

Report of the Education Director to the meeting of Executive to be held on 9th March 2004.

Subject:

DO

Special Educational Needs Review of Specialist Provision: Outcomes of the consultation on the proposal to establish a co-located primary special school on the Guard House Primary School site in Keighley.

Summary statement:

In December 2003, the Executive approved the publication of notices for the establishment of a new 100 place primary special school in the Keighley area to cater for boys and girls in Reception Year to Year 6 with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties and severe and complex autism, and a further period of consultation on the Guard House site option as the site for the proposed new school.

This report details the outcomes of the consultation on the Guard House site option for the proposed new school. The report also recommends that the new primary special school which is to be sited on the Belle Vue Campus be 'co-located' with Heaton Primary School adjacent to that campus.

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Overview and Scrutiny Area:

Education



1. Summary

In December 2003, the Executive approved the publication of notices for the establishment of a new 100 place primary special school in the Keighley area to cater for boys and girls in Reception Year to Year 6 with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties and severe and complex autism, and a further period of consultation on the Guard House site and recommends Guard House site as the site for the proposed new school.

This report details the outcomes of the consultation on the Guard House site option for the proposed new school. The report also recommends that the new primary special school which is to be sited on the Belle Vue Campus be 'co-located' with Heaton Primary School adjacent to that campus.

2. Background

- 2.1. As a result of the current review of specialist provision for pupils with special educational needs, on 2nd December 2003, the Executive approved the publication of notices to close 10 special schools and to open three new primary and three new secondary special schools across the District.
- 2.2. There are currently 2 all-age special schools in the Keighley area. Branshaw School provides for pupils with learning difficulties and Braithwaite School for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) and learning difficulties. Both schools are approved for closure to be replaced by a new 100 place secondary special school on the Greenhead site and a new 100 place primary special school on a site to be confirmed.
- 2.3. The principle of co-location with mainstream schools is fundamental to the strategic development of the new specialist provision and has been one of the key factors in determining the specific location of the new schools. The first phase of consultation included consultation in relation to the proposal to site the new primary special school at Riddlesden which was subsequently unable to proceed due to lack of support from the School's Governing Body. A further period of consultation on an alternative option of the site of Guard House Primary School at Guard House, Keighley for the new 100 place primary special school within the Keighley area was therefore approved. Respondents to that consultation proposed that the site of the existing Braithwaite school be considered as the site for the new primary special school in the Keighley area but after considering the difficulties posed by that site at their meeting in December 2003 this option was not pursued by the Executive. A further period of consultation on the option of the site of Guard House Primary School at Guard House, Keighley was approved by the Executive.
- 2.4. Early discussions with Guard House School regarding the potential proposal were extremely positive. Guard House senior management and staff have embraced the inclusion agenda through work already being carried out within the school and would be most welcoming of a co-located special school within the site. Related discussions regarding the proposal with other local primary schools also generated an equally positive response. The LEA and Education Bradford are confident that a special school built within this location would have strong potential to develop as a most effective future Centre of Excellence serving parents/carers, pupils and schools in this part of the Bradford District. This Guard House site has also been identified for the development of a Children's Centre so the benefits of this provision will also be available for parents/carers and pupils.
- 2.5. For the remainder of the Bradford District, the Executive approved the establishment of a:
 - 120 place primary special school to be co-located on the Bradford Moor / Lapage¹ site.
 - 120 place primary special school to co-located with a primary school on the Belle Vue Site. The December report anticipated that a new mainstream primary school would be needed by 2006. Figures now show that this may not be required and the new special school will therefore now be co-located with Heaton Primary School which is adjacent to the Belle Vue Campus and which is supportive of the proposal.

¹ A typographical error in the Executive Report of 2nd December 2003 identified this site for a 100 place primary special school.

- 120 place secondary special school to be co-located on the Grange Technology College² site; and a
- 120 place secondary special school to be co-located on the Beckfoot School site.

3. Other considerations

- 3.1. The consultation sought the views of a wide range of interest groups on the suitability of the Guard House site for the proposed new primary special school. The consultation period ran from 11th December 2003 to 2nd February 2004. A total of 1236 consultation documents was provided for a wide range of interest groups, including parent/carers of pupils in the Keighley area with a statement of special educational needs (including those educated within mainstream schools), Headteachers, Governing Bodies, school staff, other LEAs, Town and Parish Councils, voluntary groups, OJC members, the health trusts, neighbouring LEAs, social services and Council officers.
- 3.2. Four consultation meetings were held in the Keighley area. All interest groups were invited to the meetings held in the local library and college buildings.
- 3.3. All responses have been analysed and comments from identified groups collated. Although the consultation related specifically to the consultation on the Guard House option more general comments beyond the scope of the consultation were also received and are briefly summarised at the end of this report.

4. Outcomes of the Consultation on the suitability of the Guard House site option:

- 4.1. 81 written responses were returned within which a range of issues and comments were made. 29 individuals attended the consultation meetings and contributed verbal comments which were noted and included within the analysis.
 - 4.2. Approximately 20% of the comments received related to the Guard House site. A full analysis of related comments from individual groups is provided in Paragraph 4.4.
 - 4.3. The vast majority of comments received verbally or in writing did not relate to the consultation on Guard House site. Approximately 80% of the comments related to the wider SEN Review of specialist provision and repeated issues and concerns expressed at the time of the consultation from June to September 2003. A summary of the issues raised is provided in Appendix 2.
 - 4.4. Of the 81 written responses, 22 were from parents/carers of children with a statement of special educational needs living within the Keighley area; 33 were from teachers, nursery nurses or teaching assistants in Braithwaite or Branshaw Schools; 10 were from Headteachers of Keighley schools; four were from governors of Keighley schools and 10 responses were from other groups, included Town and Parish Councils (5), and non-teaching support staff (identified as a Clerk to Governing Body, lunchtime supervisor, bursar and school secretary).
 - 4.5. Overall, 26 respondents strongly agreed or agreed that Guard House was a suitable site and 40 respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed. 15 respondents chose not to express their overall view.
 - 4.6. A summary of the responses, illustrating the extent of agreement and disagreement from the 81 written responses can be found within Appendix 2.
- 5. Responses to the proposed co-location of a 100 place primary special school within the Guard House site have been grouped as positive (mainly from those in favour of the proposal) and negative (mainly from those against the proposal).**
- 5.1. Those making positive comments in relation to the proposal made the following comments relating to the Guard House site:

² A typographical error in the Executive Report of 2nd December 2003 identified this site for a 100 place secondary special school.

- Parents/carers in favour of the proposal indicated the value of the special school working closely with the mainstream school in developing supportive strategies for their children, particularly related to support for autism. They praised the very positive views of Guard House school staff towards inclusion and the value of establishment of a new special school within their site.
 - The governor strongly agreeing with the proposal comments positively about the principle of co-location .
 - Eight out of the 10 Headteachers responding strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal. No headteachers were against the proposal. Positive comments reflected the importance and potential advantages of close working between mainstream and special schools including: sharing expertise; access to specialist and mainstream resources; the enhancement of provision by enabling appropriate dual registration for some pupils; the potential of encouraging cohesion through community nursery provision ; and the promotion of learning within a cohesive society. The strong and positive inclusive ethos of Guard House school was praised.
 - Teachers in favour of the proposal were from mainstream schools and felt the Guard House site was sufficiently close to the current schools to minimise disruption and continue the community links already established by the two special schools. They felt that the number of primary schools close to Guard House would enable close links to be established.
 - The teaching assistant / nursery nurse in favour of the proposal recognised Guard House as an appropriate site if a new school had to be built.
 - Members of other groups strongly agreeing or agreeing with the proposal were very much in favour the principle of co-location and of the development of this site.
- 5.2. A small number of responses from individuals agreeing with the proposals included a caveat relating to the quality of provision or arrangements to be put into place should the proposal be approved.
- A teaching assistant / nursery nurse in favour of the proposal acknowledged the need for change but stated that if possible there should be a newly-built, all-age school on their school's current site.
 - Members of other groups referred to the need to ensure valuable resources were transferred efficiently and that the building was ready on time.
- 5.3. Those making negative comments against the proposal raised the following common concerns relating to the Guard House site:
- The governor, teachers and nursery nurses / teaching assistants questioned the suitability of the site in terms of the amount of space available on the site upon which a new school could be built, particularly as a Sure Start capital development programme is currently underway and the general geographical layout of the land. They also expressed concerns as to whether there would be space for the additional car parking facilities and whether a new build would reduce the play space available to children in the school.
 - Teachers and a governor anticipated problems with site access through the local estate.
 - Parents/carers, teaching assistants/nursery nurses and a member of other groups felt the area was unsuitable because it was perceived to have a reputation for vandalism and a high crime rate. A few were concerned that very vulnerable children would be transported through and educated in an unsuitable area.
 - Teachers and teaching assistants/nursery nurses reinforced the need for overall site security and the need for personal security measures for staff and pupils on site and when taking pupils out of school with or without transport as part of the curriculum.
 - A governor, teachers, teaching assistants/nursery nurses and a member of other groups pointed out the increased distance of the Guard House site from the local town centre which is currently used as a curriculum resource by the school. For one school

accustomed to walking to nearby shops, the new site would require greater use of transport to access this facility.

- Parents/carers, and a member of other groups expressed concerns about the quality of educational provision at Guard House School as judged within the last OFSTED report and the standards attained by pupils attending the school.
- One parent/carer was critical about the amount of information available at the consultation meetings.
- One Parish Councillor expressed a concern for pupils spending too long travelling the distance from Burley and Menston and another requested confirmation that pupils from Ilkley would be able to continue to be educated in a Leeds Special School.

5.4. Some of the responses from individuals disagreeing with the proposal reiterated that the reasons for taking this view related more to the reluctance to close the current school(s) than to the siting of a new primary special school at the Guard House site.

6. Options

6.1. Rationale for identifying Guard House as a suitable site for the co-location of a primary special school.

As detailed in the paper presented to Executive in June 2003, an analysis was undertaken in order to determine an appropriate number and location for the new schools. The analysis was based on a consideration of the following criteria: site suitability; site access; location across the District and travel time; stability of mainstream school roll; school standards; and school ethos, leadership and management and current provision for special educational needs. Account was taken of historical patterns of distribution of pupils with special educational needs from which the special school population has been drawn.

Guard House school matches the criteria, and is particularly well suited to co-location because of the strong inclusive ethos within the school and the very positive attitude demonstrated towards this proposal. The school was inspected by OFSTED in 2001, and the report identifies good provision for pupils with special education needs; good provision for the development of pupils' moral and social development; a good standard of care for all pupils; and very good leadership and management by the Headteacher and other key staff.

6.2. Guard House site suitability, access and security

Evidence from the recent site survey and early investigative work by Council architects suggests that the site is appropriate for development though there are issues relating to drainage problems, currently underdeveloped site access arrangements and limited car parking. The design brief for the co-located schools will emphasise, in line with DfES requirements, the need for safe and secure access, as well as sensitive design of both secure and shared areas. As for other sites approved for co-location detailed plans, clarifying appropriate access, parking and security arrangements, will be drawn up taking account of the views and recommendations of officials from Highways and Planning Divisions and any conditions of planning permissions.

All co-located schools will be developed in line with the principles of "Secured By Design" and best practice as identified in the Secure Schools Project.

7. Other issues raised

7.1. Although this consultation only concerned the Guard House site, other comments from respondents were received and are documented within Appendix 2. These comments related to issues raised within the previous consultation on the review of specialist provision for pupils with special educational needs across the District. Issues raised during the previous consultation were considered by Education Overview and Scrutiny on 5th November 2003 and by Education Policy Partnership on 23rd October 2003.

Recommendations to the Executive from both groups were incorporated into the report that was considered by the Executive on 2nd December 2003 prior to this decision to approve the re-organisation proposals.

7.2. The additional issues raised are primarily issues that will be addressed as the special school reorganisation progresses and will fall within the remit of the Special Schools Reorganisation Steering Group. This group is responsible for developing the proposals in line with the recommendations of the Executive and ensuring information about the proposed reorganisation of schools is disseminated effectively. The need for a robust communication strategy to ensure all interest groups are provided with regular information on the development of proposals is acknowledged and being responded to by this group.

7.2.1. A communication strategy is being implemented and currently involves:

- Dissemination of information from SEN Steering Group representatives directly to special school headteachers and other school staff, Education Bradford officers, Education Client team officers, officers from Health and Social Services; and Early Years and Childcare Service;
- Meetings with Headteachers of all special and mainstream school involved in the proposals to identify interest groups to be included within the communication strategy.
- Meetings with special and mainstream school staff, governing bodies and parents;
- Meetings with identified parents / voluntary groups;
- Regular Councillor briefing sheets and Education Client Team newsletters;
- A monthly Special Schools Reorganisation newsletter to all schools and staff within special schools and mainstream schools proposed as co-located sites; and
- Information about the work of the Steering Sub-groups posted on the special schools website (<http://specialschoolsreorg.sytes.net>).

7.2.2. Future plans within the communication strategy include:

- Further meetings with interest groups and continuance of previous activities
- Greater involvement of representatives from parents' groups and other voluntary groups in the work of the SEN Steering Sub-Groups, particularly Vision into Practice, Staff Training, pupil transition and Early Years.
- Dissemination of outcomes of visits by Headteachers to 'best practice' schools across the country
- 'SEN Review Roadshow' for all interest groups focused on identifying the best practice in Bradford; highlighting current limitations of our provision; sharing DFES identified exemplar designs and national best practice.

7.3 The proposal for a new primary special school on the Belle Vue Campus was approved by the Executive in December 2003. At that time it was anticipated that a new mainstream primary school would be needed in the Heaton area by 2006 and it was therefore planned that the new special school would be 'co-located' with the new mainstream school. Figures now show that the new mainstream school may not be required and it is therefore now recommended that the new special school be 'co-located' with Heaton Primary School, the adjacent to the Belle Vue Campus. As this arrangement does not alter the site of the proposed new special school further consultation has not been necessary. Discussions with the school confirm they are strongly supportive of the proposal arrangement.

8. Financial and resource appraisal

8.1. The Executive approved the publication of notices to close 10 special schools and to open three new primary and three new secondary special schools across the District on the 2nd December 2003. The report stated that there will be significant capital and revenue implications of the SEN review. The building cost of the new secondary schools will be funded through the Building Schools for the Future programme. The primary schools will be funded through bidding for DfES Targeted Capital resources.

8.2. The report contained an indicative revenue and capital financial implication estimate for 2004/5 and 2006/7 and recommended that any bids for additional resources will be put through the authority's priority-led budget process.

9. Legal appraisal

Prior to deciding on the site for a proposed new school consultation with interested parties must take place. Once a decision has been made on the site for the new Keighley primary school notices can be published for the establishment of all the new schools and for the closure of the ten special schools. There is then a two months representations period during which objections to or comments on the proposals may be made. If objections to the proposals are received, the proposals must be determined by the School Organisation Committee which will have to consider these representations

10. Other implications

10.1. Equal Rights

The Programme of Action (DfES 1998) stated a clear commitment to inclusion as a 'proposed cornerstone' of the government strategy. The siting of the new special schools, including the proposed site at Guard House, specifically reflects these principles.

10.2. Sustainability implications

None

10.3. Community safety implications

All co-located schools will be developed in line with the principles of "Secured By Design" and best practice as identified in the Secure Schools Project.

10.4. Human Rights Act

The Convention provides that no person shall be denied the right to education. The rights of parents to ensure that education and teaching is in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions must be respected in so far as this is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure.

10.5. Trade Union

Consultations and negotiations are continuing with all recognized Trades Unions, teaching and non-teaching, through a Joint OJC Level 1 and appropriate side meetings.

11. Not for publication documents

none

12. Recommendations

12.1. That the Executive approves Guard House as the site for the new Keighley primary special school.

12.2. In order to correct a typographical error in the previous report the Executive confirms the number of places at each new school as set out in paragraphs 2.2 and 2.5 of this report,

12.3. That the Executive approves Heaton Primary School as the mainstream school to be co-located with the new primary special school on the Belle Vue Campus.

12.4. That the Executive acknowledges the work of the Special Schools Reorganisation Steering Group in developing the proposals on future special school provision and commits to the further development of the SEN Review communication strategy to provide more detailed information about the current work of the review teams and disseminate good practice.

13. Appendices

none

14. Background documents

Report to Education Policy Partnership:
Report on the Consultation on the Future Special School Provision
23rd October 2003

Report to Education Overview and Scrutiny
Special Educational Needs Review: Outcomes of the consultation on proposals: to close ten special schools; to establish three new primary special schools and three new secondary special schools; and for future provision for pupils with physical difficulties.
5th November 2003

Report to Executive:
Special Educational Needs Review: Outcomes of the consultation on proposals: to close ten special schools; to establish three new primary special schools and three new secondary special schools; and for future provision for pupils with physical difficulties
2nd December 2003

Inspection Report for Guard House Primary School
OFSTED January 2001

Consultation documentation and responses

Appendix 1

Summary of responses to the proposal of Guard House site for the co-location of a 100 place primary special school with Guard House Primary School.

Group	Total responses	Strongly agree or agree	Strongly disagree or disagree	No overall view	View not stated
Parent/carers	22	5	13	4	
Governors	4	1	1	2	
Headteachers	10	8	0	2	
Teachers	14	4	7	2	1
Teaching assistants or nursery nurses	19	1	15	3	
Other groups	12	7	4	1	

Chart to illustrate representatives of each group in agreement with the proposal

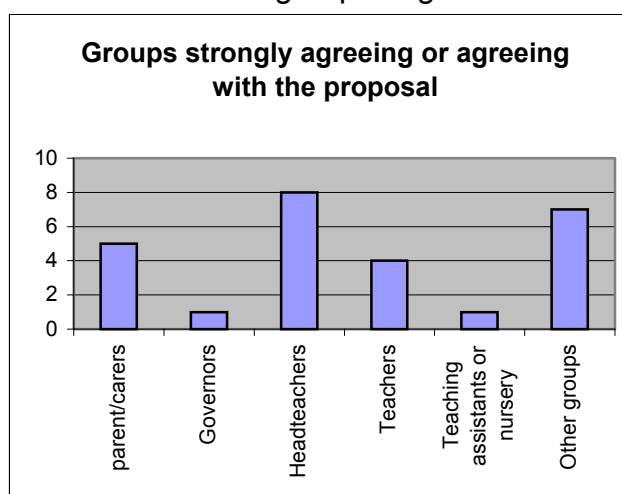
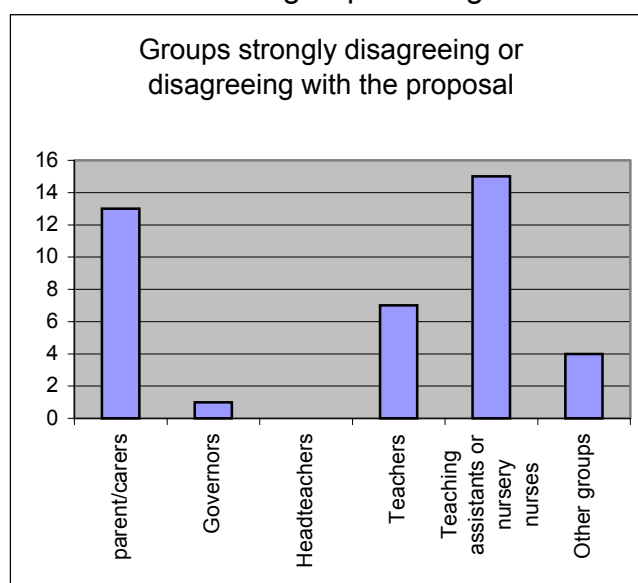


Chart to illustrate representatives of each group in disagreement with the proposal



Appendix 2

A summary of those issues raised and concerns expressed relating to the approved wider reorganisation of special schools is set out below for information:

- Negative views were expressed about the closure of all-age special schools, particularly Braithwaite School, and the principle of co-location on a mainstream site. These views were expressed by parents/carers, a Headteacher, teachers, nursery nurses, and teaching assistants. The need for more information about the potential of such an approach and evidence of good practice was requested.
- Responses included expressions of very positive satisfaction with the quality of current special school provision and an opposition to closure of these schools.
- Assurances were requested regarding the future appropriate placement of children in mainstream or special schools.
- Parents / carers requested reassurance that special school places would be available, where appropriate, for some pupils with moderate learning difficulties;
- Concerns were expressed that pupils in the mainstream school would need to be given the opportunity to learn more about pupils from the special school and to understand their needs;
- Concerns were expressed about the potential disruption and upheaval caused by moving to a new school – particularly for children with autism. More detail was requested about future arrangements for assimilation of staff to minimise disruption for vulnerable pupils and to maintain positive relationship as much as possible.
- Parent / carers, teaching assistants and nursery nurses expressed concerns about the potential for vulnerable children to be bullied or for co-location to have a negative effect on their social development and self-esteem.
- Nursery nurses/teaching assistants were concerned that the SEN Review was a cost-cutting exercise. A parent governor requested assurances that the adequate staffing would be funded for therapy provision; that there would be adequate funding within the schools' budgets for inclusion activities; and details of any financial incentives offered to Guard House School.
- The governor also requested information about the involvement of special schools in developing new proposals for specialist provision.