2.4
7		1.2	1.8	2.5
7		1.2	1.8	2.6
7	Yes	1.2	3.3	1.2
7		1.3	1.5	2.4
7		1.4	1.3	2.1
7		1.4	1.4	2.4
7		1.4	1.4	2.6
7*	Yes	1.5	1.9	1.9
7		1.5	1.4	2.6
7*	Yes	1.5	1.2	2.5
7		1.6	1.1	2.5
7		1.6	1.2	2.4
7		1.6	1.2	2.3
7		1.7	1.0	2.6
7		1.9	1.0	2.6
7		1.9	0.8	2.7
7		2.2	0.8	2.7
7		2.3	0.7	3.2
7		3.5	1.0	4.1
7*	Yes	4.0	3.3	4.2
7*	Yes	4.2	3.3	4.4
7*	Yes	4.2	2.3	4.5
7*	Yes	4.7	3.2	5.7
7*	Yes	5.8	4.0	6.7
8	Yes	0.3	2.3	1.7
8	Yes	0.3	2.3	1.7
8	Yes	0.3	2.4	1.7
8		0.4	2.5	1.7
8		0.4	2.5	1.3
8*	Yes	0.5	2.2	1.7
8	Yes	0.5	2.6	1.7
8		0.5	2.2	1.7
8	Yes	0.5	2.3	1.8
8	Yes	0.6	2.7	1.3
8		0.6	2.2	1.9
8	Yes	0.6	2.5	1.8
8	Yes	0.6	2.2	1.9
8	Yes	0.6	2.1	1.9
8	Yes	0.6	2.1	2.0
8	Yes	0.7	2.6	1.9

8	Yes	0.7	2.7	1.9
8		0.7	2.6	1.9
8		0.7	2.0	1.7
8	Yes	0.8	2.3	2.0
8	Yes	0.8	2.5	1.9
8	Yes	0.8	2.6	1.9
8		0.8	2.6	1.9
8		0.8	2.0	2.1
8*	Yes	0.8	2.6	2.0
8	Yes	0.8	2.4	2.0
8		0.8	2.0	2.0
8		0.8	2.0	2.0
8	Yes	0.8	2.9	1.6
8	Yes	0.8	3.0	1.0
8		0.9	2.9	1.5
8	Yes	0.9	2.9	1.4
8		0.9	1.9	2.2
8	Yes	0.9	2.0	2.2
8	Yes	0.9	2.9	1.6
8	Yes	0.9	2.4	2.1
8*	Yes	0.9	3.0	1.6
8		1.0	3.1	1.0
8		1.0	2.1	2.2
8	Yes	1.0	3.1	1.0
8		1.0	1.7	2.3
8		1.0	1.8	2.1
8		1.0	1.9	2.3
8	Yes	1.0	3.1	1.7
8		1.0	1.9	2.3
8		1.1	1.6	1.9
8	Yes	1.1	3.1	1.6
8		1.1	1.6	1.9
8		1.1	1.7	2.0
8		1.2	1.6	2.0
8		1.2	1.7	1.8
8		1.2	1.6	2.0
8		1.2	1.6	2.1
8		1.2	1.6	2.2
8		1.2	1.8	2.5
8	Yes	1.2	3.3	1.0
8		1.2	1.8	2.6
8	Yes	1.2	3.3	1.5
8		1.3	1.4	2.5
8		1.4	1.5	2.4

8	Yes	1.4	3.5	1.0
8		1.5	1.4	2.3
8		1.5	1.4	2.8
8		1.5	1.1	2.6
8		1.6	1.2	2.1
8		1.7	1.1	2.5
8		1.8	0.9	2.5
8		1.9	0.9	2.6
8		1.9	0.8	2.7
8		2.1	1.4	3.4
8		2.7	1.0	3.5
8		3.7	1.1	4.2
8*	Yes	3.8	3.1	4.0
8*	Yes	4.2	1.6	4.7
8*	Yes	5.3	2.7	5.6
8*	Yes	5.5	3.5	5.7
9	Yes	0.2	2.4	1.6
9	Yes	0.3	2.4	1.6
9	Yes	0.3	2.6	1.7
9	Yes	0.3	2.4	1.6
9	Yes	0.3	2.4	1.7
9	Yes	0.4	2.3	1.7
9		0.4	2.5	1.6
9	Yes	0.4	2.3	1.7
9	Yes	0.4	2.3	1.8
9	Yes	0.5	2.2	1.7
9		0.5	2.6	1.7
9	Yes	0.6	2.2	1.9
9		0.6	2.2	1.6
9		0.6	2.6	1.8
9*	Yes	0.6	2.8	1.8
9		0.6	2.8	1.8
9		0.6	2.1	2.0
9		0.6	2.2	1.5
9	Yes	0.7	2.1	1.9
9	Yes	0.8	2.3	2.0
9	Yes	0.8	2.7	1.9
9	Yes	0.8	2.6	2.0
9		0.8	2.3	2.0
9	Yes	0.8	2.4	2.0
9		0.8	2.9	1.1
9	Yes	0.8	2.4	2.0
9	Yes	0.8	2.8	1.6
9		0.8	2.8	1.8

9		0.8	2.8	0.9
9	Yes	0.9	2.1	2.1
9	Yes	0.9	2.9	1.6
9	Yes	0.9	2.9	1.4
9	Yes	0.9	2.9	1.6
9	Yes	0.9	2.4	2.1
9		0.9	2.9	0.8
9		0.9	2.9	1.5
9	Yes	0.9	3.0	1.5
9		0.9	2.1	2.2
9	Yes	1.0	2.1	2.3
9		1.0	2.1	2.3
9		1.0	1.9	2.3
9		1.0	1.9	2.3
9		1.0	1.8	2.1
9		1.1	1.7	2.3
9		1.1	1.6	2.4
9		1.1	1.7	2.2
9		1.2	1.5	2.5
9		1.2	1.6	2.1
9		1.2	1.6	1.7
9		1.2	1.6	2.1
9		1.2	1.6	2.0
9		1.2	1.8	2.5
9		1.2	1.8	2.6
9		1.2	1.9	1.7
9		1.3	1.5	2.4
9	Yes	1.3	2.6	2.1
9		1.3	1.4	1.8
9		1.3	1.8	1.8
9		1.4	3.4	1.2
9		1.4	1.4	2.7
9		1.4	1.4	2.4
9		1.5	1.3	2.4
9*	Yes	1.5	1.2	2.3
9		1.5	1.2	2.5
9		1.6	1.1	2.5
9		1.6	1.1	2.3
9		1.6	1.1	2.4
9*	Yes	1.7	0.9	2.6
9		1.8	1.0	2.6
9		1.8	1.0	2.7
9*	Yes	1.9	0.8	2.4
9		2.0	0.9	2.9

9		2.0	0.9	2.9
9		2.1	1.3	3.3
9		2.3	0.4	3.1
9*	Yes	2.4	0.2	3.1
9*	Yes	3.0	1.9	3.2
9*	Yes	3.0	0.7	3.4
9		3.1	0.5	3.5
9		3.1	0.9	3.9
9		3.6	1.0	4.1
9		3.6	1.2	4.3
9		3.8	1.2	4.3
9*	Yes	4.4	2.8	5.3
9		4.4	1.9	4.7
9		5.3	2.7	5.6
9*	Yes	5.3	2.8	5.7
10	Yes	0.3	2.4	1.6
10		0.3	2.4	1.6
10		0.3	2.4	1.7
10		0.3	2.6	1.7
10		0.3	2.5	1.7
10	Yes	0.3	2.4	1.7
10	Yes	0.4	2.3	1.7
10		0.4	2.3	1.7
10		0.4	2.3	1.8
10	Yes	0.5	2.2	1.7
10		0.5	2.3	1.8
10	Yes	0.5	2.3	1.7
10		0.5	2.3	1.6
10		0.5	2.7	1.3
10	Yes	0.6	2.7	1.7
10		0.6	2.8	1.8
10		0.6	2.2	1.9
10	Yes	0.6	2.2	1.9
10	Yes	0.6	2.8	1.8
10	Yes	0.6	2.2	1.9
10		0.6	2.1	2.0
10		0.7	2.1	1.9
10	Yes	0.7	2.6	1.9
10	Yes	0.8	2.0	1.9
10		0.8	2.1	1.4
10		0.8	2.1	1.9
10	Yes	0.8	2.5	2.0
10		0.8	1.9	1.7
10	Yes	0.8	2.8	1.6

10	Yes	0.8	2.8	1.6
10		0.8	1.9	2.2
10	Yes	0.8	3.0	1.0
10	Yes	0.9	2.1	2.1
10	Yes	0.9	2.4	2.1
10	Yes	0.9	2.9	1.6
10	Yes	0.9	2.9	1.5
10		0.9	1.9	2.2
10		0.9	2.9	1.5
10	Yes	0.9	2.9	1.5
10		0.9	2.4	2.1
10		0.9	3.0	1.5
10	Yes	1.0	3.0	1.5
10		1.0	3.1	1.0
10		1.0	1.7	2.3
10		1.0	1.9	2.3
10	Yes	1.0	2.1	2.2
10		1.0	1.9	2.3
10	Yes	1.0	3.1	1.7
10		1.1	1.8	2.3
10		1.1	2.0	1.8
10		1.1	1.7	2.3
10		1.1	1.7	2.3
10		1.1	3.2	1.3
10		1.1	1.7	2.0
10		1.1	1.7	2.5
10		1.2	1.8	2.5
10		1.2	1.8	2.5
10		1.2	1.8	2.5
10	Yes	1.2	3.3	1.1
10	Yes	1.2	3.3	1.5
10		1.4	1.5	2.4
10	Yes	1.4	3.4	1.4
10		1.4	3.4	1.4
10		1.4	1.3	2.2
10		1.4	1.4	2.4
10	Yes	1.5	3.5	1.4
10		1.5	1.3	2.5
10		1.5	1.3	2.5
10	Yes	1.5	3.4	0.2
10		1.5	1.2	2.5
10		1.6	1.1	2.5
10		1.6	3.7	1.6
10		1.6	1.6	2.1

10	Yes	1.6	3.1	0.6
10		1.7	1.2	2.3
10		1.7	1.2	2.3
10		1.7	1.0	2.5
10		1.8	1.0	2.6
10		1.9	0.8	2.7
10		1.9	0.8	2.4
10*	Yes	2.0	3.5	1.0
10		2.0	1.0	2.8
10		2.2	0.7	2.7
10		2.3	0.5	3.1
10		2.3	0.5	3.1
10*	Yes	2.5	0.3	2.9
10	Yes	2.5	4.6	1.9
10	Yes	2.6	4.7	2.0
10*	Yes	3.0	0.7	3.4
10*	Yes	3.3	0.9	4.0
10		4.2	3.1	4.5
10*	Yes	5.2	2.9	5.5
10	Yes	5.4	3.3	6.3
10*	Yes	5.4	3.0	5.7
10*	Yes	5.5	3.1	5.6
10	Yes	6.1	3.5	6.6
10*	Yes	6.9	4.3	7.4
11		0.1	2.6	1.6
11		0.1	2.5	1.6
11	Yes	0.2	2.6	1.6
11		0.2	2.6	1.6
11	Yes	0.2	2.4	1.6
11		0.3	2.6	1.7
11		0.3	2.4	1.6
11		0.3	2.6	1.7
11		0.3	2.4	1.6
11	Yes	0.4	2.3	1.7
11	Yes	0.4	2.3	1.7
11	Yes	0.4	2.4	1.7
11		0.5	2.4	1.8
11		0.5	2.4	1.7
11		0.6	2.2	1.9
11	Yes	0.6	2.7	1.2
11		0.6	2.1	1.9
11		0.6	2.1	2.0
11		0.7	2.7	1.8
11	Yes	0.7	2.1	2.0

11		0.7	2.1	2.0
11	Yes	0.7	2.1	2.0
11		0.7	2.1	2.0
11	Yes	0.7	2.1	1.9
11		0.7	2.5	1.9
11	Yes	0.7	2.8	1.6
11		0.8	2.0	2.1
11	Yes	0.8	2.3	2.0
11		0.8	2.9	1.1
11	Yes	0.8	2.8	1.6
11		0.8	2.0	1.7
11	Yes	0.8	2.8	1.6
11	Yes	0.8	2.4	2.0
11	Yes	0.8	2.8	1.6
11		0.8	2.8	1.5
11		0.8	2.9	1.6
11	Yes	0.8	2.9	1.5
11		0.8	3.0	1.0
11	Yes	0.8	2.4	2.1
11	Yes	0.9	2.9	1.5
11	Yes	0.9	2.9	1.5
11*	Yes	0.9	2.0	2.2
11		0.9	1.9	2.2
11		0.9	1.9	2.2
11	Yes	0.9	2.4	2.1
11	Yes	0.9	2.0	2.3
11		0.9	2.9	0.8
11	Yes	0.9	2.9	1.6
11	Yes	0.9	2.9	1.5
11		0.9	2.4	2.1
11	Yes	0.9	2.8	2.1
11	Yes	0.9	3.0	1.8
11	Yes	0.9	2.0	2.3
11		1.0	1.7	1.8
11	Yes	1.0	2.5	0.8
11		1.0	3.0	1.5
11		1.0	3.0	1.5
11		1.0	1.8	1.7
11		1.0	2.1	2.2
11		1.0	1.8	2.3
11	Yes	1.0	3.0	1.6
11		1.1	1.7	2.3
11		1.1	1.7	2.0
11		1.1	1.7	2.3

11		1.1	3.2	1.6
11		1.1	1.7	2.1
11		1.2	1.6	1.9
11		1.2	1.7	2.5
11		1.2	1.6	2.1
11		1.2	1.6	2.1
11		1.2	1.8	2.5
11		1.2	1.8	2.5
11		1.2	1.5	1.7
11		1.2	1.8	2.5
11		1.2	1.6	2.1
11		1.2	1.8	2.5
11		1.2	1.8	2.6
11		1.2	1.8	2.6
11		1.2	0.8	2.9
11	Yes	1.3	2.6	2.1
11		1.3	1.4	2.5
11	Yes	1.3	3.3	1.2
11	Yes	1.3	3.3	1.2
11		1.3	1.5	2.7
11		1.3	1.5	2.7
11	Yes	1.3	3.3	1.2
11		1.4	3.4	1.3
11		1.4	3.4	1.4
11		1.4	1.6	2.7
11		1.5	1.9	1.9
11	Yes	1.5	3.5	1.4
11		1.5	1.2	2.5
11		1.5	1.3	2.0
11*	Yes	1.5	1.4	2.0
11	Yes	1.6	3.7	0.5
11		1.6	3.6	1.4
11		1.6	1.1	2.3
11		1.6	1.2	2.4
11		1.6	3.1	0.4
11		1.7	3.8	0.9
11*	Yes	1.7	1.0	2.3
11		1.8	1.0	2.6
11*	Yes	1.9	0.8	2.8
11		1.9	0.8	2.8
11		1.9	4.0	1.2
11		1.9	1.0	2.6
11		2.0	1.3	3.3
11		2.3	0.7	2.9
11		2.3	0.8	2.9
11		2.4	0.8	3.3
11	Yes	2.5	4.6	2.1
11		2.6	0.9	2.9
11		3.1	0.5	3.5
11		3.5	1.0	4.1
11		4.4	1.9	4.7
11*	Yes	4.7	3.0	4.9

11	Yes	5.5	3.7	6.5
11	Yes	5.8	5.7	5.1



	Rock Ferry	Park	Bebington
Under 1 mile	222	45	18
Under 2 miles	153	145	214
Under 3 miles	21	191	151
More than 3 miles	34	49	47

Just 49 pupils would travel more than 3 miles to the Park site. Of these, 35 would be entitled to free transport. Of the remaining 14, 12 are in years 10 and 11 and would be expected to finish their education on the Rock Ferry site.

The following table shows the proportions of pupils by change in travel distance to the Park site. For 46% of pupils, the Park site is either closer, or less than 1 mile further, than their current travel distance to school.

	Number	Percentage
Closer	111	26
Less than half mile further	34	8
Half to one mile further	52	12
One to 1.5 miles further	50	12
1.5 to 2 miles further	129	30
More than 2 miles further	54	13

16. The proposed arrangements for travel of displaced pupils to other schools including how they will help to work against increased car use.

Of the 430 pupils expected to be on roll at Rock Ferry High School in September 2010, 175 (41%) would be entitled to free transport to the Park site, which includes all pupils attending the Sanderling Unit, and 60% of pupils claiming Free School Meals. This compares to 50 pupils currently entitled to free transport to the Rock Ferry site (12%), which equates to just 14% of those pupils claiming Free School Meals.

Of the 110 pupils on Free School Meals who would not be eligible for free transport, 46 live closer to Park site than to Rock Ferry, and 57 live less than 1 mile further away.

Public transport links are good, and regular bus services link the two areas throughout the day and into the evening.

Transitional arrangements remain under discussion, however it is likely that pupils in Key Stage 4 will continue their education on their current site and will not relocate. There are other alternatives for pupils who do not wish to attend the Park site. One of these is Bebington High School, which is the most closely located non-selective mixed sex school in the area, and which many pupils living in the area served by Rock Ferry High School already attend. Of the 239 pupils for whom the travel distance to the Park site would be 1 mile or more further than their current distance to Rock Ferry, 205 live

closer to Bebington High School.

Related Proposals

17. A statement as to whether in the opinion of the LA or governing body, the proposals are related to any other proposals which may have been, are, or are about to be published.

The proposals for closure are related to a proposal in the Feasibility stage to establish an 11 to 16 mixed Academy, and are conditional on the Funding Agreement for this Academy being signed.

Rural Primary Schools

18. Where proposals relate to a rural primary school designated as such by an order made for the purposes of section 15, a statement that the LA or the governing body (as the case may be) considered:

- a) the likely effect of discontinuance of the school on the local community;
- b) the availability, and likely cost to the LA, of transport to other schools;
- c) any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the discontinuance of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase; and
- d) any alternatives to the discontinuance of the school,

as required by section 15(4)

Not applicable

Maintained nursery schools

19. Where proposals relate to the discontinuance of a maintained nursery school, a statement setting out:

- a) the consideration that has been given to developing the school into a children's centre and the grounds for not doing so;
- b) the LA's assessment of the quality and quantity of alternative provision compared to the school proposed to be discontinued and the proposed arrangements to ensure the expertise and specialism continues to be available; and
- c) the accessibility and convenience of replacement provision for local parents.

Not applicable

Special educational provision

20. Where existing provision that is recognised by the LA as reserved for pupils with special educational needs is being discontinued, a statement as to how the LA or the governing body believes the proposal is likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of the educational provision for these children.

The Sanderling Unit occupies a Victorian House separate from, but within the grounds of, Rock Ferry High School. As such the facilities offered to the pupils are well below that to be desired for a 21st century school. In particular the unit is not fully accessible to the full range of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities as required by the authority's accessibility strategy.

The Sanderling Unit

The unit provides for 40 secondary aged pupils who are all of broadly mainstream ability but who experience specific learning difficulties. All of the pupils, however, also experience additional special educational needs, which make it difficult for them to thrive in a mainstream setting. These additional needs include; social and communication difficulties; autistic spectrum disorder; attention deficit disorder; social and emotional difficulties and require staff to work collaboratively with a wide range of external agencies and services.

The stand-alone nature of the unit provides a degree of security for the students and inclusion and integration are facilitated by the proximity of the mainstream school. The majority of the pupils will, upon reaching school leaving age, be expected to integrate fully into mainstream society either through work, further education or training. Developing their social and emotional resilience is, therefore, a key function of the unit.

With the closure of Rock Ferry High School it is important for the authority to secure similar provision in the future. With this in mind it is the authority's intention to commission 40 resourced base places within the new academy.

This resource base, situated within the main body of the new academy and established in line with guidelines contained within Building Bulletin 102, will;

- Provide a secure base from which the students can more easily and flexibly access the full range of curriculum and social opportunities available to them by their inclusion within the main body of the academy;
- Make provision for multi-agency and multi-professional working to greatly enhance the support available to the students;
- Greatly enhance the physical and learning environment available to the students in modern, purpose designed surroundings geared to their specific needs;
- Provide opportunities for those students in the main body of the academy who would benefit, to access the expertise and facilities available from the resources base.