

## PRESCRIBED INFORMATION

### CLOSURE OF A COMMUNITY SPECIAL SCHOOL

1. School Name .....Verney Avenue School, High Wycombe.....
2. DfES number       7008.....
3. Local Education Authority area Buckinghamshire.....
4. Proposals published by.....LEA and Governing Body.....
5. Date Proposals published.....26 June 2003.....
6. Proposed implementation date 31 December 2003.....

**Note: Not all the required information can be provided on the face of this pro forma; copies of the consultation documents, lists of schools, a map of the location of schools etc will also be required, as detailed within. This information is to be regarded as in the public domain and may be shown to interested parties without further notification.**

**1. What are the objectives of the proposal?**

The 1999/2000 document "SEN policy and strategy for the new millennium" identified the need to review special school provision in the County, to reduce surplus places, and to adapt and reinforce the role of special schools within the continuum of provision available to pupils with special educational needs. Special schools are only one element of the continuum of provision and therefore this work represents only a part of the whole.

As the consultation document details under section 3, it became apparent that Verney Avenue School, a school for secondary phase pupils with statements of moderate learning difficulties, had falling rolls which made it increasingly difficult for the school to maintain the ability to fully meet the curriculum needs of its pupils or to meet the professional and developmental needs of staff. For more detail, please refer to the consultation document, attached as Appendix 1.

The proposal is that Verney Avenue School should close with effect from 31 December 2003.

**2. Please provide a statement indicating how the proposals would contribute to enhancing the quality of education and how they support the Authority's policy for provision for children with special educational needs (SEN) as set out in the Educational Development Plan.**

The County Council is committed to ensuring that appropriate education provision is made for all pupils and especially for those with special educational needs. As the pattern of special educational need alters the County Council has to review its provision. The need for Moderate Learning Difficulty special school places in Buckinghamshire has reduced, which is a trend mirrored across the country. Increasingly children whose needs are such that they cannot be appropriately supported in mainstream schools have multiple special needs and they require a range of support services that cannot be provided by a school such as Verney Avenue. The proposal to close Verney Avenue forms part of the County Council's strategy for SEN, which involves rationalising the current provision of Special Schools to meet predicted needs more appropriately.

**3. Please give details of what consultation has taken place and provide copies of:**

**a. consultation documents:**

Copy of April 2003 consultation document attached as Appendix 1

**b. the views and responses of the persons consulted:**

report to Cabinet Members for Schools and Children and Young People dated June 2003 is attached as Appendix 2

**4. Please provide a statement which indicates the consequences for the education of pupils with special educational needs in the area if the proposal were rejected.**

Following the public consultation on the proposed closure of Verney Avenue School in April/May 2003, and the subsequent decision by the Cabinet Members for Children and Young People and Schools respectively to issue statutory notices, the LEA received requests from parents/guardians that their children transfer to an alternative school from September 2003, rather than in January 2004 when the proposed school closure was planned to come into effect. It became apparent that the wish to transfer in line with academic year dates was virtually unanimous.

After serious consideration the LEA agreed to do everything possible to accommodate parents wishes.

The reality at this juncture therefore is that alternative placements have been agreed for all Verney Avenue pupils with effect from the beginning of the 2003 Autumn term.

**5. Please provide a map showing the location of the school.**

Map attached as Appendix 3

**6. Please provide a list of all special schools, and other schools maintained by the local Education Authority where there is recognised provision for pupils with special educational needs.**

<b>Special School</b>	<b>Need</b>	<b>Phase</b>
Kynaston School	EBD	Primary
Westfield School	EBD	Primary
Prestwood Lodge School	EBD	Secondary
Wendover House School	EBD	Secondary
Chiltern Gate School	MLD	Primary
Stoke Leys School	MLD	Primary
Alfriston School	MLD	Secondary
Pebble Brook School	MLD	Secondary
Stony Dean School	MLD	Secondary
Verney Avenue School	MLD	Secondary
Furze Down School	MLD	All
Heritage House School	SLD	All
Maplewood School	SLD	All
Park School	SLD	All

School	Need	Phase
Misbourne School	EBD	Secondary
Great Missenden C of E School	HI	Primary
Highworth Combined School	HI	Primary
Stoke Mandeville Combined School	HI	Primary
Elmtree School	LNG	Infant
Iver Heath Junior School	LNG	Junior
Aston Clinton School	LNG	Primary
Bell Lane Combined School	LNG	Primary
Bierton C of E Combined School	LNG	Primary
Chepping View Primary School	LNG	Primary
The Disraeli School	LNG	Primary
Holtspur School	LNG	Primary
King's Wood School	LNG	Primary
William Harding Combined School	LNG	Primary
Holmer Green Upper School	LNG	Secondary
Juniper Hill School	PH	Primary
William Harding Combined School	PH	Primary
Sir William Ramsay	PH	Secondary
Chalfonts Community College	PH/HI	Secondary
Carrington Infant School	SCM	Infant
Elmhurst Infant School	SCM	Infant
Carrington Junior School	SCM	Junior
Elmhurst Junior School	SCM	Junior
Claytons Combined School	SCM	Primary
The Disraeli School	SCM	Primary
Princes Risborough Primary	SCM	Primary
Princes Risborough School	SCM	Secondary

7. Please provide the following information relating to pupils for whom provision is made at the school for the current year and the preceding four school years:

a. the number of pupils at the school

	YR7 11+	YR8 12+	YR9 13+	YR10 14+	YR11 15+	YR12 16+	YR13 17+	YR14 18+	YR15 19+	Total Pupils
<b>January 2003</b>	5	7	10	10	24	6	5	0	0	67
<b>January 2002</b>	8	10	11	25	14	7	4	0	0	79
<b>January 2001</b>	9	11	25	15	14	5	11	0	0	90
<b>January 2000</b>	10	27	16	14	11	14	4	0	0	96
<b>January 1999</b>	17	13	13	12	20	5	3	0	0	83

b. the number of pupils of each age group and by gender.

	YR7 11+	YR8 12+	YR9 13+	YR10 14+	YR11 15+	YR12 16+	YR13 17+	YR14 18+	YR15 19+	Total Pupils
<b>January 2003</b>										
Male	5	7	9	8	19	5	4	0	0	57
Female	0	0	1	2	5	1	1	0	0	10
<b>January 2002</b>										
Male	8	9	9	20	12	5	4	0	0	67
Female	0	1	2	5	2	2	0	0	0	12

Gender data is not available for earlier years.

**c. the number of pupils with each type of SEN for whom the school makes provision.**

All pupils attending Verney Avenue School have statements for Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD).

The reduction in numbers on roll reflects the national and local picture, as explained in the consultation paper, in respect of the greater integration into mainstream schools of pupils with moderate learning difficulties.

**8. Please provide details of schools where pupils, who will be displaced if the proposals are agreed, will be sent, including details of any interim arrangements.**

Pupils have been offered places at:	Numbers of Pupils
Furze Down School, Verney Road Winslow	22
Pebble Brook School, Churchill Avenue, Aylesbury	8
Alfriston School, Penn Road, Beaconsfield	1
Stony Dean School, Orchard End Avenue, Amersham	1
Mainstream School: Cressex Community School	<u>1</u>
	<u>33</u>

**9. Please give details of the proposed arrangements for transport of pupils to other schools.**

Where the County Council considers that the place offered to a pupil is the one that is most appropriate to meet their needs, then in line with current County Council policy transport is provided; all the pupils have been offered free transport. The Council will take care to ensure that transport arrangements for pupils are appropriate to ensure their well-being.

All pupils transferring from Verney Avenue School are receiving free home/school transport.

**10. Please provide information relating to the distance and travelling times to the schools where it is proposed that pupils will transfer.**

Marlow	to	Pebble Brook School	19 miles	45-50 minutes
High Wycombe	to	Pebble Brook School	15 miles	30-40 minutes
Marlow	to	Furze Down School	29 miles	60 minutes
High Wycombe	to	Furze Down School	25 miles	50-60 minutes
High Wycombe	to	Stony Dean School	10 miles	35-40 minutes
High Wycombe	to	Alfriston School	7 miles	30 minutes

(Times based on one child per vehicle)

**11. Please provide details of the curriculum at each of the schools to which it is proposed pupils will transfer.**

The curriculum offered to students at all the named schools follow the national curriculum, and will be tailored to meet the needs of individual pupils to conform with and support their Individual Education Plan.

In Years 10 and 11 pupils may study for accredited qualifications, and each school, as with all schools, decides which examination courses to offer. As the match between Verney Avenue and Furze Down Schools is, in this regard good, pupils and parents of older children have been encouraged to accept placements at Furze Down. This has the secondary advantages of enabling the younger pupils to take up placement at Pebble Brook, ensuring that the younger children, with the greater number of school years ahead of them, benefit from the shorter journey; and also allowing some continuity of social and class groupings.

Both Furze Down and Pebble Brook have appointed a member of staff from Verney Avenue to their schools, which will help provide security and continuity for the pupils.

**12. Please provide details of any transitional arrangements which will be made in connection with the transfer of pupils to other schools.**

Transitional arrangements will be considered as necessary, but will be kept to a minimum. Schools taking pupils additional to their agreed level of funded planned places automatically receive funding for additional places under the terms of the Council's Local Management of Special Schools scheme. Where the influx of additional pupils is causing additional expenditure that it is not reasonable for the governors of the school to meet, the Council will negotiate one-off, time limited payments.

**13. Please provide details of any measures the Authority intends to take to increase the number of school places available if the proposals are agreed.**

The number of funded planned places in the County Council's Special Schools is agreed on an annual basis taking into account known and anticipated placements. The annual review process will continue and it is anticipated that pupils with statements of MLD for whom a placement in a Special School is appropriate, will be absorbed within the remaining maintained Special Schools.

**14. Please provide information as to:**

**a. the number of pupils at each Special School listed in Paragraph 6 above.**

Special School Name	Need	Phase	Total Number on Roll as at January 2003)
Kynaston School	EBD	Primary	45
Westfield School	EBD	Primary	35
Prestwood Lodge School	EBD	Secondary	60
Wendover House School	EBD	Secondary	68
Chiltern Gate School	MLD	Primary	109
Stoke Leys School	MLD	Primary	66
Alfriston School	MLD	Secondary	124
Pebble Brook School	MLD	Secondary	66
Stony Dean School	MLD	Secondary	129
Verney Avenue School	MLD	Secondary	67
Furze Down School	MLD	All	92
Heritage House School	SLD	All	79
Maplewood School	SLD	All	72
Park School	SLD	All	79
<b>TOTAL SPECIAL SCHOOL PUPILS</b>			<b>1091</b>

**b. provision for children with SEN, listed in Paragraph 6 above.**

<u>School</u>	<u>Need</u>	<u>Phase</u>	<u>Total number on roll as at January 2003</u>
Misbourne School	EBD	Secondary	4
Great Missenden C of E School	HI	Primary	5
Highworth Combined School	HI	Primary	10
Stoke Mandeville Combined School	HI	Primary	7
Elmtree School	LNG	Infant	15
Iver Heath Junior School	LNG	Junior	10
Aston Clinton School	LNG	Primary	9
Bell Lane Combined School	LNG	Primary	12
Bierton C of E Combined School	LNG	Primary	10
Chepping View Primary School	LNG	Primary	7
The Disraeli School	LNG	Primary	9
Holtspur School	LNG	Primary	10
King's Wood School	LNG	Primary	11
William Harding Combined School	LNG	Primary	11
Holmer Green Upper School	LNG	Secondary	4
Juniper Hill School	PH	Primary	8
William Harding Combined School	PH	Primary	10
Sir William Ramsay	PH	Secondary	8
Chalfonts Community College	PH/HI	Secondary	5
Carrington Infant School	SCM	Infant	6
Elmhurst Infant School	SCM	Infant	9
Carrington Junior School	SCM	Junior	8
Elmhurst Junior School	SCM	Junior	7
Claytons Combined School	SCM	Primary	10
The Disraeli School	SCM	Primary	12
Princes Risborough Primary	SCM	Primary	12
Princes Risborough School	SCM	Secondary	24

**c. A forecast of pupil numbers at each of the above schools for the five years from year 2002/2003**

The LEA has embarked upon a review of its projections in relation to numbers of pupils who may have statements maintained by the LEA in future years. This review will consider the provision required across a continuum of provision from mainstream through to highly specialist therapeutic provision. The implications of current and proposed policy will be factored in.

The closure of Verney Avenue, first proposed in 2002, was considered in the light of the evidence of trends, both locally and nationally, relating to the preferred appropriate placement of secondary phase pupils with statements of MLD, and the forecast of numbers of pupils likely to seek a place at Verney Avenue School. The attached consultation document, appendix 1 refers.

**15. Please provide details of the number of pupils with special educational needs of each type for whom the Local Education Authority maintains a statement of SEN in the current school year, together with a forecast of such numbers for each of the subsequent five school years.**

	<b>No of statements as at Jan 2003</b>	
<b>Cognitive and Learning Needs:</b>		
Moderate Learning Difficulties	882	
Specific Learning Difficulties	242	
Severe Learning Difficulties	233	
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties	<u>9</u>	1366
<b>Communication and Interaction Needs:</b>		
Language Difficulties	366	
Severe Communication Difficulties	<u>240</u>	606
<b>Behaviour, Emotional &amp; Social Development Needs:</b>		
Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties		370
<b>Sensory and/or Physical Needs:</b>		
Visual Impaired	53	
Hearing Impaired	70	
Physical Difficulties	<u>163</u>	<u>286</u>
<b>Total No. of statements as at January 2003</b>		<b><u>2628</u></b>

As explained in the previous paragraph, work is commencing on a review of projections. Over the last year the number of statements maintained has been stable, after a period of growth.

**16. Please provide details of any arrangements for the transfer of staff employed at the school to transfer to other schools.**

Staff at the school have all been offered the support of the County Council's Human Resources Team and their professional association/union. Most staff seeking alternative employment have been successful, as illustrated in the table below: -

	Number of Teaching Staff	Number of Support Staff
Posts secured within Bucks	6	4
Redundancy/Retirement taken	5	3
Seeking alternative employment	0	2
Other	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>

**17. Please provide details of any savings in expenditure made as a result of implementing the proposals and provide a statement as to whether the premises will be sold and, if so, the estimated proceeds of the sale.**

The attached report to Cabinet Members dated June 2003 (Appendix 2) provides an assessment of the financial implications of the proposed closure.



A substantial proportion of the school building and site will become part of the adjacent Chiltern Gate School substantially improving its facilities; it will enable a staff house, currently used for teaching purposes, to revert to its intended use.

Whilst the consultation document consults on the potential sale of any part of the site/building that may be surplus to requirements, no decision has been taken to declare any part of the site surplus. This would only happen if the County Council was clear that the site is not required for the provision of services.