



## Introduction

As you may know, the County Council and its key partners are in the process of carrying out a comprehensive review of all schools throughout Cumbria. As part of this review, the County Council is seeking to establish resourced provision for children with severe learning difficulties (SLD) within some of Cumbria's mainstream schools.

For the purposes of establishing what we mean by severe learning difficulties (SLD), the following references from the County Council's SEN (special educational needs) Handbook might assist a wider understanding. For a pupil to be designated as having SLD they would:

- be expected to make the kind of progress in 12 months that an average child would make in 3-6 months
- using formalised cognitive measures, have an IQ of 54 or less
- have significant delay in the development of social/self-help skills.

For more detailed information on the criteria for establishing whether a pupil has SLD, please look at the SEN Handbook which can be found on the Children's Services website.

Resourced provision at schools offers the opportunity for pupils with SLD to be taught alongside their peers with access to additional facilities and staffing. This provides individual pupils the fullest opportunity to make progress in their learning whilst participating in all other activities offered within their school and community.

Along with all the other secondary schools in Carlisle and district, William Howard was approached by the Authority some time ago and asked if they would consider hosting resourced provision at the school. Having established the school's willingness to participate in the project, this consultation document is about turning the school's commitment to a vision into a reality.

If you would like further information you can find out more by:

- visiting the School Organisation website:  
[www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/childrensservices/school-organisation](http://www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/childrensservices/school-organisation)
- visiting the Children's Services Special Needs (Effective Hub) website:  
[www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/childrensservices/senhoep](http://www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/childrensservices/senhoep)
- telephoning the School Organisation Project Team: 01228 606013

This document marks the start of a genuine and open consultation process. We would like as many people as possible with an involvement or interest in the school, or in secondary education in the area more generally, to contribute their thoughts on what should happen. There is a questionnaire at the end of this document which we would like you to fill in and send back to us.



County Councillor Jim Buchanan,  
Cabinet Member for Children's Wellbeing,  
Cumbria County Council



Moira Swann,  
Corporate Director, Children's Services,  
Cumbria County Council

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# The purpose and nature of the consultation document



The purpose of this document is to provide information and an opportunity to comment on the possibility of developing resourced provision for pupils with SLD at William Howard School near Carlisle.

Its aim is to focus on whether establishing resourced provision would be likely to:

- create the most effective provision for the future for pupils with SLD
- enhance the educational opportunities for all the pupils in the school.

The consultation document has tried to achieve the right balance between covering the most important issues and meeting the requirements of the 'Special Educational Needs Improvement Test'. This test has recently been formulated by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). The test requires authorities to show how the kind of change being considered here will lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for children with special needs.

The document has been written for a wide audience including parents, school staff, governors, young people and other members of the community and recognises that individuals will have different starting points in terms of knowledge and understanding. The consultation document takes this into account and has attempted to make the document as easy as possible to read and understand.

Your views are important to us and will be a great help in reaching a decision. We realise that you may want more information to help you form your opinions. Details of how you can access additional information or talk over any issues of concern with us are given on page 9.

The consideration of the establishment of William Howard, as a resourced school, sits within a wider countywide context and approach. We feel that we should say a little about this, before focusing on the possibilities involving William Howard School.

# A countywide approach to changing the school network

In Autumn 2005, Cumbria County Council launched a strategic review of schools to be carried out by the end of 2007. The review covers all nursery, primary, secondary and special schools in the county. Other services for children are also part of the review.

The aim is to bring about higher achievement and better educational standards. The County Council sees this as a great opportunity to improve young people's education and their life chances and choices.

One of the reasons that the countywide review is taking place is to address some key educational issues including the establishment of resourced provision for children with SLD in mainstream schools.

The review process is a new and ambitious approach. It involves all partners with an interest in education and other services for young people, and several groups are involved:

- **Local Partnership Groups** who:
  - look at their areas of the county and identify options for the future
- **School Organisation Forum** which:
  - oversees the whole review process
  - considers options from Local Partnership Groups and makes recommendations to the County Council
- **Cumbria County Council** which:
  - decides which options should go to public consultation and considers the results of the consultation
  - makes statutory proposals to achieve school organisation change
  - decides whether or not to approve statutory proposals after considering any formal objections to them
- **School Organisation Project Team** which, on behalf of Children's Services:
  - supports the entire review and decision-making processes

Any changes to the provision affecting special education such as the proposals in this document need to rest within the overall review referred to above.



# Specialist facilities for children with severe learning difficulties in Cumbria



## Overview

As indicated in 'Inclusive Cumbria' featured on the Children's Services website, the County Council has made a long and successful commitment to inclusive and high quality education for pupils with significant special educational needs. Cumbria County Council continues to make available the highest levels of inclusive mainstream provision to pupils of all ages.

In an effort to provide an appropriate range of inclusive learning opportunities for pupils, the Council has developed a network of strategic facilities, now called resourced provision, at 23 mainstream primary and secondary schools throughout Cumbria. For more information on these resourced schools and the principles that have underpinned their development, follow the links to Strategically Resourced Schools on the Children's Services website, details of which are given in the introduction.

The County Council believes that the developments at these already successful schools have, through the inclusion of pupils with a wide range of special educational needs, enhanced the learning opportunities of all pupils by:

- enriching the curriculum through social awareness and community responsibility
- developing the quality and skills of the staff
- improving the building and offering better facilities.

## Resourced provision in the Carlisle area

The aim of the County Council is to extend the range of provision available to secondary age pupils with SLD in the Carlisle area to complement the existing provision for primary aged pupils at Newtown Primary School, and the more specialist provision at James Rennie School. It is important to note that, in developing resourced provision at William Howard School, places will only be made available to those pupils whose needs cannot be met adequately in their local mainstream school, despite the provision of additional specialist support.

Taking account of legislative requirements, the County Council is responsible for securing appropriate educational provision for all pupils, whether or not they have special educational needs. The County Council, through this consultation process, is seeking to address a current gap in mainstream provision; that of mainstream specialist provision for secondary age pupils with severe learning difficulties in the Carlisle area.

## Inclusive learning expectations

The County Council recognises that its policy of establishing a network of resourced schools is, by its very nature, less inclusive than making provision in each and every local mainstream school. The rationale for this policy centres on the present difficulty in devoting sufficient expertise, specialist support and resources to be able to offer resourced provision in each and every school. Resourced schools are seen as a necessary interim development in extending the range of provision available to pupils across Cumbria. Our ultimate aim is to reach a position where all schools can meet the needs of all pupils, regardless of the complexity of their needs. For the time being however, the siting of skills, resources and expertise within a resourced mainstream school is a staging post on the way to achieving the inclusive ideal that we strive for.

By developing resourced provision within selected schools in the county, the Council believes that it is enhancing the range of provision to children and parents within Cumbria. Furthermore, the Council considers that this strategic response:

- meets the continuing needs of pupils with SLD in Cumbria
- fulfils its responsibilities to parents and families to provide a range of local services
- enriches opportunities for all pupils
- complies with the legislative targets imposed by government.

What is most important for pupils is that they are educated in a supportive educational environment which offers the opportunity for inclusive learning. This should take place in a school that is willing to adapt to the needs of the individual, rather than expecting the individual to cope with what is provided for others.

Pupils with severe learning difficulties will be offered a broad and balanced curriculum within an inclusive environment. Each pupil's learning programme will be accessed according to individual need and within the Key Stage of the National Curriculum expected for their age range. Pupils for a significant part of the day, will learn alongside other mainstream pupils and will receive suitable assistance in the form of teaching assistant support. At all other times, pupils will have access to a dedicated unit with specialist resources.

The County Council has developed its own Inclusion Chartermark, a means to assess the inclusivity of schools, and it is this standard which it expects resourced schools to meet. A copy of the Inclusion Chartermark can be accessed on the School Organisation website.

## Contractual arrangements

All existing resourced schools are expected to have an agreed contractual arrangement with the County Council. This formal agreement has a 3-year life span, renewable annually on a roll-on basis. So, if either the County Council or the school no longer consider the resourced provision arrangement to be viable, then a 3-year notice period is required.

The purpose of the agreement is to give detailed information on areas of responsibility between the County Council and the resourced school. The contract covers the following key areas:

- Curriculum
- Staffing arrangements
- Funding of the provision
- Pupils (including designated number)
- Placement arrangements
- Transport arrangements
- Admissions / exit criteria

A copy of a draft contract can be accessed on the School Organisation website, details of which are given in the introduction.

# Considering the possibility of establishing resourced provision



## Background to the William Howard review

Taking up the strategic direction outlined in 'Inclusive Cumbria', an inclusion audit was carried out in the Carlisle area in November 2003. This identified a need for the development of the mainstream school-based resourced provision for pupils with severe learning difficulties in Cumbria.

In November 2004, the County Council wrote to all Carlisle area schools, inviting them to bid to become resourced schools for a number of areas. William Howard School expressed an interest in developing specialist facilities for children with severe learning difficulties.

Using criteria that considered the key features and qualities of the ideal host, the County Council selected William Howard School to develop resourced provision for SLD. Following further meetings with the headteacher, and members of the senior management team, relevant questions were answered satisfactorily, allowing further development of the project.

Unfortunately, the development programme for William Howard School has been delayed slightly due to the wider review of school organisation in the Carlisle area.

## Education in William Howard Secondary School

William Howard is a Foundation School for pupils aged 11-18 years. It is an above-average-sized secondary school with 1526 students on roll, 250 of them in the sixth form and drawing mainly from a large rural area. In 2004 the school successfully gained specialist status in science, with a special focus on the environment. William Howard is also a Leading Edge school.

Although the incidence of students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) at the school is below the national average, William Howard has a large special needs department to deal with the many areas of need and has developed a particular interest and skill in working with young people who have SLD. This developing skill has been recognised by the interest expressed by key staff in establishing the school as a resourced provision on behalf of the County Council.

It is important that the school is enhanced by the establishment of resourced provision, and that the basic character is not changed by distorting the overall balance of the pupil profile. Consequently, the numbers of pupils with severe learning difficulties will be restricted to a maximum of 16.

At its last Ofsted inspection in March 2006, William Howard was described as a school that '...is a good school which gives value for money...It provides a good education for all its students and deserves its designation as a Leading Edge school. The students' enthusiasm for learning, combined with good teaching, helps them to achieve well and reach consistently high standards.'

The Ofsted report commented that 'Students with learning difficulties and / or disabilities achieve well and few students leave school without a qualification ... A strong learning support department provides well for students with learning difficulties and / or disabilities'

The proposed new provision, in addition to the existing support, would allow the opportunity for pupils to receive specialist help as appropriate and the school to continue to enhance the good work in this area.

# Achieving resourced provision at William Howard School

## General

In order to bring about school organisation change, it is necessary to publish what are known as statutory proposals.

A formal proposal to bring about a 'prescribed alteration' would be needed in relation to establishing resourced provision at William Howard School. The intention would be for the County Council to publish these formal proposals which would need to be preceded by a clear written statement of support from the Governing Body of the school.

It is anticipated that any statutory proposals to bring about this change would be published in April 2008, following which a final decision would likely be taken by the Council's Cabinet in July 2008.

## The school's buildings

The resourced provision will form part of a larger special needs development that, in total, includes:

- a reception
- two classrooms
- staff workspace
- medical and assisted toilet facilities
- behaviour intervention and interview spaces
- a range of offices including spaces for health workers and family support workers.



## Drawing conclusions



As we have explained, by developing resourced provision within the county, the Council will be providing a local option that extends the range of provision for pupils with SLD in the Carlisle area. The Council feels that the case for establishing resourced provision at William Howard School is very strong. The Leadership Team at William Howard School have indicated that they feel the same way.

We would like to have your views on the possibility of establishing provision for pupils with severe learning difficulties at William Howard School, and there is a questionnaire at the back of this document to help. This consultation document and additional supporting information outlined in the next section will help you to form your opinions on the subject.

We look forward to receiving your completed questionnaire or on-line response as your views are important and will influence the decision which is eventually taken.

## Next steps - the consultation and decision making process

### The consultation period

The consultation is based on this document. The consultation period starts on Monday 11 February 2008. The final date for letting us have your thoughts and comments is **Thursday 20 March 2008**.

### How to express your views

This consultation document has been very widely distributed. It has gone to William Howard School's parents, staff and governors, all of the County Council's key partners in the provision of education, neighbouring schools, the District Council, voluntary organisations, staff associations, unions, and many others. It is important that we know what you think about the establishment of resourced provision at William Howard School. We look forward to hearing from you.

### Questionnaire

There is a questionnaire at the back of this document. We would like you to complete it and return it to us. Alternatively, you can complete the questionnaire on-line during the consultation period by following the consultation finder links on the County Council website: [www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/consultation](http://www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/consultation).

### Meetings

A series of consultation meetings will be held on Monday 25 February 2008. They will give you the opportunity to express your views and to ask questions. The details of the meetings are set out below:

Meeting For	Time	Venue
Staff and Governors	4:30pm – 5:30pm	Lecture Theatre
Parents and other members of the community	6:00pm – 7:00pm	William Howard School

Each meeting will start with a short introduction on how the session will be run. Then there will be a very brief presentation on the main points in the consultation document. During the rest of the meeting, you will be able to say what you feel about what is said in the document and ask questions of the panel of County Council officers who will be present.

Notes of each meeting will be taken to summarise the points made. These will be made available to members of the Council's Cabinet when they are taking decisions regarding changes to the school.

### What happens after the consultation process?

Once the responses to the consultation process have been analysed, a report will be prepared for the County Council's Cabinet. The report will include a summary of comments received from individuals and photocopies of the responses from recognised organisations. The report will be a public document, so will be available to the media and on the County Council website.

The Cabinet will consider the response to the consultation and form a view about what it believes to be the appropriate provision for the future. This is likely to occur shortly after the consultation closes.

If it is decided to seek to establish resourced provision at William Howard School, the legal processes referred to in the section on 'Achieving resourced provision at William Howard' on page 7 will need to be followed. As stated earlier, it is likely any new provision would not be available until September 2009.

### How can I find out more?

Members of the School Organisation Project Team will be more than happy to discuss with you any of the issues covered in this document or anything else related to William Howard School. You might find this helpful before completing the questionnaire.

**The number to ring is 01228 606013.**

As we said earlier, we wanted to keep this document as short as possible. There is extra information available if you want to read the detailed background documents that were used when this paper was written. These include draft contracts, 'Inclusive Cumbria' and the most recent Ofsted inspection report.

All of these documents are available to view or download on the School Organisation website, details of which are included in the introduction.

If you do not have access to the internet, we can provide you with a printed copy of any sections of the additional information. All you need to do is to call the School Organisation Project Team on 01228 606013. Alternatively, requests can be made by fax to 01228 606016, or by post to the following address:

Freepost RRBS – RLBG – GZGL  
CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL  
School Organisation  
18 Portland Square  
CARLISLE  
CA1 1PE

## Translation services

### **English**

You can get a copy of this document in different formats such as large print, braille, audio, or in a different language by calling 01229 894401.

### **Bengali**

আপনি 01229 894401 -এই নম্বর ফোন করে, বিভিন্ন ফরম্যাট যেমন বড় প্রিন্ট, ব্রেইল, অডিও বা একটি ভিন্ন ভাষাতে এই নথিটির একটি কপি পেতে পারেন।

### **Portuguese**

Pode obter uma cópia deste documento em vários formatos, como por exemplo em Braille, áudio, ou numa outra língua. Para tal ligue para o 01229 894401.

### **Cantonese**

如果您想获取该文件的不同版本，如：大字体印刷、盲文、音频或不同语言版本，请致电：01229 894401。

### **Lithuanian**

Paskambinę telefonu 01229 894401, galite užsisakyti šio dokumento kopiją įvairiais formatais, pavyzdžiui, atspausdintą dideliu šriftu, Brailio raštu, užsisakyti garso įrašą arba gauti dokumentą, išverstą į norimą kalbą.

### **Polish**

Aby otrzymać kopię tego dokumentu w innych formatach, takich jak duży druk, druk Braille'm, audio, lub w innym języku proszę dzwonić pod numer 01229 894401.

### **Turkish**

01229 894401'u arayarak, bu dokümanın bir kopyasını büyük puntolu, körler için kabartmalı, ses dosyası gibi değişik formatlarda veya farklı bir dilde edinebilirsiniz.

# Questionnaire

## Planning resourced provision for William Howard School

This questionnaire is to help you put your views, comments and suggestions in writing. All views will be made available to those taking decisions. Please continue on a separate sheet if required. Alternatively, complete your questionnaire online at [www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/consultation](http://www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/consultation).

Please complete, tear out and return to the address overleaf. The last date for responses to be received is Thursday 20 March 2008.

**Q1** Given the current situation and the information contained in this document, do you think it appropriate for resourced provision to be developed at William Howard School?

- Yes .....  1
- No .....  2
- Don't know .....  3

Please add any comments that you have about the question above in this box:

**Q2** Do you think that these proposals will enable Cumbria County Council to meet its target of enhancing the availability of local provision for children with special educational needs (SEN)?

- Yes .....  1
- No .....  2
- Don't know .....  3

Please add any comments that you have about the question above in this box:

**Q3** Do you have any further comments or suggestions you wish to make on the content of this consultation document?

**Q4** Do you have any general comments or other suggestions that you wish to make?

**Q5** Please tell us the nature of your interest in the process, and which school you are connected to.  
Please tick all that apply.

Interest	✓	At which school(s)?	
		William Howard (✓)	Other (please state)
Student	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Parent/Carer of current school pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Member of support staff	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Member of teaching staff	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Governor	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Pre-school parent	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Local resident	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>		

**Q6** Name .....

Address .....

.....

..... Postcode .....

**Q7** How old are you?

Under 20 .....  1    20-39 .....  2    40-59 .....  3    60+ .....  4

Signature .....

Thank you for completing this consultation questionnaire.

Please now return it to the FREEPOST address below:

Freepost RRBS - RLBG - GZGL  
 CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL  
 School Organisation  
 18 Portland Square  
 CARLISLE  
 CA1 1PE

