

Consultation on the proposal to close the Resource Provision Base for Pupils with Hearing Impairment and Specific Learning Difficulties at Westfield Primary School.

Wednesday, 29th June 2016

School Consultation

In attendance:

Ann McIntyre	Operational Director – Education, Inclusion and Provision
Anita Parkinson	Divisional Manager – Inclusion
Julie Metcalfe	Lead Teacher for Hearing Impairment
Claire Dawes	Headteacher Westfield Primary School
Mrs L Le-Surf	Chair of Governors
Ian McIntyre	Associate Governor
Denise Gough	Teaching Assistant –in the Resource Base Westfield Primary School
Joanne Berry	Signer in the Resource Base Westfield Primary School

Ann McIntyre welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

Purpose of the Meeting

It was explained that the purpose of the meeting was to commence the stage 1 consultation process on the Local Authority proposal to close the Resource Provision Base for pupils with Hearing Impairment and Specific Learning Difficulties at Westfield Primary School. The rationale behind the proposal would be explained and there would be the opportunity for questions.

Ann advised that Resource Base had the capacity for six pupils with hearing impairment and specific learning difficulties. Demand had decreased so that from September 2016 there would be only 3 pupils accessing provision. Many parents with children with a hearing impairment are now choosing a mainstream school with a package of support. Removing the Resource Base will allow this funding to be invested into increasing the level of peripatetic specialist teaching and non-teaching in Halton so that the needs of those children educated in a mainstream setting that require additional support can best be met.

Subject to the outcome of the consultation the proposal was to close the provision from 31st December 2016.

There would be no change to the support provided to the three pupils in the Resource Base from September 2016. The Local Authority would continue to fund the costs of the Teaching Assistant and the Signer and would provide teaching support from the Local Authority Peripatetic Hearing Impaired Specialist Teachers until all three pupils had completed their education at Westfield Primary School.

The outcome of the stage 1 consultation proposal would be reported to the Executive Board of the Council on 15th September 2016. Executive Board would then determine whether the proposal could be developed to a statutory proposal.

Questions

It was asked whether the closure could be deferred until 2018.

It was explained that although the Local Authority had agreed to fund the costs of the Teaching Assistant and Signer until the pupils from September 2016 had completed their primary education at Westfield Primary School, it was essential that the Local Authority invested in securing additional support to meet the needs of all pupils with a hearing impairment in mainstream settings across the borough.

There are currently children with a range of needs within the school such as ADHD, there is less of a distraction in the base and it has good acoustic conditions.

The school will continue to be able to utilise the hearing impaired base and all its facilities. The Local Authority will continue to provide support for pupils within the Hearing Impaired Unit from the Local Authority's specialist teaching team.

What is the position in terms of the current staff within the Resource Base?

The Local Authority will continue to fund the two staff in the base until the three pupils in the Resource Base in Westfield have completed their primary education at the school, this will be by July 2018 at the latest. If the proposal is agreed discussions will be held with the school, the Local Authority, the schools Human Resources Advisors and relevant trade union in accordance with the schools Redundancy Policy for Support Staff.

What happens to children with Hearing Impairment will they continue to be sent to Westfield Resource Base?

No. Hearing loss is now identified in babies through the Newborn Screening tests. This allows many babies to get hearing aids or/and support from the Local Authorities peripatetic team much earlier. The information we have currently shows that parents want their child to be fully included with their peers and siblings, where possible. In cases where children have more complex needs which include HI an appropriate setting will be identified which best meets their needs.