

**Wirral
Children and Young People’s
Department
Options for
The Lyndale School**

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1. Introduction

On 16th January 2014 Cabinet received a report from the Director of Children’s Services seeking agreement to hold a consultation on the closure of The Lyndale School. The report also contained a number of options and stated that during the consultation period all options and any new ones which might emerge during the consultation period would be considered. Cabinet agreed to begin consultation. This decision was “called in” to be re-examined by the Co-ordinating Committee on 27th February 2014. At the conclusion of this meeting the decision to begin the consultation was upheld.

2. Scope

This report will look at the options detailed in the Cabinet report and at any which have emerged during the consultation period.

3. Aim

To consider all options alongside the following:

- Viability and sustainability
- Quality and standards
- Diversity and pattern of parental preference
- Pupil numbers
- Financial implications and value for money
- SEN Improvement Test

4. Methodology

4.1. Documentation

Reports and documents were received and scrutinised during the course of the project (Appendix 1).

4.2. Meetings/interviews

A briefing meeting was held with the Director of Children’s Services and the Interim Senior Manager (SEN) and the Terms of Reference were agreed.

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An interview schedule was developed for meetings with appropriate officers and the relevant schools (Appendix 2).

5. Executive Summary

5.1. Overview

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places in the area with fair access to educational opportunity to promote the fulfilment of every child’s potential (Education Act 1996). In the case of a special school, where closure is being considered, the requirements of the SEN Improvement Test must also be met.

In 2013 a new system of funding was introduced by the DfE for the funding of High Needs pupils in schools, consisting of a base element per place and an additional top up based on individual pupil needs. This was a departure from the previous system of place led funding. In the future the Education Funding Agency will review place numbers in specialist SEN provision with the Local Authority to make provision more responsive to demand.

These national reforms have brought the The Lyndale School’s financial position into sharp focus. The three year projections for the School strongly suggest that with decreasing pupil numbers and a reduction in place led funding the school it is no longer viable or sustainable. This uncertainty about the school should not be allowed to continue as it is unsettling for children, parents and staff. A decision needs to be taken at the earliest opportunity.

After lengthy consultations, eight potential solutions have been put forward to address this issue and each has been considered in detail within this report.

5.2. Viable Options

In reality the only viable course of action is Option 7, to close the Lyndale School and expand Stanley School and Elleray Park School to provide 220/230 places.

Stanley and Elleray Park schools have both received good or outstanding Ofsted inspections which would suggest the standard and quality they provide is at least as good if not better than the Lyndale. The proposal is likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for the children. It would offer potential for a more inclusive approach for children with PMLD and would be consistent with secondary provision for pupils with CLD in the Wirral.

Both Stanley and Elleray Park schools are currently financially viable. If the number of places at each of the schools is increased to the suggested levels, and should they receive any increase in funding as a result of pupil intake, the financial position of both schools will be healthy moving into the future and will ensure stability for years to come.

6. Background and Key Issues

6.1. Background

At a national level, the Children and Families Act 2014 makes provision to improve the quality of partnership working to meet the needs of children with special educational needs and their families.

“Wirral Children and Young Peoples Plan 2014 – 2016” sets out the Authority’s commitment to provide the very best outcomes for all children and young people. The partnership working of the Children’s Trust provides a local framework for ensuring that a service which values each child will continue and that this service will make the best use of resources.

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places in the area with fair access to educational opportunity to promote the fulfilment of every child’s potential (Education Act 1996). In the case of a special school, where closure is being considered, the requirements of the SEN Improvement Test must also be met.

In 2013 a new system of funding was introduced by the DfE for the funding of High Needs pupils in schools (“Place Plus”). Previous funding systems were heavily weighted towards funding places in schools regardless of the number of pupils attending. The new arrangement introduced a national system for the funding of specialist provision, with each school receiving an amount of £10,000 per place and an additional top up based on individual pupil needs. In the future, the Education Funding Agency (EFA) will review place numbers in specialist SEN provision with the Local Authority to make provision more responsive to demand. Wirral Schools Forum has been instrumental in developing a model to distribute top up funding across the Authority.

Over the last ten years the Authority has periodically reviewed the provision for children with complex learning difficulties (CLD) and profound and multiple difficulties (PMLD) in both primary and secondary settings. As a result several changes to provision have been effected in order to better provide for these children.

Between April and June 2014 the Local Authority undertook a major consultation about the closure of The Lyndale School. This included a comprehensive list of options to be considered regarding the future provision for those children currently attending the school should closure be the final outcome of the consultation.

As soon as a date had been set for the consultation, it was announced to parents and publicised through the media. The consultation document and details of meetings have been publicly available on the council’s website. The consultation included six public meetings scheduled at different times of the day and at different venues, to give as many people as possible the opportunity to attend. In addition, people were invited to offer their views in

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writing without attending meetings. All responses will be considered by the Council as part of the consultation process.

6.2. Quality and Standards

The Lyndale School is a special school for primary aged children with complex learning difficulties (CLD). It is located in Eastham and is available to children across the whole of the Wirral. The majority of the children currently attending the school have profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD).

The Authority has two other special schools for primary aged children with complex learning difficulties (CLD), including provision for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). These are Stanley School in Pensby and Elleray Park School in Wallasey and they too serve the whole of the Wirral. All three schools have received good or outstanding Ofsted inspections.

Table 1 Summary Ofsted Information for 3 CLD Primary Schools

	Elleray Park School	The Lyndale School	Stanley School
Date of inspection	December 2010	November 2012	April 2013*
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	Good	Good
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	Good	Good
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding	Good	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding	Good	Good

* Stanley inspection carried out prior to move to new building.

6.3. Pupil Numbers

According to the Wirral School Census Pupil Count in January 2014, 401 children (0.8% of the total school population) attended a Complex Learning Difficulties (CLD) primary or secondary special school. Early Years professionals have forged strong links with their Health counterparts who continue to provide a clear and accurate picture of the number of children being born in the area and of the incidence of children with SEN so that detailed planning to support these families can begin as soon as possible.

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**Table 2 Special School Places and Current Numbers
July 2014**

	Admission Places Jan 2014	Pupil Numbers Jan 2014 Census	Pupil Numbers July 2014 Actual
Elleray Park	80	92	94
Lyndale	40	23	20
Stanley School	90	98	100
Total Primary	210	213	214
Foxfield	133	117	115
Meadowside	75	71	72
Total Secondary	208	188	187
Total	418	401	401

6.4. Diversity and parental preference

The Authority has two special schools for secondary aged children with CLD, including provision for children with PMLD. These are Foxfield School in Moreton and Meadowside School in Woodchurch and both schools serve the whole of the Wirral.

Primary aged children with CLD can attend one of three primary special schools Elleray Park School, The Lyndale School and Stanley School and they can all provide for children with PMLD. The Authority has maintained 210 places across the three schools for children with CLD and has increased this to 220 from April 2014.

In September 2013, Stanley School moved into new purpose built premises in Pensby. It currently has 90 places, but can accommodate 110/120 pupils without further extension work. Elleray Park School in Wallasey currently has 90 places, but planned building work will mean that it can accommodate 110 pupils by September 2015. The Lyndale currently has 40 places.

Children with CLD usually receive free transport to school, so their home address does not necessarily dictate which school they attend. Parents can make a choice according to the school offer and the needs of their child.

There are 64 children (0.1% of the total school population) shown on the Census with PMLD as a special need. 59 of these attend a special school and the remaining 5 attend a mainstream school.

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Table 3 January Census 2014

Selected Primary and Secondary Special School Pupil Numbers.

School	SEN Need Types												Numbers on Roll
Special Schools	SPLD	MLD	SLD	PMLD	BESD	SLCN	HI	VI	MSI	PD	ASD	OTH	
Elleray Park			77	15									92
Stanley School	2		93		1	1					1		98
Lyndale School	1		4	18									23
Foxfield	1	2	94	15	1			2			2		117
Meadowside		1	58	11	1								71
Total	4	3	326	59	3	1	0	2	0	0	3	0	401

Need Types	
SPLD	Specific Learning Difficulty
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulty
SLD	Severe Learning Difficulty
PMLD	Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty
BESD	Behaviour, Emotional & Social Difficulties
SLCN	Speech, Language and Communication Needs
HI	Hearing Impairment
VI	Visual Impairment
MSI	Multi-Sensory Impairment
PD	Physical Disability
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
OTH	Other Difficulty/Disability

6.5. Financial Position

Table 4 January School Census Pupil Numbers and Places for the last three years

Year	Elleray Park		Lyndale		Stanley		TOTAL	
	Places	Pupils	Places	Pupils	Places	Pupils	Places	Pupils
2011/12	75	85	45	28	90	86	210	199
2012/13	75	91	45	25	90	91	210	207
2013/14	80	92	40	23	90	98	210	213
2014/15	90		40		90		220	

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The national reforms to the funding of high needs SEN places in special schools have brought The Lyndale School’s financial position into sharp focus. Both Elleray Park and Stanley primary schools are maintaining or increasing their numbers year on year as a result of parental choice. This brings with it a consistency in terms of funding and ensures the viability and sustainability of the schools.

The financial situation at the Lyndale School is deteriorating as pupil numbers decrease. Locally the proposed banded system of top-ups will provide a higher rate of funding for pupils with high dependency PMLD. This banding, Band 5 which is a top-up of £16,000 per pupil, applies to all 4 Special Schools currently with children with PMLD. However, alongside these changes to the funding system the Lyndale School faces difficulties in terms of its small size.

At the latest check by the Local Authority on 3rd July 2014, pupil numbers at The Lyndale School had fallen to 20. In future the Education Funding Agency (EFA) will review place numbers in specialist SEN provision with the Local Authority to make provision more responsive to demand. Any single place reduction will represent a loss of £10,000 to the base budget of specialist SEN provision. A reduction of place funding, if aligned with current places at The Lyndale School, could represent reduction in budget of £200,000. In addition, two children are scheduled to move to secondary provision at the end of term and one other child at the end of the autumn term.

Table 5 2013-14 Illustration of cost of providing places in Wirral Complex Learning Difficulties (CLD) special schools

School	Adjusted 2013-14 Budget*	Places	Pupil Census Jan 2014	Average Cost per Pupil
Elleray Park	£1,546,820	80	92	£16,813
Foxfield	£2,327,034	133	117	£19,889
Lyndale	£761,733	40	23	£33,119
Meadowside	£1,351,179	75	71	£19,031
Stanley	£1,627,282	90	98	£16,605

* Budgets have been adjusted to take account of increased/reduced funding arising from pupil number changes.

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6.6. SEN Test

When considering any reorganisation of provision that the LA considers to be reserved for pupils with special educational needs, including that which might lead to children being displaced, proposers will need to demonstrate how the proposed alternative arrangements are likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for those children. Decision-makers should ensure that proposals:

- i. take account of parental preferences for particular styles of provision or education settings;
- ii. take account of any relevant local offer for children and young people with SEN and disabilities and the views expressed on it;
- iii. offer a range of provision to respond to the needs of individual children and young people, taking account of collaborative arrangements (including between special and mainstream), extended school and Children’s Centre provision; regional centres (of expertise) and regional and sub-regional provision; out of LA day and residential special provision;
- iv. take full account of educational considerations, in particular the need to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum, within a learning environment where children can be healthy and stay safe;
- v. support the LA’s strategy for making schools and settings more accessible to disabled children and young people and their scheme for promoting equality of opportunity for disabled people;
- vi. provide access to appropriately trained staff and access to specialist support and advice, so that individual pupils can have the fullest possible opportunities to make progress in their learning and participate in their school and community;
- vii. ensure appropriate provision for 14-19 year-olds; and
- viii. ensure that appropriate full-time education will be available to all displaced pupils. Their statements of special educational needs must be amended and all parental rights must be ensured. Other interested partners, such as the Health Authority should be involved. Pupils should not be placed long-term or permanently in a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) if a special school place is what they need.

**School Organisation Maintained Schools
Annex B: Guidance for Decision-makers January 2014**

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6.7. Viability and sustainability

Viability

In general terms, viability means that an activity is capable of being done in a practical and useful way. The viability of an organisation is measured by its long term survival, and its ability to have sustainable profits over a period of time. If an organisation is viable, it is able to survive for many years, because it continues to make a profit year after year. The longer an organisation can stay profitable, the better its viability.

In the case of a public sector organisation, this means working within a defined budget and ending the financial year having done so. An organisation shows its viability by achieving this position year on year.

Sustainability

In general terms, sustainability means the ability to maintain or support an activity or service over the long term at a defined rate or level.

The sustainability of an organisation is the management and co-ordination of environmental, social and financial demands and concerns to ensure responsible, ethical and ongoing success.

Specifically, a local authority seeking a viable alternative to a financially unsustainable situation is obliged to consider alternatives that would provide a similar benefit at a reasonable cost.

7. Options

7.1. Retain Lyndale School and school commits to take full range of CLD. Stanley and Elleray Park admissions kept to place numbers

(Original Option 1 from Cabinet Report 16.01.14)

- Retain Lyndale School and extend to full range of CLD
- Retain Lyndale School and Stanley and Elleray Park admissions are kept to place numbers
- Retain Lyndale and change funding bands (New option)

7.2. Lyndale becoming a 2-19 all through school

(Original Option 2 from Cabinet Report 16.01.14)

7.3. Federate (hard or soft) with another school with Lyndale remaining on current site

(Original Options 3 & 4 from Cabinet Report 16.01.14)

- Federate with another special school
- Federate with another primary or secondary school

7.4. Co-locate Lyndale School with another special school

(Original Option 5 from Cabinet Report 16.01.14)

- Co-locate with another special school
- Co-locate and federate with another special school (New Option)

7.5. Lyndale becoming an Academy/Free School

(Original Option 6 from Cabinet Report 16.01.14)

7.6. Close Lyndale School. Open two SLD bases in Primary schools for 6/8 pupils each. Expand Elleray Park and Stanley schools to 100 each

(Original Option 7 from Cabinet Report 16.01.14)

- Close Lyndale
- Close Lyndale and open SLD bases in two primary schools

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- Close Lyndale, open SLD places in two primary schools and expand Elleray Park and Stanley to 100 each
- Close Lyndale and open a PMLD base on the new Foxfield site
(New option)

7.7. Close Lyndale. Expand Stanley/Elleray Park schools to provide 220/230 places

(Original Option 8 from Cabinet Report 16.01.14)

- Close Lyndale and expand Stanley and Elleray Park to provide 220/230 places
- Close Lyndale and expand either Stanley or Elleray Park

7.8. Close Lyndale School but retain the site making another school a split site school. The Lyndale site would be retained for as long as felt necessary

(New Option)

- until children currently at the school had left
- until the receiving school no longer required it

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7.1 Retain Lyndale School and school commits to take full range of CLD. Stanley and Elleray Park admissions kept to place numbers

- Retain Lyndale School and extend to full range of CLD
- Retain Lyndale School and Stanley and Elleray Park admissions are kept to place numbers
- Retain Lyndale and change funding bands

Over a number of years pupil numbers at the Lyndale School have decreased. At the latest check on 3rd July 2014, pupil numbers at the school had fallen to 20 with a further 3 children moving into the secondary sector in the next academic year. It is anticipated that 2 children will join the school in September 2014 meaning that pupil numbers will then be 19. At the end of July 2015 2 more pupils will move to secondary leaving 17 on roll. Existing funding arrangements dictate that the Lyndale School is not viable with this small number of pupils.

In 2013 -14 the school set a budget for the year based on School Funding of £761,733 by using all accumulated balances brought forward of £51,707. At the end of the financial year a surplus of £3,964 was recorded. Without the balances the school would have incurred a deficit of £47,743.

In 2014-15 the school has set a budget for the year based on School Funding of £794,480 by using the balance brought forward of £3,964. This included individual pupil funding for 23 pupils who were included in the School Census Pupil Count in January 2014. However, as the numbers of children has decreased, the amount available for ‘top up’ funding for individual children in both the Autumn and Spring terms will be reduced accordingly. In February when the budget for 2014 was being prepared the projected deficit at the end of the financial year was anticipated to be £110,919. Although the school eventually managed to set a balanced budget, it is anticipated that it will incur a deficit by the end of the financial year as a result of a reduction in actual pupil numbers.

On an annual basis, three year projections are produced for each school so that the Headteacher, governors and the Local Authority are able to see the anticipated financial position of the school. The projections for the Lyndale School show that with decreasing pupil numbers and a reduction in place led funding in response to government requirements, the school will fall into an irreversible downward spiral in terms of viability and sustainability.

There are several additional factors which need to be considered. Due to its nature, the school maintains high staffing levels and relatively high salary

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levels which account for 78% of the overall budget. There appear to have been no reductions in support staff to reflect the reduction in pupil numbers.

The building requires some upgrading. Many of the resources and some of the equipment need to be refreshed and updated.

The school places a high emphasis on care and support for pupils’ wellbeing, in fact the latest Ofsted report judged the school to be ‘outstanding’ for behaviour and safety. However, with such a small number of children, social interaction, aspirations of children and aspirations of parents could all be limited within the confines of a school providing specialised education and therapeutic approaches.

• Retain Lyndale School and extend to full range of CLD

The Lyndale School is classed as a CLD primary school; this means that should parents choose, it can currently provide a place for any child with CLD. Over time the school appears to have evolved into provision mainly, although not exclusively, for children with PMLD. However, it does not attract all the children in the Authority who are classified as PMLD, nor does it attract many children who are classified as CLD. Many parents choose other schools for their children.

Table 6 January Census 2014

Selected Primary Special School Pupil Numbers.

School	SEN Need Types		SLD	PMLD	BESD	SLCN	HI	VI	MSI	PD	ASD	OTH	Numbers on Roll
Special Schools	SPLD	MLD											
Elleray Park			77	15									92
Stanley School	2		93		1	1					1		98
Lyndale School	1		4	18									23
Total	3		174	33	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	213

The school has the capacity to accommodate 40 pupils. If the place numbers were held at 40 the core funding would be £400,000, however the individual pupil funding would only reflect the actual number of pupils in school in September. This is anticipated to be 19 children.

The Local Authority cannot direct children to the school when 2 other primary special schools can offer provision for CLD and PMLD. Parental choice will apply and parents may still choose Elleray Park or Stanley schools.

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The avoidance of pupil disruption is important. Once a child is settled in a special school, it is unlikely that parents will move their child unless they are not satisfied with the existing provision. Even in the best case scenario pupil numbers will not increase at the Lyndale School until September 2015 and even then admission numbers to primary CLD schools are not high. In September 2014 it is expected that 21 pupils will start at one of the CLD schools and that 4 will be classified as PMLD.

Current staffing levels at the school will accommodate more children, but the current position of very high teaching assistant (TA) support will change. At the moment parents’ expectations include a minimum of 1:1 support and in some cases an even higher ratio.

Should the school take on a broader range of pupils with CLD, the ‘top up’ for those children is likely to be in lower funding bands than existing children at the school. Funding for Lyndale School becomes more difficult as more occupied places at lower funding may not reduce the deficit.

In order to facilitate this option, financial protection will be required for several years at Lyndale School. It is anticipated that a school specific top up will be required and this is not consistent with local policy. Other schools demonstrate better value.

- Retain Lyndale School and restrict places at Elleray Park and Stanley**

In addition to the arguments listed above, the following applies:-

In terms of capacity:-

Table 4 January School Census Pupil Numbers and Places for the last three years

Year	Elleray Park		Lyndale		Stanley		TOTAL	
	Places	Pupils	Places	Pupils	Places	Pupils	Places	Pupils
2011/12	75	85	45	28	90	86	210	199
2012/13	75	91	45	25	90	91	210	207
2013/14	80	92	40	23	90	98	210	213
2014/15	90		40		90		220	

Towards the end of the summer term a further check was made with each school:-

- Stanley now has 100 children (9.06.14)
- Elleray Park now has 94 children (12.06.14)
- Lyndale now has 20 children (3.07.14)

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Stanley School relocated in September 2013 into new accommodation, built subject to current DfE requirements for special schools. It has been equipped for children with CLD, including those with PMLD. It has 12 large classrooms and within each class base there are group rooms, storage and toilets. There are also specialist facilities pertinent to the needs of the children, i.e. hydrotherapy pool, medical facilities, sensory facilities. Based on the current pupil: classroom ratio, 120 pupils would be accommodated in the school in its present form.

Elleray Park School currently caters for a number of pupils with PMLD, so already has specialist facilities. The site will lend itself to restricted new building accommodation and capital finance has been identified for Phase I which is currently in design stage. Completion date of Phase 1 is September 2015. This will create 4 new classrooms, resource space, storage, toilets and a hygiene room, bringing the total number of classrooms to 11, which could accommodate 110 children.

Restriction of places at either of the schools will restrict parental choice. This may result in appeals by parents to the SEN Tribunal. Restriction of places also goes against Government policy which encourages the expansion of popular schools. Should children with PMLD be prevented from attending one of the named schools, the schools would attract children from a lower funding band resulting in reduced individual funding and a reduction in school budget.

- Retain Lyndale and change funding bands**

In addition to the arguments listed above, the following applies:-

Any suggestions for change to funding bands will need to be considered for the whole of the sector and not just for the Lyndale School. When the new funding model was introduced in April 2014 it was agreed that it would be kept under review. However, it is unlikely to be reviewed until it has been in operation for at least 12 months so that the impact of the model can be studied across a full financial year.

SEN Improvement Test

Not needed as no change proposed.

However, the revised budget position at 31.03.16 is £168,000 deficit. It is not possible to demonstrate how the proposed alternative arrangements are likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of

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educational provision for the children at the Lyndale given this financial position.

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7.2 Lyndale becoming a 2-19 all through school

In April 2009, the Authority commissioned a feasibility study into the possible creation of a 2-19 school for children and young people with PMLD. This was undertaken in collaboration with the Headteacher and governors of The Lyndale School who were the main proponents of this option. The report was a detailed study of whether the creation of such a school would be feasible, desirable and viable. It was presented to Cabinet in June 2010 and concluded that no case could be made for the creation of a 2-19 school for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

Some work has been undertaken to address wider issues raised by the study in terms of improved information for parents, transition arrangements and the need to develop a comprehensive strategy. However, the main findings of that report appear still to be valid.

The majority of pupils with PMLD on Wirral are currently educated within the broader CLD schools. There is evidence that these children’s needs are being appropriately met within existing provision.

The Authority has two special schools for secondary aged children with complex learning difficulties (CLD), including provision for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). These are Foxfield School in Moreton and Meadowside School in Woodchurch and both serve the whole of the Wirral. Both schools have been rated good by Ofsted, with outstanding features, and are well regarded by parents. Foxfield will move to a new site in January 2015 and has been constructed in line with current DfE requirements. Meadowside is already well equipped to support pupils with PMLD.

Table 7 Summary Ofsted Information for 2 CLD Secondary Schools

	Foxfield School	Meadowside School
Date of inspection	October 2012	October 2012
Achievement of pupils	Good	Good
Quality of teaching	Good	Good
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Good	Good
Overall effectiveness	Good	Good

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The transition arrangements for children transferring from the three CLD primary schools to either Foxfield School or Meadowside School are fully comprehensive.

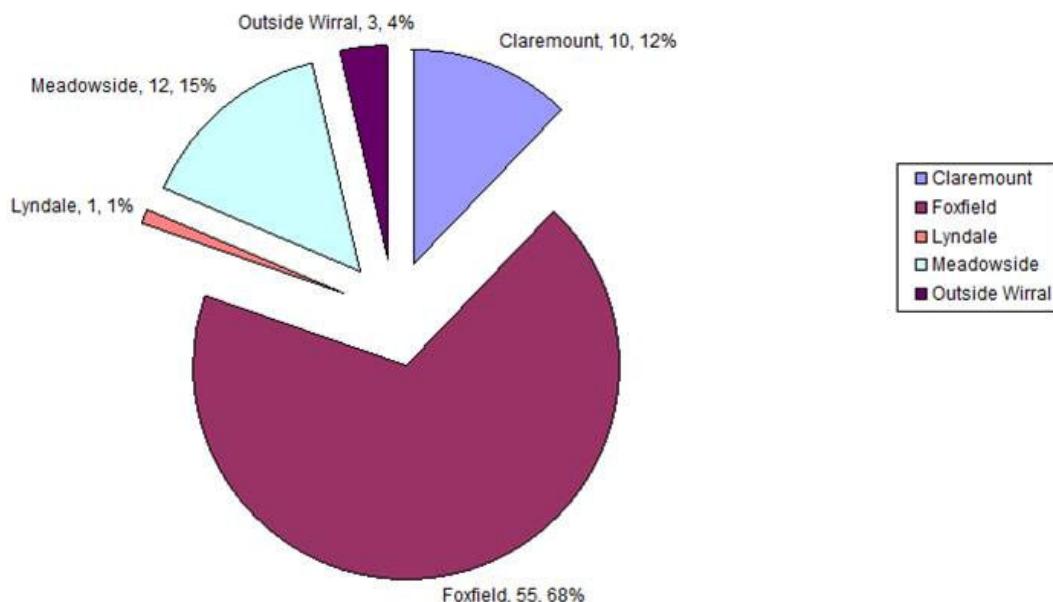
The Lyndale parents remain supportive of the proposal for a 2-19 PMLD school. There is little parental support from parents of children at the other two CLD primary schools for the creation of a 2-19 provision for PMLD. There is no evidence to suggest that a sufficient number of parents would wish to opt for a specialised PMLD 2-19 provision for their children.

Evidence suggests that whilst all parents are naturally anxious at the time leading up to transition, pupils transfer without parents expressing significant dissatisfaction and the needs of the children and young people are met by the receiving school. It is unlikely that parents whose children have integrated into the secondary sector would wish for their children to undertake another transition if the Lyndale were to become a 2-19 provision.

Table 8

**Year 7 destination of Y6 children attending CLD primary schools over three years
2011-2013**

Source: January Census Y6 compared to Autumn Census Year 7



The numbers of children with CLD have increased slightly over the last five years and the authority is regularly monitoring the position. The numbers of children with PMLD have stabilised, with a higher incidence in the primary sector than in the secondary sector. At the beginning of July, pupil numbers

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at the Lyndale had fallen to 20 with a further 3 children moving into the secondary sector in the next academic year. Not all these children would require a PMLD placement at secondary level.

The majority of 2-19 special schools across the country provide for children and young people exhibiting a wide range of need from severe to moderate learning difficulties and including children with autism, hearing impairment (HI) and visual impairment (VI), and behavioural and emotional needs. The schools are all viable due to the pupil numbers and diversity of special needs catered for.

A 2-19 PMLD school would provide a restricted environment for children and would mean that children could be in the same physical environment, with the same small group of children and staff with little or no change for over 17 years. Social interaction, aspirations of children and aspirations of parents could all be limited within the confines of a school providing specialised education and therapeutic approaches. The Ofsted report recognised that care and support for pupils’ wellbeing are outstanding at the Lyndale School; however it is unlikely that boundaries would be pushed in the same way as when children make the transition to a secondary environment with a more diverse range of children and experiences.

A 2-19 PMLD school would not be educationally viable until it had attracted at least 8/9 pupils per key stage. This would still give cause for concern regarding curriculum delivery and age appropriate groupings. Current numbers at Lyndale would not support this in the early years and it would take up to seven years for the current pupils to populate the secondary phase assuming new intake could be guaranteed in the primary phase. Even so, the numbers in each year group are very small, so the number of places would still only likely to be in the region of 48/50 at the end of the process.

To enable the school to operate efficiently and effectively as an all through 2-19 establishment, the leadership and management capacity would need to be enhanced.

A thorough assessment of the needs of secondary aged pupils with PMLD would be required to ensure that the accommodation, equipment and resources meet the needs of the prospective pupils. It is anticipated that this would result in a significant capital outlay. The assessment would also determine the additional staffing levels and expertise required to enable staff to deliver a secondary aged curriculum which meets the needs of prospective pupils.

The new funding mechanism no longer supports places in a school as it did in the past; it is now more geared at actual pupils. The school would not be financially viable and to sustain it would require funding to be diverted from

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the remainder of the special sector. There is a major risk to the authority if it makes a considerable financial investment in a school which is then substantially underused.

Should a 2-19 specialist PMLD school be established, it could have a detrimental impact on the numbers of children transferring to Foxfield and Meadowside schools. Whilst pupil numbers in any one age group are low at the Lyndale School, any decrease in intake at secondary level is significant.

Perhaps more significant is that a specialist 2-19 PMLD could destabilise both Elleray Park and Stanley schools. If parents’ choices were influenced simply by the possibility of their children not having to make a transition at the age of 11, then the character and nature of both schools would be affected. Both schools are equipped with facilities for PMLD and would not be making the best use of resources if the facilities were no longer required.

Given the lack of broad support the creation of a 2-19 school for children with PMLD on the Lyndale site would be a high risk option. Recent history shows that very few parents want this provision, therefore it is difficult to make a case for the creation of a 2-19 school for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

SEN Improvement Test

The revised budget provision at 31.03.16 is £35,000 deficit. It is not possible to demonstrate how the proposed alternative arrangements are likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for the children at the Lyndale given this financial position.

In the current context the option does not meet the following requirements:-

- take account of any relevant local offer for children and young people with SEN and disabilities and the views expressed on it; (ii)
- offer a range of provision to respond to the needs of individual children and young people, taking account of collaborative arrangements (including between special and mainstream), extended school and Children’s Centre provision; regional centres (of expertise) and regional and sub-regional provision; out of LA day and residential special provision; (iii)
- provide access to appropriately trained staff and access to specialist support and advice, so that individual pupils can have the fullest possible opportunities to make progress in their learning and participate in their school and community; (vi)
- ensure appropriate provision for 14-19 year olds; (vii)

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7.3 Federate (hard or soft) with another school with Lyndale remaining on current site

- Federate with another special school
- Federate with another primary or secondary school

Since the 2002 Education Act, local authority (LA) maintained schools in England have been free to collaborate with other schools in a variety of arrangements, including federation. There are two types of federation. A “hard” federation refers to a formal and legal agreement by which multiple schools have a single governing body that is formally constituted. A “soft” federation is a collaboration in which the governing bodies of schools remain separate.

Federation does not provide the clear financial autonomy and feeling of ownership that comes with academy status, nor is there the wealth of government guidance available for governing bodies considering federation that is available for those considering academies. However, according to Ofsted’s 2011 report ‘Leadership of more than one school’, there is some evidence that federation confers significant benefits in terms of pupils’ attainment, cost efficiency and governance. This is highlighted mainly when a successful school federates with a weaker school, where the greatest improvement is in teaching and learning, achievement, behaviour and attendance. One of the three main reasons for schools to federate is out of necessity rather than choice: the risk of closure of a small school.

The School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012 require all governing bodies considering federation to send their proposals to a number of stakeholders for consideration. This includes the Secretary of State, the local authority, the Headteacher, parents and staff of each school, the relevant Diocese and the wider community.

In the case of the Lyndale School, there are no obvious partners seeking federation from within the special, primary or secondary sectors. It is evident from relevant guidance that governors at the other school need to be positive about federation. The quest for federation must be governor led and there is no expression of interest at the moment.

The small size of the Lyndale means federation may not be viable. The pupil numbers and financial position of the school do not make it an attractive proposition. Any single place reduction will represent a loss of £10,000 to the base budget of specialist SEN provision. A reduction of place funding, if aligned with current places at the school could represent reduction in budget of £200,000.

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At the latest check on 3rd July 2014, pupil numbers at The Lyndale School had fallen to 20. In addition, two children are leaving in July 2014 to move to secondary, one child is leaving in December 2014 to move to secondary. It is anticipated that two new children will start at the Lyndale in September 2014. This would mean that the school opens in September 2014 with 19 pupils. Individual banded funding will only be for those 19 pupils from September 2014. A further two children are due to move to secondary provision in July 2015. This reduction in pupils affects the individual ‘top up’ funding and many of the children at the school are within the top two bands, so the decrease in budget is significant.

The location of the Lyndale could also present challenges. Significant geographical issues can be identified, as the distance between the Lyndale and any other prospective school would make it difficult for fast travel between sites. It would be difficult to share staff effectively in this set of circumstances.

As the school would remain on the existing site, there would be no need for capital outlay. However the building is in need of some upgrading and the equipment and resources need replenishing. Resources from one school could be used to subsidise another, but it is difficult to determine how the Lyndale could make this arrangement work. There may be economies of scale in some areas, but on balance the other school would need to support the Lyndale for an indeterminate period.

The implications for the LA of a “hard” federation are that the two schools could appoint a single Headteacher thus making a saving, but the governors of both schools would have to agree to this process and the qualities sought in a Headteacher may differ depending on the type of school. The implications for a “soft” federation are that the appointment of a single Headteacher would also be possible, but the person appointed would be answerable to two possibly competing governing bodies.

SEN Improvement Test

The revised budget provision at 31.03.16 is £140,000 deficit. It is not possible to demonstrate how the proposed alternative arrangements are likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for the children at the Lyndale given this financial position.

In the current context the option does not meet the following requirements:-

- take account of any relevant local offer for children and young people with SEN and disabilities and the views expressed on it; (ii)

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- take full account of educational considerations, in particular the need to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum, within a learning environment where children can be healthy and stay safe; (iv)
- support the LA’s strategy for making schools and settings more accessible to disabled children and young people and their scheme for promoting equality of opportunity for disabled people; (v)

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7.4 Co-locate Lyndale School with another special school

- Co-locate with another special school
- Co-locate and federate with another special school

Co-location refers to schools sharing the same site, but remaining as separate schools, with distinct governing bodies and separate budgets. Some shared facilities can exist, but each school would pay a percentage of the cost. A good example of this is the new Stanley School which is co-located with a mainstream primary.

This proposal would necessitate another special school being a suitable candidate for co-location. The combined site would require sufficient space to accommodate new build to replace the existing Lyndale School, albeit for a smaller number of places than provided at the present. Any new build would be subject to planning restrictions and in some cases to the requirements of Sport England.

Several of the special schools have already been deemed unsuitable by the LA:-

- Claremount – adequate space exists, but the existing building and the ground conditions are poor
- Kilgarth – this site is not deemed suitable
- Gilbrook – this site is not deemed suitable
- Observatory – this site is not deemed suitable
- Hayfield – adequate space exists, but there are no pool or hydrotherapy facilities
- Orrets Meadow – adequate space exists, but there are no pool or hydrotherapy facilities
- Wirral Hospital School – the site is restricted due to its proximity to Birkenhead Park and there are no pool or hydrotherapy facilities

Four sites could be considered as possibilities, however significant capital outlay would be required at any of these special schools to create the required space in terms of rooms and facilities needed. Architectural advice would be required to facilitate a detailed exploration of each location.

- Stanley – reconfiguration of the new school would be possible, however it is already co-located with a mainstream primary.
- Elleray Park – reconfiguration of the school is possible, however new build is already planned (Phase 1) and any amendment to this would need to be in Phase 2.

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- Meadowside – a space analysis would be required, but there is possibly potential for a small specialist base to be built.
- Foxfield – there is the possibility of a ‘unit’ on adjoining land on the site of the new school.

Over a number of years pupil numbers at the Lyndale School have decreased. At the latest check on 3rd July 2014, pupil numbers at the school had fallen to 20 with a further 3 children moving into the secondary sector in the next academic year. It is anticipated that 2 children will join the school in September 2014 meaning that pupil numbers will then be 19. At the end of July 2015 2 further pupils will move to secondary leaving 17 on role. Existing funding arrangements dictate that the Lyndale is not viable with this small number of pupils.

In future the Education Funding Agency (EFA) will review place numbers with the Local Authority taking into account overall numbers in specialist provision. Place numbers would reduce to be more in line with actual numbers. It is likely that base funding will only be available for 20/25 pupils.

In instances of co-location, it is usual for the school to retain a Headteacher. Unless a review of teachers and support staff takes place, all staffing costs will remain however, pooling curriculum expertise may enable schools to deliver an enriched provision.

Capital outlay would be required whichever site is chosen, however the floor area would be reduced dramatically as it would not replicate the space at the Lyndale as that has capacity for 40 pupils. The new build would be designed to accommodate a more realistic number of children, in line with actual numbers. As a result running costs would be less and the school could share the costs of specialised facilities such as the hydrotherapy pool.

The Lyndale School places a high emphasis on care and support for pupils' wellbeing and was judged by Ofsted in 2012 to be 'outstanding' for behaviour and safety. However, with such a small number of children, social interaction is limited. On a co-located site this could be remedied. However, if there is no intended interaction between the 2 school populations, children will be isolated so co-location may offer no additional educational or social opportunities for Lyndale pupils.

Stanley School already provides for 2-11 children with CLD and has excellent PMLD facilities, with sufficient places for the children from Lyndale. Therefore, offering a co-location option would not represent best value.

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Elleray Park School already provides for 2-11 children with CLD, including a significant number of children with PMLD. It will have some places available in September 2015. Consequently, offering a co-location option would not represent best value.

Meadowside School and Foxfield School both provide for 11-19 children and young people with CLD, including a significant number with PMLD. The opportunities for pooling expertise, sharing resources and co-working will be minimal given the different age ranges of the schools. Children will still make the transition to secondary provision at the age of eleven. However, if either Foxfield or Meadowside is the site chosen, then there may be significant implications for the remaining CLD secondary school when children move into the secondary phase. Parents may consider that transition will be easier if their children remain on the same site. This will have a detrimental affect on the remaining secondary school.

Sufficient capacity exists for primary children with PMLD and there can be little justification for the additional management and new build costs associated with co-location given the effectiveness of the current provision.

- **Co-locate and federate with another special school**

In addition to the points listed above, the following applies:-

There are no obvious partners seeking federation.

SEN Improvement Test

The revised budget provision at 31.03.16 is £81,000 deficit. It is not possible to demonstrate how the proposed alternative arrangements are likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for the children at the Lyndale given this financial position.

In the current context the option does not meet the following requirements:-

- take account of any relevant local offer for children and young people with SEN and disabilities and the views expressed on it; (ii)
- offer a range of provision to respond to the needs of individual children and young people, taking account of collaborative arrangements (including between special and mainstream), extended school and Children’s Centre provision; regional centres (of expertise) and regional and sub-regional provision; out of LA day and residential special provision; (iii)

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- take full account of educational considerations, in particular the need to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum, within a learning environment where children can be healthy and stay safe; (iv)

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7.5 Lyndale becoming an Academy/Free School

Academies are publicly funded independent schools that are not managed by a local authority. They can set pay and conditions for their staff and also change the length of their terms. Academies don’t have to follow the national curriculum. Academies are run by an academy trust, which is a charitable company limited by guarantee.

Maintained primary and secondary schools, special schools, alternative provision schools and 16 to 19 providers can all apply to become an academy. A school can convert on its own if it is performing well, with the support of a sponsor, or as part of a group of schools (an academy chain). A school cannot acquire or remove their faith character, expand, become mixed or single sex, or introduce selection as part of the conversion process.

Over a number of years pupil numbers at the Lyndale School have decreased. At the latest check on 3rd July 2014, pupil numbers at the school had fallen to 20 with a further 3 children moving into the secondary sector in the next academic year. It is anticipated that 2 children will join the school in September 2014 meaning that pupil numbers will then be 19. At the end of July 2015 2 further pupils will move to secondary leaving 17 on role. The school is not viable with this small number of pupils.

In 2013 -14 the school set a budget for the year based on School Funding of £761,733 by using all accumulated balances brought forward of £51,707. At the end of the financial year a surplus of £3,964 was recorded. Without the balances the school would have incurred a deficit of £47,743.

In 2014-15 the school has set a budget for the year based on School Funding of £794,480 by using the balance brought forward of £3,964. This included individual pupil funding for 23 pupils who were included in the School Census Pupil Count in January 2014. However, as the numbers of children has decreased, the amount available for ‘top up’ funding for individual children in both the Autumn and Spring terms will be reduced accordingly. In February when the budget for 2014 was being prepared the projected deficit at the end of the financial year was anticipated to be £110,919. Although the school eventually managed to set a balanced budget, it is anticipated that it will incur a significant deficit by the end of the financial year.

Should the school become an academy it will receive additional funding from the Education Services Grant, if they agreed to fund. The Authority has received recent notification that the amount per child will reduce from £595 to £332 from April 2015. This would amount to:-

20 children @£332 = £6,640
19 children @£332 = £6,308
17 children @£332 = £5,640

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However, this injection of funding would not compensate for the reduction in place led funding due to the new funding scheme:-

Remain at 40 = £400,000
Reduce from 40 to 28 (12 places) = loss of £120,000
Reduce from 40 to 25 (15 places) = loss of £150,000

In addition the school would incur additional costs for bought in services e.g. insurance, accountancy, human resources. It is anticipated that these costs would more than absorb the additional funding.

It is envisaged that the school will continue to increase the deficit on an annual basis. Both the current and the projected financial position of the Lyndale School would indicate that pursuing the option of academy/free school status would not significantly improve the Lyndale’s financial profile.

Furthermore, the Lyndale School sponsors would be required to enable the school to convert. At this point in time no sponsors have been identified and given that the other 2 CLD schools have spare capacity, it could be argued that there is currently no market for an academy. There is also the additional possibility of governors not entering a commitment to take responsibility of the school under these circumstances.

SEN Improvement Test

This will be a matter for parents and the DfE to decide.

However, the revised budget provision at 31.03.16 is £170,000 deficit. It is not possible to demonstrate how the proposed alternative arrangements are likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for the children at the Lyndale given this financial position.

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7.6 Close Lyndale School. Open two SLD bases in Primary schools for 6/8 pupils each. Expand Elleray Park and Stanley schools to 100 each

- Close Lyndale
- Close Lyndale and open SLD bases in two primary schools
- Close Lyndale, open SLD places in two primary schools and expand Elleray Park and Stanley to 100 each
- Close Lyndale and open a PMLD base on the new Foxfield site
- **Close Lyndale**

From September 2015 there will be sufficient capacity in Stanley and Elleray Park for all the primary children with CLD on the Wirral. Both schools are equipped for children with PMLD. If the decision were made to close the Lyndale School, parents would be supported to identify an appropriate setting for their child. By September 2015 it is anticipated that there will be 17 pupils at the Lyndale School. There are currently 6 children in Y4 who will be at the end of Y5 in July 2015. These children could make the transition to secondary at that stage with the agreement of the parents, the receiving school and the Local Authority. Disruption would then be minimised by effecting only one transfer at age 10 instead of age 11 for this group of pupils. The destination of the remaining pupils would be predicated on parental preference.

• **Close Lyndale and open SLD bases in two primary schools**

The current provision for primary children with SLD is within CLD schools where capacity is currently 220 meeting the needs of 214 children. At this time there is no evidence which shows that there is a demand for this specialist provision within the primary sector.

Securing engagement from primary schools may take time, and the LA would need to determine whether any mainstream primary school has an interest in hosting an SLD base on their site. The Authority has previous history of locating bases on mainstream sites, but not for children who fall into this category of need. The LA may enter into a consultation exercise with the primary sector and invite expressions of interest, bearing in mind that the proposal will need the agreement of all current providers.

Should any primary school express an interest, a feasibility study would be commissioned for each potential host school to identify the leadership and management arrangements, the financial position, quality and standards,

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current numbers on roll, current capacity, potential disruption for current pupils, staffing requirements, build requirements, and start up costs. It may also be pertinent to consider against the Children and Young People’s Plan to ensure compliance.

By September 2015 it is anticipated that there could only be 11 children at the Lyndale School if the option to transfer the 6 children who will be at the end of Y5 to secondary is taken. The children would be added to the roll at the host school and inclusion opportunities could be developed. However, the specialist health services currently available to the special school sector may not be replicated and none of the primary schools contains a hydrotherapy pool. In addition, bases will not give the same freedom of space that the children currently enjoy in the Lyndale.

The host school would receive funding for children in the base at the same level as if they had been in a special school, so £10,000 per child plus the appropriate level of ‘top up’. The numbers of children would then be subtracted from the figures for the school which are used to calculate the school budget, so the school is not double funded. The school can then use the total budget across the school including the bases. However, the LA can propose targeted use of inclusion budgets.

- Close Lyndale, open SLD places in two primary schools and expand Elleray Park and Stanley to 100 each**

In addition to the points listed above:-

Expanding Elleray Park and Stanley schools to 100 each can be readily achieved, however both schools have the capacity for more pupils. It is difficult to rationalise incurring the expense of bases in 2 primary schools and the expense of expanding Elleray Park and Stanley to accommodate the same group of pupils. The expansion of Stanley and Elleray Park schools to accommodate 220/230 pupils offers potential for a more inclusive approach for children with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)/Profound Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD). The model would then be consistent with secondary provision for CLD pupils in the Wirral and would achieve better value across specialist provision.

SEN Improvement Test

The revised budget provision at 31.03.16 is £26,530 deficit. It is not possible to demonstrate how the proposed alternative arrangements are likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for the children at the Lyndale given this financial position.

In the current context the option does not meet the following requirements:-

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- take account of parental preferences for particular styles of provision or education settings; (i)
- take account of any relevant local offer for children and young people with SEN and disabilities and the views expressed on it; (ii)
- offer a range of provision to respond to the needs of individual children and young people, taking account of collaborative arrangements (including between special and mainstream), extended school and Children’s Centre provision; regional centres (of expertise) and regional and sub-regional provision; out of LA day and residential special provision; (iii)
- take full account of educational considerations, in particular the need to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum, within a learning environment where children can be healthy and stay safe; (iv)

- **Close Lyndale and open a PMLD base on the new Foxfield site**

In addition to the points listed above:-

Foxfield School currently provides CLD provision for children aged 11-19 and will move to a new site in January 2015. Locating a primary PMLD base on the same site would present several challenges.

There is the possibility of building a unit on adjoining land at the site of the new school, however it would be subject to planning regulations and the requirements of Sport England. The establishment of a base would require new build, which would require significant capital outlay by the Local Authority. In order to meet EFA requirements in terms of taking account of overall numbers in specialist provision, the base would be designed to accommodate realistic pupil numbers, in line with current numbers at the Lyndale. It would therefore be considerably smaller than the current provision. Funding would be at £10,000 base rate per place, plus the appropriate amount of individual ‘top up’ funding.

Lyndale will close, but children attending the base would need to be on roll at a school. As the base would be adjoining Foxfield it might be natural to assume that this would be the appropriate school, but this presents serious issues as Foxfield is an 11-19 school. Attaching a primary unit to a secondary school is highly unusual.

The Headteacher and staff are all secondary trained with little or no experience of primary aged children. It would be inappropriate for the school to become 2-19 by default and a decision as critical as this would need authority wide consultation over a significant time period. No other provision

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across the Wirral is 2-19. In addition a primary base restricted to children with PMLD does not follow the strategic pattern of the Authority’s provision. Schools are designated CLD and cater for children with a number of categories of special needs including PMLD, offering greater potential for a more inclusive approach for children.

Whilst there are specialist health services and a hydrotherapy pool on the site of Foxfield, children will need to cross the site and enter the main building to gain access. The opportunities for pooling expertise, sharing resources and co-working will be minimal given the different age ranges of the schools. Opportunities for social interaction may also be limited.

SEN Improvement Test

The revised budget provision at 31.03.16 is £26,530 deficit. It is not possible to demonstrate how the proposed alternative arrangements are likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for the children at the Lyndale given this financial position.

In the current context the option does not meet the following requirements:-

- take account of parental preferences for particular styles of provision or education settings; (i)
- take account of any relevant local offer for children and young people with SEN and disabilities and the views expressed on it; (ii)
- offer a range of provision to respond to the needs of individual children and young people, taking account of collaborative arrangements (including between special and mainstream), extended school and Children’s Centre provision; regional centres (of expertise) and regional and sub-regional provision; out of LA day and residential special provision; (iii)
- take full account of educational considerations, in particular the need to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum, within a learning environment where children can be healthy and stay safe; (iv)

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7.7 Close Lyndale. Expand Stanley/Elleray Park schools to provide 220/230 places

- Close Lyndale and expand Stanley and Elleray Park to provide 220/230 places
- Close Lyndale and expand either Stanley or Elleray Park

The most recent Ofsted inspection in November 2012 judged that the Lyndale School was a good school. The report recognised that:-

- care and support for pupils’ wellbeing are outstanding;
- behaviour and safety are outstanding
- partnerships with parents are outstanding

Primary aged children with CLD can attend one of three primary special schools Elleray Park School, The Lyndale School and Stanley School and they can all provide for children with PMLD. The Authority has maintained 210 places across the three schools for children with CLD and has increased this to 220 from April 2014.

Table 4 January School Census Pupil Numbers and Places for the last three years

Year	Elleray Park		Lyndale		Stanley		TOTAL	
	Places	Pupils	Places	Pupils	Places	Pupils	Places	Pupils
2011/12	75	85	45	28	90	86	210	199
2012/13	75	91	45	25	90	91	210	207
2013/14	80	92	40	23	90	98	210	213
2014/15	90		40		90		220	

Over a number of years pupil numbers at the Lyndale School have decreased. At the latest check on 3rd July 2014, pupil numbers at the school had fallen to 20 with a further 3 children moving into the secondary sector in the next academic year. It is anticipated that 2 children will join the school in September 2014 meaning that pupil numbers will then be 19. Two further pupils will move to secondary at the end of July 2015 leaving 17 on role. The school is not viable or sustainable with this small number of pupils.

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- **Close Lyndale and expand Stanley and Elleray Park to provide 220/230 places**

Both schools have received good or outstanding Ofsted inspections. Ofsted would suggest the standard and quality they provide is at least as good if not better than the Lyndale.

Table 1 Summary Ofsted Information for 3 CLD Primary Schools

	Elleray Park School	The Lyndale School	Stanley School
Date of inspection	December 2010	November 2012	April 2013*
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	Good	Good
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	Good	Good
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding	Good	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding	Good	Good

* Stanley inspection carried out prior to move to new building.

Stanley School relocated in September 2013 into new accommodation, built subject to current DfE requirements for special schools. It has been equipped for children with CLD, including those with PMLD. It has 12 large classrooms ranging from 76m² in F1&2 to 66m² in KS1&2. Within each class base there are group rooms, storage, calming or toilets. There are also specialist facilities pertinent to the needs of the children, i.e. hydrotherapy pool, medical facilities, sensory facilities. Based on the current pupil: classroom ratio, 120 pupils would be accommodated in the school in its present form. If required, additional or reconfigured accommodation could be provided at a cost of between £500,000 and £750,000 depending on the required adaptations.

Elleray Park School currently caters for a number of pupils with PMLD, so already has specialist facilities. The site will lend itself to restricted new building accommodation and capital finance has been identified for Phase I

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which is currently in design stage. Completion date of Phase 1 is September 2015. This will create 4 new classrooms, resource space, storage, toilets and hygiene room, bringing the total number of classrooms for KS1&2 to 11, which could accommodate 110 children. Phase 2 options are being assessed to provide an additional storey which could accommodate a further 4 rooms for resources and storage, creating additional classrooms at ground level, and would require approximately £750,000 to complete.

The expansion of Stanley and Elleray Park schools to accommodate 220/230 pupils offers potential for a more inclusive approach for children with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)/Profound Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD). The model would then be consistent with secondary provision for CLD pupils in the Wirral and would achieve better value across specialist provision.

As a result of the combination of place led funding and individual ‘top up’ for actual pupil numbers, both Elleray Park and Stanley schools have set balanced budgets for the financial year 2014-15. They are both financially viable and any increase in funding as a result of pupil intake, will ensure stability for years to come. If the number of places at each of the schools is increased to the suggested levels in line with government policy regarding popular schools and should they admit further pupils from the Lyndale School, the financial position of both schools will be healthy moving into the future.

In September 2014 there will be a maximum of 19 pupils at the Lyndale and by September 2015 there will be 17. There are currently 6 children in Y4 who will be at the end of Y5 in July 2015. These children could make the transition to secondary at that stage with the agreement of the parents, the receiving school and the Local Authority. Disruption would then be minimised by effecting only one transfer at age 10 instead of age 11 for this group of pupils.

If this were to happen, significant attention could be concentrated on the 11 pupils who will remain on roll at the Lyndale. The Local Authority would need to undertake a detailed capacity mapping exercise to Elleray Park and Stanley Schools. During the course of the consultation, the Principal Educational Psychologist has worked with parents, the Headteacher and continuing care staff where appropriate to ensure a full extent of the children’s needs are understood. In the event of a decision to seek permission to close the Lyndale School, further meetings with the parents of each child at the School would take place, parental preferences would be determined and transition arrangements put in place to minimise disruption for all pupils. It is expected that this process would commence as soon as a decision has been made by Wirral Cabinet in the Autumn term.

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SEN Improvement Test

The revised budget provision at 31.03.16 is £33,470 surplus. It is possible to demonstrate how the proposed alternative arrangements are likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for the children at the Lyndale given this financial position.

- Close Lyndale and expand either Stanley or Elleray Park**

The significant point in this option is the concept of either school being expanded, but not both. This will restrict parental choice both in terms of choice of school and choice of model of provision.

In September 2015 only 17 pupils will remain on roll at the Lyndale School. There are currently 6 children in Y4 who will be at the end of Y5 in July 2015. These children could make the transition to secondary at that stage with the agreement of the parents, the receiving school and the Local Authority. Disruption would then be minimised by effecting only one transfer at age 10 instead of age 11 for this group of pupils.

Stanley School currently has 100 pupils on roll and can accommodate 120 pupils. Elleray Park School currently has 94 pupils on role and will be able to accommodate 110 pupils by September 2015. In theory, at that point, either school could offer provision for the remaining children from the Lyndale, however, expanding one and not the other may mean that parental preference is not met as they offer differing models of provision.

SEN Improvement Test

In the current context arguably the option does not meet the following requirements:-

- take account of parental preferences for particular styles of provision or education settings (i)**

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7.8 Close Lyndale School but retain the site making another school a split site school. The Lyndale site would be retained for as long as felt necessary

- until children currently at the school had left
- until the receiving school no longer required it

Over a number of years pupil numbers at the Lyndale School have decreased. At the latest check on 3rd July 2014, pupil numbers at the school had fallen to 20 with a further 3 children moving into the secondary sector in the next academic year. It is anticipated that 2 children will join the school in September 2014 meaning that pupil numbers will then be 19. At the end of July 2015 2 further pupils will move to secondary leaving 17 on role. Existing funding arrangements dictate that the Lyndale is not viable with this small number of pupils.

The proposal would require the governing body and Headteacher of another school being amenable to accepting the responsibility for the Lyndale children, buildings and staff for an indeterminate period of time, but possibly for up to 7 years. This would include taking on responsibility for the current and projected financial position. The current cost of provision for a child in the Lyndale is £33,119. The running costs of the Lyndale will remain and the will continue to incur a deficit.

Table 5 2013-14 Illustration of cost of providing places in Wirral Complex Learning Difficulties (CLD) special schools

School	Adjusted 2013-14 Budget*	Places	Pupil Census Jan 2014	Average Cost per Pupil
Elleray Park	£1,546,820	80	92	£16,813
Foxfield	£2,327,034	133	117	£19,889
Lyndale	£761,733	40	23	£33,119
Meadowside	£1,351,179	75	71	£19,031
Stanley	£1,627,282	90	98	£16,605

* Budgets have been adjusted to take account of increased/reduced funding arising from pupil number changes.

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The Lyndale School places a high emphasis on care and support for pupils' wellbeing and was judged by Ofsted in 2012 to be 'outstanding' for behaviour and safety. However, with such a small number of children, social interaction is limited. As the school will be split site with the intention of keeping the Lyndale pupils together, it is unlikely that there will be interaction between the 2 school populations, so children will be increasingly isolated as numbers fall. Therefore the proposal may offer no additional educational or social opportunities for Lyndale pupils. All the elements that have made the Lyndale a 'good' school may be compromised as numbers fall.

SEN Improvement Test

The revised budget provision at 31.03.16 is £143,000 rising to £266,000 by 31.03.17 and £377,000 by 31.03.18. It is not possible to demonstrate how the proposed alternative arrangements are likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for the children at the Lyndale given this financial position.

In the current context arguably the option does not meet the following requirements:-

- take account of any relevant local offer for children and young people with SEN and disabilities and the views expressed on it; (ii)
- offer a range of provision to respond to the needs of individual children and young people, taking account of collaborative arrangements (including between special and mainstream), extended school and Children’s Centre provision; regional centres (of expertise) and regional and sub-regional provision; out of LA day and residential special provision; (iii)
- take full account of educational considerations, in particular the need to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum, within a learning environment where children can be healthy and stay safe; (iv)
- support the LA’s strategy for making schools and settings more accessible to disabled children and young people and their scheme for promoting equality of opportunity for disabled people; (v)

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Appendix 1
Documentation

- Wirral Council Cabinet 16th January 2014 - Report seeking approval to consult on the closure of The Lyndale School
- Consultation Document - The Lyndale School April to June 2014
- Primary Education in Wirral 2014-2015, Information for Parents
- Secondary Education in Wirral 2014-2015, Information for Parents
- Schools Forum Report 12th June 2006
- Schools Forum Report 31st January 2007
- Wirral Council Cabinet Report 15th March 2007- Review of provision and funding for pupils with PMLD
- Wirral Council Report 25th September 2008 – Improving primary school provision for pupils with CLD
- Wirral Council Cabinet 23rd April 2009 – Improving primary and secondary special school provision for pupils with CLD
- Wirral Council Cabinet 26th November 2009 – Improving primary and secondary special school provision for pupils with CLD – progress so far and relocation of Stanley School
- Wirral Council Cabinet 24th June 2010 – Feasibility Study on the development of 2-19 provision
- Wirral Council Cabinet 12th July 2010 – Member’s questions following the Feasibility Study
- Wirral Council February 2011 – initiation of a review of the current provision for children and young people with PMLD
- Final Report 2011 - Consultation on services provided for children and young people with PMLD in Wirral
- Wirral Council 14th February 2011 – Approval for the replacement of Stanley and Elleray Park schools; continuation of investigations into the development of a 2-19 CLD provision; and the development of new build secondary (11-19), CLD school , catering for the full range of needs found within the CLD population, on split sites
- Wirral Council Cabinet 12th January 2012 – A review of Wirral’s provision for children and young people with PMLD
- Report on the PMLD Project Group’s Action Plan January 2012- December 2012 – September 2013
- School Organisation Maintained Schools (DfE)
Annex B: Guidance for Decision-makers January 2014
- The Road to Federation – National Governors’ Association 2013
- Letter to CLD Consultation Group Members – Final notes from CLD Workshop 24th February 2009
- Notes of the Public Consultation Meeting re the Lyndale School held at Elleray Park School on 7th April 2014
- Notes of the Public Consultation Meeting re the Lyndale School held at Williamson Art Gallery on 8th April 2014
- Notes of the Public Consultation Meeting re the Lyndale School held at The Professional Excellence on 10th April 2014

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- Notes of the Public Consultation Meeting re the Lyndale School held at Stanley School on 3rd June 2014
- Notes of the Public Consultation Meeting re the Lyndale School held at the Floral Pavilion on 9th June 2014
- Notes of the Public Consultation Meeting re the Lyndale School held at the Professional Excellence Centre on 16th June 2014
- Letter from the Director of Children’s Services to the Lyndale School parent governors dated 29th May 2014
- Letter from the Director of Children’s Services to the Lyndale School parent governors dated 25th June 2014
- Parents Document - Consultation re The Closure of The Lyndale School - March 2014
- The Lyndale School Consultation - Individual responses received by Wednesday 25th June 2014
- Wirral School Census Pupil Count January 2014
- Wirral School Census Pupil Count January 2013
- Wirral School Census Pupil Count January 2012
- The Lyndale School Final Budget 2014-15
- The Lyndale School Projected 3 Year Costs 2014-16
- The Lyndale School Projected 3 Year Costs 2015-17
- Stanley School Final Budget 2014-15
- Stanley School Use of Inclusion Funding 2012-13
- Elleray Park School Final Budget 2014-15
- Elleray Park Use of Inclusion Funding 2012-13
- Capital Allocations including Formula Capital for CLD schools from 1999-2000 to 2014-2015
- Year 7 destinations of Y6 children attending CLD primary schools 2011-2013
- Options Costing Schedule July 2014

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Wirral Children and Young People’s Department - Options for The Lyndale School

Appendix 2
Wirral Contact Schedule June/July 2014

Contact	Title
Phil Ward	Interim SEN Manager
Andrew Roberts	Head of School Funding, Resources & Universal Services
David Armstrong	Head of Universal Services CYPD & Assistant CX
Paul Arista	SEN Manager
Paul Atherton	SEN Officer
Sue Ashley	Senior Manager LMS
Mark Ellis	Senior Manager Information Technology
Sally Gibbs	Principal Officer Admissions & School Place Planning
Jane Cowden	Senior Manager MIS
Cathy O'Connor	Principal Educational Psychologist
Sue Talbot	Senior Manager School Improvement
Tony Newman	Head of Stanley School
Kim Owen	Head of the Lyndale School
Paula Wareing	Head of Meadowside School
Margaret Morris	Head of Elleray Park School
Andre Baird	Head of Foxfield School
Lyndale Parents	The Lyndale School