

Committee: **Cabinet**

Date: **14 December 2005**

Title of Report: **Review of Special Educational Needs (SEN) Specialist Provision**

By: **Director of Children's Services**

Purpose of Report: **To seek the Cabinet's agreement to the proposed consultation on changes to the designation and role of St Mary's Special School, Horam, and to inform the Cabinet of the progress made on the four key priorities of the SEN Review.**

Recommendations:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1. agree to the proposed consultation on changes to the designation and role of St Mary's Special School, Horam; and**
 - 2. note the progress on the four key recommendations of the SEN Review**
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1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 The intention of the SEN Review is to use existing resources more effectively. Many of the actions described in Annex 1 to this paper are expected to be managed through re-allocating existing resources. However, in some cases initial investment will be required to generate future savings. An 'invest to save' proposal has been submitted for consideration as part of the 2006/07 Reconciling Policy and Resources process for the revenue costs of the increased number of places at St Mary's, Horam, and for the capital works. The investment would enable significant savings to be made in agency placements in future years to cover the additional costs involved.

2. Supporting Information

- 2.1 The SEN review has two core objectives:
- (i) to promote greater inclusion in East Sussex schools (special and mainstream); and
 - (ii) to improve further the quality and range of provision available in East Sussex by using existing resources more effectively.
- 2.2 At its June 2005 meeting the Cabinet agreed that the review should focus on four key areas of activity:
1. co-ordinate and publicise the significant number of initiatives and strategies for promoting good behaviour in schools, through the work of the recently established Behaviour Board, with the aim of providing comprehensive advice on resources and support, including those present in specialist SEN provision, for promoting good behaviour;
 2. review the range and scope of local maintained specialist provision and ensure that it is best placed to meet the needs of the children and young people with the most complex needs, including options for the changed use of St Mary's School, Horam, and the development of multi-agency co-ordinated services for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and their families;
 3. work closely with one or more Local Partnerships for Children (LPCs) to establish procedures and protocols for the pilot delegation of SEN funding to the LPC in 2006/07, attempting to resolve the issues raised in the consultation and avoiding pitfalls, and to

- undertake a cost/benefit analysis;
4. extend out of school activities in special schools and specifically:
 - i. produce costed options for increased overnight respite for children with autism and report back to the Cabinet for a decision by December 2005;
 - ii. pilot the establishment of out of school activities in the South Downs Special School, Eastbourne.

2.3 Annex 1 provides an update on the progress on these four key areas.

2.4 The background audit for the SEN Review identified Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) and ASD as two key areas of need where the demand for specialist placements has been increasing significantly and also where there are high numbers of placements in independent and non-maintained special schools.

2.5 In order to increase the numbers of specialist BESD places within East Sussex it is proposed that from September 2007 St Mary's Special School, Horam, should become a school for 80 boys aged 9-16 with severe BESD. The school would offer an extended day and overnight respite, as appropriate, having up to 20 places for overnight accommodation. The changes would be incremental and the current pupils would be able to complete their statutory education at St Mary's School.

2.6 Work to improve the teaching and residential accommodation at the school would be incorporated into the 2007/08 capital programme subject to funds being agreed.

2.7 Informal discussions have been held over recent weeks with the governors, staff and current parents of pupils attending St Mary's. The governors have given their full support to the proposal. The staff are also supportive. The current parents are reassured that their children's placement will not be affected and are also supportive of the proposals. Discussions have also been held with the headteachers of all the special schools maintained by the Council who also back the proposals.

2.8 Annex 2 provides some background information on St Mary's Special School, Horam.

2.9 Subject to the agreement of the Cabinet, it is proposed that further informal consultation is held between January and March 2006. The responses will be analysed and reported to the Cabinet at its meeting in May 2006. Subject to the agreement of the Cabinet, a formal consultation period would then be launched with the issue of statutory notices. This formal consultation period would last for two months and if no formal objections are received the changes would be implemented. If objections are received the matter would be considered by the School Organisation Committee. If the School Organisation Committee supported the proposal unanimously the proposals would go ahead; if not, the matter would be referred to the National Schools Adjudicator for determination.

2.10 Annex 3 is a draft leaflet to support the informal consultation period between January and March 2006.

3. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendations

3.1 The actions proposed are intended to address the objectives of the SEN Review described in paragraph 2.1 and to increase the availability of local specialist placements for boys with severe BESD, thereby reducing the need to rely on external placements.

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Local Members: Councillors Dowling, Dyason, Forster, Gubby, Harris, Kramer, Murphy,

Scott, Skilton, Stogdon, Mrs Tidy, Waite, Woodall

Update on Progress on the SEN Review

Key Priority Areas

1. Behaviour

This key priority is overseen by the Behaviour Board. The Board has agreed to undertake a review of the behaviour support currently provided to schools by Cuckmere House and New Horizons, undertake a survey of secondary schools in relation to behaviour support, revise the Behaviour Support to Schools document and enable it to be accessed on-line, and provide support to schools in relation to exclusions especially in Year 8.

2. Delegating funds to Local Partnerships for Children

The implementation of this key priority has been delayed by the new funding regulations for schools which do not allow changes to the funding formula until April 2008. In the meantime, changes are being proposed to the method of funding support to pupils with SEN, but without statements, in primary schools and discussions have been held with the Bexhill Consortium about pooling SEN funding. This has resulted in an agreement to explore the possibility of a flexible provision being established at Bexhill High School to cater for pupils who need a flexible reintegration into school or who are at risk of permanent exclusion.

During the coming year there will be discussions with heads about possible alterations to the way the support for pupils with SEN is delegated to schools in order to enable schools to make early intervention to support pupils with special educational needs. This will lead to proposals to the Children's Services Senior Management Team, the Cabinet and the Schools Forum for changes to the formula in April 2008.

3. Specialist provision

a. St Mary's, Horam

Discussions have been held with governors, staff and parents. There is broad agreement amongst these groups with the proposals, although a few parents expressed some concern that girls would no longer be admitted and about the proposed closure of the 16+ provision. An invest to save bid for the additional revenue and capital costs has been submitted.

Following consideration of the proposals by the Cabinet and subject to its agreement, it is planned to launch an informal consultation with all key stakeholders, including the Learning and Skills Council, in January 2006. This would be followed by the issuing of statutory notices in June 2006 with a view to the redesignation of the school in September 2007. Subject to the success of the 'invest to save' bid improvements to the residential and teaching accommodation would be scheduled in 2007/08.

b. Review of special school provision

Special school designations - Discussions have been held with special school headteachers about clarification to their current roles and designations. It is proposed that the schools' designations should be as follows:

Grove Park – Severe Learning Difficulties/Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (SLD/PMLD) including associated ASD (2-19)

Hazel Court – SLD/PMLD including associated ASD (11-19)

Glyne Gap – SLD/PMLD including associated ASD (2-19)

South Downs – Communication and Learning Difficulties (including PMLD) (2-11)

The Lindfield – Communication and Learning Difficulties (11-16)

Torfield – Communication and Learning Difficulties (2-11)

Saxon Mount – Communication and Learning Difficulties (11-16)
Cuckmere House – Severe BESD (7-16)
New Horizons – Severe BESD (7-16)
St Mary's Horam – Severe BESD (9-16)

Formal consultations will be held in December 2005 with the schools' governing bodies on these proposals. Once agreed, clarification will be sought from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) about whether or not this would require any statutory notices to be issued.

ASD facilities at special schools - Discussions are under way about the future of the specialist ASD facility currently based at Hazel Court. It is currently based in hatted accommodation on the site of the old primary Hazel Court which is now part of South Downs Community Special School. There is agreement that this is not a situation which can continue and was raised as an issue in the OFSTED inspection report for Hazel Court. The capital costs of building additional accommodation for this facility on the Hazel Court Secondary site have been estimated at £850,000. This would allow for the provision to expand from 6 to 12 places. However, audit evidence reveals that this would not be viable unless there were significant overnight respite/residential provision attached as there are very few children whose ASD is so severe as to need this specialist facility who can be maintained within their own homes. Currently there are four pupils attending the facility. Formal proposals for the future of this provision will be developed for initial consideration by the SEN Review Project Board in the summer 2006.

All learning difficulties special schools have specialist provision/classes for pupils with ASD. When co-location is achieved for Grove Park this will complete the programme. Recent developments at Grove Park have led to the employment of a specialist ASD teacher who supports pupils with ASD attending the school and provides outreach to local mainstream schools.

Foundation Stage - Work is also underway to re-establish Foundation Stage provision at South Downs. South Downs took over the SLD/PMLD primary phase in Eastbourne from Hazel Court. There was always and continues to be a need for pre-school places for children with severe learning and physical needs. Pressure on places in the upper years of South Downs led to the school reorganising so that there have not been any pre-school places for the last year. The pressure on places in Key Stage 2 will be removed in September 2006 and it is planned to re-establish the pre-school provision. We are exploring the possibility of locating the South Downs pre-school provision within a maintained nursery class in the locality on lines similar to that of the nursery at Glyne Gap School.

BESD provision – 'Invest to save' proposals have been submitted for a KS3/4 class at Cuckmere House to cater for pupils who require extremely flexible provision and who could be moved from agency placements. The revenue costs of the class would be £139,080 for a full year. Subject to the provision of start up funds of £65,000 being available from January 2006, the class could be operational in April 2006.

Co-location - Capital funding grant has been achieved from the DfES to support the co-location of Grove Park 11-16 and 16-19 with Beacon Community College. This will mean that we will have two fully co-located special schools (Grove Park and Hazel Court), one special school co-located at Foundation Stage and Post 16 (Glyne Gap) and three special schools located very close to mainstream schools (Torfield, The Lindfield and Saxon Mount). Priority for future capital planning should be South Downs and Torfield, both of which have significant accommodation issues and are not fully accessible.

c. c. Outreach from special schools

Co-ordinated partnership arrangements - All special schools have been visited to audit outreach provision and partnerships with mainstream schools to get an overview of the current situation. The findings will be collated and proposals developed in January 2006 for a network of mainstream partnerships based on the offer from the central support services and building on the skills and capabilities of special schools in order to present a co-ordinated approach of support to

mainstream schools, especially in relation to ASD.

Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) - The School Improvement Service has achieved grant funding from the Teaching Development Agency for special schools to provide outreach/modelling/support for NQTs in schools requiring additional support. This project will take place in this financial year.

Behaviour Support Service – the Behaviour Support Service operated by Cuckmere House and New Horizons Schools is under review by the Behaviour Board.

Non-maintained special schools - Discussions are under way about the establishment of a partnership arrangement between the Department and Chailey Heritage School to provide outreach in relation to physical difficulties, particularly in the western area of the county.

d. Special units and facilities

ASD - An 'invest to save' bid has been submitted for both capital and revenue funds to establish a specialist resourced provision at a mainstream secondary school for 6 pupils with high functioning ASD. If successful, it is proposed that this model is rolled out in up to five other secondary schools across the county.

Discussions are also being held with the headteacher of Filsham Valley School about the future role of the current special facility based at the school. This could lead to a refocusing on physical difficulty (PD) or redirecting the facility towards ASD.

Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) - Discussions are underway with Bexhill High about the refocusing of the current SpLD facility to allow the establishment of a flexible provision for vulnerable pupils as described above. The position of the other two SpLD facilities also needs to be reviewed including the possibility of reshaping them to become ASD facilities.

e. ASD Integrated Team

ASD Integrated teams have been established in Crowborough, Eastbourne and Hastings involving the Early Years Teaching and Support Service, Speech and Language Therapy Service, Children's Disability Team, Health Service colleagues, schools, Psychology and Learning Service and Special Facility teaching staff to meet in order to track and support children with ASD.

- The teams provide ongoing monitoring and support to schools and settings within a defined geographical area in relation to the management of pupils with an autistic spectrum disorder through:
 - Development of a training programme
 - Sharing of good practice and latest research findings
 - Tracking of individual pupils in order to respond in a more co-ordinated and timely fashion
 - Collaborative decision-making in relation to children and families presenting with complex needs
 - Creation of a bank of specialist resources and equipment
- Post Diagnosis Parent Support Groups are being developed, again with a multi-disciplinary approach and co-ordinated by the Family Intensive Support Service (Health)
- A Parent Focus Group has met in order for their ideas to be used to inform the working of the multi-disciplinary teams

An 'invest to save' bid has been submitted for a new post of ASD Co-ordinator to oversee and co-ordinate the ASD Integrated Teams and support the establishment of the ASD specialist facilities in secondary schools.

4. Extended schools and respite

a. Extended special schools

The current survey of extended school provision in special schools will be the key audit information on which proposals for the development of increased opportunities for special school pupils will be developed.

The South Downs Extended School project is well under way and it is expected that inclusive child-care will be provided in the area from April 2006. This work will provide a model for sustainable development at other special schools. It is anticipated that the model could be developed in two further special schools for September 2006.

Links have also been made with an extended school project at Hillside Special School in Brighton and Hove.

b. Respite

Plans for the redevelopment of Dorset Road have been established leading to extended provision for a wider range of children including those with ASD.

Further work is needed to develop costed proposals for the extension of respite/residential opportunities for children with ASD as proposed in the SEN Review. This will be completed by the summer 2006 and plans will be proposed to the SEN Review Project Board at that time.

Next Steps Short Term actions

a. Speech and Language Therapy (SALT)

An 'invest to save' bid has been submitted for two therapists to support the Department in providing individual therapy to children which is included in their statements by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal. The therapists will also support the Department by providing advice for children who may be seeking a placement at an agency school through the Tribunal. Steps have already been taken in partnership with the Primary Care Trusts to employ one therapist.

b. Occupational Therapy (OT)

We are currently in the process of appointing a paediatric OT to be part of the Children's Disability Service's OT team to perform a similar role to the SALT described above.

c. Home to school transport

Work is advanced on the relaunch of the home to school transport policy for pupils with SEN which, subject to SMT and Cabinet agreement, will include new procedures to ask parents to apply for transport in each case rather than it being allocated by the Department. This should allow the Department to monitor more closely all transport applications and ensure that good reasons are provided for its provision. Parents who may have difficulties in making the application will be supported by the SEN Caseworker.

Background Information on St Mary's School, Horam

Over recent years there have been around 50 pupils placed at St Mary's, Horam. All of these pupils exhibit behavioural difficulties and most have quite significant learning difficulties. A number also have mental health needs. Five are looked after, three by East Sussex and two by other authorities. 44 are boys and five girls. Four girls are due to leave the school in the next two years.

St Mary's is near the town of Horam in the centre of East Sussex. It is 17 miles from Lewes, 21 miles from Eastbourne and 32 miles from Hastings. There are poor public transport links to Horam and St Mary's is outside the town. All pupils are transported to school.

St Mary's occupies a large site with gardens to the rear. The main building was originally a convent and is not ideal as a special school. The school also has four small houses on site, which have been used as residential accommodation. The buildings are not in the best of condition and some work would be needed whatever plan was agreed for its future development. The school's 1999 OFSTED inspection report said:

'The unsatisfactory levels of maintenance over a sustained period mean that the school has several outstanding problems concerning the accommodation.'

Although much has been done since that time to improve the school buildings and residential accommodation, the above statement can still be said to be largely true. There are some specialist rooms including a science laboratory, a home economics room, a fitness centre and a small radio studio.

St Mary's was originally classified as a school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) with boarding provision. Over time the school's intake has changed considerably and the school has become part of the county's BESD provision. It seems that this had not been fully recognised by staff and governors although mentioned in the 1999 OFSTED report and supported by the previous headteacher's attendance at the county BESD panel.

The residential provision is used for respite for four nights a week and to allow pupils to attend extended day activities at the school. There are no pupils fully residential at the school other than one joint placement with Lansdowne Children's Centre.

The school's budget in 2005/06 is £1,443,890 excluding Standards Fund. Included in this figure is funding for 60 places, 10 at Band B, 14 at Band C and 36 at Band D and for 45 residential places at a cost of £538,320. Given that it has tended to operate with approximately 50 pupils, the mean cost per pupil is nearly £29,000.

Current costs of placements other than in East Sussex maintained schools

	Number	Costs	Mean
BESD	55 ¹	£2,439,799	£44,360

Providing additional behaviour support is a major priority of the SEN Review. Changing the remit of St Mary's to formally include BESD has merit in that there is a clear need for increased specialist provision for BESD pupils especially in Key Stage 3. This would reduce the need for some placements in independent and non-maintained special (agency) schools.

There is significant upward pressure for specialist placements for an increasing number of BESD pupils from Year 5 upwards. This is leading to an upward trend in the numbers of pupils placed in

¹ This number is likely to be artificially low as there will be a number of pupils with BESD who are out of school through exclusion or awaiting placement at any one time.

agency placements. There are few BESD agency schools in East Sussex which are able to offer high quality day placements to our children. There are also some pupils out of school, either excluded or awaiting placement, especially in the Hastings area.

Analysis of the agency placements made in the last financial year reveals that more than half (25) were made for pupils with BESD. A serious concern to the Children's Services Department has been the quality of provision offered by the day agency placements for BESD that are available in the county and the decision has been taken to no longer use one provider and concerns have been raised about another. If the current level of agency placement continues it will be necessary for us to look to use schools that are further afield and for which there will be no alternative but to make residential placements which will be more costly.

Redesignating St Mary's to an 80 place BESD school for boys would provide 16 places per year group for Years 8-11 and 8 places for Year 7 and a further 8 places for Years 5-6.

EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

**REVIEW OF
SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS
PROVISION**



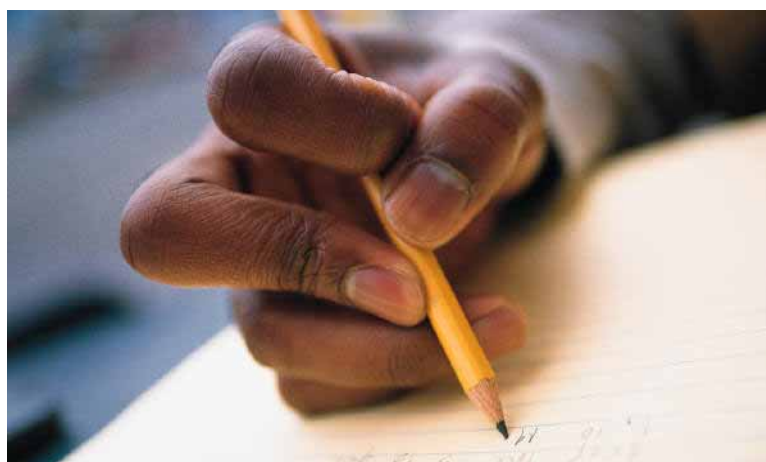
**INFORMAL CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE
ROLE OF ST MARY'S SCHOOL, HORAM**

INTRODUCTION

The consultation on the recommendations of the SEN Review in East Sussex took place in the spring term 2005.

The review has two core objectives:

- (i) To promote greater inclusion in East Sussex schools (special and mainstream).
- (ii) To improve further the quality and range of provision available in East Sussex by using existing resources more effectively.



The SEN Review Project Board recommended that action should be taken in a number of areas including reviewing the range of support for promoting good behaviour in schools and the number of special school places available for children with severe behavioural difficulties.

The Review will also look at the amount and type of all special school places we have and in particular look at options for the changed use of St Mary's School, Horam.

THE PROPOSAL

St Mary's School, Horam, should increase in size to have 80 places for boys aged 9-16 who have severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. It should have facilities for up to 20 boys at any one time to stay overnight on school nights.

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN

St Mary's School would be changed gradually. The current pupils would be able to stay at the school until they finish their statutory education at age 16. No further young people aged 16-19 would be admitted to the school from September 2006. No further girls would be admitted from September 2006.

This consultation period will end on 31 March 2006. Depending on the outcome, a statutory consultation would be held in the summer 2006 for the redesignation of the school from September 2007.

The current staff would continue to be employed by the school. Work to improve the school buildings will take place in 2007.

WHY THIS IS PROPOSED

- The role of St Mary's School has been changing over a long period of time. It now caters for many more children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. This needs to be recognised formally.
- There is an increasing number of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties who need a special school place including some in the upper years of primary school. Currently many have to attend schools outside of East Sussex which charge fees. This proposal would mean that more children will be able to attend a local school.
- St Mary's School has empty places. This proposal would mean that more children will be able to benefit from the specialist provision at St Mary's. There are also too few girls at St Mary's to allow them to have friendship groups. Most classes have only one girl and many have none.
- St Mary's School has a large building and is in the central part of the county. It is possible for children from a wide area to attend the school.
- The children who attend special schools are tending to have more complex needs. This is also true for St Mary's. The school wants to develop further its expertise in meeting these needs and this will be helped by the increased funding of a larger school and greater clarity about its role.

BACKGROUND

St Mary's School is near the town of Horam in the centre of East Sussex. It is 17 miles from Lewes, 21 miles from Eastbourne and 32 miles from Hastings. St Mary's occupies a large site with gardens to the rear. The school also has four small houses on site, which have been used as residential accommodation.

St Mary's was originally classified as a school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) with boarding provision. Over time the school's intake has changed considerably and the school has become part of the county's behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) provision.

Currently there are 50 pupils at St Mary's. Many have behavioural difficulties as well as learning difficulties. Five are in the care of a local authority, three by East Sussex and two by other authorities. There are 45 boys and five girls. Most of the girls are due to leave the school within the next two years.

The school's budget in 2005/06 is £1,443,890. This is funding for 60 places and the average cost per pupil attending is nearly £29,000 per year.

Providing additional behaviour support is a major priority of the SEN Review. There is a clear need for specialist placements for an increasing number of children from age 9 upwards. This is leading to an upward trend in the numbers of pupils placed in placements outside of East Sussex.

Developing St Mary's as an 80 place BESD school for boys would provide 16 places per year group for Years 8-11 and 8 places for Year 7 and a further 8 places for Years 5-6.

FEEDBACK

We would welcome your views on this proposal. Please contact:

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