

## **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 Sunningdale Primary School is a primary school based in the St Chads Ward. It provides the city's primary education for children with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD). The school is rated Outstanding by Ofsted and offers school provision for children from 2 to 11.
- 1.2 The school relocated to its new site in St Chads in 2021. As part of its relocation to the new site the Council increased the capacity at the school from 120 places to 136 places. This increased the number places for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) in the city.
- 1.3 However, despite providing more local school places for children with an EHCP and who require a special school place, there remain waiting lists at most Sunderland's special schools with demand for places across all age ranges.
- 1.4 Together for Children, on behalf of Sunderland Council, has continued to collaborate with schools to develop ways to respond to the increased demand for special school places in the city while also engraining SEN expertise and best practice within localities. This proposal is one of a range of schemes that will support young people with SEN in the city in coming years.

## **2.0 Why are we proposing to make changes at Sunningdale Primary School?**

- 2.1 The number of children who require additional support due to a special educational need has increased in Sunderland. More children now attend special schools who require significant additional interventions to support them in their school place. The number of children who now require a special school place in the city is more than the number of places available.
- 2.2 Sunningdale Primary School is the city's designated deliverer of primary aged education for children with SLD, PMLD and complex needs. Despite a recent expansion it is again at capacity with waiting lists for places in most year groups.
- 2.3 Where local SEN places are not available children are either required to remain in mainstream places until a place becomes free, are required to travel to out of area provisions or are placed in high-cost independent provisions. Increasing the number of places offered by Sunningdale Primary School would enable children who are currently on the waiting list for places to access a local school place that meets their assessed needs quickly.
- 2.4 The proposal provides an opportunity to allow mainstream schools and special schools to be based together at a single site. This will enable (where appropriate) the sharing of best practice, resources, and facilities as well as increase the opportunity for joint working across all schools to further enhance access and inclusivity at the site.

## **3.0 What are we proposing to do?**

- 3.1 The Council proposes that the number of SEN school places delivered by Sunningdale Primary School is increased from 136 places to 160 places.

- 3.2 The Council proposes the former Ryhope Early Days Nursery site at the Ryhope Infant Academy and Ryhope Junior School site is converted to a satellite teaching site for Sunningdale Primary School. The Council developed the Early Days site as a day-care/ early years setting. It is proposed that the Sunningdale cohort that attend the site are children predominantly under 5 years old who will access an early year's curriculum.
- 3.3 The premises at the Ryhope Infant Academy and Ryhope Junior School site, formerly occupied by Ryhope Early Days, have been vacant since the day-care ceased operations in 2022. Sunderland Council owns and manages the building and is responsible for its costs and maintenance.
- 3.4 Relocation of Sunningdale Primary School's current early years provision to the proposed Ryhope satellite will allow the teaching areas currently used for this cohort at the main Sunningdale Primary School building to be used by 5 -11-year-olds accessing the provision. This will allow the Council to place more children of statutory school age at the main site with those aged 2 – 5 years of age placed at Ryhope.
- 3.5 The former Ryhope Early Days site conversion will include the development of specialist facilities (such as sensory, group and hygiene facilities as well as equipment required to access the facility).
- 3.6 This programme is part of a wider inclusivity scheme at the site that also includes a new external play area for Ryhope Infant Academy and an Immersive Learning Room for Ryhope Junior School. Where appropriate the SEN facilities available to one school may be accessed by pupils attending one of the other two schools at the site. While this would include children attending Sunningdale having the opportunity to access outdoor facilities currently within the Junior School it could also enable children with SEN at the Infant or Juniors schools could access sensory facilities at the Sunningdale satellite. This would enhance the offer to all children with complex needs who access one of the three schools at site.
- 3.7 It is noted that while Sunningdale School will establish a satellite at a site currently accommodating Ryhope Infant Academy and Ryhope Junior School this proposal will not result in any deficit in provision, capacity or resource at either of the two schools. Sunningdale will take occupation of vacant premises and not property currently utilised by either setting.

#### **4.0 Outcomes**

The proposal would secure the following outcomes:

##### **4.1 Increased capacity within the local SEN Sector**

The proposal will add an additional 24 primary school places to Sunderland's current SEN offer. They will be delivered by a school graded as Outstanding by Ofsted. This responds to the increasing demand for place local SEN school places and reduces the risk that primary aged children will have to be travel to other local authority areas to access an appropriate education provision.

## 4.2 Increased Efficiencies in Commissioning

Being able to provide local facilities therefore reduces commissioning costs such as home to school transport costs and the costs associated with out of area placement.

## 4.3 Effective Use of Current Education Accommodation

The Early Years and Aim Higher funding used to develop the former Early Days site requires that the building must be used for the purpose of providing an Early Years educational offer. This proposal achieves that. The Council considers that this proposal, in addition to increasing the number of Outstanding SEN places in the city, allows us to continue to utilise education premises for the purpose for which they were developed.

## 5.0 Statutory Requirements

5.1 The following changes are required to the current Sunningdale Primary School offer to facilitate this proposal

***Expansion onto an additional site ('or satellite sites')*** and

***Changes in number of pupils in a special school***

## 6.0 Next Steps

6.1 The Council would like to know what you think about the proposals. This initial consultation will open on Monday 21st October 2024 and will at 5pm on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2024

You can respond by accessing the consultation online via the link below.

[Sunningdale Primary School Satellite Proposal Survey](#)

or using the QR code below.



All responses must be received by 5pm on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December.

6.2 At the end of the consultation period, the responses received will be considered. If the proposals are to proceed, the Council will publish the required Statutory Notice setting out the final proposals which will be displayed at the school, in a local newspaper and on the Sunderland City Council website. A further 4-week representation period will follow publication of the Notice.