

Report to: **Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability**

Date: **18 October 2021**

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

Title of report: **Proposed extension to the designation of the specialist facility at Wallands Community Primary School**

Purpose of report: **To seek Lead Member approval to extend the designation of the specialist facility at Wallands Community Primary School.**

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## ***RECOMMENDATION:***

**The Lead Member is recommended to approve an extension to the designation of the specialist facility at Wallands Community Primary School to also include pupils aged 4-11 with a primary need of Autistic Spectrum Disorder with associated speech, language and communication needs with effect from 1 September 2022.**

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## **1. Background**

1.1 On 22 July 2021 the Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability (the Lead Member) considered a report on a proposal to extend the designation of the specialist facility (the facility) at Wallands Community Primary School (the school).

1.2 The school has a designated specialist facility for up to 16 pupils aged 4-11 with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). The local authority is proposing to extend the designation of the facility at the school from 1 September 2022, to ensure it can also meet the needs of local pupils with a primary special educational need (SEN) of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) with associated speech, language and communication needs.

1.3 The proposal reflects the changes being seen in the type of SEN being presented across the East Sussex. In recent years fewer pupils with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) are presenting with a primary need of SLCN. Since 2014/15 the number of primary age pupils with an EHCP for SLCN has decreased from 329 pupils to 218 in 2020/21. Over the same period, the number of pupils with an EHCP for ASD has risen from 298 to 406. The local authority's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) forecasts are projecting that these trends will continue.

1.4 The local authority consulted with the school community, local schools and key stakeholders on the proposed change between 14 May and 17 June 2021. The local authority also held a virtual parent's meeting on 9 June 2021 to explain the proposal in more detail and answer parent's questions. By the close of the consultation period 15 responses had been received, 11 (73%) of which supported the proposal. One respondent (7%) did not support the proposal.

1.5 Having considered the report and the outcome of the consultation, the Lead Member approved the publication of a statutory notice to extend the designation of the specialist facility with effect from 1 September 2022. The Lead Member report can be viewed using the following link: [Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability 22 July 2021](#)

## **2. Statutory process**

2.1 In accordance with the prescribed process established by the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 (the regulations) a statutory proposal was published on the local authority's website on 6 August 2021. A statutory notice was published in the Sussex Express and posted at the entrances to the school on the same day, providing details to interested parties on how the full proposal could be accessed.

2.2 Publication of the statutory proposal triggered a 4-week representation period, when comments or objections could be made to the local authority. By the close of the representation period on 2 September 2021 no comments or objections had been received.

### **3. Equality Impact Assessment**

3.1 The Lead Member is required to have 'due regard' to the duties set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Public Sector Equality Duty) in determining the proposal. The local authority has completed an EqlA initial screening and concluded that the proposal will have a positive impact on provision at the school. The facility will be able to meet the needs of local pupils with a broader range of SEN than before, reflecting the changes we are seeing to the type of SEN presented. No potential equality barriers were identified by stakeholders during either the initial consultation or the subsequent representation period following the publication of the statutory proposal.

### **4. Factors to be considered before making a decision**

4.1 In accordance with the regulations, the Lead Member should consider a number of key factors before reaching a final decision on the proposal. These are set out in **Appendix 1**.

### **5. Conclusion and recommendation**

5.1 The local authority wishes to extend the designation of the specialist facility at the school with effect from 1 September 2022 so it can meet the needs of local pupils with SEN, reflecting the changes being seen to the type of SEN being presented. Since 2014/15 the number of primary age pupils with an EHCP for SLCN has decreased, while, over the same period, the number of pupils with an EHCP for ASD has risen. The local authority's SEN forecasts are projecting that these trends will continue.

5.2 Feedback from the initial consultation was largely positive, with 73% of respondents in support of the proposal. No comments or objections were received during the subsequent representation period.

5.3 The local authority expects the proposal to have a positive impact on provision at the school. Specialist staff will continue to work with pupils in the facility and also work with teaching staff across the school to develop skills and expertise in responding to SEN needs and creating an inclusive environment. The local authority believes that the facility is well placed to support children with ASD and SLCN.

5.4 For these reasons the Lead Member is recommended to approve an extension to the designation of the specialist facility at Wallands Community Primary School to also include pupils aged 4-11 with a primary need of Autistic Spectrum Disorder with associated speech, language and communication needs. with effect from 1 September 2022.

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#### Local Members

Councillor Wendy Maples

#### Appendices

Appendix 1 - Factors which the Lead Member should consider before reaching a decision on the proposal

### Factors which the Lead Member should consider before reaching a decision on the proposal

1.1	Are the proposals related to other published proposals?	The proposal to extend the designation of the specialist facility at Wallands Community Primary School is not related to other published proposals.
1.2	Is conditional approval being sought for the proposal?	No
1.3	Was a statutory consultation carried out prior to the publication of notices?	<p>A 4-week period of consultation was carried out between 14 May and 17 June 2021. The local authority also held a virtual parent's meeting on 9 June 2021 to explain the proposal in more detail and answer parent's questions.</p> <p>By the close of the consultation period 15 responses had been received. Respondents were largely in favour of the proposal, as can be seen in the breakdown below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11 (73%) respondents support the proposal</li> <li>• 1 (7%) respondent does not support the proposal</li> <li>• 1 (7%) respondent was undecided</li> <li>• 2 (13%) respondents did not answer</li> </ul> <p>In summary, those in favour of the proposal recognise the benefits it would bring to pupils with a primary need of ASD and associated SLCN, to the school and to the wider community. They suggested that being part of an inclusive school means pupils are able to learn together and that it would be good for the existing pupils to understand more about ASD and learn alongside pupils with ASD. The main reason given for not supporting the proposal was that the facility should remain for use by pupils with SLCN and that the teaching should be focused more on supporting those pupils. Concern was also raised about the negative impact the facility might have on mainstream provision e.g., staffing numbers and behaviour management.</p>
1.4	Did the published notice comply with statutory requirements?	The notice was published in accordance with the prescribed process established by the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013.
1.5	How will the proposal affect education standards and diversity of provision?	<p>In East Sussex specialist facilities promote an ethos of inclusion across the school and help integrate their pupils into the mainstream school for as much of their learning time as their needs allow. The facility also provides access to a base within the school for more intensive support when required.</p> <p>The primary objectives of extending the designation of the specialist facility are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to provide sufficient places for pupils with an EHCP and to specifically expand provision for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder with associated speech, language and communication needs</li> <li>• to improve the attainment and progress of pupils with SEN</li> <li>• to provide more local options for pupils to attend schools within their local community.</li> </ul>

		The East Sussex model expects that the expertise of staff within the facility provide significant benefits to the rest of the school and other schools in the local area to support all pupils with SEN and create a fully inclusive learning environment.
1.6	How will the proposal affect the proposed admission arrangements for the school?	Pupils within the facility are on the roll of the school and are in addition to the published admission number. Placements are determined by the local authority according to clear criteria.
1.7	Has due regard under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) been given to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations?	<p>An initial equality assessment was undertaken to identify any potential barriers to equality. The local authority concluded that a full EqIA is not required. No potential equality barriers were identified by stakeholders during either the initial consultation or the subsequent representation period following the publication of the statutory proposal.</p> <p>The local authority believes the proposal will have a positive impact on provision at the school. Specialist staff will continue to work with pupils in the facility and also work with teaching staff across the school to develop skills and expertise in responding to SEN needs and creating an inclusive environment. The local authority believes that the facility is well placed to support children with ASD with associated speech, language and communication needs and SLCN.</p>
1.8	Will the proposal have an impact on community cohesion?	<p>Across East Sussex there are three primary specialist facilities in mainstream schools for pupils aged 4-11 with ASD as their primary need, including new facilities at Churchwood Primary Academy in Hastings and Grovelands Community Primary School in Hailsham. The local authority's SEND forecasting has identified that there is a need for more specialist facilities that cater for pupils with ASD and associated speech, language and communication needs, including in Lewes.</p> <p>The proposal will have a positive impact on provision at the school and the wider community as it will be able to meet the needs of local pupils with a broader range of SEN, reflecting the changes we are seeing to the type of SEN presented.</p> <p>No potential community impacts were identified by respondents to the consultation.</p>
1.9	Will the proposal have an impact on travel and accessibility?	The proposal is not expected to have an impact on travel and accessibility as the facility will predominantly serve Lewes and the local area. The facility will continue to have capacity for up to 16 pupils, it is not intended to expand this number.
1.10	Has capital funding been identified and secured to enable the proposals to be implemented?	No capital funding is required to implement the proposal.
1.11	Have any particular issues or objections been raised during the representation period which could directly affect the proposal?	By the close of the representation period no comments or objections to the proposal had been received.