

## IMPROVING SECONDARY SPECIAL SCHOOL PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH COMPLEX LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Consultation meetings  
November 2008



### The meeting

- Short presentation about:
  - The background to the review
  - The Consultation process
  - The Options which affect this school
- Your comments



### 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



### What Elected Members have approved

1. Undertake a feasibility exercise to identify the practical and financial implications of amalgamating Foxfield School and Meadowside School.
2. An extensive consultation exercise with pupils, parents and all other relevant stakeholders to gauge wider support for the amalgamation of Foxfield School and Meadowside School and the establishment of a single split site 11-19 provision for pupils with complex learning difficulties.
3. Undertake a detailed exploration with the Learning and Skills Council of the feasibility of developing a post 16 facility which is co-located with a local college.



### Remember

- Decisions to close, amalgamate or change Wirral special schools have NOT 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



### Current Secondary CLD Provision: Issues identified by the Headteachers.

- Meadowside and Foxfield currently provide for a combined current population of 201 pupils. The combined number of 16-19 year old students with complex learning difficulties is 72. While the numbers of pupils in each school vary over time the size of the combined population remains fairly constant.
- Foxfield has traditionally provided for pupils with SLD and PMLD. Meadowside's population is changing and is now similar to Foxfield. Both schools are currently judged by Ofsted to be good with outstanding features.
- Foxfield and Meadowside have difficulties providing suitable discrete accommodation for their 16+ learners due to constraints in the buildings. Both sites have difficulties offering adequate age appropriate environments for vocational and work related learning, alongside independent living skills teaching areas.



### Current secondary provision for pupils with CLD

- The small size of the 16-19 departments limits the curriculum options that can be offered to the students
- Appropriate learning environments will become increasingly vital as new curriculum opportunities are created through the specialist diplomas.
- Effective transition and co-ordination of provision with local FE colleges, work place training organisations and Adult Social Services could improve if those organisations had to work with fewer school sixth forms



### 16+ LDD provision at present

- The LSC are concerned about the very high number of applications for specialist residential FE provision from Wirral students with learning difficulties when they leave school.
- Wirral accounts for over 40% of the total number of Merseyside students with learning difficulties who have gone to specialist colleges. The LSC have a duty to develop suitable local post 16 provision for all learners.
- Existing local college provision is under-developed but both colleges are keen to look at how things could be enhanced
- Vocational training and employment opportunities exist but have been under-developed in the past. New vocational training and employment opportunities are being established locally in conjunction with Adult Services and Wirral Metropolitan College.



### 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 agree that any changes to local provision must build on existing standards and bring clear benefits for pupils and their families



### Preliminary Discussions

- Developing extended schools provision and services for pupils with CLD, including wrap around child care, better year round access to health professionals and improved school holiday activities were priorities for all parents
- Strong support for improving post 16 opportunities and providing more choice for students in the sixth form
- Concern about the transition from school to adult life, and the provision available locally



### The Option for reorganising secondary CLD provision

- i) Changing the present secondary CLD provision by amalgamating Foxfield and Meadowside Schools.
- ii) Age-specific provision to be set up as follows:
  - KS3 and KS4 provision to be on the Foxfield site
  - 16-19 provision to be on the Meadowside site
- Long-term plan to co-locate the 11-16 special school provision with a mainstream school, and to develop the 16-19 provision in a specialist building alongside a mainstream FE college.
- While physically separate, the 6<sup>th</sup> form CLD provision would stay part of the special school to maintain curriculum continuity and effective transition



### The Consultation process

- Consultation document produced
- Stakeholder meetings – parents, staff, governors
- Drop-in sessions
- Meeting pupils in the schools
- Wider consultation with partners, stakeholders and other interested parties
- Ongoing discussions and planning with the LSC and feasibility work completed



## 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

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

