

WIRRAL COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM - 6TH JULY 2011

REPORT OF INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

PLACES IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS RE: SURPLUS FUNDING APPLICATIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January 2011 the Schools Forum received a report describing a reduction in demand for places in some of our special schools. This reduction in demand has resulted in £1,276,989 been identified as surplus funding. (Appendix One, Wirral Special Schools Places and Funding 2011-12). The Forum agreed to pilot an approach that would respond to this issue. This approach had been consulted on with both special school headteachers and governors. The approach involved those schools with surplus funding submitting proposals for the use of this funding in year one of the scheme and the following year having a reduction in five places of funding if the proposals could not be supported. If the downward trend in demand continued, further reductions in the admission numbers would follow. Five schools submitted an application with one proposal fully supported and four other schools being informed that in September 2012 funding would be reduced by 5 places each. The reduction in funded places would realize £286,685 with a recommendation that £100,000 should be added to the exceptional needs budget with £120,000 being reserved to commission up to 8 places for children with social and communication difficulties in either a special school or mainstream school and the balance being used to fund a growth in demand for other special school provision.

Background

The issue with regard to the funding of surplus places in special schools has been the subject of previous discussion at the Forum. Appendix One sets out the position with regard to places and funding in January 2011 and Appendix Two Numbers on Roll at January Census sets out the trend in recent years. Those special schools with surplus funding were invited to submit a written explanation of their circumstances to a panel and a proposal for how any surplus funding could be used. This proposal was in addition to what the school ordinarily would be providing. The panel was chaired by the Vice Chair of the Forum, other members of the panel were the Chair of the Wirral Association of Special Headteachers a Senior Officer with Responsibility for SEN and a Senior Officer with responsibility for Finance. The panel met twice to consider applications with the second meeting being called to consider additional financial information that had not been provided as part of the initial submission. The schools that submitted were: Foxfield School, Stanley, Lyndale, Hayfield and Orrets Meadow. Schools were informed that if unsuccessful they had the right of appeal to a panel Chaired by the Chair of the Forum with primary and secondary headteachers and governors completing the group. No appeals were received.

After due consideration it was agreed to support the innovative proposal to convert funding for stated places at Orrets Meadow into places for children without statements for up to 12 months. The submissions from the other four schools were declined for one or a combination of the following reasons:

- Schools were not offering activity above and beyond what they should ordinarily provide.
- The funding they were requesting should be accessed through the exceptional needs budget.
- The service they were offering could be bought in from schools if they so wish.
- The proposal for places for children with social and communication difficulties should be part of a commissioning process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To convert the £196,665 of funding at Orrets Meadow in to part-time places for non-statemented children with severe literacy difficulties with effect from September 2011.
- To allocate £100,000 to the exceptional needs budget in September 2012.
- To reserve £120,000 to commission 8 places for children in the growing area of demand of social and communication difficulties in either a special school or primary school for September 2012
- To use the balance of £66,685 to fund additional demand for places in over-subscribed special schools and to meet the cost of primary provision in Wirral Hospital School.

David Armstrong
Interim Director of Children's Services

Number on Roll at January Census

Appendix Two

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Lyndale	40/43	<i>34/39</i>	<i>33/38</i>	<i>26/32</i>	<i>27/32</i>	<i>26/31</i>	<i>29/31</i>
Foxfield	<i>126</i>	<i>128</i>	138	136	<i>129</i>	<i>123</i>	<i>117</i>
Stanley	86/89	88/89	85/88	82/90	78/87	<i>73/75</i>	<i>73/74</i>
Orrets Meadow	53	58	63	71	<i>60</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>45</i>
Hayfield	<i>111</i>	115	120	<i>114</i>	<i>113</i>	<i>109</i>	<i>107</i>
Kilgarth	56	49	51	46	51	48	<i>42</i>

Numbers in italics show those years when the school had more than 5 surplus places based on its current admission number.

PA May 2011

**Wirral Special Schools
Place and Funding 2011-12**

Appendix One

School	Places	January Census	Surplus Places	Average Funding per place	Surplus Funding	School Budget	Surplus
				£	£	£	%
Orrets Meadow	66	45	21	9,365	196,665	775,818	25
Hayfield	120	107	13	11,004	143,052	1,550,419	9
Claremount	189	203					
Lyndale	45	30	15	15,782	236,730	847,637	28
Elleray Park	75	80					
Stanley	90	73.5	16.5	15,115	249,398	1,358,574	18
Meadowside	75	75					
Foxfield	138	117	21	15,436	324,156	2,382,378	14
Gilbrook	50	49	1	13,148	13,148	987,902	1
Kilgarth	50	42	8	14,230	113,840	951,138	12
Observatory	50	50					
Total	948	871.5	95.5		1,276,989		