

Summary of representations

Overall funding issues

- The financial argument is not convincing
- The dedicated schools grant is ring fenced so closing the school doesn't save any money for the Council, it is merely redistributed
- There is no reason to close the school on financial grounds
- The Council has considerable financial reserves which should be used to support the school
- These children will always be expensive due to their physical and medical needs and will be equally expensive at another school
- The books have always balanced despite small numbers, it is only the funding drop that will cause the school to go into deficit
- School has only had £30-£40k capital investment since 1999 whereas the others have had 100s of thousands
- Surplus funding in the schools budget should be used to keep the school open
- What would the cost be if the children from Lyndale chose to go to out of borough schools?

Funding bands

- Wirral has chosen a particular model of top-up funding for children with special needs which does not reflect the full cost of the provision at the Lyndale school
- Clarification requested on funding bands - Why has my child been placed in Band 4 and not Band 5?
- Funding bands can be reviewed again
- A contingency fund could be used to support specialist provision experiencing financial difficulties
- Croydon funding arrangements are an example of how SEN funding should work
- Funding bands were devised as a deliberate attempt to put Lyndale into deficit
- Funding bands should recognise that different settings have different costs, not one banding system across all settings
- Banding should be based on need not budgets
- The "out of borough" band is uncapped
- West Kirby Residential is 5 to 16 - Why can't the West Kirby Residential children go to Stanley?

Health and Safety of the Lyndale pupils

Appendix 4 – Representations summary

- Lyndale children would be more vulnerable in Elleray Park and Stanley which is an unsafe environment
- The needs of the children in Elleray and Stanley are different and incompatible in many cases
- Children would have to be segregated in one or two rooms
- How would children be safe when transferring to and from transport?
- Moving school would be disruptive for children
- Children's health is very fragile and many have life-limiting conditions
- Many children can do nothing for themselves and need the constant attention of an adult 24 hours a day
- Children develop in an environment where they feel safe and secure
- Concerns about mixing able bodied children and children with disabilities
- There have been reports of children being injured at other schools

Future of the Lyndale staff

- Staff are highly professional and provide valuable care, support, compassion and assistance
- What would the staffing ratio be? Will children still get the same one to one?
- Would the staffing ratio allow children to still get trips and outings at other schools?
- Do not want to see the teamwork and expertise of teaching and support staff fragmented and broken up
- No redeployment policy in place for staff
- If TUPE does not apply, can the Council ask the governing bodies of the other schools to apply the TUPE principles where individual staff can be identified as having specific relationships with certain children
- Staff have built up good relationships with parents and pupils and families are very thankful for the help staff provide
- Would want the staff to move with the children as much as possible to give parents some security and ensure care needs are met
- All three schools offer a fantastic service but Lyndale is unique
- Ofsted said Lyndale was a good school with outstanding features in 2012
- Ofsted report on Elleray Park is four years old
- Wonderful school
- Atmosphere of welcome, care and serene concern for each child
- Staff have developed a specialism in PMLD

Appendix 4 – Representations summary

- Closing the school midyear will make it harder for staff to find other jobs

Assessment of children

- Concerns about new EHCP process
- All children at Lyndale have complex and profound medical conditions
- Children's needs are not all the same and they should be treated as individuals
- Children will need the same high quality support in any setting
- The individual assessments carried out by the educational psychologists have not been used in anyway in relation to the consultation
- Parents do not dictate the level of care, the school and experts make those decisions

Physical environment

- Children with PMLD benefit from a bright stimulating environment while children with CLD benefit from subdued calming environments
- Unique and special facility that should be preserved and safeguarded
- Accessible sensory garden at Lyndale
- Abundance of outside space at Lyndale
- There is only a wire fence between Stanley and Pensby
- With more children, breaktimes would be exceedingly noisy and noise could trigger seizures
- Stanley has very little outside space and no sensory outdoor space
- Classrooms need to be spacious
- Would children be mixed in with the Stanley/Elleray Park children or segregated in separate classrooms?
- There can be a maximum of six children in wheelchairs in one classroom, not 10 per class
- Extensions would have to be built to accommodate the children from Lyndale as there is not enough room in the other two schools

Pupil numbers

- School has been in managed decline for 8 years with uncertainty and rumours about its future
- Council should have promoted the school as a choice for parents but have failed to do so
- Parents have not been told Lyndale was an option or have been discouraged from coming here
- More special schools will be needed in future

Appendix 4 – Representations summary

- Lyndale is designated for CLD but over the years has become a school for children with PMLD
- No evidence that larger schools are better than smaller schools
- Secondary special schools do not provide the same level of education as the Lyndale school
- A report said that the school should only have 28 children with the current staffing levels

SEN Improvement test

- Not convinced the SEN improvement test has been met
- The independent consultant did not do an in-depth analysis of individual children's needs
- EHCPs should have been completed before any decision is made
- Stanley has never had any PMLD pupils and Elleray Park has limited experience with pupils on Band 4 or 5
- The independent consultant's report was published after the consultation ended so there was insufficient time to scrutinise it's findings
- The independent consultant was appointed by the Council with no consultation with governors or parents
- The independent consultant has no background in PMLD, only in school reorganisation and funding
- The independent consultant only spent two hours with parents at Lyndale and did not speak to any governors
- Cannot compare the three schools as they take very different children

The Consultation

- Parents questions raised during the consultation have not been fully answered or taken seriously
- How were responses to the consultation made available?
- Different closure date was consulted on to the one in the statutory notice
- Consultation has been long winded, repetitive and stressful
- No detailed answers were given at the consultation meetings
- Chair of the consultation meeting told me to be quiet when I tried to describe my daughters needs
- Consultation lacked clear plan or focus
- Over 7000 people signed a petition

Appendix 4 – Representations summary

Comments on the proposal

- Disruptive to close the school mid-year, why not close in July 2016 at the end of the academic year otherwise - some children would start the year in one school, transfer to another, then again to go to secondary school
- Some parents will not want their child to go to Elleray Park or Stanley
- Should transfer all the children and staff to another site as one unit, this option was broached in a half-hearted manner in the consultation
- A school survey of parents of Lyndale children indicates that about half would be interested in a unit at Foxfield
- Will there still be places available for children with autism at Stanley School?
- Stanley and Elleray do not have space for the children from Lyndale
- Concern about the impact of change on working families
- Has not clearly indicated what alternative provision is available if Lyndale closes, just a list of schools
- Parents preference is clearly for Lyndale – this has not been taken into account
- Staff at the new schools would not be trained in time for the transfer
- A survey of parents of Lyndale children carried out by parents indicates that most would not want their child to go to Stanley or Elleray Park if the school were to close
- Stanley takes only children with ASD and behaviour problems

Other Comments

- There has been a wealth of national adverse publicity associated with social services and vulnerable children
- Moral obligation to keep the school open
- In 2011 it was recommended to close Kingsway Primary as a small school but it is still open so officers were incorrect to recommend closure and are incorrect now
- Beggars belief that this statutory notice has been issued at all
- A society is judged on how it treats those who are less able to look after themselves
- Insensitive and cruel