

Swinton Academy
East Avenue, Swinton,
Mexborough, Rotherham S64 8JW
t: 01709 570586
e: enquiries@swintonacademy.org
w: swintonacademy.org



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Principal: Chela Wilson BA (Hons), PGCE
CEO: Rebecca Scutt BSc (Hons), PGCE

Swinton Academy Significant Change Consultation Response

Proposal: To increase the SEND Resource from 20 to 40 places when the new building opens (opening date yet to be confirmed).

Trust response is highlighted in blue.

Respondent Summary

Stakeholders Represented

- Staff members: 11
- Parents/Carers: 8
- Wider community: 1
- Total responses received: 20

Key Themes Raised

1. Strong Support for Increasing SEND Provision

The overwhelming majority of respondents supported increasing the student capacity for the SEND Integrated Resource places from 20 to 40. Respondents highlighted rising demand for specialist provision in the local area and the benefits of increasing opportunities for young people with SEND.

2. Need for Additional Funding and Staffing

The most common caveat raised was that any increase should be accompanied by sufficient funding, staffing and specialist resources. Respondents stressed that additional capacity must not place further pressure on existing staff.

The proposed additional 20 places would be allocated to pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), with associated funding provided in accordance with the Local Authority's funding arrangements for placements within the Integrated Resource Unit (IRU). Funding for these additional places would be received in line with the Local Authority's agreed terms and conditions.

Additional staffing would be recruited and resourced through this funding to ensure that the increased capacity is appropriately supported. It is not the intention for the expansion to place additional pressure on existing staff. The leadership structure of the Integrated Resource Unit would be reviewed to reflect the increased provision and associated funding.

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Where appropriate, the roles and responsibilities of staff involved in the day-to-day operation of the Integrated Resource Unit would also be reviewed to ensure the provision continues to operate effectively and meets the needs of all pupils.

The Local Authority will provide capital funding to support the physical expansion of the Integrated Resource Unit (IRU) within the new school building. Accommodation will be designed and allocated in accordance with the Department for Education's national space standards and formulae, ensuring that the expanded provision is appropriately resourced to meet the needs of pupils.

3. Growing Demand for SEND Places

Many respondents referred to increasing numbers of pupils with EHCPs and the lack of specialist SEND provision locally. Several respondents felt that 20 places no longer meets community need.

The Principal and Chief Executive Officer agree that there is a growing demand for places within the Integrated Resource Unit (IRU), reflecting the increasing number of pupils requiring specialist SEND provision. The proposal to increase the capacity of the Integrated Resource Unit by 20 places has therefore been developed in partnership with the Local Authority, taking account of identified need, available accommodation, staffing, and the school's ability to maintain the quality of provision. While some respondents consider that additional capacity beyond 20 places is required, the current proposal represents a significant and sustainable expansion that can be effectively accommodated within the school's resources and facilities, while ensuring that the high quality of education and support provided to pupils is maintained.

4. Benefits for Students and the Wider Community

Respondents believed that an expanded provision would improve outcomes for children with SEND, provide greater access to support, and benefit the wider community by creating more opportunities for specialist placements.

The Principal and Chief Executive Officer agree with the views expressed by respondents that expanding the Integrated Resource Unit has the potential to improve outcomes for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Increasing the number of specialist places will enable more children and young people to access high-quality, appropriately targeted provision within their local community. It is also recognised that expanding the provision will increase access to specialist support, reduce pressure on existing specialist placements, and contribute positively to meeting the growing demand for SEND provision across the area. The proposed expansion has been carefully planned to ensure that these benefits can be realised while maintaining the quality of education, support, and pastoral care provided to all students.

5. Importance of Staff Training and Professional Development

Several comments highlighted the need for ongoing staff training, high-quality CPD and specialist expertise to ensure that provision continues to meet the needs of pupils effectively.

The Principal and Chief Executive Officer agree that high-quality professional development and specialist expertise are essential to ensuring the continued success of the Integrated Resource Unit. It is a Trust priority to ensure that all staff have access to appropriate and meaningful professional development, with particular emphasis on those working within the Integrated Resource Unit.

The Trust is committed to ensuring that the expanded provision is supported by a skilled and confident workforce. A programme of ongoing training and high-quality continuing professional development will be provided to ensure staff have the knowledge, skills and expertise required to meet the diverse needs of pupils accessing the provision. This commitment will support the continued delivery of high-quality education, pastoral care and specialist interventions as the provision expands.

6. Concerns About Capacity and School Identity

A small number of respondents expressed concerns about whether current provision is already stretched or whether a significant increase could affect the perception of the school. However, those respondents generally considered 40 places to be a reasonable level.

Overall Support for the Proposal

Including all 20 responses:

- In favour: 18 (90%)
- Not in favour: 2 (10%)

Conclusion

There is very strong support for increasing the number of SEND Integrated Resource places from 20 to 40. The dominant message from respondents is that additional provision is needed to meet growing local demand, provided that sufficient funding, staffing, training and specialist resources accompany the increase.