

A Vision for Special Education in Wiltshire



Wiltshire Council is proud and pleased to announce a bright new future for children with special educational needs.

We propose a bold investment of around £20m in two new centres of excellence in the county – purpose-built and amply equipped, giving our children a better start in life than ever before.

The new and extended campuses are proposed for Rowdeford, near Devizes, and Exeter House, Salisbury.

The new direction for SEND in Wiltshire will mean keeping Rowdeford at Rowde, St Nicholas at Chippenham, and Larkrise, Trowbridge, open until the new schools are completed in autumn 2023.

All the pupils and staff teams from Larkrise and St

Nicholas will come together in the new, purpose-built modern school at Rowdeford, Rowde, from 2023.

The buildings at Larkrise and St Nicholas are past their prime, out of date and need replacing.

They no longer meet Department for Education guidelines on space.

They don't have enough outdoor green areas for children to play and learn in the fresh air.

We also need a new vision because the numbers of children we care for is rising, and the money we have to pay for it is falling.

But this is not about saving money.

The investment means we are committing more to special education needs.

Not less.

Our vision targets our budget to provide a better education and a better experience for our children.

This vision is based on three years of consultation with families, schools and communities. It offers a future where we concentrate the best facilities, the best teaching, and the best learning environment in specialist locations in the north and south of the county, rather than only being available in some parts of Wiltshire.

It means our expertise and experience can be applied in greater strength with greater purpose and greater focus across two centres, reaching out to all schools.

It might mean a little more travel time for some children.

For many it could mean less.

For all, it will promise a better education, better life chances, and better outcomes. It also assures:

- great teaching from well-trained, well-paid, caring, specialist and dedicated staff
- the right facilities and support: hydro-pools, sensory rooms, physio, open outdoor space, speech and language therapy, family care
- strong community links – with cafés, community gardens and public playing fields
- attractive, comfortable, child-scale buildings - safe, friendly, calm and engaging places with wide corridors and lots of natural light
- closer links between SEND schools and neighbouring mainstream schools. Each have resources the others can benefit from
- links with specialist nurseries, offering children with special needs seamless attention from the time they are tots to their teenage years
- both sites are on good road routes, central to the home locations of children and young people with SEND and with space to expand.

We look forward to discussing our vision with parents, families and schools.

