

Change in designation of Redwood Park School

Redwood Park is a special school which caters for up to 140 pupils aged 11 to 16 who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan (or statement of special educational need (SEN)).

The school is officially designated as a school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) or speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). The current cohort of pupils at Redwood Park School has a range of needs from MLD through to complex needs and autism. There is a range of specialist provision for students with challenging autism and associated challenging behaviour.

A large proportion of current Redwood Park pupils previously attended Cliffdale Primary Academy.

The Proposal

It is proposed to change the SEN designation of Redwood Park School in recognition of the increasingly complex profile of need of pupils attending the school.

The school would be redesignated as a school for pupils with complex needs and Autism (i.e. pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) or autistic spectrum condition (ASD)).

Pupils currently attending Redwood Park School would continue to be placed there as long as the school continues to meet their educational needs irrespective of their category of need.

The school would continue to be funded for 140 places for pupils aged 11 to 16 (in school years 7 to 11).

Description of alteration and evidence of demand

Special educational needs are defined as follows: 'A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special provision to be made for him or her'. SEN Code of Practice 2014.

Around 2-3% of children and young people require a higher level of support to access education than is 'ordinarily available'. For these children a statutory assessment resulting in the issuing by the local authority of an EHC plan sets out the provision that they are entitled to receive to enable them to access the curriculum.

Educational provision can be made for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in the following ways:

- within mainstream schools and settings,
- within specialist additionally resourced provision attached to mainstream schools,
- within special schools.

Pupils in special schools will have an EHC plan (or statement of SEN). Children and young people with SEND in mainstream do not necessarily have an EHC plan, but will have access to a level of support appropriate to their needs.

Portsmouth currently maintains a higher percentage of pupils with EHC plans (or statements of SEN) than the national average (3.1% compared to 2.8%). Portsmouth also has a higher percentage of pupils with an EHC plan in specialist provision than the national average (49% vs 40%).

The prevalence of SLD, SLCN and ASD are growing while traditional diagnoses of Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD) are falling.

Portsmouth mainstream schools are better resourced and enabled than ever to deliver inclusive practice and make provision for pupils with SEND. Underpinning pedagogical approaches such as quality first teaching and the waves of SEN interventions are now well embedded in school culture to enable good teaching; since 2009, all school Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) have been required to achieve accreditation at masters degree (MA) level and be recognised as senior leaders within their schools; Portsmouth's SEN funding formula (in line with Department for Education guidance) now makes resources available to schools in order to make up to the first £6,000 of 'ordinarily available' SEN Support; the local authority commissions specialist teaching advice to mainstream schools and academies from the city's maintained and academy special schools which offers a broad menu of specialist teaching advice and training.

Pupils with SEND achieve better outcomes, in general, when educated in mainstream schools alongside mainstream pupils¹. The converse is only true for pupils who require specialist provision because they have significant or complex needs. However, more than half of Portsmouth's pupils with statements are educated in special schools or resourced provision. A local culture has grown among professionals and parents of overreliance and expectation of pupils with identified SEND being placed in special schools.

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of children with more complex SEN needs in the City and the needs of pupils attending Redwood Park School reflect this change in demographic.

The school has specialist provision for pupils with complex ASD.

The LA is seeking to formally change the SEN designation of Redwood Park School. The School will continue to maintain specialist classes for students with challenging autism spectrum disorders.

At the same time the LA will continue to develop a more inclusive mainstream education which would include pupils with MLD to be educated in mainstream settings where appropriate.

In order to support the move towards providing education for pupils with more complex needs the LA has identified funding for some building works to provide some additional space. These works together with some adaptations to the existing

¹ Inclusive education and students without special educational needs: (Nienke M. Ruijs, Ineke Van der Veen & Thea T.D. Peetsma, 2010)

accommodation would also provide some smaller spaces for group or 1-2-1 sessions.

The effect on other schools within the area

Pupils with MLD where possible, would be educated in local secondary provision.

There is a related proposal to change the category of need for Cliffdale Primary Academy.

Timescale

If approved these changes would be implemented from 1st November 2016

The Process

A change of area of need for a special school would be a prescribed alteration and would require a statutory process.

The process is:-

- 1) Publication - 1 day
- 2) Representation (consultation) - 4 weeks
- 3) Determination (decision) - within 2 months of end of representation period
- 4) Implementation

Portsmouth City Council as commissioner of places for SEN and as the decision maker would make the final decision on whether to implement the proposal.

Before deciding whether to proceed to the formal statutory process The Council would like to hear the views of the parents and carers of pupils at the schools and other interested stakeholders.

How you can have your say?

You can comment on these proposals by completing the attached response form and returning the completed forms either to

the School Office,

or by post to: Janet Andrews, Education - Strategic Commissioning, Portsmouth City Council, Floor 2, Core 6, Civic Offices, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth, PO1 2EA.

or by email to: eandsc@portsmouthcc.gov.uk (please title your email Redwood Park Consultation)

The closing date for responses is 20th July 2016

Response Form

Consultation on a change in designation of Redwood Park School.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Please tick:

Parent Governor Staff Other (please state) _____

Do you support the proposal to change the designation of Redwood Park School?

YES **NO**

Comments (please attach separate sheets of paper if necessary):

Signature: _____

Date

It is important that you sign and date this form.

Responses must be received by 20th July 2016

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