

Full statutory proposal information for prescribed alterations to The Westminster School

In accordance with the School Organisation (Making “prescribed alterations to maintained Schools” Regulations 2016 Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council proposes to make prescribed alterations to The Westminster School with effect from 1st January 2019.

Local Authority details:

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

Sandwell Council House,

Freeth Street,

Oldbury,

West Midlands, B69 9EX

School details:

The Westminster School

Rowley Campus, Curral Road,

Rowley Regis,

West Midlands, B65 9AN.

The Westminster School is a community special school providing education for pupils deemed to have the following:

Complex Moderate Learning Difficulties, including Autism (CMLD)

Moderate Learning Difficulties with Physical and Sensory Disabilities (MLD)

The age range of the school is currently 7 to 19.

All admissions to the school are as a result of Sandwell Council determining that this is the most appropriate educational provision. Students admitted have an Education & Health Care Plan (EHCP) / Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) agreed by the Council which specifies Complex, Moderate Learning Difficulties, including autism.

Description of the proposed alteration

As part of its strategy to increase the number of special school places for young people with special educational needs and learning disabilities, and in support of the Supported Internship and Apprenticeship Programme, Sandwell Council is proposing to make a statutory change to The Westminster School. It is proposed to increase the capacity of the school up to 250 places.

Proposed New Pupil Profile: currently 194

Age	No. of Additional Pupils	Existing Pupil numbers	Total
7-11 years	5	25	30
11-16 years	5	121	126
Post 16	46	48	94
Total	60	194	250

Objectives

As the population of Sandwell grows so does the demand for school places which also includes the demand for places in our special schools. The planned expansion of The Westminster School will lead to more young people with disabilities in Sandwell being able to attend a special school for MLD. This requirement was identified by an independent review carried out on behalf of the Head Teachers' Joint Executive Group and the Local Authority. The expansion will increase the council's ability to provide places on the Supported Internship and Apprenticeships leading to increased employment opportunities for young people with Learning Disabilities.

The proposed increase in capacity at The Westminster will:

- a) confirm current provision for 7 to 16 year olds; and
- b) create space for a bespoke 16 to 19 provision that will enable students to extend their studies and access Supported Internships and Supported Apprenticeships.

It's important to note that in 2016 only 48 out of every 100 disabled people were in paid work, whilst 80 out of every 100 non-disabled people were in paid work. The number of people with learning disabilities in work is even lower. The Government's target is to get a million more people with disabilities into employment by 2027. This is approximately a 29% increase on current levels.

Sandwell's Supported Internship and Apprenticeship programme has been endorsed by the Government with visits from the Department for Education (DfE) and a direct request from the DfE and HMI to expand the programme with immediate effect.

Young people in Sandwell have also requested that the Supported Internships and Apprenticeships programmes, based at The Westminster School, be expanded so that more young people with special needs can access pathways to employment (see the young people's White Paper which can be downloaded from the "Changing Our Lives" website (www.changingourlives.org) and the Westminster School website). The White Paper has been presented to Sandwell Councillors.

Therefore, it is proposed to expand the capacity of The Westminster School up to 250 places to meet the increase in demand for places as the Supported Internship and Apprenticeship programme receives publicity via special schools and support services such as Connexions. It is proposed that this is achieved by expanding into the adjoining educational building currently occupied by Whiteheath Education Centre (Alternative Provision). In order to complete this expansion, resources would be allocated to support the re-location of Whiteheath Education Centre to a comparable site.

The effect on other schools in the area

The effect on the wider community of schools relates to providing additional capacity to ease the shortage of specialist places in Sandwell. It will reduce pressure from schools that are maintaining children and young people whose parents would voice a preference for specialist provision. There is a direct effect on Whiteheath Education Centre as the proposal will involve the relocation of the provision to another site.

Project costs

The cost of the project will be met from within the EVOLVE initiative which is a strategic plan that takes the Local Authority through to the Council's Vision 2030 and establishes additional places and routes to employment for young people with SEND. The DfE has allocated the Council funding to improve specialist provision for young people. This funding will be sufficient to cover the project costs.

Consultation responses

An initial consultation process took place from 11th May to 15th June 2018. The following stakeholders were consulted:

The Governing Body of The Westminster School, parents of children at the school, members of staff, Whiteheath Education Centre, all Sandwell schools, the local authorities of Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Dudley and Walsall, Church of England and Roman Catholic diocesan authorities, members of the community including

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS), Local businesses, Autism West Midlands, Joint Union Panel.

Responses were received as follows:

Category	Number Responding	Yes (to the proposal)	No (to the proposal)	Don't know
Parents	76	68	5	3
Staff	63	63	0	0
Student	114	110	1	3
Governors	6	4	2	0
Community member	401	397	4	0
TOTAL	660	642	12	6

In addition, Sandwell Parent Voice (SPV), a statutory organisation which formally presents the views of SEND parents, has been consulted. At the latest SPV workshop and volunteer meeting, all attending agreed with the council's proposal. Sandwell SEND Partnership Board, which represents a number of organisations including health services and Adult Social Care, has also unanimously supported the proposal.

Implementation date

A decision on this proposal will be made by Sandwell's Cabinet within 2 months of the end of this representation period. If agreed, it is proposed to implement this proposal with effect from 1 January 2019

How to make representations or comments on the proposal

Within four weeks from the date of publication of this proposal (by 23 July 2018), any person may object or make a representation or comment on the proposal. This can be done by writing to Dr Kevin Rowland, Principal Educational Psychologist, Group Manager Inclusive Learning, Connor Education Centre, Connor Road, West Bromwich B71 3DJ.

Email: kevin_rowland@sandwell.gov.uk

Any personal information you provide will only be used to communicate with you on this issue and your details will be deleted at the end of the process.