



**IMPROVING PRIMARY SPECIAL
SCHOOL PROVISION FOR PUPILS
WITH COMPLEX LEARNING
DIFFICULTIES**

Consultation meetings
November 2008

 **WIRRAL**


[The meeting](#)

- Short presentation about:
 - The background to the review
 - The consultation process
 - The options being considered
- Your comments

 **WIRRAL**

[Important to:](#)


- Focus on the needs of young people in the schools and not the schools themselves
- Think about the current and next generation of pupils
- Try to maintain a balanced view of the benefits
- Share information
- Trust one another

 **WIRRAL**

[What Elected Members have approved](#)


A formal review of the provision the Authority makes for primary aged pupils who have complex learning difficulties. Such a review would be completed in March 2009 when a further report would be submitted to Cabinet.

This review would include a widespread consultation with all stakeholders and the assurance that any development would be an improvement on the current high quality provision.

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[Remember](#)

- No decisions to close or change any Wirral special schools have already been made.
- The Council are committed to listening to the views of parents, pupils, schools and stakeholders
- The Council will consider ways to improve current provision

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[The Consultation process](#)

- Consultation document produced and circulated
- Stakeholder meetings – parents, staff, governors invited to Open meetings in each school
- Drop-in sessions offered
- Meeting pupils in the three primary CLD schools
- Wider consultation with partners, stakeholders and other interested parties

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Current Primary CLD Provision:
Issues identified by the Headteachers and the Local Authority.

- Ofsted have recently inspected all three schools and reported that they each make outstanding provision.
- The numbers in the three primary CLD schools have fluctuated over the years. At present numbers in The Lyndale School are relatively low while Elleray Park has seen a recent growth in numbers. Stanley School's numbers have been more stable for many years. A variety of factors can influence parental preference.



Accommodation

- The complexity in the needs of this group of pupils are changing and whilst current accommodation is sufficient it is no longer the best on offer.
- The accommodation available at the three primary schools has a number of limitations.
- Stanley School shares a site with Thingwall Primary School and close links are maintained between both schools, much to the benefit of the pupils. Stanley School does not however meet current accessibility requirements and pupils who are wheelchair users cannot be placed at the school.
- Elleray Park School has some restrictions in its accommodation, particularly given the recent rapid rise in the number of pupils on roll.



•The Lyndale School is within a refurbished building. It's facilities are attractive and modern but it's limited number of classrooms restricts the number and range of pupils that the school can accommodate.

•Elleray Park School and The Lyndale School do not benefit from being co-located alongside a mainstream primary school.

•Wirral is likely to receive substantial new Government funding in the coming years, under the Building Schools for the Future programme. This will provide a major opportunity to build new schools in Wirral or to remodel and modernise existing buildings. It is important that the needs of the special school sector and the pupils within it are included within this programme.

•Special schools in other parts of the county are benefiting from opportunities afforded by Building Schools for the Future, the advantages of being co-located with mainstream schools and the benefits of extended services being available to children and parents.



Preliminary Discussions

- Earlier in 2008 discussions took place with staff, governors and parents in all five primary and secondary CLD schools
- Parents were generally positive about their child's current school and education and care that was provided
- All agreed that any changes to local provision must build on existing standards and bring clear benefits for pupils and their families



Preliminary Discussions

Priorities for parents included:

- developing extended schools provision and services for pupils with CLD
- including wrap around child care,
- better year round access to health professionals
- improved school holiday activities



The options for reorganising primary CLD provision

The Special School Headteachers group identified three possible options for changing primary CLD school provision in the future. They believe that each option has its merits and needs more detailed consideration.

The schools concerned asked the Local Authority to formally review existing provision and to consider each option.

A fourth option was put forward by a group of parents at The Lyndale School in relation to pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

The Council would like to hear views of stakeholders on each of these options



Option 1- Creating three newly built generic primary CLD schools, each co-located with a mainstream primary school.

- Each school could have new co-located premises alongside a mainstream primary school giving pupils the opportunity to participate in inclusive activities with mainstream pupils.
- The schools could each extend the range of inclusive educational opportunities for its pupils.
- All three schools would include accommodation and facilities on each site offering extended school provision, including before and after school child care, holiday activities and access to health and therapy staff during the school holidays



Option 1- Creating three newly built generic primary CLD schools, each co-located with a mainstream primary school.

- There are approximately 200 primary aged pupils with CLD at any time. Maintaining three separate schools would mean that any fluctuation in the number on roll in an individual school would continue to cause that school practical and financial difficulties.
- This could be solved by creating three schools of a similar size, but this would result in a reduction in the size of two of the existing schools which could be unpopular with parents and the schools concerned.
- If the Council wanted to maintain a choice between three co-located primary CLD schools at the same size as they are now they would have to plan to rebuild one school with less than 50 places
- Building three new schools would be extremely expensive and potentially beyond the scope of the available funding. Building fewer, larger school buildings is likely to be more cost effective



Option 2- Creating two newly built 100 place generic primary CLD schools, each co-located with a mainstream primary school

- The two schools could provide 100 places and could offer a range of integrated extended school provision including before and after school child care, holiday activities and access to health and therapy staff during the school holidays.
- Both schools would be co-located alongside a mainstream primary school.
- Two schools could continue to offer parents a choice between special schools, and could be situated within different parts of the borough
- Both schools would provide for the full range of needs of pupils within the CLD and PMLD continuum.



Option 2- Creating two newly built 100 place generic primary CLD schools, each co-located with a mainstream primary school

- At least one existing school would close, or two schools could be amalgamated.
- For pupils and staff at The Lyndale School the prospect of being part of a 100 place school may appear to be a major contrast to the size of their current school. For pupils and staff at Elleray Park and Stanley the change would be less noticeable given the size of their present schools.



Option 3- Creating a single new 200 place generic primary CLD school, co-located with a mainstream primary school

- One new primary CLD school would provide 200 places for all of the young people with complex and profound learning difficulties in Wirral.
- As a single centre of excellence, the school could offer a range of integrated and extended school provision including before and after school child care, holiday activities and year round access to health and therapy staff.
- The single school would be co-located alongside a mainstream primary school, and the school would make provision for outreach and in-reach to support pupils within mainstream provision.
- The single school option would be less expensive than both the three and two school options. It may also be easier to identify a suitable location for a 200 place special school co-located on a mainstream site .



Option 3- Creating a single new 200 place generic primary CLD school, co-located with a mainstream primary school

- A single 200 place primary CLD special school would offer parents no choice between schools in Wirral.
- This option would require the closure of at least two of the existing three schools, or the amalgamation of all three schools
- A single 200 place primary CLD school may seem very large to pupils, parents and staff and substantially different in it's size and nature to their current schools.



Option 4- Creating a single 2-19 school for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties

- There are currently 60 pupils with PMLD within 4 of the 5 CLD schools. Elleray Park School, The Lyndale School, Foxfield School and Meadowside School all have a similar number of young people with these needs.
- A single PMLD school could meet the educational and care needs of this group of pupils and would remove the need for these pupils to transfer from a primary to secondary school setting when they reach 11 years old.
- A school for pupils with PMLD could reduce the risks associated with being within a more generic CLD school where very vulnerable children are in the same school building as other pupils who have challenging behaviours
- Integrated provision for pupils with PMLD including education, health and social care could be built into the planning and operation of a single specialist PMLD school.



Option 4- Creating a single 2-19 school for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties

- Wirral were one of the earlier Local Authorities to reorganise its special school provision into primary and secondary phases. Returning any special school in Wirral to 2-19 provision could be seen as a backwards step.
- The transfer to secondary schools at 11 recognises all pupils increased maturity. It confirms the expectation that they will be respected as adolescents, and that preparation and consideration will be given to their life as young adults beyond school.
- Having a single PMLD school would remove the opportunities for children mixing in class with other pupils with a broader range of needs.
- Any generic CLD school would seek to minimise the risks associated with having very vulnerable pupils in the same building as other pupils.



Option 4- Creating a single 2-19 school for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties

- There are a small but increasing number of vulnerable pupils who have complex medical needs that require specialist input and supervision but who do not specifically have PMLD. Many of these pupils have moderate or severe learning difficulties.
- It would therefore be inappropriate to place them in a PMLD setting that could not help them to reach their full learning potential.
- More generic CLD provision that included integrated health services and support could provide the correct environment for meeting these children's cognitive, physical and medical needs.



Competition process

- New schools now expected to be result of a "competition"
- Bids invited to operate the new school
- Council can enter it's own bid
- Decision is either by the LA or the Schools Adjudicator
- LA can apply to waive the competition – if successful, LA publishes proposal to operate new school



What happens next?

December 2008

Consultation ends

Spring 2009

Consultation outcome report goes to Council's Cabinet

Summer 2009

Statutory notices published (if required), representation period begins. If competition required, competition process begins.

Autumn/Winter 2009

Proposals to Council's Cabinet and/or to School's Adjudicator for a final decision

September 2010

Earliest any change could be implemented



Your Comments and Questions

It would be very helpful if you could:

Raise your hand if you want to speak

Wait for the microphone to come to you

Please say your name, and your relationship to the school

And:

If you know someone who couldn't be here tonight, please encourage them to write in with their comments

