

Contents

Statutory Notice3
Description of alteration4
Objections and comments5
Appendix A6

Proposed Opening of a Specialist ASD Unit at Downside Primary School

Statutory Proposal

September 2020

This proposal has been published by Luton Council, Town Hall, Luton LU1 2BQ and relates to Downside Primary School, Chaul End Lane, Luton, LU4 8EZ. Downside Primary School is maintained by Luton Council.

Nicholas Nel | Education Provision and Planning Manager

Statutory Notice

Prescribed Alteration to Downside Primary School Luton

Notice is given in accordance with section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, as amended by the Education Act 2011, and the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 that Luton Borough Council intends to make a prescribed alteration to Downside Primary School, Chaul End Lane, Luton, LU4 8EZ from September 2021.

The proposal is to open a specialist provision, on the mainstream school site at Downside Primary School for 8 children with the SLA (Service Level Agreement) funding up to 10 children with autism spectrum disorders, providing a safe base for pupils not yet able to access mainstream lessons, with a focus on slow integration when pupils are academically, socially and emotionally ready.

The Provision will provide for 8 to 10 pupils, across Luton, with an Education Health Care Plan which identifies that a specialist provision, attached to mainstream school, is best able to meet their needs. Pupils attending the Provision will be placed on the roll of Downside Primary School.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained from *Mr Nicholas Nel, Education Provision and Planning Manager* by email to Nicholas.Nel@luton.gov.uk or by writing to *Mr Nicholas Nel, Education Provision and Planning Manager, Luton Council, Town Hall, George Street, Luton LU1 5BQ*. Alternatively, the complete proposal can be accessed on the council website at: www.luton.gov.uk/schoolstatutorynotice.

Within four weeks from the date of publication of these proposals, any person may object to, make comments on, or express support for the proposal by email to Nicholas.Nel@luton.gov.uk or by writing to *Mr Nicholas Nel, Education Provision and Planning Manager, Luton Council, Town Hall, George Street, Luton LU1 5BQ*.

The closing date for representations is midnight on 9th October 2020.

Signed: Amanda Lewis, Corporate Director - Children, Families and Education

Publication Date: 9th September 2020

Description of Alteration:

It is proposed to open a new Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) unit at Downside Primary School following the closure of an ASD unit at Wigmore Primary School.

Objectives:

The objective is to close an unsustainable ASD unit at Wigmore Primary School and open a subsequent unit at Downside Primary School with a new ethos to ensure the sustainability of the ASD unit.

Evidence of Demand and the impact on other schools, academies and educational institutions in the area:

There is no anticipated impact as this unit will be run under a new sustainable ethos.

Project Costs:

The cost of the new accommodation, at Downside Primary School, will be met from the Council's Basic Need Capital Funding, provided by the Department for Education, to facilitate the development of additional school places, where required. £600,000 has been committed from the SEND Capital Grant for Downside Provision.

Implementation:

It is proposed that the prescribed alteration will take effect from September 2021.

Consultation:

The following people/organisations were consulted before publication of these proposals:

- Governors of Downside Primary School
- staff at Downside Primary School
- parents of pupils attending the ASD Unit at Wigmore Primary School
- Headteachers of Luton primary schools
- trade Union representatives
- local ward councillors
- Luton MPs
- local pre-schools, schools and nurseries
- maintained community nursery schools in Luton

Broader consultation around SEN provision, including the need for additional ASD provision, was carried out with all parents of children with EHC plans in December 2019.

A copy of the consultation document is attached at Appendix A.

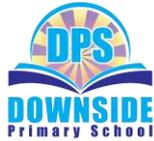
No responses were received to the consultation.

Objections and Comments:

Any objections to, or support for/comments on, the proposals should be put in writing and addressed to:

Mr Nicholas Nel
Education and Provision Planning Manager
Luton Council
Children, Families and Education Directorate
Town Hall
Luton
LU1 2BQ
Email: nicholas.nel@luton.gov.uk

The representation period for these proposals is four weeks. The closing date for comments and objections is 7th October 2020.



Luton Council and Governors of Downside Primary School are seeking your views on a proposal to open a specialist Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Unit for up to 10 pupils. The Unit will be situated within the primary school.

Background

Luton's pupil population has grown significantly over the last twelve years. The number of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) has also more than doubled to 1795 in the past 10 years, 7% higher than the national average.

The Council endeavours to provide a diverse range of specialist provision to meet the needs of pupils with an EHCP. The ASD Unit, at Wigmore Primary School, is planning to close in July 2021 and is not accepting any new pupils, therefore, there is a need to create a new provision as soon as possible.

This paper sets out a proposal to open an ASD Unit at Downside Primary School, to cater for pupils with ASD, where their EHCP confirms a specialist provision, attached to a mainstream school, would best meet their needs.

Proposal

To open a specialist provision, on a mainstream school site for 8 children with the SLA (Service Level Agreement) funding up to 10 children with autism spectrum disorders, providing a safe base for pupils not yet able to access mainstream lessons, with a focus on slow integration when pupils are academically, socially and emotionally ready.

The Provision will provide for 8 to 10 pupils, across Luton, with an EHCP which identifies that a specialist provision, attached to mainstream school, is best able to meet their needs. Pupils attending the Provision will be placed on the roll of Downside Primary School.

Context

Downside is a large Primary School, with a significant number of children with special needs on its roll. Due to the size of the School, Downside has restructured its Special Needs Team to ensure that each type of special need has an experienced team to support the children.

Downside has a very inclusive approach to children with special educational needs and have identified capacity across the School to support children with more complex ASD, both in classes and in the provision.

The Provision will be a safe place for children with ASD. Children must feel safe and secure in order to prosper educationally. The School has every child's mental health and wellbeing at its heart and has an experienced wellbeing team as well as the benefit of a regular Clinical Psychologist in school and support from a Child Psychotherapist . Such expertise, alongside what is offered through the Provision, would be integral in supporting the children therapeutically and in supporting the staff working with them. The School is currently developing a 'Social Life skills' package for ASD children, to ensure they have the life skills necessary to support them at high school and in their wider lives. Having such a provision at the School would enable Downside to develop this even further.

Children at Downside are calm, well behaved and accepting that everyone is different. Once children in the Provision are ready, it will be imperative that the classes they are integrated into are calm and consistent places to be. The children in the Provision will need routines to be clear. Downside would be able to provide the classroom structure, expertise and stability that the provision children need.

In place already are lunch time clubs for children who find the dinner hall and playground a busy place. Children in the Provision would be able to have different options for their lunchtimes – spending it in the Provision, in a lunch time club and then, when ready, spending it with the School

The Provision would need an experienced team, who could be recruited from within the School and externally. Training and working with external professionals is something the School has always benefitted from and are currently hosting training for the ASD Teaching Assistant Course.

Financial considerations

The cost of the new accommodation will be met from the SEND Capital Grant to facilitate the development of additional school places, where required.

The School will be provided with additional revenue funding to support children within the Provision.

Transport

Pupils placed in the Unit can make applications for travel assistance. These applications will be considered in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy which can be viewed at:

https://www.luton.gov.uk/Education_and_learning/Pages/travel-assistance.aspx

Site considerations

Depending on the outcome of this consultation, the ASD Unit, proposed at Downside, will go out for tender with an estimated build cost of £600,000 to both utilise existing space and build further classroom space for the Provision and is not expected to cause any disruption to surrounding residents. It will have a maximum capacity of 10 pupils from across Luton.

Distribution of consultation document

In order to ensure that this consultation document should be read as widely as possible, it is being distributed as follows:

- Governors of Downside Primary School
- staff at Downside Primary School
- parents of pupils at Downside Primary School.
- parents of prospective pupils who may attend Downside Primary School ASD Provision
- Headteachers of Luton primary schools
- trade Union representatives
- local ward councillors
- Luton MPs
- local pre-schools, schools and nurseries
- maintained community nursery schools in Luton
- residents whose properties back on to school site close to where the new ASD unit will be situated.

Responding to the consultation

It is important that all interested individuals and groups have the opportunity to comment on the proposal to open an ASD unit at Downside Primary School.

We would normally arrange drop-in sessions for interested parties to ask questions about the proposal, however, due to the social distancing restrictions in relation to the Covid-19 crisis, we ask that questions be sent to:

Nicholas Nel, Education Provision and Planning Manager, Luton Council.
Email: nicholas.nel@luton.gov.uk

and/or

Ms Karen Hooker, Head of Downside Primary School
Email: admin@downside-primary.co.uk

If you would prefer to discuss your queries over the phone, please mention this in your email and we will call you back.

Please note that all feedback must be in writing. Parents and other stakeholders are asked to complete the online feedback form at <https://engage.luton.gov.uk/> or send their comments via email or post to one of the addresses below.

Downside Primary School
Chaul End Land
Luton
LU4 8EZ
Email: admin@downside-primary.co.uk

If you would prefer to send your response directly to the council, please address it to:

Mr Nicholas Nel
Education and Provision Planning Manager
Luton Council
Children, Families and Education Directorate
Town Hall
Luton
LU1 2BQ
Email: nicholas.nel@luton.gov.uk

The deadline for submitting your comments is 28th July 2020.

3. I am interested in this issue because...

(Please tick the appropriate box)

- I am parent / carer of a child attending Downside Primary School.
- I am a parent / carer of a child who could attend the ASD Unit at Downside Primary School.
- I am a member of staff at Downside Primary School.
- I am a governor at Downside Primary School.
- I am a resident in the area who is not likely to have children attending Downside Primary School in the future.
- Other (please specify)

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All forms to be returned by no later than midnight on 28th July 2020.