

Prescribed alteration proposal: Expansion of Landgate School into the Abram Bryn Gates site on a temporary basis

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Prescribed alteration proposal: Expansion of Landgate School onto an additional site

Notice is given in accordance with [section 19\(1\) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006](#) and the statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers '[Making significant changes \('prescribed alterations'\) to maintained schools, March 2025](#)', that Wigan Council intends to make a prescribed alteration to:

Landgate School
Landgate Lane
Ashton-in-Makerfield
Bryn
Wigan
WN4 0EP

Local Authority Details

Wigan Council
Town Hall
Library Street
Wigan
WN1 1YN

Description of alteration

Landgate School is a community special school for children and young people aged 4 to 19 years with autism and associated communication and interaction difficulties.

There is little movement in the school population as demand for reception places is high and most pupils remain in that setting until they are 19 years. This leaves little opportunities for in-year admissions or admissions at key transition points, such as high school, for those children and young people who would be best served attending a special school. As a result, demand for places far exceeds the current capacity placing a reliance on the independent sector to educate children and young people with Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans.

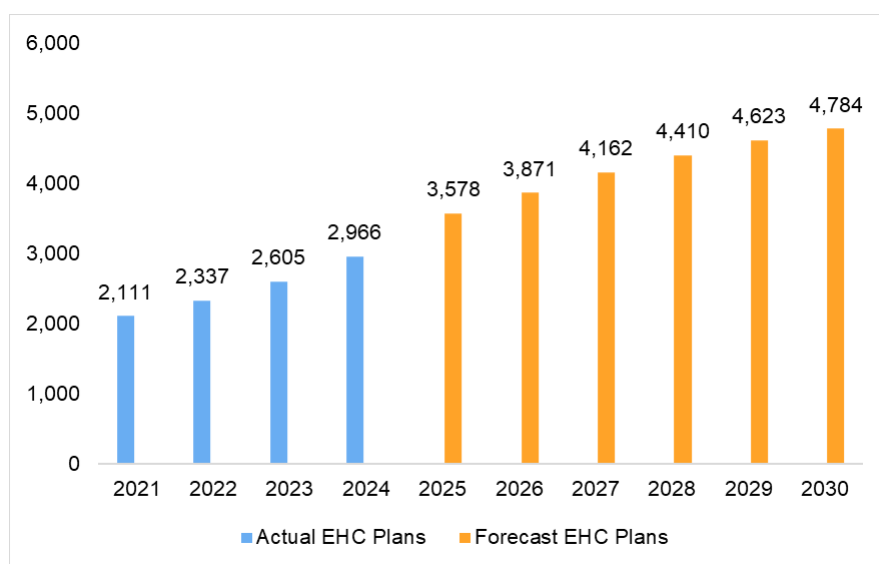
There are currently 100 places available for primary and secondary pupils (60 at primary and 40 at secondary phases of education) which equates to one class per year group (Reception to Year 11 only). Given the number of requests for placements there is an urgent need to increase the capacity of

the school to two forms of entry to 192 pupils (Reception to Year 11), in line with Wigan's SEND Sufficiency Strategy. The current site is at maximum capacity and has been overdeveloped in terms of the use of mobile units to accommodate additional pupils on roll.

Therefore, it is proposed to temporarily utilise the vacant Abram Bryn Gates School located on Lily Lane in Bamfurlong approximately 3 miles from the site of Landgate School. This will enable the Senior Leadership Team of the school to move Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils to Abram Bryn Gates and manage the school over the two sites. This temporary solution will enable the Council to secure additional investment and land to rebuild and permanently expand the school in line with the capacity required to meet both the current and future special educational needs of children and young people living in Wigan.

Reasons for expansion

Following the introductions of the SEND reforms in 2014, there has been a steady year-on-year increase in the number of EHC Plans maintained by Wigan Council for children and young people with special educational needs which is reflective of regional and national trends. Our forecasting model shows that the number of children and young people with EHC Plans is predicted to increase by 32% by 2030.



Whilst most children and young people's special educational needs can be met in a mainstream school, the increasing number of maintained EHC Plans will result in a higher demand for special school places. Currently 55% of Wigan's EHC Plan pre-16 population are educated in mainstream settings - this means that around 45% of the school aged population require

specialist provision. Taking into consideration, the historical use and future forecasts of both state-funded special and independent special school places, the overall deficit in special sector is forecast to be 396 places by 2030/31.

As of January 2025, the actual number of children and young people attending Landgate School reached its maximum capacity of 134. Additional places are required to enable the intake of pupils in September 2025 and beyond.

Objectives of the proposal

The objectives of the proposal are to:

- Temporarily relocate Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils at Landgate School to Abram Bryn Gates for a period of two academic years to enable the school to admit more pupils with EHC Plans who require a special school place, whilst the long-term need for placements is addressed and a permanent new site is established.
- Reduce the Council's reliance of the independent special school sector, so that more children and young people can access a local special school place.
- Ensure that children and young people receive a high-quality education – Landgate School was graded as 'Outstanding' by OFSTED in its most recent inspection and Wigan Council are assured that educational standards within the school are good.

Notwithstanding the financial case, there are clear educational, social and moral imperatives for the Council to place children and young people locally in the borough and to invest in the Wigan state-funded education sector, all of which align with our Progress with Unity missions to:

1. Create fair opportunities for all children, families, residents and businesses.
2. Make all our towns and neighbourhoods flourish for those who live and work in them.

Admission and curriculum arrangements

The new site will be used for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils aged 11 to 16 years.

All admissions to Landgate School are controlled by Wigan Council in consultation with the school's leadership team. The law says that most

children and young people will require an EHC Plan to attend a special school.

There are some very limited situations in which a child without an EHC Plan may be considered – for example for the purposes of an EHC needs assessment, but only where the headteacher of the school, the Council and the child's parents agree to the placement.

There will be no changes to the school's curriculum arrangements, and it is not proposed that pupils will move between the Landgate Lane and Abram Bryn Gates sites.

Governance and administration

Landgate School have been part of Aspire Federation since September 2015, and it is proposed that the temporary site at Abram Bryn Gates will remain under this governance arrangement and managed by the Senior Leadership Team at Landgate School.

Landgate School's Governing Body will continue to provide scrutiny and challenge to the Leadership Team to ensure that the site is managed in line with the standards and expectations that are in operation at the Landgate Lane site.

Staff for the new site will be employed on the same terms and conditions of existing staff across the Aspire Federation some of which work across multiple sites, but the expectation is that most teaching and support staff will be based at Abram Bryn Gates.

Physical characteristics of the school

Abram Bryn Gates Primary School was closed on the 31 August 2023 and is easily accessible to the community that the current school serves being 3 miles away from the Landgate Lane site.

As the site was previously a school, there are limited adaptations required to the building, and both school sites have adequate facilities to serve its pupils without the need to share resources.

The effect on other educational institutions within the area

It is not intended that the proposal would impact adversely on other schools and academies or the educational provision in the wider area. The proposal would provide additional places for children with special educational need across Wigan.

Project costs and indication of how these will be met, including how long-term value for money will be achieved

The refurbishment of the Abram Bryn Gates site will be funded from the High Needs Capital Programme Allocation estimated to be a cost of no more than £250,000.

If no action is taken to expand the number of school places, there is a risk that more children will be placed out of the borough and in independent provision at a significant cost to Wigan Council. The average cost to Wigan Council for an independent school place is £49,000 (not including transportation costs), but this can range from £34,000 to £103,000 per place depending on the provider. Landgate School costs are in the region of £24,000 per pupil on average providing better value for money. Expanding Landgate School will alleviate the pressures on an already overspent budget (High Needs Block). This will also affect the reputation of the council if we are not able to provide for our children within our borough.

*High needs capital funding is the money the Department for Education give local authorities each year to help them fulfil their duty to make sure there are enough special school places for children in their local area, and to improve existing provision.

Implementation

The proposals are planned to be implemented from September 2025.

How to make representations on the proposal

Within four weeks from the date of publication of these proposals, that is by 5pm on the 6 July 2025, any person may support, object to, or make comments on the proposal online at www.wigan.gov.uk/consultations

Or by sending their representations to:

By Post: SEND Service, Wigan Life Centre (South), 2nd Floor, Wigan, WN1 1NJ,

By email: consultation@wigan.gov.uk