

Building Communities of Specialist Provision: A Collaborative Strategy for Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Lincolnshire

Lincolnshire County Council's Children's Services has been working with all special school head teachers and Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum to develop a new strategy for special education in Lincolnshire. The Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy is the result of this work and we believe it will address many of the challenges pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families face when trying to access the right education, in the right place at the right time.

For parents and carers, we recognise some of the challenges you may have had to deal with.

- Your nearest special school may not be able to meet your child's specific needs, so they have to travel long distances to get to a school that can meet their need.
- Your nearest special school may not have space to accept your child, so they have to travel long distances to get to a school that has a space.
- Your nearest special school may not have the resources to meet your child's needs, so they have to travel long distances to get to a school that can give the right support.
- Your child may have specific, complex needs and because the special schools in Lincolnshire cannot meet their needs, they are being educated out of county. This can mean long periods living away from home or long daily journeys.
- You may have wanted your child to remain in mainstream school but did not feel there was adequate support and training for staff to meet your child's needs.
- You may feel that your child needs an education which offers a combination of special school and mainstream school opportunities but cannot see how to get this.
- You may feel that your child misses out on many opportunities that their friends who attend mainstream school enjoy because all their school friends live too far away.
- Your child may feel isolated and would like to feel part of a community of people with similar experiences.

It is important to recognise that our special schools offer an extremely high quality of education to all their pupils, but if your child arrives at school tired and stressed after an unnecessarily long journey, their ability to learn will be compromised. If they arrive home after a long journey, tired and stressed, it will have an impact on your family time. If your child has to attend a specialist residential school, your family relationships may be impacted. We want to see things improve for your child and family and we believe this strategy can make this happen.

The Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy will:

- Address the challenges pupils with SEND and their families face in accessing the right education.
- Reduce the length of journeys to school for pupils with SEND by ensuring all special schools can meet all types of need and disability, so pupils can go to their nearest school.
- Enhance provision through investment, so that all pupils have equal access to the space and facilities needed to meet their needs. For example, we are proposing to build facilities for pupils with complex physical disabilities in all special schools so they can be educated in their nearest school. Another example is the proposed development of more sensory and therapeutic spaces in all schools so all pupils can access these facilities.
- Through investment, ensure there are enough school places to meet the growing demand and for pupils to be able to attend their nearest school, or one in their locality. This is likely to require some schools to be expanded and a new school to be built.

- Work closely with all professionals to ensure our special schools have the right type of health and social care support to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Develop satellites of special schools on some mainstream school sites so pupils with SEND will have the opportunity to access mainstream experiences and curriculum, supported by the nurturing environment of their special school.
- Provide opportunities for your child to return to mainstream, through these satellites, if this is what you wish for your child
- Support pupils with SEND who are being educated outside of Lincolnshire, to access a special school closer to home, if this is what you want for your child
- Develop stronger relationships between special and mainstream schools so pupils with SEND can be educated in mainstream school by teaching staff who can access the expert knowledge of special school staff.

Please do not worry. No child will be forced to change school if you do not want them to. However, with only 30% of pupils with SEND currently attending their nearest school, we want your child to have the chance to attend a school in your local community, if you would like them too.

This strategy proposes to make significant changes to our existing special schools:

- Creating a joined up system where pupils can attend their nearest school in the confidence their educational and health needs can be fully met.
- Where they have full access to a curriculum which is appropriate for their learning needs and are taught by teaching staff who are skilled in the learning profiles of all pupils with SEND.
- Where they can develop close friendship bonds with their classmates, which can extend beyond the school boundaries as they are educated in their local communities and where pupils feel they belong.

We really need your thoughts and comments on these exciting proposals so please take time to read the strategy information on www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/SENDcommunities and provide us with your feedback via the survey.