

# WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM

21 JANUARY 2009

## DEVELOPING PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN MAINSTREAM AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS

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### Summary

This report updates members of the Schools Forum on the development of resourced provision within secondary mainstream schools for young people with special educational needs. It also addresses the implications of this development on Wirral's secondary special school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Finally it explains how the special school and officers within the Children and Young Peoples Department are working together to respond to this and to broaden the provision that the school makes.

### The development of SEN resourced provision in four secondary mainstream schools

In Autumn 2007 schools were consulted on a proposal to fund new SEN provision within four of Wirral's secondary mainstream schools. There was clear support for this proposal, both from schools and when this was then presented to the Schools Forum for consideration. As a consequence Cabinet then approved the funding for four new resourced provisions to be opened from September 2008.

The funding allocation, which was broadly similar to the funding for comparable provision within Wirral's secondary special school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD), was then built into the budgets of the four schools from April 2008. This allowed the schools to appoint new staff to work in their resourced provisions before the start of September. These staff undertook important training and supported the transition of the pupils moving from primary schools into the new provisions. Each of the secondary mainstream schools that planned to open resourced provision were initially given the funding for 10 pupil places.

Four schools that were involved in developing the model for resourced provision opened new provision from September 2008. This provides specialist staffing and resources for pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) or Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) within a mainstream secondary school setting. The new provision now in places is

Wallasey School	– offers 10 MLD places
Oldershaw School	– offers 10 MLD places
Hilbre School	– offers 5 MLD places & 5 ASD places
Bebington High School	– offers 10 MLD places

Initial demand for places in each of the resourced provision varied between schools. The timing of the confirmation of the funding for this new provision and the inability of parents to visit existing provision in the schools during 07/08 resulted in only 17 places being filled from September 2008. This has however now risen to 20 pupils and is likely to rise further during the year 08/09.

Take up of places in each of the secondary bases and the quality of this new provision is carefully monitored by officers from the Children and Young Peoples Department. Each of the four schools has been allocated increased time and support from an Educational Psychologist. The teachers who work within these four provisions also meet regularly to network, share ideas, concerns and solutions. They also undertake joint training.

The initial feedback from the pupils that have been placed in these new resourced provisions has been very positive. The young people appear happy and settled in their new schools. They are having their special needs met within a setting that also enables them to feel a part of the mainstream school. These young people are also becoming involved in mainstream activities such as joining the Year 7 football team or successfully auditioning for a part on a school production. They are clearly experiencing the benefits of this more inclusive provision.

### **Increasing resourced provision in the future**

While there is some capacity to place more pupils into each of the resourced provisions at present, it is expected that the number of vacant places will decrease over 2009. A number of parents are now contacting or visiting the four schools to enquire about their resourced provision. The schools have also produced information sheets and brochures for parents which explain the new resourced provision in place. This information has been given out to interested parents at Open Evenings and has generated extra interest and requests for places in the provision offered by these schools.

The four schools with resourced provision are now working with the officers to plan for the next intake of pupils who want places in September 2009. The majority of these pupils will be transferring into Yr7. It is expected that by the start of the next academic year that the initial 40 funded places will be filled in secondary resourced provisions and some additional places will be required in two of the four schools. Where demand for places in a particular school's provision exceeds the number of places available there is a need to increase the number of funded places by mutual agreement between the school and local authority.

The arrangement for expanding places in secondary resourced provisions allows for individual schools to increase the total number of funded places available by increments of five additional places. In 2009/2010 it is expected that two of the four secondary schools will be asked to increase their total number of resourced provision places from 10 to 15. Early indications are that up to 15 resourced provision places will be needed at Wallasey School and Bebington High School although this cannot be fully confirmed until the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2009 when the updated SEN Statements for pupils transferring into resourced provisions have been finalised and agreed with parents.

An amount of £75,000 has been earmarked from 2009-10 Headroom to expand EIB secondary provision. The part year cost of expanding two of the four resourced provisions from 10 to 15 places from September 2009 is £44,512 (an additional £22,256 per school).

As the demand for places in resourced provision is expected to increase in future years then the additional funding allocated to these four schools (or any other schools that want to establish their own provision) would need to increase further. This would require the support and further agreement from the Schools Forum and Cabinet together with the identification of resources. Establishing some resourced provision in a secondary mainstream school within the Birkenhead area remains a priority.

**Proposal : The Schools Forum are asked to support the increase in funding to two of the four secondary mainstream school offering SEN resourced provision, enabling the schools to provide five additional pupil places. Both schools would receive an additional £22256 for September 2009 to March 2010.**

### **The implications of resourced provision on Wirral's secondary special school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties,**

Clare Mount is the only Wirral secondary special school for pupils with MLD. Clare Mount has been involved throughout the planning and establishment of secondary mainstream resourced provision. The school and local authority both recognise the high standard of provision at Clare Mount and want to ensure that comparable high quality provision is made within the new resourced provisions.

Clare Mounts staff and Governors have also been working with officers to explore the implications for the school on the placement of pupils with MLD in resourced provisions. There is an acknowledgement that the demand for MLD places at Clare Mount will reduce. Staff and Governors are trying to be proactive and are working with officers to explore the new opportunities that arise as a result of this reduction in demand for MLD places.

Clare Mount is currently funded to provide 10 places for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD). These places are filled. The authority also has to place significant numbers of pupils with ASD in non-maintained provision at West Kirby Residential School because of a lack of sufficient ASD places in an appropriate special school in Wirral. Agreement is therefore being reached between the Headteacher and Governors and the local authority that surplus MLD places at Clare Mount will be removed over time and additional ASD places will be created within the school. This will increase capacity for suitable ASD provision at Clare Mount and reduce the authority's reliance on non-maintained provision. It will also be of benefit to the pupils concerned, the majority of whom were educated successfully in an MLD/ASD setting in their primary school.

By coinciding the reduction of MLD places with the development of additional ASD places at Clare Mount there is little impact on the schools budget. This helps the school to avoid the difficulties of a falling roll and reduced budget and supports the authority's goal of educating as many Wirral pupils as possible in local authority provision.

**Planned changes in pupil places at Clare Mount Specialist Sports College to develop ASD provision and remove MLD places**

	<b>MLD pupils on roll</b>	<b>Proposed reduction in MLD places &amp; financial value</b>	<b>Funded MLD places in budget</b>	<b>Proposed increase in funded ASD places and value</b>	<b>Proposed number of funded Band 3 ASD/SCD places in the school</b>	<b>Total number of places in the school</b>
<b>2008/09</b>	156	*	185	10 places currently in budget =136,640 (13 ASD pupils on roll)	10	200 (212 on roll)
<b>2009/10</b>	TBA	Remove 17 MLD places = -132,430	168	Create 10 additional places in budget = +136,640	20	193
<b>2010/11</b>	TBA	Remove 17 MLD places = -132,430	151	Create 10 additional places in budget = +136,640	30	186

All figures based on the 08/09 funding allocations.

In order to support Clare Mount to expand its ASD provision and establish new classes for pupils with these needs a sum of £30,000 from Standards Fund will be allocated to the school in April 2009. This will enable the school to appoint new staff in the summer term who will work with the growing ASD cohort from September 2009. In a similar way to the development of resourced provision in mainstream secondary schools, these new staff can then undertake important training during the summer term and can be involved in the careful transition of the ASD pupils from the primary special school into the new ASD provision at Clare Mount. In addition £80,000 of capital funding has been identified to make building adaptations.

### **Recommendation**

1. Members are asked to note the positive progress made in opening Secondary Resourced Provision.
2. The Schools Forum are asked to support the increase in funding to two of the four secondary mainstream school offering SEN resourced provision, enabling the schools to provide five additional pupil places. Both schools would receive an additional £22256 for September 2009 to March 2010.