

Report to: Children and Young People's Panel / Cabinet

Date: 22nd May 2008 / 29th May 2008

Subject: Review of Provision and Use of Resourced Schools:
Consultation on the Provision of Resourced Places for Pupils
with Low Severity Autism at Hawkley Hall High School

Report of: Director of Children and Young People's Services

Contact officer: Kath Nelson Assistant Director k.nelson@wigan.gov.uk
Elaine Baulcombe 01942 486127 e.baulcombe@wigan.gov.uk

Purpose / summary: The purpose of this report is to:

- inform Panel and Cabinet of the outcome of informal consultation on the proposal to provide resourced places for pupils with low severity autism at Hawkley Hall High School;
- seek Cabinet approval to conduct statutory consultation on the proposal.

Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended: Contained within the report.

Recommendation / decision: Members are recommended to note the content of this report and grant approval to conduct statutory consultation.

Key Decision: This report involves a key decision within ground(s) 1.

The decision made as a result of this report will be published within **48 hours** and cannot be actioned until **seven working days** have elapsed, i.e. before 10 June 2008.

This item is included in the Forward Plan.

Risks / Implications:

Financial:	There will be no financial or staffing implications directly as a result of this report.
Staffing:	
Policy:	School Organisation Plan. LA Inclusion Strategy
Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?	N/A
Wards affected:	All

Property Implications – Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council’s asset base or its occupation?

No

If yes, have the property implications been agreed with the Corporate Property Officer?

N/A

Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Has the Director of Legal and Property Services confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council’s Constitution? **Yes**

Has the Director of Finance and IT confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council’s budget? **Yes**

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? **No**

For Cabinet reports only :


Categorisation of the report:	x		x
Discussion leading to a decision		Discussion	
Monitoring		Decision	x
Sharing for corporate understanding		Information	

Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
22/05/08		29/05/08	

List of Background Papers in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972:

Document	Date	File Reference	Place of Inspection
Review of Provision and Use of Resourced Schools			Progress House Westwood Park Drive Wigan WN3 4HH
Report to CYPP	24 May 2007		
Report to Cabinet	31 May 2007		

Proper Officer	
Date	7 th May 2008

1 Background

1.1 In May 2007, Cabinet approved a range of LA proposals concerning specialist resourced provision in Wigan, and agreement to conduct informal consultation was granted.

1.2 The proposals were to:

- identify a primary school in the east of the borough to offer resourced mainstream provision for pupils with potential additional needs; specific speech and language difficulties; Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD);
- discontinue the resourced nursery facility at Meadowbank School if the school did not self-refer to become the resourced primary school in the east;
- discontinue the Speech and Language Development Centre at Hindley Green Primary School;
- identify a secondary school to offer resourced provision for pupils with ASD.

1.3 Informal consultation on the proposals regarding Meadowbank and Hindley Green Schools took place in September 2007. This led to statutory consultation and subsequent Cabinet agreement, in January 2008, to implementation of the proposals.

The resourced nursery provision at Meadowbank will cease with effect from 1st September 2008, and the closure of the Speech and Language Development Centre at Hindley Green will be with effect from 1st September 2009.

Revenue savings made as a result of the changes at Meadowbank and Hindley Green Schools will be redirected to develop resourced provision.

1.4 The timescale for identifying a primary school in the east of the borough and a secondary school from across the borough to become resourced was extended to allow further discussions with schools.

1.5 The process for identifying a primary school in the east of the borough is still ongoing.

1.6 The headteacher and governors of Hawkey Hall High School have now expressed an interest in the school becoming the resourced secondary school.

1.7 Following lengthy discussions with officers, and full consideration of the possibility and practicalities of this proposal, informal consultation took place.

2 Alternative options considered and reasons for the recommended option

2.1 The alternative option considered was for no change.

2.2 The reason for the recommended option would be to meet an identified need for provision within the borough for those pupils on the ASD continuum whose needs are not so severe as to warrant placement in a special school, but who experience difficulty accessing their local

- mainstream school, even with considerable support.
- 2.3 The results of the informal consultation substantiate this recommendation.

3 Details of informal consultation

- 3.1 Informal consultation on the proposal to provide 15 resourced places for pupils with low severity autism at Hawkley Hall High School took place between 7th and 21st April 2008.
- 3.2 A consultation document, detailing the proposal, was produced and is attached at Appendix 1. This was sent to parents, staff and governors of Hawkley Hall School, and of the Wigan South primary schools whose pupils may attend Hawkley in the future. The document was also sent to a wide range of other interested parties, and was made available to members of the local community.
- 3.3 Responses were invited, either via the consultation response form provided, which was also accessible via the Wigan Council website, or by any other written method.
- 3.4 Officers met with a with a representative cross-section of the Hawkley Hall student community to discuss the proposal and ascertain their views.

4 Consultation Responses

- 4.1 There were 106 written responses during the consultation period. Of those, 103 were made via the response form, and three were via letter/email.

Of the 106 written responses, 101 were in favour of the proposal.

A summary is attached at Appendix 2.

4.1.1 Comments on Issues Raised

- The problems associated with Asperger's should be handled in an environment where only children with the same condition are, so that their peers understand their behaviour and can offer the appropriate support or empathy.
- Integrating them into mainstream is detrimental to the non-Asperger's element.
- I believe that implementation of the proposal would restrict my children's advancement and social blending, and that a divide would naturally be created between the children.
- I am in favour of special provision for children with autism and similar conditions. Affected children can be unhappy in mainstream education and, therefore, are unable to make the progress they ought.
- These children would, in my opinion, suffer from their peers in as much as they are insensitive to the conditions suffered by children with special needs. There is a special school at Hope where appropriate excellent teachers are available to give these children the education at the correct level and in accordance with the Development Plan.

There is evidence to show that many students, with varying levels of difficulty, are already thriving in mainstream schools, where pupils are included and are treated and respected as individuals, with differing

degrees of need and ability.

The integration of children with any learning difficulty or disability into a mainstream school should serve to enrich and enhance the experiences of all concerned, to increase mutual understanding, and tolerance, and promote equality, respect and the acceptance of diversity.

The changes at Hawkley Hall will be based upon a broad consensus of informed opinion. Stakeholder comments received clearly acknowledge the school's inclusive ethos.

The inclusive attitude, and commitment, of the headteacher, staff, governors, and wider school community is, apparent and deserving of the support the proposal has received.

- 4.2 The meeting with students was held in school on 16th April 2008. Notes are attached at Appendix 3.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 The proposal has received overwhelming support. 95.28 per cent of respondents expressed the opinion that the plan to provide resourced places at Hawkley Hall High School should be pursued.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 Taking into account the content of this report, Members are recommended to approve the request of the Director of Children and Young People's Services to conduct statutory consultation on the proposal to provide resourced places for pupils with low severity autism at Hawkley Hall High School.

Diversity Impact Assessment form

Section:

Policy/Service Area:

Person Completing Form:	Date:

Do any of the below groups suffer specific disadvantage (please indicate)

	Yes	No		Yes	No
Race			Disability		
Ethnicity			Gender		
Age			Religion		
Class			Sexual Orientation		

Is there evidence of disadvantage or associated problems?

How was the information collected and/or who have you consulted with?

Action Plan – <i>What specific actions are planned to tackle any disadvantage identified?</i>

Is the policy in line with current equality legislation and relevant codes of practice?

Timescale	
Responsibility	
Comments	

Are the actions specified included in any other documents/plans?

Departmental Service Plan	
Section/Team Plan	
Other (Specify)	

Date for further review



Children and Young People's Services

Consultation on the Proposal to Provide Resourced Places for Pupils with Low Severity Autism

HAWKLEY HALL HIGH SCHOOL

Carr Lane
Hawkley Hall
Wigan WN3 5NY

7th April 2008

Introduction

Local Authorities are required, by law, to keep their arrangements for special educational needs provision under review. As part of this, Wigan Council is proposing to make additional funding available at Hawkley Hall High School, to provide a small number of places which will be reserved for young people with low severity autism. These are known as resourced places.

The proposal has the full support of the Headteacher and the Governing Body, who are eager to further promote the school's already positive, caring and inclusive ethos, whilst maintaining high standards and quality education in 'The Hawkley Way'.

This document has been written in conjunction with the Headteacher, and contains details of the proposal, including the process for consultation, and how you can make your views known.

Background

Some young people with autism have their needs met in special schools. Others, whose autism is less severe, have their needs successfully met in mainstream schools, with the help of extra support.

However, a need has been identified for provision in Wigan for those pupils whose autism is less severe, but who find mainstream education difficult. Many of these may be described as having Asperger's Syndrome.

For primary-age children, this type of provision will be available on an area basis, in the west and centre of the borough, at Platt Bridge and Westfield Community Schools, and negotiations are underway to identify a third school to become the resourced primary school in the east.

In response to an invitation to all secondary schools, the Headteacher and Governors at Hawkley Hall have expressed an interest in the school becoming resourced, to develop a Centre of Excellence for communication and social development.

What is the proposal?

The proposal is for Hawkley Hall High School to provide high quality provision for up to 15 secondary-age pupils with low severity autism, or Asperger's, with effect from 1st September, 2009.

How will the places be allocated?

Set criteria will be used when considering admissions to resourced places. Wigan Council will be responsible for these admissions, in consultation with the Headteacher.

How do I make my views known?

To help make your views known, a response form is provided. Please complete and return to the address shown by **Monday, 21st April, 2008**. Or, alternatively you may write to us.

What will happen then?

Strict legal procedures have to be followed.

All responses to this consultation will be summarised and reported back to Cabinet. You will be able to see copies of the report on the Wigan Council Website at www.wigan.gov.uk and at Progress House, Westwood Park Drive, Wigan WN3 4HH.

After full consideration of the content and recommendations of the report, Cabinet will decide whether or not to approve the proposal. If the proposal is approved, the process will enter the next stage. This means that statutory notices will be published in a local newspaper, and posted at the entrance to Hawkley Hall High School; at Progress House; and at another public place in the area, such as the local Post Office or Library.

At this stage, you can make your views known by writing to Children and Young People's Services (CYPS), at Progress House. You will have six weeks from the date of publication of the notices in which to express your views. This is known as the representation period.

Any written comments or objections received will be reported back to Cabinet for further consideration before a final decision is made. However, if Cabinet fails to reach a decision within two months of the closing date for responses, the decision will be passed to the Schools' Adjudicator.

Stage	Dates
Consultation: During this time you can make your views known either by writing to, or emailing, CYPS OR by completing and returning the response form.	7 th to 21 st April 2008
Results of consultation will go to Cabinet who will decide whether or not to carry on with the proposal.	29 th May 2008
Representation Period: You will have six weeks in which to make your views known by writing to CYPS, at Progress House. The closing date will be shown on the notice.	18 th June to 30 th July 2008
Decision Date:	18 th September 2008

Certain organisations may appeal against the decision, but this must be done within four weeks of the decision being made.

Please note that these dates may change. CYPS officers, staff and governors at Hawkley Hall High School will be able to tell you if this happens.

Further copies of this document are available from CYPS (01942 486142). It is also available in other formats on request, and via the Wigan Council website.

Response Form

It is important that this is returned by **Monday, 21st April, 2008** to:

Director of Children and Young People's Services, Access and Inclusion Team,
Progress House, Westwood Park Drive, Wigan WN3 4HH

Email: education@wigan.gov.uk

My preferred option for Hawkley Hall High School is that: *(please tick)*

1. there should be no change to the type of provision at the school.
2. the school should receive additional funding which will allow it to develop a Centre of Excellence for communication and social development.

Reason

Comments

I am: a parent / carer of a pupil at Hawkley Hall High School

a parent / carer of a pupil at another school who may attend Hawkley in the future

a member of staff at Hawkley Hall High School

a member of staff at another school (please say which)

a governor of Hawkley Hall High School

a governor of another school (please say which)

Other (please state)

CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO PROVIDE RESOURCED PLACES FOR PUPILS WITH LOW SEVERITY AUTISM AT HAWKLEY HALL HIGH SCHOOL

SUMMARY OF WRITTEN RESPONSES

The period of informal consultation ran from 7th – 21st April 2008. Of the 106 written responses received during that time, 103 were made via the response form provided with the consultation document, and three were via letter/email.

A. Summary of Response Forms

The options to choose from were:

1. there should be no change to the type of provision at the school.
2. the school should receive additional funding which will allow it to develop a Centre of Excellence for communication and social development.

The breakdown of responses is shown below. However, many respondents fell into more than one category.

Preference	Hawkley Parent	Wigan South Parent	Hawkley Staff	Other Staff	Hawkley Gov.	Other/ Anon	Total
No change	1	2	0	0	0	0	3
Change	29	24	18	8	5	16	100

Below is a sample taken from the comments received to support the proposal:

(A comprehensive list is available on request.)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I fully support Hawkley Hall in their efforts to become a Centre of Excellence for communication and social development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is an excellent proposal for the school. It will help children to mix. All will benefit and learn to accept each other. Children with autism should have the opportunity to go to mainstream schools.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I believe all children deserve to be included wherever possible in mainstream and the extra funding is essential to ensure success.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any change for a better future for any child can only bring a brighter and healthier community for our children to grow up in.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with special needs in mainstream primary schools will have the opportunity to continue their mainstream education in the secondary phase.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would not want to deny these children the opportunity to develop and learn in mainstream.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any change that benefits the children should always be welcomed. It will help the children with autism to integrate into society and help the non-autistic children to better understand the condition and have more empathy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social inclusion is the only way to promote anti-discrimination, and supports the philosophy of 'every child matters'.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has the right ethos, staff and community to enable children with any special needs to fulfil their educational potential and additional provision would enhance that.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hawkley Hall is a caring environment and this would ensure that other pupils recognise the challenges that some young people face in learning and managing and developing their personal capabilities.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hawkley Hall High School has achieved an impressive turn around in achievement for pupils and the community in recent years. The funding can only strengthen the school's aims to continue to improve and excel.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If Hawkley is made a Centre of Excellence the students with low severity autism will have the opportunity to get the specialist help they need without being made to feel different from any other young person.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much more needs to be done to ensure all children's educational needs are met to allow them to be able to reach their full potential. All need to be treated and respected as individuals with individual needs and abilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children with special needs should have the best possible facilities to be able to lead a normal life. By providing the school with the special funding it will help families in the area with children who require that little extra help. It is good to see the Government putting the education of young people in this area to the forefront.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wigan needs this type of a school to avoid students having to travel far.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extra funding will allow the school to provide the opportunity for our pupils to learn greater tolerance of others through inclusion.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The additional funding would allow the school to build upon the work that has already begun for current pupils with ASD who are gaining in confidence by mixing into the 'ordinary' school environment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It will enhance and enrich our school community. The school already provides a very good education for SEN students and should adapt well to a new challenge.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This would provide an excellent opportunity for staff and students to support students with ASD in reaching their full potential, and build upon the excellent reputation the school already has for inclusiveness.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pupils with ASD already at the school are happy and settled. They enhance the school and enhance all pupils' understanding of 'every child matters'.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The provision would fill a gap. Hawkley is the right school for the job.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is a well regarded and achieving school which is very capable of giving special needs children a better start in life.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school provides an ideal learning environment and is fully inclusive. Care is taken to meet the requirements of all students.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'The Hawkley Way' development work and personal development programmes have enabled the school to create a calm environment where everyone is treated with respect and consideration.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This would be a natural progression for the school which already has an excellent inclusion centre.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hawkley has a team in place who will work hard to make a success of this, bringing huge benefits to all students in school and potential new students.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has the capacity to develop this provision to meet the needs of a small group of students who are able and entitled to access mainstream with appropriate support.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's ethos fully supports the inclusion agenda. Staff and students share a positive approach to equality and diversity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would maximise the use of resources and build capacity for staff expertise in a mainstream environment. The school has encouraged an understanding of mutual respect in its pupils and promotes inclusion.

Below are the comments received to oppose the proposal:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The problems associated with Asperger's should be handled in an environment where only children with the same condition are, so that their peers understand their behaviour and can offer the appropriate support or empathy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrating them into mainstream is detrimental to the non-Asperger's element.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I believe that implementation of the proposal would restrict my children's advancement and social blending, and that a divide would naturally be created between the children.

B. Summary of Communication by Letter or Email

1 x letter to support the proposal:

- from a parent of a child at a Wigan South Primary School, who may attend Hawkley in the future who is also the parent of an ex-Hawkley Hall pupil with Asperger's Syndrome. (Copy available on request.)

2 x email to oppose the proposal:

- from two Wigan Councillors. Comments below:

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I am in favour of special provision for children with autism and similar conditions. Affected children can be unhappy in mainstream education and, therefore, are unable to make the progress they ought. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• These children would, in my opinion, suffer from their peers in as much as they are insensitive to the conditions suffered by children with special needs. There is a special school at Hope where appropriate excellent teachers are available to give these children the education at the correct level and in accordance with the Development Plan. |

Comments opposing the proposal have been represented and addressed within the report - 'Review of Provision and Use of Resourced Schools: Results of Informal Consultation', at paragraph 4.2.3.

CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO PROVIDE RESOURCED PLACES FOR PUPILS WITH LOW SEVERITY AUTISM AT HAWKLEY HALL HIGH SCHOOL

PUPIL VIEWS: Notes from a Meeting held in School on 16th April 2008

Background and Purpose of the Meeting

Statutory Guidance advises that Local Authorities are under a duty to consult pupils on any proposed changes to school organisation that may affect them. It was with this in mind, and in an attempt to make the consultation as inclusive as possible, that the LA invited a representative cross-section of the Hawkley Hall student community to meet with officers, in an informal setting, to express their views and opinions on the proposal. A member of staff was also present.

Introduction

Dr Simon Jenner, Principal Educational Psychologist, opened the meeting and thanked the students for volunteering to take part in the discussions. The students were given the opportunity to read and digest the consultation document before Dr Jenner provided a verbal overview of its content and the consultation process.

The students were encouraged to be open and honest in expressing their views, and it was explained how these would be fed back to Cabinet Members, with other consultation responses, to form the basis of the decision as to whether the consultation should move to the next stage.

Dr Jenner went on to clarify the term 'low severity autism', or Asperger's Syndrome. He described some of the traits and characteristics displayed by young people with autistic spectrum disorder, which is sometimes referred to as ASD.

The students were provided with the opportunity to ask questions.

Further discussion was prompted by Dr Jenner asking the questions below. Responses have been summarised and are in italics.

What do you think are the positives about the proposal:

- **for the students with ASD who may come to Hawkley Hall?**
 - *they would benefit from the experience of attending a 'normal' school*
 - *they would be able to go to the same school as their friends*
 - *they would be able to make more friends*
 - *they would learn to feel more comfortable around other people*
 - *all the above would lead to boosting their confidence*

- **for the school and the students already here?**
 - *it would bring the school community closer together*
 - *it would make the students feel good about themselves because they would be able to help*
 - *it would help the students to understand and appreciate other people's difficulties*
 - *it would help them learn to feel more comfortable around people who are different to themselves*
 - *the benefit of extra funding (extra equipment and staff)*

When asked if the students had any concerns, or could foresee any problems related to the integration of the new students because of their difficulties, they said that they had no issues to raise.

All the students present said that they agreed with the proposal.

Dr Jenner explained that, if the proposal is approved, it is hoped to be able to convene further meetings to facilitate open discussion and exchange ideas. The students welcomed the idea of being trained in being able to understand and accommodate the new students, and when asked if anyone would be interested in becoming a 'buddy', half of those present said that they would.

The students' enthusiastic and caring attitude was very encouraging.