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Luton Council

**Proposed Closure of Wigmore
Primary School's Specialist ASD
Unit**

Statutory Proposal

September 2020

This proposal has been published by Luton Council, Town Hall, Luton LU1 2BQ and relates to Wigmore Primary School, Twyford Road, Luton, LU2 9TB. Wigmore Primary School is maintained by Luton Council.

Nicholas Nel | Education Provision and Planning Manager

Statutory Notice

Prescribed Alteration to Wigmore 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 Wigmore Primary School, Twyford Road, Luton, LU2 9TB from July 2021.

The Governing Body of Wigmore Primary School have written to the Council to request that the Autistic Spectrum Disorder provision at the School be closed. The provision was set up to offer a 1:2 staff pupil ratio with a fully inclusive ethos. However the complexity of the children gradually increased. This meant that the fully inclusive model with a staff pupil ratio of 1:2 was no longer sustainable.

There is a new proposed provision at Downside Primary School from September 2021 that will operate from a different ethos. The provision has been designed and staffed so that pupils can be educated within the provision in parallel to their mainstream peers, until they are academically, socially and emotionally ready to be included in mainstream lessons.

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 permanently close the School's specialist Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) unit. Plans are underway to develop a new unit at Downside Primary School.

Objectives:

Due to concerns by the Governing Body of the sustainability of the ethos of the unit, the objective is to close the 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 there is a subsequent proposal to open an ASD provision at Downside Primary School in Place of the ASD provision at Wigmore Primary School

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.

Revenue funding to support pupils in the Wigmore Provision will cease at the end of next academic year. By this time the remaining 2 Year 6 pupils in the Provision will have transferred to secondary school. There will be no redundancies.

Implementation:

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

Consultation:

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

- Governors of Wigmore Primary School
- staff at Wigmore 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 Wigmore Primary School are seeking your views on a proposal to permanently close the School's specialist Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) unit. Plans are underway to develop a new unit at Downside 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 risen from 862 in September 2010 to 1795 currently, 7% higher than the national increase during the same period of time.

The Council endeavours to provide a diverse range of specialist provision to meet the needs of pupils with an EHCP. This paper sets out a proposal to close the ASD unit at Wigmore Primary School. The Council is consulting on a proposal to develop a new unit at Downside Primary School to cater for pupils with ASD where their EHCP suggests a specialist provision, attached to a mainstream school, would best meet their needs.

Proposal

The Governing Body of Wigmore Primary School have written to the Council to request that the ASD provision at the School be closed.

Rationale

Governors are concerned that the percentage of pupils with Education Health Care Plans (EHCP), specifically those with high level needs, has increased considerably within Wigmore's mainstream admissions. Governors are concerned that the demands of meeting these needs, along with the needs of those allocated to the provision, are putting considerable strain on the School's ability to provide a productive learning environment for all.

The Council's review of specialist provisions showed that the ASD provision provided high quality support for children with autism. However the children's needs were more complex than the provision had originally planned for. Wigmore provision was originally set up to be fully inclusive, with children being registered and attending lessons within the main school. A 'base' was designed to offer quiet time out, individual and small group teaching and an IT suite for when pupils needed to be withdrawn from the mainschool.

The provision was set up to offer a 1:2 staff pupil ratio with a fully inclusive ethos. However the complexity of the children gradually increased This meant that the fully inclusive model with a staff pupil ratio of 1:2 was no longer sustainable.

The new proposed provision at Downside Primary will operate from a different ethos - the provision has been designed and staffed so that pupils can be educated within the provision in parallel to their mainstream peers, until they are academically, socially and emotionally ready to be included in mainstream lessons (with each subject being considered separately).Funding will be sufficient to allow this, the change in vision and expectations around the way in which the provision will operate should enable this to be successful.

Financial considerations

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. The Basic Needs funding does not cover special provision.

Revenue funding to support pupils in the Wigmore Provision will cease at the end of next academic year. By this time the remaining 2 Year 6 pupils in the Provision will have transferred to secondary school. This action will not impact on staffing and will not result in redundancies. Provision staff are being incorporated by the school onto the school staff.

Site considerations

The spaces used for the unit will be utilised by the School to support pupils with greater needs in mainstream classes.

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 Wigmore Primary School
- staff at Wigmore 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.

Responding to the consultation

It is important that all interested individuals and groups have the opportunity to comment on the proposal to close the ASD Unit at Wigmore 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 Laura Flitton, Head of Wigmore Primary School
Email: head@wigmore.primaryluton.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.

Wigmore Primary School
Twyford Road
Luton
LU2 9TB
Email: head@wigmore.primaryluton.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 Wigmore Primary School.
- I am a parent / carer of a child who may attend Wigmore Primary School in the future.
- I am a member of staff at Wigmore Primary School.
- I am a governor at Wigmore Primary School.
- Headteacher of a Luton school..
- Other (please specify)

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