

Proposal to cease to maintain The Lyndale School Complete Proposal

Name and contact details of the Local Authority or governing body publishing the proposal

Wirral Council, Town Hall, Brighton Street, Wallasey, Wirral, CH44 8ED

Name, address and category of the school proposed for closure

The Lyndale School, Lyndale Avenue, Eastham, Wirral, CH62 8DE.
This is a Community Special school.

Proposed closure date

Proposed date of closure is 31 December 2015.

Objectives, reason for closure and why closure of the school is considered necessary

The proposal is to close The Lyndale School with effect from 31 December 2015.

The Lyndale School is a community special school for primary aged boys and girls with Complex Learning Difficulties (CLD). CLD includes Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD).

The school is located in Eastham and serves the whole of Wirral. Ofsted's most recent inspection of the school in November 2012, judged that The Lyndale School was a good school, with outstanding features.

The closure of The Lyndale School is being considered because the viability of the school is compromised by its small size and falling roll which impacts on its sustainability for the future.

A new national system of funding was introduced by the Department for Education in 2013 for the funding of High Needs pupils in schools. Under the new system, each school receives an amount of £10,000 per place, with an additional "top-up" based on the needs of the individual pupil. This is called "Place Plus" funding.

The new funding arrangements apply to all schools, including the three existing primary special schools for children with CLD in the Wirral area. However, the impact on The Lyndale School will be significantly greater than the other two schools, Elleray Park School and Stanley School.

This is because there is a greater difference at The Lyndale School between the number of places and the number of pupils, and because it is a small school.

	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	85	92	40	23	90	98	210	213
2014/15	90		40		90		220	

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

For the 2014-15 financial year The Lyndale School set a balanced budget of £743,345 based on funding for 40 places, when it had 23 pupils on roll at January 2014 Census. Any single place reduction will represent a loss of £10,000 to the base budget of specialist SEN provision for the school. Therefore any future reduction in place funding to 23 pupils (the number of pupils on roll), would result in the school receiving a budget which is £170,000 less than currently. This is not sustainable.

Taking into account these figures the school's budget shortfall would increase by a similar amount each year thereafter.

It is also the case that there are two other primary schools in Wirral, namely Elleray Park School and Stanley School, providing good and outstanding provision for children with complex learning difficulties (CLD).

Pupil numbers and admissions

	F1	F2	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
October 2014	3	1	3	2	3	1	6	2	21
Boys	2	0	1	2	3	1	2	1	12
Girls	1	1	2	0	0	0	4	1	9
December 2015	0	3	1	3	2	3	1	6	19
Boys	-	2	0	1	2	3	1	2	11
Girls	-	1	1	2	0	0	0	4	8

Number in each year group in December 2015 assumes that all current pupils remain on roll, that no new children are admitted to F1 (Nursery) in September 2015, and that no further children join or leave other year groups from October 2014 onwards.

Details of the schools at which displaced pupils will be offered places

If the proposal is approved following the completion of the statutory process, parents of pupils who will be on roll at The Lyndale School at the time the school is due to close will be given an early opportunity to express a preference for an alternative school. The Council considers that the need for school places for children with CLD can be met by other schools in the area (as referred to below) which have the capacity to accommodate any displaced pupils from The Lyndale School.

There is alternative specialist provision for primary aged children with CLD at Stanley School, Pensby and at Elleray Park School, Wallasey.

Elleray Park School

Elleray Park School in Wallasey will be able to accommodate up to 110 pupils through already agreed building work to address sufficiency and suitability issues at the school. This is due to commence on-site in Spring 2015 and be completed by September 2015. The school caters for primary aged children with CLD. The school has some potential to expand further if required in future.

Stanley School

In September 2013 Stanley School moved into a new purpose built premises co-located with Pensby Primary School. All access issues from the former building have been resolved and the school can accommodate children with a full range of CLD. Stanley School can accommodate at least 110-120 pupils and the school has some potential to expand further if required in future.

School	NOR Oct 2014	Estimated NOR Dec 2015*	Capacity Dec 2015
Elleray Park	93	99	110
Stanley	98	99	110-120

*Actual number on roll (NOR) at December 2015 may differ as pupils may leave and join schools during the academic year.

Taken together, the capacity of Elleray Park and Stanley School would give sufficient places across the two schools to meet the needs of all existing and future projected Wirral children with CLD.

If the proposal is approved after the statutory processes have been followed, children on roll at The Lyndale School would be assigned a designated key worker, from the point the decision is made, to work with the family to ensure that transition to an alternative school is as smooth as possible. Parents may also wish to consider a place at other schools where this is appropriate. No interim arrangements would be required if the proposal to close the school is approved.

Schools in other areas

In addition to the schools named above, there are maintained special schools in nearby authorities for primary aged children with a range of Complex Learning Difficulties (CLD).

Abbot's Lea School, Beaconsfield Road, Woolton, Liverpool, L25 6EE
Bluebell Park School, Cawthorne Walks, Southdene, Liverpool, L32 3XP
Dee Banks School, Dee Banks, Sandy Lane, Chester, Cheshire, CH3 5UX
Dorin Park School and Specialist SEN College, Wealstone Lane, Upton, Cheshire, CH2 1HD
Hebden Green Community School, Woodford Lane West, Winsford, Cheshire, CW7 4EJ
Hinderton School, Capenhurst Lane, Whitby, Cheshire, CH65 7AQ
Merefield School, Westminster Drive, Southport, PR8 2QZ
Millstead School, Old Mill Lane, Liverpool, L15 8LW
Peterhouse School, Preston New Road, Churchtown, Southport, PR9 8PA

Princes School, Selbourne Street, Liverpool, L8 1YQ
Rosebank School, Townfield Lane, Barnton, Northwich, Cheshire, CW8 4QP
Rowan Park School, Sterrix Lane, Litherland, Bootle, L21 0DB
The Russett School, Middlehurst Avenue, Weaverham, Northwich, Cheshire, CW8 3BW

Parental choice

The Council aims to meet parental preferences for a Community or Voluntary Controlled school as far as possible provided that there are vacant places in the preferred school. In the case of Voluntary Aided schools and Academies, the governing body of those types of school decides the criteria for admission to their particular school, and applications for such schools will be co-ordinated by the Council, however the decision as to whether a place can be offered will be made by the relevant governing body and not the Council.

Impact on the community

Community (non-school) use of The Lyndale School

The following groups have been identified as community users of The Lyndale School that may be affected by this proposal if it is approved.

The Mulberry Centre - A Cheshire-based day care centre for adults with learning difficulties. Uses the hydrotherapy pool between 12 and 1pm, two days a week in term time, 2 service users and approximately four staff in attendance.

Eastway - A Cheshire-based NHS Trust unit for adults with learning difficulties. Uses the hydrotherapy pool between 12 and 1pm two days a week in term-time. 3 service users and approximately four staff in attendance.

Eastham Day Centre - A Wirral-based day centre for adults with learning difficulties. Uses the hydrotherapy pool between 12 and 1pm one day a week in term-time. 2 service users and approximately 4 staff in attendance. Centre has on-loan use of The Lyndale School specialist bikes during summer holidays. Service users attend school drama productions.

Aquababies Swimming Club - Use the hydrotherapy pool outside school hours in term-time only.

Wirral Autistic Society (Raby Hall) – Carries out gardening work at the school as part of their programme for autistic adults.

Wirral Livewell Partnership – Have held a “health and well being” day during the summer holidays.

South Wirral High School - Students in Y10 to Y13 on a Health and Social Care course visit the school, one afternoon, twice a month to obtain course-related experience of communication and activities with children with learning difficulties. Up to 8 students, accompanied by a teaching assistant.

If the proposal to close the school is approved following the completion of the statutory processes, the Council will work together with community users of the building to help them find alternative facilities to meet their needs.

Extended school use of The Lyndale School

Early Years and Preschool

The age range of the Lyndale school includes Foundation 1 (nursery) places. Ellera Park and Stanley Schools also offer places for children in this age group.

Afterschool and holiday clubs

The Lyndale School operates an afterschool club one day a week in term-time. A playscheme operates for three weeks in the summer holidays.

At the alternative schools it is suggested that children may attend if the proposal to close the school is approved, Ellera Park School has after-school clubs three days a week in term-time. A playscheme operates for three weeks in the summer holidays. Stanley School has after-school clubs on two days a week in term-time. A playscheme operates for two weeks in the summer holidays, and usually also for one week in the Spring break (Easter).

An Equality Impact Assessment is available on-line at www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-april-2014/eias-families-wellbeing

Balance of denominational provision

Not applicable as the school does not have a religious character.

Rural primary schools

Not applicable as the school is not a rural primary school.

Maintained nursery schools

Not applicable as the school is not a maintained nursery school.

Provision for 16-19 year olds

Not applicable as the school is a primary school.

Special educational needs (SEN) provision

Both the alternative primary schools (Ellera Park and Stanley School) can cater for children with CLD and have received good or outstanding in their most recent Ofsted inspection reports in relation to their educational provision.

	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

If the proposal to close the school is approved following the completion of the statutory processes, children will continue to have access to an educational, therapeutic and developmental environment that will meet their specific needs. Children and their families will have access to a range of multi-agency staff, including teachers, learning support staff, therapists and social work support to maximise each child's development.

Holistic, multi-agency assessments/meetings have been held at the Lyndale School for all the children whose parents would like them. The purpose of these meetings was to collate the information available from different sources, i.e. Education, Health and Social Care, to ensure both parents and the Council have a clear up-to-date picture of the needs of each child. The Council's Principal Educational Psychologist and members of the Council's SEN Team have met with the headteacher and parents along with NHS Continuing Care staff as appropriate. The assessment information is being collated into draft Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) under the new SEND Regulations which came into force from 1st September 2014. The EHCPs will contain the most current information about each child and will, over time, replace the current SEN statement provided by the Council. The EHCPs will be updated as necessary using the annual review process.

An independent Consultants report was commissioned to consider the following in relation to the possible options of change in relation to the Lyndale School. The report takes into account:

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

The independent Consultants report is part of the complete proposal.

Both Elleray Park School and Stanley School are able to meet the needs of the range of children with CLD. The schools have very good relationships with all their parents working alongside them in promoting their children's welfare

and education. The schools can cater for the recreational needs of children particularly in relation to swimming and outdoor space. Elleray Park and Stanley Schools both provide excellent nursing support and any additional support required is provided to each child according to their individual needs. Both schools have the capacity to expand further if required to meet new demand in the future and like all good special schools have the ability and capacity to offer a flexible curriculum in terms of learning, environment, social mobility and health support. The schools will offer, by virtue of their size and future sustainability, a greater opportunity for children to mix with their peers and to experience a broad and balanced educational offer.

Travel

The Council provides free home to school transport to children attending The Lyndale School, based on an assessment of the child's needs. If the proposal to close the school is approved after the statutory processes have been followed, children will continue to be provided with free home to school transport for children to their alternative school placement. The proposal is unlikely to result in any increase in car use overall.

	The Lyndale School	Elleray Park School	Stanley School
A	6.8	2.9	6.1
B	5.8	4.5	5.0
C	10.2	2.1	6.8
D	12.8	8.9	5.2
E	5.1	5.1	5.5
F	8.6	1.2	6.8
G	6.7	5.3	3.6
H	5.4	4.9	5.0
I	10.6	4.3	5.3
J	7.7	4.4	4.6
K	0.8	10.3	8.4
L	7.3	12.1	4.0
M	11.7	7.8	4.6
N	10.1	3.7	5.3
O	7.9	3.7	5.0
P	2.1	7.6	8.4
Q	6.6	5.5	3.9
R	0.9	9.6	9.1
S	4.1	5.7	6.8

	Under 3 miles
	3 to 6 miles
	More than 6 miles

Anonymised home to school distances for children currently on roll at The Lyndale School at October 2014 and are expected to still be on roll in December 2015 (e.g. excludes children currently educated in Year 6). Distances are in miles and are measured using the Council's mapping system which uses Ordnance Survey Address Point™ and Ordnance Survey Integrated Transport Network™ data to calculate the shortest route along approved roads and footpaths to the nearest approved school entrance. Home to school distances have been colour coded into distance ranges as shown.

Consultation

The Council has complied with all applicable statutory requirements in relation to the proposal.

The public consultation on the proposal to close The Lyndale School began on the 2nd April 2014 and ended on the 25th June 2014. Copies of the consultation document were distributed to the parents/carers, teachers and governors of the three primary schools for children with Complex Learning Difficulties (CLD). All Wirral head teachers and governing bodies were sent copies along with Trade Unions, Wirral MPs and Councillors, neighbouring Councils, diocesan bodies, Council departments and other interested persons. The document was also published on the Council's website for residents to gain access.

Six public meetings were arranged at five different venues and at different times to allow as many people as possible to attend.

The consultation document is part of the complete proposal document.

In brief, key themes that emerged from the consultation were in relation to:

- funding arrangements for children with special needs and special schools
- concern about health and safety of children
- concern about the future of staff
- importance of meeting children's individual needs
- hydrotherapy pools and facilities at other schools
- current and future pupil numbers and trends
- retaining the Lyndale ethos
- the SEN improvement test
- a 2 to 19 school for children with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)

A summary of points raised during the consultation and notes taken at the public meetings held as part of the consultation process are provided as an appendix to the Cabinet report of 4th September 2014, which is part of the complete proposal.

Related proposals

None.

Procedure for making representations (objections and comments)

Within four weeks from the date of publication of this proposal, i.e. by 19th November 2014, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to:

Julia Hassall, Director of Children's Services, Children and Young People's Department, Wirral Council, Hamilton Building, Conway Street, Birkenhead, CH41 4FD or to specialreview@wirral.gov.uk by Wednesday 19th November 2014.

