

Marshfields Community Special School Re-designation
Cllr Lynne Ayres, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education, Skills and University
January 2021
Deadline date: 8th February 2021

Cabinet portfolio holder: Responsible Director:	Cllr Ayres, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education, Skills & University Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Executive Director: People & Communities Jonathan Lewis, Service Director: Education
Is this a Key Decision?	NO
Is this decision eligible for call-in?	YES
Does this Public report have any annex that contains exempt information?	NO
Is this a project and if so has it been registered on Verto?	NO

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S
The Cabinet Member is recommended to:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> approve the re-designation of Marshfields Community Special School from Moderate Learning Difficulties to Learning Difficulties having regard for ‘Maintained Schools Prescribed Alterations Guidance’ (Department for Education (DfE), October 2018) and taking into consideration the views/comments submitted during the statutory 4 week representation period which concluded on 8th December 2020, including support for, objections to, and comments on the proposal.

1. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1.1 This report is for the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education, Skills and University to consider exercising delegated authority under paragraph 3.4.3 of Part 3 of the constitution in accordance with the terms of their portfolio at paragraph (g).

2. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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3. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

3.1 Marshfields is a community special school with 175 places for children and young people aged between 9 and 19 years, all of whom have Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans. The school was judged Good by Ofsted when inspected in October 2016.

Current demand

Over the past five years the cohorts of students at Marshfields have changed significantly; before this time the admissions guidance was not always applied consistently. This means that where there have previously been more-able students in each cohort, starting points are now lower.

Many students in the city are recorded as having Moderate Learning Difficulties. Marshfields Hub have been working with Peterborough City Council's (PCC) Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) service to provide training to local schools on the meaning of Moderate Learning Difficulties. Too often it is used for students with a Specific Learning Difficulty. This makes place planning difficult and suggests to parents and carers that Marshfields may be suitable for their child's needs when other schools would suit their child's needs more closely.

Forecast demand

The recent review of SEND provision across Peterborough identified that there was a mismatch between the overall SEND pupil profile in Peterborough and the range of provision available across mainstream schools, specialist hubs and special schools.

The SEND census data (see table 1) from the previous five years shows that the number of children with an EHC Plan in Peterborough has risen steadily. A high number of these children will be able to successfully access education provision in mainstream schools; however those with more severe needs will require a special school place.

Year	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Number of children	1174	1200	1204	1251	1287

Consultation responses

At the closure of the consultation there were 10 written responses, 8 in favour of the proposal and 2 against. The main themes in support included, the re-designation would:

- allow children to access the education right for them,
- ensure sufficient special school places across the City
- allow the school to plan strategically when it comes to staffing, support systems, curriculum and capital works

The main theme in the responses against the proposal was that young people who would have attended Marshfields would be forced to attend mainstream schools and would be unable to cope in these settings.

Other considerations.

It is important to note that the admissions guidance for the school will not change under this re-designation; it will continue to be applied consistently as it has been for the past five years. The change in designation would come into effect from September 2021.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Officers consulted with the Governing Body, Peterborough's SEND service and local SEND school head teachers whilst drafting the proposal. The formal consultation was launched on Tuesday 10th November 2020 on the Peterborough City Council website. The webpage included the proposal, a statement and details of the public meeting. Please see Appendix 1 for these.

The proposal, statement and details of the public meeting were also sent to Marshfield's Governing Body, the parents of every registered pupil of Marshfields, Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire SEND services (in their capacity as Local Authorities who have children attending Marshfields) and Ward Councillors.

A notice of the consultation was published in the Peterborough Telegraph with a link to the full webpage.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions an online consultation event was held on Tuesday 24th November at 7pm. There were eleven attendees.

The consultation closed on Tuesday 8th December 2020.

5. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

- 5.1 The anticipated outcome of this report and attached appendices is that the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Skills & University will have a clear understanding of:
- (1) what she must take into account as decision-maker and
 - (2) will be able to take the final decision to approve the re-designation of Marshfields Community Special School.

6. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 The re-designation of Marshfield's Community Special School to 'Learning Difficulties' would:
- more accurately reflect the forecast cohort of pupils attending the school
 - ensure that there are sufficient high needs SEND places available across Peterborough
 - recognise the increased health needs of students on roll at the school
 - ensure parents have a choice in where to educate their child
 - ensure the staffing structure and the curriculum is more closely tailored to the needs of students who need a place at the school
 - will formalise the training staff need to meet the needs of students within the school's admissions guidance

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 Marshfields to continue as a school designated for Moderate Learning Difficulties.

8. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 8.1 It is not anticipated that there will be any costs involved with this proposed change.

Legal Implications

- 8.2 It is not anticipated there will be any legal implications related to this proposed change.

Equalities Implications

- 8.3 Local Authorities have a number of statutory duties including securing diversity in the provision of schools, increasing opportunities for parental choice and ensuring fair access to educational opportunity.

Carbon Impact Assessment

- 8.5 The re-designation of Marshfields Community Special School is not likely to have an impact on the amount of carbon the school produces.

9. DECLARATIONS / CONFLICTS OF INTEREST & DISPENSATIONS GRANTED

9.1 None.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

10.1 Making significant changes (prescribed alterations) to maintained schools guidance (DfE October 2018)
[Making significant changes \('prescribed alterations'\) to maintained schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1: Consultation proposal, statement and details of public meeting