

CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES - CLLR LIONEL GRUNDY OBE

DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND EDUCATION

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REFERENCE: CS-002-11

**CS-002-11 REVIEW OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN)
PROVISION - CONFIRMATION OF DECISIONS**

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the outcome of the consultation on the statutory notice that was published subsequent to the decisions of Cabinet on 27 July 2010.
2. To make recommendations concerning the closure of the Pre-School Specialist Learning Centre at St Mary's Infant School Marlborough based on the response to the statutory notice.

Consultation

3. A public consultation on the Review of Special Educational Needs (SEN) Provision was held from 22 February to 24 May 2010. The outcome of that review was reported to Cabinet on 27 July 2010 where the decision was taken to proceed with all of the recommendations. Subsequent to the meeting 12 statutory notices were published on 9 September 2010. The proposals covered by those statutory notices related to changes to the age range and designation of special schools along with the closure of a number of specialist learning centres in primary schools.
4. On 27 July 2010 Cabinet also agreed that a statutory notice be issued for closure of the Pre School Specialist Learning Centre at St Mary's Infant School in Marlborough so that it could become part of the Early Years SEN Network, subject to a contractor being engaged to take over the running of the provision. As the process to find a new provider had not been concluded at that stage it was not possible to publish this statutory notice at that stage. It was published on 13 January 2011 when it was clear that a provider was to be engaged to take over the pre-school SEN work for the area.
5. There has been one response to the statutory notice asking for clarification of a number of points and saying how important that they had felt the provision to be for their child in the past.

6. An e-mail response was previously received from Dorset County Council supporting all the proposed changes in the review as they aimed to improve SEN provision in Wiltshire so there was a better match between identified need and available provision.

Options Considered

7. The closure of the Pre-School Specialist Learning Centre at St Mary's Infant School in Marlborough will enable a more efficient use of resources, as there will be a reduction in vacant places and improved consistency through Wiltshire as a whole in relation to responsibilities for meeting pre-school pupils' special educational needs. The resources released would be available for redeployment elsewhere in the Council's SEN budget.
8. Currently there are only 2 pupils with Statements of SEN on roll and both of them will leave at the end of Summer Term 2011. Historically the number of pupils with Statements in the provision has decreased as other types of provision have become more available. Therefore the closure will not displace any pupils with considerable SEN needs. The small number of pupils with very considerable needs on roll in most recent years has meant that it has been difficult to provide a reasonable sized peer group or efficiently utilise resources.
9. The provision for pre-school pupils with SEN in the east of the County will be enhanced by being included in the Wiltshire Early Years Network. Children will be able to have their needs met within a larger peer group in mainstream settings, local to their homes, where they will have access to the full pre-school curriculum. Specialist support will be available by outreach from the District Specialist Centre in Devizes or provision could be made at the Centre itself. Other support arrangements might include Specialist Childminder placement, Portage Service or direct support in the local setting from members of the Early Intervention Team. Provision in the Marlborough area would then be made in the same way as it is for children throughout Wiltshire.
10. The options considered were to either:
 - proceed with the closure or
 - not to proceed with the closure

Reason for Decision

11. The decision will be taken to proceed with the closure of the Pre-School Special Educational Needs Provision at St. Mary's Infant School in Marlborough so that:
 - provision in the Marlborough area can be made in the same way as in the rest of Wiltshire giving wider opportunities to pupils with SEN and that
 - resources can be released to be used more efficiently in other parts of the Wiltshire SEN Budget.

DECISION MADE

I approve that the proposal set out in the Statutory Notice should be ratified and then implemented. This decision was published on the 16th March 2011 and will take effect from the 24th March 2011

The following supporting documents are attached:

CS-002-11 - Review of Special Educational Needs Provision - Confirmation of Decisions - Report

Date: 16 March 2011

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Cllr Lionel Grundy OBE
Cabinet Member for Children's Services