



## **Consultation on a proposal to expand the Special Educational Needs designation for pupils at Rowdeford Special School, Rowde, Wiltshire**

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# Consultation on a proposal to extend the Special Educational Needs designation for pupils at Rowdeford Special School, Rowde, Wiltshire

## 1. The Proposal Summary

1.1. It is proposed that the Special Educational Needs (SEN) designation for pupils attending Rowdeford Special School, Rowde, Wiltshire is extended to include pupils with Severe Learning Disabilities from June 2018 to:

- 1.1.1. Enable a wider range of pupils to benefit from the education and support provided by Rowdeford school
- 1.1.2. Meet the needs of children with higher levels of SEN in Wiltshire
- 1.1.3. Increase the number of places for children with higher levels of SEN in the north, east and west of the County.

## 2. Why is this consultation taking place?

2.1. Before any major decision can be made about the future of a maintained school, there has to be consultation with those people likely to be affected by the change<sup>1</sup>. The purpose of this document is to consult with parents and other stakeholders with an interest in the provision of special education provision for children in Wiltshire. This document gives you background information and asks for your views.

## Background Rowdeford School

### 3.

3.1. Rowdeford is a Community Secondary (11-16), co-educational Special School for 130 pupils whose main Primary Needs are:

- 3.1.1. Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)
- 3.1.2. ASD (autistic spectrum disorder)
- 3.1.3. PD (Physical Disability)
- 3.1.4. Moderate Learning Disability<sup>2</sup> (MLD)

3.2. In practice many of the pupils have ASD (40%) as their primary SEN. A further 28% have their primary designation as Moderate Learning disabilities and 22% Speech, Language and Communication needs<sup>3</sup>.

3.3. A significant number of these pupils also have additional sensory impairments, physical difficulties or medical needs.

3.4. The school also currently has a small residential facility, although pupils are not placed here on the basis of needing residential support, but this provision might represent an enhancement of their life skills education.

3.5. The school has an Ofsted rating of "good" with outstanding features in Quality of teaching, learning and assessment, Personal development, behaviour and welfare and Outcomes for pupils<sup>4</sup>

3.6. The school also has a range of outreach and extended support for pupils attending other local schools in Wiltshire. The school is highly regarded and offers young people a quality education and support into adulthood.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/514548/16-04-06\\_FINAL\\_SO\\_Guidance\\_PA\\_Regs.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/514548/16-04-06_FINAL_SO_Guidance_PA_Regs.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Source Edubase <http://www.edubase.gov.uk/edubase/establishment/prusencharacteristics.xhtml?urn=126546>

<sup>3</sup> Census January 2018

<sup>4</sup> <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/126546>

#### 4. Background Wiltshire

- 4.1. Rowdeford is one of six special schools in Wiltshire. All of Wiltshire's Specials schools are coming under significant pressure to offer school places to children/young people with higher levels of SEN.
- 4.2. Wiltshire has a growing population with an expected 13,500 new pupils by 2026 of which we anticipate at least 2.9% will have a higher level of SEN such that they will need an education health and care plan (EHCP).
- 4.3. In addition, Wiltshire, alongside other Local Authorities, is meeting the need to respond to the 2014 Children and Families Act which has created a growth in the number of children/young people registered with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or statement of special Educational Needs
- 4.4. As of 2017 around 2,200 school age children and young people in Wiltshire have an EHCP/statement.
- 4.5. It is anticipated that by 2026 an additional 660 pupils will have an EHCP and that roughly 220 of these children will need a special school place.
- 4.6. It is also acknowledged that there are now greater numbers of children and young people in Wiltshire with SEN who have increasing levels of need such that they will be registered as having severe learning disabilities more often than is currently the case.
- 4.7. The Local Authority has a finite number of special school places and these must be prioritised for those with greatest need.
- 4.8. Related to this higher level of need more children are now having to leave the County and be placed in independent schools, which does not add to the County's ability to provide for these pupils, removes these children/young people from their local community, adds transport time and costs and costs on average more than twice as much to meet need<sup>5</sup>.
- 4.9. In order to meet this growth in need Wiltshire Local Authority has been working:
  - 4.9.1. With mainstream schools to upskill provision so that more children can attend local mainstream schools when they have moderate learning disabilities, and is looking to special schools to use their higher level of specialist skill and expertise to meet the needs of children with higher level needs.
  - 4.9.2. With the six special schools to look at how provision can be expanded. This is a separate piece of work and as a consequence expansion is not part of this consultation, but will be addressed separately as a Wiltshire wide project.

#### 5. The Proposal:

- 5.1. Following discussions with the school it was felt that one of the ways Rowdeford Special School could contribute to meeting the changes in need would be to extend the types of SEN amongst pupils who can attend the school. Key elements of this proposal would be that from June 2018, as places become available, Rowdeford special school's designation will be extended to include pupils with Severe Learning Disabilities (SLD) as part of its core offer. (i.e. it will change from MLD to MLD/SLD)
- 5.2. However, in agreement with the school this would be based upon:

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<sup>5</sup> Based on Wiltshire LA budget costing as at January 2017 excluding residential placements

- 5.2.1. No pupil currently attending the school being displaced by this proposal. All pupils currently at the school would continue their education at the school.
- 5.2.2. This proposal being separate from any consideration of the future of the residential provision.
- 5.2.3. Any consideration of expansion being separate from this consultation as it is being led by the Local Authority project working with special schools together.
- 5.2.4. Pupils with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) could join any year group, as places become available from June 2018, but the focus would be on new pupils joining in year seven from September 2018.
- 5.2.5. Due consideration will be given to the limitations of the site for non-ambulant pupils and the “mix” of pupils having regard to safeguarding, well-being and learning factors.

## **6. The Benefits of this proposal**

6.1. The benefits of this proposal are that it will:

- 6.1.1. Enable pupils with higher level learning disabilities to benefit from the high-quality education and support at Rowdeford School, with potentially shorter travel times for local pupils.
- 6.1.2. Enable Rowdeford special school to develop provision for more children and young people with higher level SEN.
- 6.1.3. Develop Rowdeford Special school’s provision for pupils with Moderate Learning difficulties (MLD) and create more cohesive learning groups on a continuum of need.
- 6.1.4. Enable more Wiltshire children and young people with SEN to attend a school in Wiltshire.
- 6.1.5. Reduce the pressures on budgets created by expensive out of county placements thus enabling spend to benefit the development of Wiltshire provision for Wiltshire pupils.

## **7. Effects of the Proposed Changes:**

7.1. For pupils:

- 7.1.1. Pupils currently placed at the school will continue to receive a high quality education at Rowdeford
- 7.1.2. New pupils with SLD will be able to attend the school, giving more locations and choice of provision
- 7.1.3. All pupils will get access to a range of integrated and relevant education and qualifications
- 7.1.4. Pupils will continue to receive good and outstanding education and support which is being continuously developed

7.2. For the school:

- 7.2.1. An opportunity to develop and consolidate education provision

7.2.2. Greater financial security with higher level funding for top-ups

7.2.3. No negative impacts on staff numbers with opportunities to offer new posts and training.

7.3. For other schools:

7.3.1. For the other Wiltshire Special schools, no direct impact is anticipated, however it should enable more discussion about shared approaches to new admissions, training and skill development.

7.3.2. For mainstream schools, there is the expectation that some of the pupils who might formerly have attended Rowdeford School, will in the future have the opportunity to attend mainstream schools particularly where a mainstream secondary school could offer more academic opportunities within the mainstream schools Enhanced Learning Provision (ELP)<sup>6</sup>. The local authority, working with mainstream secondary schools, is concurrently reviewing and developing the scope of ELP to increase provision for pupils with higher level SEN.

7.3.3. For Independent Special Schools, there should be some reduction in how many children are sent to these schools when parental preference is for a local school. However, with higher level need still increasing there may be no significant loss.

7.4. For the Local Authority:

7.4.1. Greater capacity to meet the higher level needs of children with SEN locally.

7.4.2. Broadening the expertise and provision available in Wiltshire Special Schools.

7.4.3. A potential reduction in expenditure when travel and independent special school fees are less used.

## **8. Other Impacts**

8.1. Financial implications

8.1.1. There will be no detrimental financial implications for the school or the Local Authority. Overall the school will benefit from greater financial security and higher funding levels.

8.1.2. There should be some reduction in expenditure for the Local Authority as more children and young people are able to have local placements reducing travel budgets and placement budgets.

8.2. Environmental and community considerations

8.2.1. Overall the potential for more children and young people to go to a more local school should have a positive impact on carbon emissions and reduction in use of fossil fuels for travel.

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<sup>6</sup> ELP is a middle ground provision which offers young people access to a supportive education which includes features of both mainstream and special school provision. Rowdeford Specials' schools outreach is part of this provision in local mainstream secondary schools.

8.2.2. However more importantly this proposal should mean benefits for local communities being able to support and engage with children and young people with SEN in their own area.

### 8.3. Health and Safety and safeguarding issues

8.3.1. This proposal will not make any detrimental changes to the safety of the children currently at Rowdeford school or new pupils attending. Safeguarding is a very important issue for all our schools and the wellbeing and safeguarding of all Wiltshire children remains a top priority.

## 9. Consultation Period:

9.1. This consultation on this proposal is running from Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2017 to 16<sup>th</sup> February 2018 in accordance with the Department for Education (DfE) publication "Making 'prescribed alterations' to maintained schools - Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers - April 2016"

9.2. The proposal is made by Wiltshire Local Authority following discussion with the Senior Leadership team and the Governor's of Rowdeford Special school which is a maintained community Special School.

9.3. Following the consultation period the Local Authority will make a decision as to whether the proposals should be taken forward within two months of the closure of the consultation.

9.4. The implementation date, should the proposal be accepted, would be proposed as the 1st of June 2018.

## 10. Who is being consulted:

10.1. This document is being sent or made available to:

10.1.1. Parents of current pupils at the schools via post and on the school website

10.1.2. All staff at the school

10.1.3. Governors of the school

10.1.4. Other Wiltshire Council staff working with SEN children

10.1.5. The County Secretaries of the relevant unions and professional bodies

10.1.6. The public and particularly parents of children and young people with SEN via The Local Offer website, Wiltshire parent Carer Council website and Wiltshire Council website

10.1.7. Other stakeholders such as other schools in Wiltshire, particularly other Special schools.

## 11. How to Respond:

11.1. There are a number of ways in which you can make comments about these proposals:

11.1.1. There is a questionnaire attached to this consultation document which you can fill in and return by post or email to Wiltshire Local Authority.

- 11.1.2. There is a meeting for staff and governors of the school on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2018.
- 11.1.3. There will be a meeting for parents/carers, pupils and other interested parties at the school on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2018.
- 11.1.4. The pupil's school council will take this as an agenda item.
- 11.1.5. You can submit your comments through the Local Offer website:  
[www.wiltshirelocaloffer.org.uk](http://www.wiltshirelocaloffer.org.uk) or e-mail [Judith.westcott@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:Judith.westcott@wiltshire.gov.uk)

## **12. What happens at the end of the consultation process?**

- 12.1. All responses and views expressed will be collated and analysed by Wiltshire Local Authority following the closure of the consultation. The information provided to the Council will be used to come to a decision within two months following the end of the consultation to decide whether or not to proceed to make statutory proposals and to implement the proposed changes.
- 12.2. Wiltshire Council can choose to proceed as identified in this document, make modifications and implement or withdraw proposals. If significant changes or new proposals are made a further consultation period will be established. Following a decision Wiltshire Council will publish its decision via the Website and to the school Governing body, Head teacher and to all parents with children at the school. An appeal can be made by School Governors within four weeks of the decision to the Schools Adjudicator. A decision should be made by the Schools Adjudicator within a week and there is no further appeal. Following implementation Wiltshire Council will inform the Secretary of State by updating the department's Register of Educational Establishments.

**Thank you for taking the time to consider these proposals the school and Wiltshire Local Authority will look forward to your comments.**

### Rowdeford Proposal Questionnaire Autumn 2017:

It is proposed that the SEN designation for pupils attending Rowdeford Special School is extended to include pupils with Severe Learning Disabilities (SLD) from June 2018 to:

- Enable a wider range of pupils to benefit from the education and support provided by Rowdeford school
- Meet the needs of children with higher levels of SEN in Wiltshire
- Increase the number of places for children with SEN in the north east and west of the County.

Please give us your views on the proposal.

Please tick one of the below	Please tick
Parent of a child at Rowdeford Special School	
Parent of child/young person with SEN not currently attending Rowdeford Special School	
Member of staff	
Governor	
Other – please note your role in relation to the consultation:	

Do you agree with the proposal to extend Rowdeford School's SEN designation to include Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)?	Yes	No	Not sure
Please Comment:			
Do you think there are other options that should be explored? (please describe)			
Are there any other comments you would like to make?			

*Please return your form either electronically to [Judith.westcott@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:Judith.westcott@wiltshire.gov.uk) or in hard copy to the school office who will pass it on. You can also post your response to Judith Westcott at Commissioning and Joint Planning Team, Children's Services, Wiltshire Council, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, BA14 8JN. This must be received by the 16th of February at 5pm 2018.*



<b>Consultation Process</b>		
<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>Publication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposal will be published on Rowdeford School and Wiltshire Council website from the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2017 to 16<sup>th</sup> of February 2018.</li> <li>• A copy of the proposal will be sent to the Governors of Rowdeford School and the Head teacher. Also to Wiltshire's Special Schools and Local Schools.</li> <li>• Rowdeford School will ensure that the information is released through a circulated update (this may be a paper or electronic newsletter or update) and also sent directly to parent/carers of all registered pupils.</li> <li>• Copies of the proposal will be available via the school, by contacting Wiltshire Council and on both websites.</li> <li>• Comments can be made via E-mail or letter or using the reply form to: Judith Westcott, Rowdeford SEN Designation consultation, Children's Commissioning and Performance, Wiltshire Council, Bythesea Rd, Trowbridge, BA14 8JN or <a href="mailto:Judith.westcott@wiltshire.gov.uk">Judith.westcott@wiltshire.gov.uk</a></li> <li>• Comments must be received by 5pm on the 16th of February 2018 to be considered in the decision making.</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 2</b>	<b>Representation (Formal consultation 4 weeks)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2017 to 16<sup>th</sup> of February 2018</li> <li>• 2 evening meetings will be arranged at the school during this time and led by the Head of Children's Commissioning at Wiltshire Council (Susan Tanner): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Staff and Governors</li> <li>2. Parents, carers and local people/ other stakeholders</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The school will work with the school council to ensure that pupils are given an opportunity to express their views.</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 3</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following the period of consultation, a decision will be made between the 17<sup>th</sup> of February 2017 to the 20<sup>th</sup> of April 2018.</li> <li>• The proposal can be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Accepted</li> <li>○ Rejected</li> <li>○ Or accepted with modifications by the proposer, Wiltshire Council.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The decision will be published within one week of the decision and; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Published on the same sites as the proposal</li> <li>○ Sent to parent/carers of every registered pupil, and</li> <li>○ Sent to the Governing body.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Following the decision, the Governing body may appeal within one week of publication with information that must be additional and was not available to be submitted during the consultation.</li> </ul>

<b>Stage 4</b>	<b>Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Implementation date is set as the 1st of June 2018 with effect from the beginning of the June 2018 term.</li><li>• The Secretary of State will be informed by updating the departments Register of Educational Establishments (EduBase)</li><li>• If the proposal is accepted an implementation plan will be designed by Rowdeford School.</li></ul>
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