

SPECIAL SCHOOLS PROPOSALS (22 May 2019)

APPENDIX 7:

ANALYSIS OF ONLINE COMMENTS IN PHASE 2

66 responses were received (9 friends of family with child with SEND, 13 'Other' – including Clare Moody MEP and Trowbridge Town Council, 32 parent carers and 12 Professionals)

There were repeating themes within the comments, in order of quantity of repetition of themes, these were:

- Concern over longer distances for pupils to travel to Rowdeford (should the one school proposal still be on the table) – 25 responses included this
- A desire that children should be educated as close to their home/community as possible – 21 responses included this, and 12 responses asked that all existing provision be enlarged – That Rowdeford school should be expanded – 14 responses included this (although one person was worried that expanding the school would destroy its 'ethos')
- 12 comments gave direct objection to a 'mega school' and five voiced that more support should be given for children with SEND within mainstream provision
- Three responses voiced concern over a lack of focus on the south of the county and one organisation asked for all partners supporting the SEND community to be more joined up
- Three responses identified that parents would have a lack of choice if the one school proposal was continued
- There were two responses who voiced anger that a small group of parents were trying to delay the process and 'jeopardising the future of thousands of children in Wiltshire' – 'hold your nerve and proceed with this sensible project'

Alternative options put forward:

- Could St Nicholas serve a smaller range of need?
- Could there be two slightly smaller schools in the Chippenham and Trowbridge areas, but under one leadership, sharing staff?
- A site in Melksham or perhaps just outside of Trowbridge that is easier to get to than in the centre of town? I would also like to see creative use made of the schools that close, e.g. turn them into specialist centres for young people with special needs to help them get ready for independent living or learn and practise work skills in a special environment supported by local businesses.
- All 3 schools extended and come under one leadership. Larkrise to have a split site divided between primary and secondary years – same for St Nicholas. Schools share resources and therapists.
- Develop a school for autism only in West Wiltshire
- Use Ashton Street site to expand Larkrise