

PROPOSALS FOR PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCED PROVISION PLACES FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)

Section 19(3) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013.

1. The name and contact details of the LA or governing body publishing the proposal, and the name, address and category of the school proposed for expansion.

Cumberland Council, School Organisation Team, Parkhouse Building, Baron Way, Kingmoor Business Park, Carlisle, Cumbria CA6 4SJ.

The schools are Kingmoor Infant School, Hether Drive, Lowry Hill, Carlisle, Cumbria CA3 0ES. Category: Community. St Patrick's RC Primary School, Todholes Road, Cleator Moor, Cumbria CA25 5DG. Category: Voluntary Aided Catholic and St James' RC Primary School, Lonsdale Road, Millom, Cumbria LA18 4AS. Category: Voluntary Aided Catholic.

2. Description of alteration.

To establish new, specialist 'Resourced Provision' (RP) places for children with SEND in a number of mainstream schools.

Places and speciality at each school:

Kingmoor Infant: 10. All SEND
St Patrick's RC: 8. Autism/SLD
St James' RC: 9. Autism/SLD/physMed

3. Evidence of demand

The number of children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) has increased substantially over recent years. Cumberland's EHCP numbers have increased by around 7% between 2023 and 2024 and currently stand at 2,768. The capacity of specialist provision across the board to support our students with SEND has not kept pace with the growth in demand. Cumberland has only three special schools – James Rennie in Carlisle, Mayfield in Whitehaven and Cumbria Academy for Autism in Lillyhall – and, whilst capacity at these schools has been increased in recent years, the demand continues to outweigh capacity. Growth in EHCP numbers is forecast to continue to increase over the next decade, and existing specialist provision in mainstream schools and academies is already under significant pressure. An inability to meet demand in the maintained sector will lead to greater use of costly, independent provision, adding further pressure to the High Needs Block, which is currently in significant deficit.

4. Objectives of proposal.

The objective of the proposal is to provide much needed additional specialist provision for children and young people in Cumberland with SEND. The new provision will ensure that children and young people's needs can be met closer to their homes. Provision in mainstream maintained schools and academies is much more cost-effective than that in independent settings, which would need to be used without the additional provision proposed here.

5. The effect on other schools, academies and educational institutions within the area

There should be no negative impact on other schools. Additional maintained specialist provision will mean less pressure on existing maintained special schools and resourced provision bases. Additional funding will be provided to the new RP bases, but this will come from the High Needs Block and will not negatively impact any other school.

6. Project costs and indication of how these will be met, including how long term value for money will be achieved

High Needs Provision Capital Funding (HNPCF) Grant Guidelines state that this funding can be spent on Mainstream schools or college including Mainstream School or Academy therefore there are no issues with allocating funding to the Academies should the results of the consultation be positive. Estimated project costs are as follows:

Kingmoor Infant: £107,790

St Patrick's: £ 40,050

There are no costs associated with the scheme at St James', as existing space in the school can be utilised.

HNPCF grant funding of £950k is available to the Council for 2024-25, and these projects will be funded from that grant.

In revenue terms, RP places cost approximately £6k per occupied place plus the pupil's usual AWPU allocation, plus any EHCP top ups; a minimum of around £15k/year. This is in comparison to approximately £27k/year for a special school place, or £59k/year on average per independent place. The proposals will, therefore, result in significant cost-avoidance in the High Needs Block. Because more provision will be available closer to home for more children, it is also likely that there will be cost-avoidance in relation to home to school transport. Both the High Needs Block and Home to School Transport are areas with significant budget pressures within Cumberland and this proposal would help to ease these pressures in the long term, or at least not exacerbate them further. This increase in High Needs places is in line with the DSG Management Plan for Cumberland, and the DfE's Delivering Better Value in SEND programme (DBV).

7. Implementation and any proposed stages for implementation.

The proposal would be implemented in full on 1 September 2024.

8. Objections and comments

Within four weeks of the publication of this notice, i.e. by 12 July 2024 any person wishing to raise objections or make comments on the proposal may do so in writing to the School Organisation Team, Cumberland Council, PO Box 415, Carlisle, CA1 9GU or by emailing school.organisation@cumberland.gov.uk