



Prescribed alteration proposal – Permanent expansion of Wood Fold Primary School

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, October 2024', that Wigan Council intends to make a prescribed alteration to Wood Fold Primary School, Green Lane, Standish, Wigan, WN6 0TS.

It is proposed to enlarge the school by extending the school premises to increase the capacity of the school to admit more pupils. The school currently has an admission number of 60 pupils per year group. It is proposed that Wood Fold Primary School is permanently enlarged so it can admit 90 pupils into Reception Class from September 2026 and for subsequent years.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal, which can be viewed at:

www.wigan.gov.uk/consultations

Copies of the complete proposal can also be obtained from: Wigan Council, School Organisation Team, Town Hall, Library Street, Wigan, WN1 1YN, by email to consultation@wigan.gov.uk or by phone to 01942 489013.

Within 4 weeks of the date of these proposals, 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 Wigan Council, School Organisation Team, Town Hall, Library Street, Wigan, WN1 1YN or by email to consultation@wigan.gov.uk

The closing date for comments is 5pm 14th February 2025.

Signed: Catherine Pealing, Assistant Director Education

Publication Date: 17th January 2025

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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, October 2024', that Wigan Council intends to make a prescribed alteration to:

Wood Fold Primary School
Green Lane,
Standish,
Wigan,
WN6 0TS.

Local Authority Details

Wigan Council
Town Hall,
Library Street,
Wigan, WN1 1YN

Description of alteration

It is proposed to enlarge the school by extending the school premises to increase the capacity of the school to admit more pupils. The school currently has an admission number of 60 pupils per year group. It is proposed that Wood Fold Primary School is permanently enlarged so it can admit 90 pupils into Reception Class from September 2026 and for subsequent years.

A small-scale expansion has already taken place at the school to provide a classroom to accommodate a bulge class due to the anticipated increase in demand for primary school places in the area and to meet the Council's statutory requirement to provide sufficient good school places.

The alteration will provide a new stand-alone block at the school that will accommodate the additional classrooms and facilities required to increase capacity at the school. Basic need/section 106* contribution will fund the new building.

*Basic need 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 school places for children in their local area. Section 106 contributions are sought from developers towards the costs of providing

community and social infrastructure, such as school places, the need for which has arisen as a result of a new development taking place.

Evidence of demand

Pupil projections suggest there will be insufficient primary school places in Standish to meet need. In light of this, we have reached the decision to propose 30 additional places at Wood Fold Primary School. If some of the 30 places are not filled, we can meet the shortfall in expenditure required to resource an extra class.

The birth rate in Standish primary planning area (WN6 0) has been climbing for the past 10 years. The table below shows the data on births from the NHS and our current projections for the Standish area based on the latest trends –

Intake Year	Rec 2019	Rec 2020	Rec 2021	Rec 2022	Rec 2023	Rec 2024	Rec 2025	Rec 2026	Rec 2027	Rec 2028
Year of birth	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
Births	95	99	114	127	132	137	166	170	160	207
Placed on roll/Projection	128	158	174	160	170	170	212 (P)	217 (P)	205 (P)	260 (P)

(P) – projected numbers

This birth data combined with preference trends and growth provides the basis for our projections.

The need for additional places was triggered by a jump in the birth rate between 2019/20 and 2020/21. This higher birth rate was then maintained until 2022/23. The latest birth data received from the NHS in November 2024 shows a further jump in the birth rate for 2023/24. This new birth rate exceeds the current 180 places available and demonstrates that the birth trend in Standish is continuing to rise. This adds weight to the need to increase capacity in the area to 210 places per year group.

Objectives of the proposal

The objectives of the proposal are to permanently enlarge Wood Fold Primary School by increasing the physical capacity of the building so that it can admit 90 pupils in Reception Class 2026 and subsequent years. This will:

- ensure there are sufficient good or better school places to educate primary age children living in the area who will be of school age with effect from 1 September 2026; and
- increase the opportunity for parental choice as projections indicate that schools in the Standish primary planning area will be oversubscribed.

Educational standards at Wood Fold Primary school are graded Good or better by Ofsted. Whilst Ofsted no longer give one-word judgements to schools, the school's outcomes are above national in recent years. Our School Improvement monitoring gives the Local Authority high confidence in the school.

The effect on other educational institutions within the area

There are 3 primary schools in the Standish primary place planning area. These are St Marie's Catholic Primary School, St Wilfrid's CE Academy and Wood Fold Primary School.

St Marie's Catholic Primary School and St Wilfrid's CE Academy cater for families seeking a faith education. The expansion of Wood Fold Primary School would provide additional community school places at a school with less restrictive admission arrangements which do not prioritise being a member of a particular faith. This will provide more choice for parents seeking an education for their child at a local non-faith school. Currently the places available within Standish primary schools is –

School Name	Places per year group	Religious Character
St Marie's Catholic Primary School	30	Roman Catholic
St Wilfrid's CE Academy	90	Church of England
Wood Fold Primary School	60	None
Total places	180	

This means that currently one third of primary school places in Standish are available in a non-faith school. By increasing capacity at Wood Fold Primary School, we can secure diversity in the provision of school places and increase opportunities for parental choice, especially when considering that Church of England places have already been expanded and evidence suggests that the need for Catholic places is being met.

Without the additional capacity at Wood Fold Primary School, the local authority is at risk of not fulfilling its obligation to provide sufficient school places to ensure every child requiring a mainstream school place receives an offer on National Allocation Day.

It is acknowledged that any expansion needs to be carefully planned to ensure that additional capacity is only made available when needed, so that other local schools are not negatively impacted upon.

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

The cost of the expansion is anticipated to be £6,000,000. It is assumed that scheme costs will be part funded from S106 contributions, subject to housing developments progressing as per the S106 agreements. Should there be a shortfall in S106 contributions received then Basic Needs funding will be used to gap fund to the value stated above.

The local optioneering review for schools in the Standish area indicated that the expansion of Wood Fold Primary School would be favourable because it's far easier to expand than other local schools. Any construction activity at Wood Fold Primary School can be separated wholly from the school, resulting in a safe, efficient, and cost-effective build period.

Long term value for money will be achieved through permanent expansion. Modular or temporary solutions have been discounted because they do not represent good value. Their primary advantage is speed of construction. Once that is not a significant factor, they offer a worse solution in terms of cost, suitability, condition and crucially perception.

In the medium to long term, standard modular buildings at best cost more than traditional construction. Bespoke solutions are cost equivalent in the short term and more expensive in the medium to long terms. If a standard "off the shelf" modular solution is adopted, the school needs to adapt its working practises to standard sized spaces of the building, and not the other way around. They have a shorter design life and are less robust than traditional forms of procurement and require more maintenance.

Temporary modular solutions are non-compliant with building regulations and can only secure short-term and temporary planning permission. A standard modular building will also crucially always be perceived as "a mobile" by pupils, parents and carers, the staff and the public.

Pre-publication Consultation

A non-statutory pre-publication consultation took place between 8th October and 19th November 2024. The main themes raised by consultees were –

Transport and Environmental Factors	Community, Social and Educational Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased traffic/congestion• Parking• Expand a different school or use capacity in other areas• Road safety• Loss of open space to accommodate expansion• Build a new school somewhere else• Pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A 3-form entry school is too big• Impact on the feel of the school/school community/standards• Impact of building work on pupils

The most significant theme highlighted by consultees during the pre-publication consultation was the impact any expansion would have on traffic and congestion.

If approved, once the 5-stage process is completed by the School Organisation Team, planning permission will be required for the proposed expansion of Wood Fold Primary School. The planning application will be supported by a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan.

The Transport Assessment will consider the impact of the development on all transport modes, set out proposals to minimise the impact of the development on the transport network and promote measures to encourage sustainable transport. The impact of the remaining development traffic that cannot be reduced further through sustainable transport measures is assessed on the local road network. The Transport Assessments will be tailored to local circumstances and as such will account for any existing road safety issues in the area, the additional traffic generated by the new residential developments in Standish and any associated mitigation developed through the Standish Infrastructure Assessment.

The primary purpose of a Travel Plan is to identify opportunities for the effective promotion and delivery of sustainable transport initiatives such as walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport in connection with the proposed development and through this to thereby reduce the demand for travel by less sustainable modes.

It is acknowledged that a significant proportion of responses received to the pre-publication consultation were in relation to the negative impact on traffic and congestion in the area. In addition to the 5-stage process and the planning application transport assessment travel plan, the council's transport strategy provides more information about transport across Wigan, including the Standish area.

Implementation

The proposed permanent expansion will be completed by September 2026. This will provide the facilities required to allow the school to admit 90 pupils per Reception Class intake from September 2026. The new admission number will phase in as each new Reception Class cohort starts.

How to make representations on the proposal to permanently expand Wood Fold Primary School

Within four weeks from the date of publication of these proposals, that is by 14th February 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: Wigan Council, School Organisation Team, Town Hall, Library Street, Wigan, WN1 1YN

By email: consultation@wigan.gov.uk

Comments previously made during the pre-publication consultation will be made available for decision makers.