

Proposal to discontinue Furness School

Equality Impact Assessment

The Equality Impact Assessment has been updated in response to issues raised during the consultation.

**KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Directorate:

Education & Young People's Services

Name of policy, procedure, project or service

Proposed Closure of Furness School

What is being assessed?

Project

Responsible Owner/ Senior Officer

Ian Watts, Area Education Officer – North Kent

Date Initial Screening Completed

30 January 2015



Screening Grid

Characteristic	Could this policy, procedure, project or service affect this group less favourably than others in Kent? YES/NO If yes how?	Assessment of potential impact HIGH/MEDIUM LOW/NONE UNKNOWN		Provide details: a) Is internal action required? If yes what? b) Is further assessment required? If yes, why?	Could this policy, procedure, project or service promote equal opportunities for this group? YES/NO - Explain how good practice can promote equal opportunities
		Positive	Negative	Internal action must be included in Action Plan	If yes you must provide detail
Age	Yes – Secondary aged students	Low	Low	Age profile of students currently attending Furness School established by Year group. Identification of appropriate vacancies in relevant Year groups in SRBPs in other schools serving the area to identify whether demand matches need and commissioning of additional capacity in specific year groups in certain schools if required. <i>See actions within Closure Plan.</i>	Yes – with a detailed transition plan in place for the affected students that takes account of the individual needs of the young people and their families (in particular the individual support needs), the students could benefit from attending schools with SRBPs where learning opportunities and experiences could be significantly broadened. Kent's Admission to Secondary School in Kent 2015 will be applied. Kent's Transport Policy will be applied.
Disability	Yes – all students attending the school have either Statements of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plans; for either ASD or BESD.	Med	Med	An appropriate placement for every student with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plans will be identified through meetings with the SEN department and families in liaison with receiving schools. Individual needs of all students will be identified through meetings with the families to identify requirements to ensure transition to receiving schools is smooth and records are up to date and transferred in time to receiving schools.	Yes – transfer to a larger school could potentially provide more flexibility of resource to support the young person's needs. Each student and their parents/carers will have one to one discussions to fully understand their needs and how best the local authority can support them. Schools that offer places to students from Furness will provide the same level of provision, or better. Parent and student wishes will be the driver that decides where the student will be placed.

					Kent's Transport Policy will be applied and any student that continues to need and qualify for transport assistance will receive it.
Gender	Yes	Med	Low	No particular action over and above that provided for other protected groups	The majority of students at the school are male, which matches the national clinical picture of ASD affecting a higher percentage of males than females. The gender of the student will not affect the level of support & individual consultation that will be provided during transition to a new provision
Gender identity	No				
Race	Yes	Low	Low	Individual needs of all students will be identified through meetings with the families to identify requirements to ensure transition is smooth and records are up to date and transferred in time to receiving schools.	Yes – transfer to school that is a larger than Furness will enable more flexibility of resource to support the young person's needs. This will result in individual needs continuing to be met at the same or better level in their new school. Kent's Admission to Secondary School in Kent 2015 will be applied.
Religion or belief	No – Furness School is not a faith school	Low	Low	Discussions with the nearest schools to student's homes to identify availability of places and capacity may identify places at faith schools. Discussions with families with regard to preference for a school with a particular ethos.	Students who express a faith-based need during their one to one discussions will have those wishes taken into account when considering a new provision. Depending on the faith need, this may require KCC to investigate specialised provision in a dedicated faith school. This will be determined following individual discussions.
Sexual orientation	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Pregnancy and maternity	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Marriage and Civil Partnerships	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Carer's responsibilities	Yes	Med	Low	The local authority needs to be cognizant of carer's circumstances, for both boarders and day students.	While there is no requirement for the local authority to make decisions based on the impact of carer's circumstances, it may be considered as a mitigating factor, especially if there are other siblings who would be adversely affected by the decisions.

Part 1: INITIAL SCREENING

Low	Medium	High
Low relevance or Insufficient information/evidence to make a judgement.	Medium relevance or Insufficient information/evidence to make a Judgement.	High relevance to equality, /likely to have adverse impact on protected groups

Proportionality - Based on the answers in the above screening grid what weighting would you ascribe to this function

Medium – Medium numbers affected; mitigating actions will be sufficient.

Context

Furness School was re-designated from BESD to ASD in 2014. Now a school for students with ASD, it currently provides for:

Yr	7	8	9	10	11	total
ASD	3	5	2	6	6	22
BESD		1	1		6	8
SCLN				1		1
tot	3	6	3	7	12	31

The number of young people entering the school each year is very small and these low numbers are not expected to increase within a reasonable timeframe. This is due to:

- the numbers of students/parents who have decided to take up places elsewhere, citing the poor reputation of the school.
- the significant budget deficit which will cause a deleterious effect on the staffing and resources available.
- the current Ofsted rating of 'requires improvement'.

More and more schools are establishing specialist resource based provisions resulting in increased numbers of ASD places being created in mainstream schools. It is completely accepted by the local authority that there will always be a number of students, both primary and secondary, who will need a place at a special school in order for them to receive a statutory education. The local authority continues to investigate sources of school places. Retaining Furness School is not a viable solution because of the

significant budget deficit and the unpopularity of the school. The number of students on roll at the school is diminishing, although some of that may be attributable to the redesignation of the school from BESD to ASD. The Equality Impact Assessment that was completed for the redesignation can be viewed here: <http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/Furness/consultationHome>

Historic Numbers of Students on Roll (using annual September data collection)

Sept 2008	Sept 2009	Sept 2010	Sept 2011	Sept 2012	Sept 2013	Sept 2014
72	81	68	90	50	34	30

Schools receive funding based on student numbers and the decline in numbers results in a corresponding decline in funds available to the school. The school has a considerable budget deficit which means that it will be impossible to maintain the current staffing levels necessary to maintain and sustain the improvements required by HMI.

Some of the school's buildings are in poor condition and substantial additional funding would be required to continue to maintain them.

Aims and Objectives

- To discontinue Furness School due to the large budget deficit and the unlikelihood of the school being able to recover
- To ensure that students in the current Year 11 who remain on site have the opportunity to complete their GCSE studies
- Should the proposal be progressed:
 - To ensure that every student currently in Year 7, 8, 9 and 10 attending or who has applied for a place in Year 7 at Furness School for September 2015, secure a school place at their nearest appropriate school - operating within KCC policy and procedures, in particular, with regards to Admissions, Transport and support for SEN.
 - To ensure the current Year 11 students are supported in making alternative and suitable decision on the post-16 options.

Beneficiaries/ Stakeholders

- Students attending Furness School and their parents and carers
- Parents making an application for a place at Furness School for their children for September 2015

- Families in the locality who may have identified Furness School as a preference at some point in the future
- Primary, Secondary and Special schools serving the locality
- KCC as commissioners of education
- Other users of the school site
- Local residents
- Hextable parish council
- local members/councillors
- Staff of Furness School
- Other stakeholders identified through the Public Consultation process.

Consultation and data:

(i) Consultation:

Parents and Carers

There will be a meeting with parents and carers during February/March 2015. All families will be offered the opportunity for one to one discussions to look at their preferences and the needs of their children before the end of the consultation period. Following the one-to-one meetings, the Equality Impact Assessment will be updated if required

Public

- The consultation period will run from 4 February to 25th March 2015, allowing additional time for school holidays.
- A public drop in will be held at the school during the Public Consultation on a date TBA.
- Following the consultation period, feedback as a result of the consultation will be reported to KCC Education Cabinet Committee on 15 April 2015. A decision to issue a public notice will be taken by the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform.
- The public notice period (if issued) will be 8 May to 12 June 2015.
- The decision on closure will be taken by the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform at the end of the public notice period.

Staff

Consultation will be undertaken with staff and their respective professional associations according to agreed policy and procedure. Early consultation will commence on the 11 February 2015.

(ii) Data

Data used on student numbers and future projections for the Sevenoaks district is to be found in the Kent Commissioning Plan: http://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/16236/Commissioning-plan-for-education-provision-in-Kent-2015-2019.pdf

There are no forecasts for numbers of young people with SEN, although the trend indicates that the number of young people with ASD continue to increase. KCC continues to monitor the numbers and apart from creating SRBP places, we continue to commission special school places for students with ASD.

Free School Meals

There are 11 (35.5%) students that are eligible for Free School Meals. These students attract additional funding. However, it is not significant enough to impact on the viability of the school.

SEN

All students have Statements of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan.

LACs

3 (10%) of students are LAC.

EAL

At the time of writing, all 31 pupils have recorded their first language as English.

Gender

Of the 31 students on roll at the time of going to consultation, 3 are girls and 28 boys.

Race & Ethnicity

Of the 31 students on roll, 30 have indicated their ethnicity as English. One student is of Gypsy/Roma origin.

Religion or Belief

Details of religion or belief are not recorded for students at this school. The school is non-denominational.

Potential Impact

Adverse Impact:

Any potential adverse impact that students may experience from a move to a new school will be countered through:

- close working with the school and parents/carers around their individual needs
- close liaison with receiving schools around individual needs of the young people and educational performance
- consideration of transport requirements (within the constraints of current agreed KCC policy) particularly for those where financial constraints may have an adverse impact
- consideration of uniform costs
- consideration of placement of siblings
- work with other local schools to agree additional capacity where required to meet the needs of young people currently attending Furness School
- ongoing consultation and evaluation to ensure equality of outcomes for all students and that mitigating action is put into place

Positive Impact:

- Linked proposals will ensure that there will be a net increase of ASD provision in the area. An additional 50+ places are being proposed for Hugh Christie Technology College, and at least 15 more are proposed at the Wilmington Academy.
- KCC continue to work with local special schools to
- the relocation of Furness students will be to schools in a much stronger financial position, and who have thriving rolls. This will enable the individual needs of young people to be met and provide greater opportunities and a broader curriculum for students

- those attending larger schools will benefit from the larger staffing and, therefore broader range of skills that a larger staffing establishment should be able to provide.

JUDGEMENT

Internal Action Required YES

There is a risk of students being unable to find a provision that will entirely suit their needs. Through one to one discussions, the number of occurrences will be kept to a minimum, with the aim of all students receiving the same or better provision to that which they were receiving at Furness.

There is a risk of the local authority having to commission additional places at special schools, over the SRBP places being proposed at Hugh Christie Technology College and Wilmington Academy.

As issues arise during one to one meetings with families and through the consultation period, we will reflect these in this Equalities Impact Assessment and in the actions reflected in our closure plan to ensure that we are mitigating any potential adverse impacts for those groups with protected characteristics.

Full Impact Assessment NO

Sign Off:

I have noted the content of the equality impact assessment and agree the actions to mitigate the adverse impact(s) that have been identified.

Name: Ian Watts, Area Education Officer Date: 30 January 2015

Revised:

Following feedback and comments from stakeholders, I have revised the equality impact assessment.

Name: Ian Watts, Area Education Officer Date: 9 March 2015

Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan

Protected Characteristic	Issues identified	Action to be taken	Expected outcomes	Owner	Timescale	Cost implications
Age	Young people of secondary school age potential to be affected by change of school	Detailed transition plan to be developed	Smooth transition, school places secured, receiving schools confident of young person's needs.	Local Authority	5 February ongoing	
Race	Individual needs of students to be considered and responded to	1-2-1 meetings with parents to identify needs. Information to be passed to receiving schools re individual needs.	Any potential for adverse impact mitigated.	Furness School/Local Authority	5 February ongoing	
Religion or belief	Furness School is not a Faith school	Work with Faith and Non Faith secondary schools to identify capacity and willingness to take over Published Admission Number if parents indicated a preference for a school with a particular ethos.	Ability to accommodate wishes of parents who have a strong preference for a school with a particular ethos.	Local Authority	5 February ongoing	