

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

**Date:** 18 October 2007 / 8 November 2007

**Subject:** Review of Provision and Use of Resourced Schools:  
Results of Informal Consultation

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

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

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

- inform Cabinet and Panel of the outcome of informal consultation on the proposal to:
  - discontinue the specialist nursery provision at Meadowbank Primary School;
  - discontinue the Speech and Language Development Centre at Hindley Green Primary School;
- seek Cabinet approval to conduct statutory consultation on the proposals.

**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 approve the request to conduct statutory consultation on the proposals.

**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 30 October 2007

This item is included in the Forward Plan.

**Risks / Implications:**

Financial: There are 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 Not at this stage. However, equality and diversity implications have been considered.  
 been conducted?  
 Wards affected: All

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

The proposal is not identified as having a property implication. The Council’s asset base would be unaffected, as the discontinuation of resourced places would not result in the vacation of any building.

**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 \***

\* delete which applicable

**For Cabinet reports only :**

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

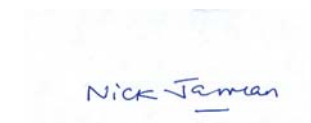
**Tracking/Process:**

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
08/11/07		18/10/07	

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



Nick Jaman

Date

4<sup>th</sup> October 2007

## **1 Background**

- 1.1 In May 2007 Cabinet approved in principle a range of proposals concerning specialist resourced provision in Wigan.
- 1.2 The proposals were to:
  - identify a primary school in the east of the borough to offer resourced provision for pupils requiring observation and assessment, support for specific speech and language difficulties, and mainstream provision for Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD);
  - 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 Cabinet was also made aware that Meadowbank School currently offers observation and assessment for children in their nursery year and that if Meadowbank were not to express an interest in becoming the resourced primary school in the east, full consultation on the proposal to discontinue the resourced nursery facility at the school would be necessary. This was also approved.
- 1.4 Following Cabinet approval of the proposals, all primary schools in the east, which offer nursery provision, and secondary schools across the borough, were invited to express an interest in becoming resourced schools.
- 1.5 The Acting Headteacher of Meadowbank School has confirmed that they will not be expressing an interest in becoming the resourced school in the east of the borough, making it necessary to identify an alternative primary school.
- 1.6 The process for identifying an alternative school is ongoing.
- 1.7 The process for identifying a high school to become the resourced provision for pupils with ASD is also ongoing.
- 1.8 Therefore, in line with the original timescale, informal consultation on the following has taken place:
  - to discontinue the resourced nursery provision at Meadowbank School with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> August 2008;
  - to discontinue the Hindley Green Speech and Language Development Centre with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> August 2008.
- 1.9 The timescale for identifying a primary school in the east of the borough, and a secondary school from across the borough, to become resourced, has been extended to allow further discussions with schools.

## **2 Alternative options considered and reasons for the recommended option**

- 2.1 The alternative option considered for Meadowbank and Hindley Green Primary Schools was that they should remain unchanged.
- 2.2 However, the recommendation to progress to the statutory stage of consultation on the discontinuation of resourced provision at both schools is based on the following:

### 2.2.1 Meadowbank School

- there are no children yet identified as requiring specialist places at Meadowbank Nursery from September 2007, therefore, the resource does not offer value for money;
- in the event of children being identified, and in the current absence of a resourced primary school in the east, alternative assessment places could be offered at Westfield, Platt Bridge, New Greenhall and Hope, until a school is identified and established.

### 2.2.2 Hindley Green Speech and Language Development Centre

- the budget provides for 32 places at the SLDC, with only 20 pupils accessing the provision from September 2007. The resource, therefore, does not offer value for money;
- whilst the aim of the proposal is to offer alternative area-based provision, this will still be possible, but with reduced options, ie at only Westfield and Platt Bridge Schools, until the third resourced primary school is established in the east.

### 2.2.3 New Primary Resourced School in the east and New Secondary Resourced School

- an extension of timescale will allow for further work to be undertaken to identify appropriate schools, with changes to be implemented by 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009.

## 3 Details of informal consultation

3.1 Informal consultation on the proposal to discontinue the resourced provision at Meadowbank and Hindley Green Primary Schools took place between 7<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> September 2007.

3.2 The Local Authority produced consultation documents which are attached at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. These were sent to parents, staff and governors of the respective schools. The documents were also sent to a wide range of other interested parties and were made available to members of the local community.

3.3 Responses were invited, either via the consultation response form, on the consultation document and accessible via the Council website, or by any other written method.

3.4 Officers held a series of meetings to provide the opportunity for interested parties to discuss the proposals.

## 4 Consultation responses

### 4.1 Meadowbank Primary School

4.1.1 There were 107 written responses during the consultation period. Of those, 106 were made via the response form provided, and one letter was received from the Acting Headteacher, with the request that this be circulated to Members. A summary of responses is attached at Appendix 1a. The letter is attached at Appendix 1b.

4.1.2 Two meetings were held in school on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2007. Notes of the Meeting with SMT and Governors are attached at Appendix 1c. Notes of the Public Meeting are attached at Appendix 1d.

4.1.3 Comments on issues raised

- The management of the budget reduction and implication for staff and children.

*The Local Authority will support the school in managing the budget reduction through established processes. The schools will be funded in accordance with the formula for funding all mainstream primary schools. Staff will be provided with information and support regarding options for alternative employment opportunities.*

- The loss of a successful, valued and inclusive provision will have a detrimental effect on the school and the community;
- The loss of staff expertise.

*The mainstream nursery provision will remain at the school providing pre-school places for children from the local community. Skills and expertise developed over the years will not necessarily be lost as these are embedded within the ethos of the school.*

- Children with special educational needs are increasing but are not being identified early or referred to the Nursery.

*There are clear processes in place for identifying and supporting children who may have additional needs from birth onwards. Specialist places and resources to support these children in mainstream settings have not reduced and parental preference is always taken into account.*

- Changing to area-based provision will be more cost effective and provide for children locally.

*The aim of the proposal is not to reduce the resources available to meet the needs of children, but to provide them more equitably.*

## **4.2 Hindley Green Primary School**

4.2.1 There were 50 written responses during the consultation period. Of those, 37 were made via the response form provided, or similar, and 13 people wrote in, either by letter or email. A summary is attached at Appendix 2a.

4.2.2 Three meetings were held in school on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2007. Notes of the Governors' Meeting are attached at Appendix 2b. Notes of the Staff Meeting are attached at Appendix 2c. Notes of the Public Meeting are attached at Appendix 2d.

4.2.3 Comments on issues raised

- The timescale of the proposed withdrawal of the Speech and Language resource is insufficient;
- The reduction in budget is such a large one to manage over a period of only one year;

- Budget reductions will have an adverse impact on mainstream staffing levels and standards and quality of education.

*Whilst the timescale is fairly robust, there is assurance from the Local Authority that the Headteacher and Governors will be supported by officers from the Human Resources, Finance and School Improvement teams in managing the budget reduction through established processes, and in the best interests of the school. Staff will be provided with information and support regarding options for alternative employment opportunities.*

*Funding will be in accordance with the formula used for all mainstream primary schools. There should be no resultant fall in standards or quality of education.*

- The move to area-based provision would not necessarily give pupils the same levels of expert support;
- There is no guarantee that each area school could provide the same quality of support.

*The levels of support for each pupil would be safeguarded through their Statement of Special Educational Needs. The Authority will work with colleagues from Health to ensure that high standards are in place across all schools.*

- Timescales for development of speech and language in resourced schools is insufficient to allow staff time to reach required levels of expertise.

*Expert support from health professionals will be available at each of the resourced primary schools. If parents express a preference for their child to be educated at their local primary school, expert support and advice will also be made available.*

*The timescales for developing speech and language support have been fully discussed with Health Service managers. There is a full commitment to ensure that staff in the resourced schools are trained and supported in working with pupils with speech and language difficulties.*

- Some pupils would find the disruption of known routines and loss of friendships very difficult to cope with.

*The Local Authority will work with parents and colleagues in school to minimise disruption for pupils. For some pupils, for example, those currently in Year 5, the best option may be to remain at Hindley Green Primary School for their final year. There will be a full review of each child's needs, with contributions from parents, pupils, Health Service professionals, school staff and educational psychologists, to determine the best placement.*

- Decisions about the current resourced school serving the centre of the borough (ie Platt Bridge) were made without reference to Hindley Green. Given the opportunity, Hindley Green could have put itself forward to become the resourced school.

*Decisions about the siting of the resourced primary schools serving the central and west areas of the borough were consulted upon during the Review of Specialist Provision in 2003. Both the Westfield and Platt Bridge*

*sites were named at that time. No objections or alternative proposals were received.*

- Reduction in travelling time is not sufficient reason for splitting up the facility. Children often enjoy their travelling time.

*Many children will have shorter travelling distances in the future if the proposal goes ahead. The issue is not only one of travelling time but of community involvement and access to extended school and curricular activities. Parents would also have easier access to the schools.*

- If these proposals go ahead, funding will be transferred from the primary to the secondary sector. This does not fit with the Local Authority's commitment to early intervention.

*If the proposals go ahead, funding and resources will be redirected to meet pupils' needs in whichever setting they might be. No budget reduction for children with additional needs will take place. New provision for pupils of secondary age with ASD will be developed. This has been identified as a lack in provision, and will be of direct benefit to some pupils currently accessing support at the Speech and Language Development Centre.*

## **5 Conclusion**

- 5.1 Taking into account the findings of the informal consultation, and the ongoing process to identify a school in the east of the borough to become the primary resourced school, the proposed implementation date for discontinuing the Speech and Language Development Centre at Hindley Green Primary School should be deferred to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2009, with a reduction in the number of planned places from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008.
- 5.2 As there are no children currently identified as requiring specialist places at Meadowbank Nursery, the proposed implementation date for discontinuing this provision should remain as 31<sup>st</sup> August 2008.

## **6 Recommendations**

- 6.1 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:
- discontinue the specialist nursery provision at Meadowbank Primary School with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> August 2008;
  - discontinue the Speech and Language Development Centre at Hindley Green Primary School with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> August 2009.

**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>

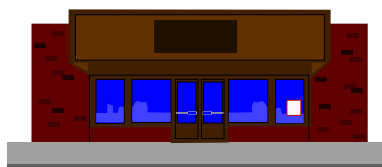
Is the policy in line with current equality legislation and relevant codes of practice?

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
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**Review of Specialist Provision  
MEADOWBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL  
AND NURSERY EDUCATION CENTRE**

***Consultation on the Proposal to Discontinue Nursery Provision  
for Children with Special Educational Needs***

**Background**

The Nursery at Meadowbank School can cater for 60 children, from the local community, on a part-time basis. In addition to this, the Local Authority funds 15 extra full-time places which are reserved for children with special educational needs from across Wigan borough. These children receive ongoing observation and assessment to help determine future placement.

**What is the proposal?**

The proposal is that, with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> August 2008, the Nursery provision which is reserved specifically for children with special educational needs will be discontinued.

This proposal was approved by Cabinet on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2007, and the request of the Director of Children and Young People's Services to conduct informal consultation on the proposal was agreed.

**NB There will be no reduction in the number of mainstream Nursery places.**

**Why discontinue the provision?**

With more pre-school children with special educational needs accessing Nursery provision in their local community, the demand for this type of provision at Meadowbank has decreased. In 2006 / 2007 only seven pupils accessed the resourced places, and there are currently no pupils who have been identified as requiring this provision for the coming academic year.

**What would be the benefits?**

***Children's Welfare***

Children who would otherwise have to travel long distances to access this provision would benefit from the advantage of:

- substantially reduced travelling times;
- assessment provision available in local schools – and with their local peer group.

***Value for Money***

The Local Authority provides additional funding for 15 Nursery places for children with special educational needs. As the number of children taking up these places has fallen over recent years, this provision is no longer cost effective.

**How do I make my views known?**

A meeting will be held at Meadowbank School on Tuesday, 11<sup>th</sup> September, at 3.30 pm. This is a public meeting and is open to everyone.

Also, to help you make your views known, a reply slip is provided. Please complete and return to the address shown by **Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> September 2007**. Or, alternatively, you may write to us.

**What will happen next?**

All responses will be summarised and reported back to Cabinet. You will be able to see copies of the report on the Wigan Council Website ([www.wiganmbc.gov.uk](http://www.wiganmbc.gov.uk)) and at Progress House.

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 formal stage of consultation.

At this stage, statutory notices will be published in a local newspaper, posted at the entrance(s) to Meadowbank School, and will be available at public places in the area, such as the local Town Hall and Library.

You have six weeks from the date of publication of the notices in which to express your views, in writing, to the Local Authority at Progress House, Westwood Park Drive, Wigan WN3 4HH.

Under new government regulations, decision making powers now lie with Local Authorities. All written comments and objections received, and the Authority's observations on them, 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 written responses, the decision will be passed to the Schools' Adjudicator.

If no objections are received during the six week period, Cabinet's decision of 31<sup>st</sup> May 2007 will be final.

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

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**Return to:** Director of Children and Young People's Services, Access and Inclusion Team,  
Progress House, Westwood Park Drive, Wigan WN3 4HH  
Email: [education@wiganmbc.gov.uk](mailto:education@wiganmbc.gov.uk) - **by 21<sup>st</sup> September 2007**

My preferred option for Meadowbank School is: (please tick)

- 1. No change. The Nursery provision for children with special educational needs should continue.
- 2. The Nursery provision for children with special educational needs should be discontinued.

Reason

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Comments

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I am a: Parent  Staff Member  School Governor  Other (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

## CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE THE SPECIALIST NURSERY PROVISION AT MEADOWBANK SCHOOL

### SUMMARY OF WRITTEN RESPONSES

The period of informal consultation ran from 7<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> September 2007. Of the 107 written responses received during that time, 106 were made via the response form provided with the consultation document, and one letter was received.

#### Summary of Response Forms

The options to choose from were:

1. No change. The Nursery provision for pupils with special educational needs should continue.
2. The Nursery provision for children with special educational needs should be discontinued.

The breakdown of responses is shown below.

Preference	Parent	Staff	Gov	Parent/Gov Staff/Gov	Other/ Anon	Total
No change.	87	13	2		2	104
Discontinue provision.		1			1	2

#### **Comments**

- The provision in place has a very good reputation and has proved very successful. The children are happy and content there.
- The Nursery is a much valued and vital part of already reduced specialist provision in the area. Children won't get the same care in mainstream schools.
- To discontinue this provision would be extremely negative for all involved and would result in the reduction of good quality education.
- The best chance for children with special needs is to be with mainstream children. The staff at Meadowbank make a big difference to those children with special needs who are placed in their care. Because the call for places is low this year, doesn't mean that it will be low next year.
- This is the only special needs Nursery for the local area, and if the provision was discontinued and the specialist team reduced it would have an effect on all those at the school, and the local and wider community.
- To discontinue the provision would have a serious and detrimental effect on the budget and teaching provision, which would need to be addressed.
- Meadowbank provides a vital service to both parents and children with special needs. These children are on the increase. The number of children taking up places has fallen over the years, yet parents have not been made aware of this facility. Some of the most demanding children have come from mainstream nurseries. Others had not even been identified before attending Meadowbank in mainstream places.
- To discontinue the provision would be a far more effective use of a costly resource and better meet the needs of children in a more local setting.
- The resource is no longer needed because of the area model.

#### Summary of Letters

One letter was received from the Acting Headteacher of Meadowbank School with the request that this be circulated to Members. A copy of the letter is attached at Appendix 1b.

Concerns raised within the written responses have been represented and addressed within the report - 'Review of Provision and Use of Resourced Schools: Results of Informal Consultation', at paragraph 4.1.3.



# Meadowbank Primary School & Nursery Education Centre

Metropolitan Borough of Wigan

Telephone: Main School: 01942 874271  
Nursery Centre: 01942 887447  
Fax: 01942 895321  
Email to: [enquiries@admin.meadowbank.wigan.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@admin.meadowbank.wigan.sch.uk)  
[www.meadowbank.wigan.sch.uk](http://www.meadowbank.wigan.sch.uk)

Formby Avenue  
Atherton  
Manchester  
M46 0HX

Headteacher: Mr J Fisher BA

13<sup>th</sup> September 2007

Dear Cabinet Member,

## **Re: Review of Provision at Meadowbank Primary School and Children's Centre**

There is overwhelming support from the governors, parents and staff at Meadowbank to retain the status of the existing provision for children with special educational needs (please see attached slips) established in 1988.

Meadowbank Nursery and Education Centre caters for 60 children from the local community on a part time basis, in addition the Local Authority fund 15 full time places for pupils with additional needs.

Meadowbank has a very highly skilled teaching and support team who work closely with a range of professionals observing and assessing pupils needs, reporting sensitively to parents/carers of pupils. This specialist provision once a flagship in the authority benefits the whole school. Its discontinuation will reduce the quality of education for all our pupils.

The proposal to initially site a resourced school at Meadowbank was declined after careful consideration and debate between staff and governors based on the limited teaching space available for the proposal and consideration for our existing pupils. The resourced schools at the West and Centre of the borough are purpose built. The consultation regarding specialist provision for Nursery pupils has taken many years and during this time the reduction in numbers of SEN pupils can be measured against the increasing complexity and severity of needs of those pupils in attendance.

It is our considered opinion that to remove a child from his/her home school to assess at a resourced school only then to return a child to their home school is an unnecessary upheaval. Our suggestion would be to use specialist teaching skills to support the pupils in their mainstream school.

A resourced school managing pupil's needs from 3-11 years is an unrealistic expectation. Rarely do teachers have multi skilled specializations of expertise across Foundation Stage, KS1 and KS2. Hence the question why is it essential to have all pupils with additional needs placed in school rather have expertise across age ranges at different schools.

Finally, should the decision to discontinue the provision be agreed the reduction of approximately £200,000 from budget in September 2008 would be very difficult to absorb. The impact on staffing in the first instance would be detrimental to a professional teaching team. Therefore the staff and Governing Body would welcome contingent financial support should the decision proceed.

The staff governors and parents strongly urge you to consider the impact on Meadowbank pupils and staff and consider retaining the highly regarded excellent Nursery Centre to cater for Foundation Stage pupils in the East of the borough a much needed and clearly well used resource evident from 1988 – 2007.

The absence of SEN pupils this year is a question unanswered by the SEN quality and inclusion team, surely there are pupils in the East of the borough still requiring observation and assessment and we are happy to identify their needs, support their parents and work with professionalism as required.

Yours sincerely

Mrs. M Middlehurst.  
Acting Headteacher



**MEADOWBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL****Informal Consultation Meeting held with the Senior Management Team and Governors on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2007 at 2.45 pm**

**Present:** School Senior Managers and Governors (Approx 6)

**Also Present:** Lorna Hulme – Strategic Manager for Learning and Inclusion - CYPS  
Elaine Baulcombe – Strategic Manager for Access and Inclusion - CYPS

Apologies were received from the school adviser Graham Jarvis and Assistant Director, Richard Powell – Assistant Director Learning and Attainment.

LH opened the meeting by reviewing the process to date and stating that the proposals were not based on any criticism of the effectiveness of the school or any judgement as to the quality of the education being offered.

**QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS**

**Q Children with additional needs are not being placed by the Local Authority in the nursery but many children with additional needs are applying for mainstream places and being admitted. There are a high proportion of children with needs throughout the school.**

A If the proposal to discontinue the 15 places in the nursery goes ahead, the school will be funded as any other primary school in a similar social economic area.

**Q What will be the process for a reduction in staff if the school loses the additional funding?**

A We should know by the end of January 2008 what the decision is. Elected members will have the final decision. If decision is to go ahead, HR, Finance and other relevant personnel will initiate their processes for managing budget reductions and any staff changes.

**Q Is the issue dependent on a resourced school being developed in the East? If none is identified will the resource remain at Meadowbank?**

A The proposal is to have resourced provision in the East of the Borough for pupils aged 3-11. Meadowbank has elected not to become that provision. If a school in the East is not identified nursery age children with SEN could access specialist provision at New Greenhall, Platt Bridge, Westfield and Hope.

**Q Are the Language Unit staff also included in this equation?**

A Yes. There will be the same process for staff at the Language Unit if that proposal goes ahead.

**Q What is the rationale behind closing the resource at Meadowbank?**

A Review of specialist provision 2003 stated that provision should where possible be area based. This will reduce travelling time and provide local provision.

**Q Are the places for learning or EBSD?**

A Resourced provision will provide places for children requiring observation and assessment, speech and language and some children with ASD. Some of these children may have EBSD as a result of their learning needs but will not have EBSD as their primary need.

**Q Will it be clear what the process for staff is, including support packages, options, ring fenced posts in new resourced schools?**

A There is a well established process in the Authority which has been agreed with the Unions. Representatives from HR will support the implementation of this process.

**Q If there are no places for staff to move to and due to budget reductions staff have to leave, what happens?**

A See above.

**Q Is it all staff in the school not just the nursery?**

A Yes. The money for the SEN places is part of the whole school budget and therefore all staff are involved.

**Q Is it no longer last in first out?**

A No. There is a new model which has recently been agreed where cover for the curriculum must be a priority.

**Q When will teachers know?**

A The decision should be known in January. Not long for staff to get new jobs from September. Staff may start looking for jobs resulting in an unnecessary drain on staff resources throughout the school.

**Q Mainstream nursery children have benefited from the high level of adult support available in the nursery which, when withdrawn will have a knock on effect on standards.**

A The nursery will be funded in the same way as other maintained nurseries, all of which have some children with additional needs.

**Q If we want to keep the facilities we need to become a mainstream school, but to have more children with additional needs would not be beneficial to the other children in school.**

If the resourced provision is discontinued the school would be funded like other primary schools in a similar social economic area.

**MEADOWBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL****Informal Consultation – Public Meeting  
held at the School on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2008 at 3.30 pm**

**Present:** 25 people attended – all of which were staff

**Also Present:** Lorna Hulme – Strategic Manager for Learning and Inclusion - CYPS  
Elaine Baulcombe – Strategic Manager for Access and Inclusion - CYPS

LH welcomed those present and gave a brief overview of the meeting held before the end of the summer term, which was not part of the formal process.

At that meeting, questions had been raised and school were considering whether to become the resourced all-aged primary school in the East of the borough.

The background to the proposals was explained, along with the current process and the timescale for implementation.

Meadowbank has decided not to become the resourced school in the East therefore, another school will be sought.

It was emphasized that the review proposals were no reflection upon the quality of provision at the school. The concept of area-based provision is integral to the Local Authority plans for becoming increasingly inclusive.

**QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS**

**Q In the formal consultation would the school be expected to give a formal response?**

A If the consultation moves to the formal stage, notices will be published inviting interested parties to respond in writing with their comments or objections.

**Q When will we know the outcome of the decision?**

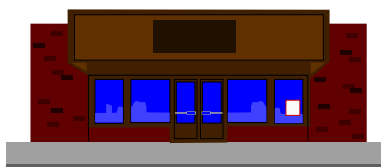
A If the proposal to move onto statutory consultation goes ahead, the outcome of the statutory process will be known by January.

If the final decision is to discontinue the provision, HR and Financial Services will support the school in the budget reduction process.

**Q What happens to children who have Statements, will mainstream schools not have any?**

A Resourced provision is not necessarily to take children with Statements but to provide a facility to offer further observation and assessment of a child's needs following which appropriate provision could be made in their local school. Mainstream schools will continue to provide for pupils with a range of special needs, some of whom will have Statements.

- Q Do children who go from one school to another remain on the roll of the mainstream school?**
- A Yes. Children who will be placed at the resourced schools will initially remain on the roll of their mainstream school for the period of observation and assessment.
- Q What is the process for staff?**
- A LH raised governors' concerns about process of reducing the budget and explained the established process and that all staff would be involved. Options for staff including reduced hours, job share etc.
- Q Will staff only know this in January?**
- A Yes, once formal consultation has been completed.
- Q What if people don't get posts or want to reduce hours, share etc?**
- A There is an established process agreed with the Unions, HR staff will support the school and individual members of staff. The Authority has a very good record of managing these situations.
- Q If the new school wasn't ready to become the resourced school in 2008 would there be interim arrangements for children requiring observation and assessment places?**
- A There is enough capacity currently for all children who are identified as requiring an observation and assessment place to have one, even with only the two resourced schools.
- Q Buildings are a big issue and the other resourced schools are new builds. Meadowbank has not got the physical capacity to accommodate 18 additional children.**
- A This has been acknowledged. There is no capital funding available for this project.
- Q Is the language unit going to close as well and within the same timescale?**
- A That is the proposal.
- Q Will the staff at HGLU get the opportunity to work in the resourced school?**
- A The resourced school will be responsible for recruiting the staff required.
- Q Would staff at Meadowbank be able to apply for those jobs too?**
- A Yes. Staff at Meadowbank would be able to apply for any jobs that were advertised if they met the person specification.



## Review of Specialist Provision HINDLEY GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

### *Consultation on the Proposal to Discontinue the Speech and Language Development Centre*

#### **Background**

The Speech and Language Development Centre at Hindley Green Primary School was established to provide support for up to 32 children with specific speech and language difficulties. Children from across Wigan borough attend the Development Centre on a short-term basis before returning to mainstream schools or other specialist provision.

#### **What is the proposal?**

With more children accessing this type of provision in their local mainstream school, the demand for places at the Speech and Language Development Centre has decreased.

Therefore, it is proposed that, with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> August 2008, the Speech and Language Development Centre will be discontinued.

Instead, the facility will be provided within area-based resourced primary schools across the borough.

**NB There will be no reduction in the number of mainstream places at the school.**

This proposal was approved by Cabinet on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2007, and the request of the Director of Children and Young People's Services to conduct informal consultation on the proposal was agreed.

#### **Why discontinue the provision?**

##### ***Children's Welfare***

Children who would otherwise have to travel long distances to access this support would benefit from the advantage of:

- substantially reduced travelling times;
- locally available specialist support – and with their local peer group.

##### ***Value for Money***

The number of children taking up places at the Speech and Language Development Centre has fallen over recent years, but the additional resources allocated to the school have remained the same.

#### **How do I make my views known?**

A meeting will be held at Hindley Green Primary School on Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> September, at 7.00 pm. This is a public meeting and is open to everyone.

Also, to help you make your views known, a reply slip is provided. Please complete and return to the address shown by **Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> September 2007**. Or, alternatively, you may write to us.

**What will happen next?**

All responses will be summarised and reported back to Cabinet. You will be able to see copies of the report on the Wigan Council Website ([www.wiganmbc.gov.uk](http://www.wiganmbc.gov.uk)) and at Progress House.

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 formal stage of consultation.

At this stage, statutory notices will be published in a local newspaper, posted at the entrance(s) to Hindley Green Primary School, and will be available at public places in the area, such as the local Town Hall and Library.

You have six weeks from the date of publication of the notices in which to express your views, in writing, to the Local Authority at Progress House, Westwood Park Drive, Wigan WN3 4HH.

Under new government regulations, decision making powers now lie with Local Authorities. All written comments and objections received, and the Authority's observations on them, 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 written responses, the decision will be passed to the Schools' Adjudicator.

If no objections are received during the six week period, Cabinet's decision of 31<sup>st</sup> May 2007 will be final.

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

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**Return to:** Director of Children and Young People's Services, Access and Inclusion Team, Progress House, Westwood Park Drive, Wigan WN3 4HH  
Email: [education@wiganmbc.gov.uk](mailto:education@wiganmbc.gov.uk) - **by 21<sup>st</sup> September 2007**

My preferred option for Hindley Green Primary School is: (please tick)

1. No change. The Speech and Language Development Centre should continue.

2. The Speech and Language Development Centre should be discontinued.

Reason

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Comments

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I am a: Parent  Staff Member  School Governor  Other (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

## CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE THE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT CENTRE AT HINDLEY GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

### SUMMARY OF WRITTEN RESPONSES

The period of informal consultation ran from 7<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> September 2007. During that time, a total of 50 written responses were received: 37 via the response form provided, or similar, and 13 either by letter or email.

#### Summary of Response Forms

The options to choose from were:

1. No change. The Speech and Language Development Centre should continue.
2. The Speech and Language Development Centre should be discontinued.

The breakdown of responses is as follows:

Preference	Parent	Staff	Gov	Parent/Gov Staff/Gov	Other/ Anon	Total
No change.	15	6	2	3	9	35
Discontinue provision.		1			1	2

#### Comments

- The Centre has an excellent reputation and has been very successful for many years. Staff there have years of experience and are very understanding and helpful. Mainstream schools would not be able to match this provision as resources would be overstretched.
- Would the change be beneficial to the children and increase their progress?
- Local children benefit from having the Centre on site. It's removal would be a great loss to the school and the local community. It would be more beneficial for this provision to continue to avoid disruption for children already there.
- There is no other provision in Wigan for children to access an intensive individually tailored programme delivered by specialist Speech and Language Therapists. This support may be reduced for children if they are moved, and they may have long distances to travel.
- Removal of the Centre may result in redundancy amongst teachers and support staff, which will affect the mainstream children at the school and may reduce the school's future intake.
- It would be better use of public money to offer this provision via borough-wide resources.
- The Centre is no longer needed due to the introduction of the area model.

#### Summary of Communication by Letter or Email

The breakdown is as below. Copies are available on request.

- 6 parents
- 4 staff
- 1 parent/governor
- 1 teacher/governor
- 1 councillor

Concerns raised within the written responses 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.

## HINDLEY GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Informal Consultation Meeting held with the Senior Management Team and Staff on Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> September 2007 at 4.00 pm

**Present:** Approximately 37 people attended

**Also Present:** Richard Powell – Assistant Director (Learning/Attainment) – CYPS  
Lorna Hulme – Strategic Manager (Learning/Inclusion) – CYPS  
Elaine Baulcombe – Strategic Manager (Access/Inclusion) – CYPS

#### Introduction

RP opened the meeting and thanked everyone for coming, explaining that this was part of the informal consultation process, and setting out the proposals.

LH circulated information including process and timescales. Reminder that this was no criticism of school, standards etc, and that the reason for the proposal was the move to area-based provision, away from one central resource. Proposals were first introduced during the review of specialist provision in 2003. Proposal for change to be implemented wef 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008. Anyone can comment on the proposals and these will be reported.

#### QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

**Q Is there any point in responding?**

A There is a good reason for responding to these proposals. A summary of all responses will be reported back to Cabinet to help them decide whether the consultation should move on to the formal stage.

**Q Considering that the school is going to be located on one site, can't the school become the third resourced school?**

A The third resourced school will need to be located in the East of the borough to comply with the area-based model.

**Q Why weren't we considered when the central school was established?**

A There was a new opportunity in a new build, and the Local Authority wasn't looking at speech and language development at that time.

**Q We are in the centre, why were we not considered?**

A All schools were consulted about the proposal for Platt Bridge School to be the resourced school for the centre of the borough. Hindley Green made no suggestion or responses at that time.

**Q Why are we involved in the consultation on the East of the Borough, when we are in the centre? Why were we not given the opportunity to become the central resourced school?**

- A The resourced school needed a Children's Centre. The Local Authority wasn't looking solely at speech and language development at that time, and took the opportunity to develop a new observation and assessment resource in a new purpose-built school.
- Q If Meadowbank is part of the proposal, children will need to go from the centre to the East.**
- A The site of the resourced school in the East has not yet been decided. There will always be an element of travel for some children but, on the whole, this will be reduced.
- Q It will cost more as the resident speech therapist is on site at the Language Unit. Will the new resources have SALT there?**
- A Meetings have been held with ALWPCT about spreading the SALT resource across the settings. Resources have dropped a little bit, but numbers are steady as it was set up for 24. (SH)
- Q It won't work if SALT is spread.**
- A We will look at what the children need and ensure they receive appropriate support. The quality of support will be exactly the same as that which the children have access to now.
- Q If other resourced schools are already established there will be no opportunity for staff here to move.**
- A The resources (ie budgets and support from SALT services) will be reallocated to the area resourced schools. Staff from this school will not automatically transfer with the children, but will be supported by the Local Authority in finding new posts.
- Q So children will need to travel.**
- A Children will go the nearest place where support can be provided. There will be a level of expertise in each area. The children are not evenly distributed, therefore, some areas will have more children than others.
- Q There is concern about the timeframes – children will be disrupted and staff may lose their jobs. Staff feel that this is a foregone conclusion. Why can't you just say this is going to happen and children can be re-located and staff looked after?**
- A Even if officers wanted it, the nature of the school can't be changed without going through a statutory process which takes a pre-determined length of time. During the previous review, when six schools closed and only three opened, all parents were given their preferred choice of school and out of hundreds of staff no more than 4 or 5 were made redundant. The Authority will work really hard with staff.
- Q What about packages for staff?**
- A HR processes are well established. Meetings will be held with individual staff to consider options. In the past some staff from special schools have had the opportunity to access pensions etc.

We can't short circuit the statutory process mentioned. Some pupils may stay here - but some parents may want access to their local primary school.

**Q The timescale is daunting for a decision to be made. There has just been a re-organisation in the last 2 years.**

**Q In the resourced schools there will be 18 places across all categories of need. ASD will need longer term placements. Will this block places for speech and language pupils if the schools are full?**

A An analysis of numbers shows that there would be enough capacity.

**Q There will be a need to identify teaching staff in the resourced school to develop expertise in individual areas, eg speech and language or ASD.**

A Yes, there will be a training and development programme for all resourced schools.

**Q The criteria and assessment process will have to be clear. There will have to be high liaison between CYPS, schools, SALT and Landgate.**

A Yes, staff have become increasingly expert in identifying pupils' needs clearly. Historically, 'speech and language difficulties' covered a wide range of needs.

**Q Clarify dates.**

A The informal consultation will run until 21<sup>st</sup> September. If the proposal is agreed, the formal consultation will run November/December, and the final decision will be made in January next year. If the decision is to proceed, implementation will be September 2008.

**Q Wouldn't it be easier to implement from 2009 due to constraints in timeframe?**

A Your point is noted.

**Q In the letter to parents, it says that more children are accessing provision in their local mainstream school. This is misleading, as they don't have the same type of needs.**

A This was not meant to be misleading. Apology – if this is the case. Certainly, more parents want their child's needs met in a local school.

**Q We provide the best provision in Wigan.**

A There is no criticism of provision in this school. We want to provide high quality support at an area level.

**Q Please note the request for slower implementation to allow children to adjust and expertise to be disseminated.**

Responses to the informal consultation were encouraged and the assurance was given that timescales would be considered.

## HINDLEY GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Informal Consultation Meeting held with the School Governors on Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> September 2007 at 5.45 pm

**Present:** W S Shaw – Chair of Governors, A Taylor – SEN Governor,  
Anne Marie Hamilton, Gillian Akers, P Chapman, Julie Spencer,  
Jon Dutton, Sue Bray, Les Borritt, Julie Butler.

**Also Present:** Richard Powell – Assistant Director (Learning/Attainment) – CYPS  
Lorna Hulme – Strategic Manager (Learning/Inclusion) – CYPS  
Elaine Baulcombe – Strategic Manager (Access/Inclusion) – CYPS

#### Introduction

RP welcomed everyone and introduced the officers present.

LH presented a report on the consultation process and explained the background to the proposals.

The proposal to review provision for speech and language development at Hindley Green Primary was part of a much larger review of special provision across the borough which started in 2003. Since 2003, officers have had meetings with the school managers and colleagues from health to inform them of the outcomes of the review of provision and to collect data from the school about the kinds of difficulty experienced by pupils in the Language Development Centre, the referral routes into the school and the eventual placement of pupils leaving.

The specific proposal to withdraw the resource for speech and language development from Hindley Green Primary was put before Cabinet in May 2007 as part of the proposal to:

- establish a new resourced primary school to serve the East of the borough from September 2008
- develop the expertise and resources to support pupils with speech and language difficulties in each of the three area-based resourced primary schools from September 2008
- establish secondary resourced mainstream provision for pupils with Asperger's and Autistic Spectrum Disorders

It was emphasized that the review proposals were no reflection upon the quality of provision at the school or within the Language Centre. The concept of area-based provision is integral to the Local Authority plans for becoming increasingly inclusive.

#### QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

**Q This is informal consultation – when does a report go back to Cabinet?**

**A** Informal consultation will take place until 21<sup>st</sup> September. A report will be taken to Cabinet in October based on all the responses from informal consultation. If the agreement is to proceed, formal consultation will take place November/December 2007. The final report is due to be presented to Cabinet on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2008.

**Q Parents do not understand the implications of the withdrawal of the resource on the whole school.**

A If the Language Centre resource is removed, the school will still have exactly the same levels of funding as all other primary schools in the Authority.

The resource provided is specifically for pupils with speech and language difficulties and will be reallocated to support these pupils when they move to their local resourced primary schools.

All parents have been sent a copy of the proposals, a response form and details of how to submit any comments or views on the proposals.

**Q How is the school expected to manage what will be a serious drop in budget?**

A The Local Authority teams in Human Resources, Finance and School Improvement will work with Hindley Green, SMT and governors to minimise the impact of any budget reduction on standards within the school and on the welfare and well-being of pupils at the school.

There is a well-defined process for managing budget reductions in schools and Local Authority officers are experienced in supporting staff through the process.

**Q Will there be a lot less travelling? Some children are reaching the end of their school lives at Hindley Green - how will this be managed?**

A There will still be some travelling involved for pupils but, overall, far fewer miles will be travelled across the Authority.

**Q Where are the children currently attending the Language Centre going to go?**

A Wherever appropriate children will transfer to their local resourced primary school. For some individuals, it may not be in their best interests to move – eg pupils about to enter Y6, their last year at primary school, or maybe youngsters who have had only one year at the Language Centre and would benefit from staying with their peers here for a further year.

Each pupil will have a full review of their needs. This will involve the pupils themselves, parents, health staff, school staff and educational psychologists. The Local Authority will listen very carefully to the views of parents in determining the best placement for each pupil.

**Q Will staff be able to work in the other resourced schools?**

A Not necessarily. The resources (ie budgets and support from Speech and Language Therapy Services) will be reallocated to the area resourced schools, but staff from the school will not automatically transfer to other schools.

Decisions about the employment of staff will rest with the governing bodies of the resourced schools.

- Q The new resourced schools seem to be set up for pupils only staying on short term – but some children at Hindley Green stay for several years. How will the new schools help these children?**
- A The resourced schools will fulfil three different functions. Pupils in each of the three categories will stay in the resourced school for different lengths of time:
- assessment and observation – pupils will usually stay for 3 terms
  - speech and language difficulties – pupils will usually stay for 6 terms
  - pupils on the Autistic Spectrum – will usually stay longer than 6 terms
- Q Where are the current resourced schools?**
- A Westfield (West) and Platt Bridge (central) – we need to identify a primary school to become the resourced school in the East of the borough.
- Q Why were we not considered when Platt Bridge was established as we have been waiting for a new build so why didn't we get a chance for this?**
- A The Local Authority took the opportunity to use the closure and amalgamation of two schools to create a new resourced school at both Platt Bridge and Westfield. In addition, both these schools had Children's Centres on site.
- One of the major influences was the geographical siting and timing of these complete new builds.
- Q Why was the 'no change' option proposal not put forward as a consideration?**
- A This option is always considered by Elected Members. During the consultation process, staff, parents and governors will be asked to indicate whether or not they support the proposed changes.
- Q Why is a resource identified as excellent at the last OFSTED been identified for closure? How can something be described as better than this?**
- A The proposal is not based on judgements about the quality of provision – as has already been stated. It is about making provision available at a local level across the borough.
- Q Is Meadowbank going to be the resourced school in the East?**
- A The site of the resourced school in the East of the borough has not yet been determined.
- Q Is there any capital funding?**
- A No capital funding has been identified to support these proposals.
- Q How many schools have put themselves forward?**
- A Officers are in discussion with heads and governors at present.

- Q No-one can argue that resources follow children but resources are built up accordingly. Staff are very skilled, have worked with SALT and developed expertise. If these proposals go ahead, the history of the school will change. Mainstream children will lose that expertise also.**
- A The school will still be funded exactly as other primary schools are funded in Wigan. The expertise currently across the school will not be lost completely.
- Q Timescales are tight.**
- A Thank you for that comment. The point is noted.
- Q Where will the budget go? Will resourced schools receive extra funding?**
- A The resources from Hindley Green will go to help establish the resourced school in the East and to develop ASD provision in a mainstream secondary school.
- Q Has a secondary school put themselves forward to be the resourced high school?**
- A Yes – but no decisions have yet been made.
- Q What is the process for managing the budget reduction and the effects on staff?**
- A Established processes by Human Resources, Finance and School Improvement teams. Meetings for all staff. Options discussed with everyone – eg job share, reduced hours. Interviews with staff to discuss issues on an individual and confidential level.
- Q If staff reduce their hours it won't be good for pupils.**
- A The management of budget reductions is a well established process. Decisions about staff hours, etc, will be taken in the light of getting the very best outcomes for pupils still in the school. The Authority would want to minimise the impact on pupils.
- Q This school has successfully reduced the staff age over the last 10 years which means that there are issues for them. They will not want reduced hours etc. They have family commitments and mortgages to pay.**
- Q It will take the heart out of the school and staff may start leaving sooner rather than later.**
- A The budget will support a school of this size. At this stage in any review the potential situation may appear worse than it ultimately will be.
- Q In terms of the budget, 15% of the budget is implicated in this proposal. Are there 15% of pupils in the unit?**
- A No – there are likely to be 20 pupils in the Centre in September 2007. The budget involved is approx £270k.

- Q It will have a big effect on staffing levels when the budget changes.**
- A Appropriate budget will still be provided.
- Q If there is an amount of money given (32 places) and there are only 20 children - it doesn't mean that there is spare capacity in school.**
- A This point is appreciated. Nevertheless the Authority does have to consider value for money issues.
- Q Expertise is used across the school and mainstream children will suffer and SATs results will fall.**
- A The expertise to keep good quality education in the school will be provided through the level of funding available.
- Q Will children get specialised 'teaching' at the new schools like they get here?**
- A Pupils will receive levels of specialised support whichever schools they attend.
- Q The Unit has been being reviewed since 2001/2003 and there had been discussion with the Chair of Governors when on the Council. Flabbergasted – timescale ridiculous. Outrageous - staff won't wait till the bitter end.**
- A Thank you – your comments have been noted.
- Q Staff will start looking at jobs sooner rather than later whatever the outcome of consultation.**
- A All schools face periods of change and staff turnover from time to time. This can be managed.
- Q Unit aside, does this school have a high proportion of children with SEN?**
- A Yes. (Headteacher)
- Q A lot of work has been done looking at 3 year budget but school are being asked to manage a huge budget reduction in less than one year?**
- A Point noted.
- Q It appears that a decision has already been made and there is not a lot of point in completing the consultation response form**
- A A decision has most definitely not been made. We are listening very carefully to the points being raised.
- Q Decision made by default in 2003 therefore we look forward to receiving the appropriate support from the Local Authority in managing the process**
- A Support will be forthcoming.

**Q A parent asked the Chair of Governors what the letter was about and was told that this didn't apply, as the child was a mainstream pupil.**

A The proposal does not affect mainstream pupils directly.

**Q In 13 years on the Council there is not one instance that a consultation has been overturned by public opinion.**

**Q Decisions are made as to where new school buildings are agreed. Ridiculous that they have not been able to bid into the process of being a resourced school at that time. Parents are not aware of the implication that this will have on the school as a whole. Staff will not stay.**

A Thank you. These points have been noted.

**Q Teachers in the unit have not necessarily got the current expertise to teach in a full class.**

A The management of matching staff skills to school needs will be part of the exercise.

**HINDLEY GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL****Informal Consultation - Public Meeting  
held at the School on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2007 at 7.00 pm**

**Present:** There were approx 12 people in attendance

**Also Present:** Richard Powell – Assistant Director (Learning/Attainment) - CYPS  
Lorna Hulme – Strategic Manager (Learning/Inclusion) - CYPS  
Elaine Baulcombe – Strategic Manager (Access/Inclusion) - CYPS

**Introduction**

RP opened the meeting and thanked everyone for coming, explaining that this was part of the Informal Consultation process, and setting out the proposals.

LH circulated further information - including process and timescales. Reminder that these proposals were not based on any criticism of the quality of provision and support at the school. The Local Authority wanted to have good provision in each of the three areas of the borough.

**QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS**

**Q How are you going to run the new units? I know what happens to my daughter every minute of the day and I won't know what is being provided in the new setting.**

A Children who have speech and language difficulties will have similar support to what they have now, ie speech and language therapy, teaching assistants, programmes etc. Individual children will continue to get individually designed programmes at individual schools – if this is appropriate.

**Q Where is the resourced school in the East going to be? We can't comment if we don't know?**

A Discussions with schools are ongoing for a school to be identified.

**Q Basically when talking about resourced schools I understand inclusion but there is no guarantee that this will continue in a resourced school. Funding may be there but the expertise will not necessarily be transferred with them. The expertise is in HGLU and cannot be spread out. Evidence will show that the outcomes for children who have been through the unit will justify maintaining the unit. Thanks to Mrs Bray and unit staff for the support they have given.**

A The expertise will be developed across the borough.

**Q It is the expertise of the staff which is necessary. If the resourced schools haven't got that, then it is a worry.**

A Decisions about the employment of staff will rest with the governing bodies of the resourced schools. The management of matching staff skills to schools' needs will be part of the exercise. The expertise at this school is very valuable and will not be lost.

- Q My child has been in a class of six. Will this still happen or will she be stuck in a mainstream class? The way it's set up here works.**
- A We can't say definitely that this will happen. There will need to be discussions with the headteachers. Some decisions are school-based decisions, made around curriculum design. We will want the provision to be at least as good as the support in this school.
- Q Is there a guarantee that there will be a place in a resourced school for every child who needs it?**
- A Analysis of numbers shows that there will be sufficient places.
- Q There is the strong view amongst parents that September 2008 is too soon for closure.**
- A Comment noted.
- Q Will the unit phase out rather than close? Will this mean that there will be no new intake?**
- A This is something that will need to be discussed with health professionals.
- Q Is there a process of appeal?**
- A The ultimate decision will rest with Cabinet after careful consideration of all factors.
- Q At this moment there are six children in Y2 working with a teacher all day. I'm not sure that parents are aware of this.**
- A Your comments are noted.
- Q Why do you feel that splitting up is better?**
- A The reason for the proposal is the move towards area-based provision – away from one central resource – which will allow children to access support closer to their home and with their friends. Some young children travel a long way to come here.
- It will be easier for the resourced schools to support local mainstream schools, and the PCT structure reflects area-based provision.  
There is a lot of expertise in one school which needs to be developed in other settings.
- Q If the children live near to the school would transport be provided?**
- A The provision of transport is determined by Authority's transport policy. Decisions about transport are based on the distance between the child's home and their school and on the child's individual needs.
- Q Where is the expertise from this school going?**
- A The speech and language expertise will be spread across the three area resourced schools. Staff will be supported in finding new posts where necessary.

- Q Will each of these resourced bases have speech and language expertise. If not can the children stay here?**
- A SALT will be spread across the three areas – as will the budget.
- Q A phased approach would address some of these issues. The current timescale doesn't allow for proper planning.**
- A Comments about timescale have been noted and will be given consideration.
- Q Parents want to send their children to a Centre of Excellence, not a watered down version**
- A We intend the resourced schools to be Centres of Excellence.
- Q It's not just the Speech and Language Therapists, but the expertise in the teaching and support staff.**
- A Your point is noted.
- Q Children blossom in this school**
- A As has been stated, this proposal is no criticism of the standards in this school, but children also blossom in other schools across the borough.
- Q I think its about cost**
- A This is not about money. The proposals were first introduced during the review of specialist provision in 2003, as a move towards developing area-based provision, to prevent children having to travel long distances to school.
- Q My opinion is that it's going ahead anyway.**
- A No decisions have been made. Even if officers wanted it, no decisions can be made without going through a statutory process.
- Q Another option would be to carry on with this resource and develop it, as it is an example of good practice and parents from out of borough would want to come.**
- A The Authority is committed to trying to develop area-based provision.
- Q Mainstream children would miss out, as having the children with speech and language difficulties here benefits them as well.**
- A As with all schools, Hindley Green will still have pupils with a range of special educational needs even if pupils with speech and language difficulties move.
- Q Are the units going to stay as mainstream schools?**
- A The resourced provision will be in mainstream schools.

**Q Will children have to leave after 2 years?**

A The resourced schools will fulfil three different functions. Pupils in each of the three categories will stay in the resourced school for different lengths of time:

- assessment and observation – pupils will usually stay for 3 terms
- speech and language difficulties – pupils will usually stay for 6 terms
- pupils on the Autistic Spectrum – will usually stay longer than 6 terms