

Public Consultation

Brent Council proposed changes to Vernon House Special School

1.	Introduction <p>Vernon House School, Drury Way, London, NW10 0NQ is a special school located in the south of the borough. It provides school places for primary aged children between the ages of 4 to 11 with complex behaviour, emotional and social difficulties (BESD).</p> <p>Vernon House Special School has provision for 30 children with statements, or draft statements for BESD. Overall, demand for places for pupils with complex BESD in the 4 -11 year old age range has reduced in recent years. The school had between 45%-60% occupancy rate during 2010-11 school year and there are currently 14 pupils on roll (January 2012).</p> <p>Over the same period demand for special school places for pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in the 4-11 year old age range has increased from 96 in 2008 to 121 in 2012.</p> <p>There will continue to be a need for special school places in the 4-11 age range for pupils with complex BESD in small numbers and for pupils with ASD in higher numbers. (See sections 3 and 4 for more detail)</p> <p>Brent Council is therefore consulting with staff, parents and the community on the proposal to change the character of the Vernon House Special School from a designation of Behaviour, Emotional, Social Difficulties (BESD) to a designation of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD for those pupils capable of accessing the mainstream curriculum with specialist support) and Children with Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (CLDD) from September 2012.</p>
2.	The proposal <p>Brent Council is proposing to change the character of Vernon House Special School, Drury Way, London, NW10 0NQ, from a 30 place special school for pupils with Behaviour, Emotional, Social Difficulties (BESD) to a 35 place special school for pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD for those pupils capable of accessing the mainstream curriculum with specialist support) and Children with Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (CLDD) from September 2012. The change to a broader designation will increase the flexibility of the school to admit pupils with a broader range of associated needs.</p> <p>Who will be affected by the proposal?</p> <p>This change will affect families with children currently placed at Vernon House Special School who have a statement for BESD. The change to the broader designation will</p>

allow those children to continue with their education at Vernon House Special School. Each child's case will be reviewed on an individual basis with the full involvement of the parents/carers and child concerned.

The arrangements for the continuing education of the pupils currently on the roll of Vernon House Special School are described in further detail in section 3.

The change will also affect families with children who have a statement for ASD who are capable of accessing mainstream curriculum with specialist support. The change will provide greater choice of special school placement for these families and children in the future and significantly an option that is within Brent and much closer to their home address.

When is the change proposed to take place?

The designation of Vernon House Special School will change from BESD to CLDD/ASD (for those pupils capable of accessing the mainstream curriculum with specialist support) with effect from September 2012. There will be a period of transition from the 1st September 2012 when the school will continue to meet the needs of a number of the pupils with BESD currently on roll (according to parental preference and individual placement planning – see Section 3 for arrangements for current pupils). At the same time the school will begin to admit pupils with a statement of special educational need (SEN) for CLDD/ASD for those pupils capable of accessing the mainstream curriculum with specialist support. This will be managed through a full consultation process with the LA and the full involvement of parents and carers. Up to 10 pupils with the appropriate CLDD/ASD profile will be admitted in the first year building to a maximum of 35 pupils over subsequent years according to demand.

How will the staff be supported?

The implications for staff development will be properly planned for and staff will access a full training programme in ASD specialism. They will be supported by the LA's services to schools, visiting existing ASD provision and forging partnerships to support the development.

What changes will need to be made to the school building?

Vernon House Special School premises were originally built with a capacity of 40 secondary aged pupils and are currently funded to take 30 pupils. The proposal is to designate for up to a maximum of 35 pupils and the premises will need to be adapted in order to meet the needs of 35 pupils with CLDD/ASD. There has been a feasibility study informed by an ASD professional to assess the nature of the adaptations. The feasibility has identified 3 options and the decision on which option to proceed with will be made with the full involvement of the management and Governing Body of the school. This will represent a significant investment in the school and capital funding will be provided to ensure that the premises are adapted according to the outcome of the feasibility to fully meet the needs of the new intake of pupils. **The feasibility plans are available to be viewed on request by contacting the school at admin@vernonhouse.brent.sch.uk or by telephoning on 0208 451 6961.**

3. Additional information

Basis for the proposed change in Designation.

The numbers of stated pupils in the 4-11 age range with BESD identified as a primary need has decreased over the last 5 years. The number of pupils placed at Vernon House special school has reduced over this 5 year period. The forecast from LA projection data is that there will continue to be a need for specialist support for pupils with very complex BESD but in lower numbers than previously. This is consistent with the Local Authority's overall strategy of improving capacity to accommodate pupils with BESD in mainstream schools. The table below illustrates the relatively low and stable demand for special school places for BESD in the 4-11 age group in recent years.

Demand for BESD Special School Places (4-11)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Maintained day	14	12	20	17	12
Independent/non-maintained	0	0	1	2	1

During the same 5 year period the number of stated pupils aged 4-11 identified with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) **across the whole spectrum of needs** has increased by 20%.

Numbers in the Reception to Y3 age group particularly indicate a continuing increase in need for future years. The table below illustrates the increase in demand for special school places for ASD in the 4-11 age group in recent years which is in contrast to the low and stable demand for BESD places.

Demand for ASD Special School Places (4-11)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Maintained day	78	81	81	85	85
Independent/non-maintained	18	20	21	26	36

Source: Tribal SEN

There is limited capacity in Brent special schools for pupils with ASD and over the last 3 years there has been a need to increase placements at independent and non-maintained schools outside the Borough boundary often requiring pupils to travel long distances.

There has also been an increase in incidence of pupils with a more complex range of issues and combination of layered needs which require informed, specific support. This is consistent with a new category of special educational need recognised by the Department for Education known as Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities CLDD. Children with severe emotional and behavioural needs and Autism Spectrum Disorders are key groups within this category.

Arrangements for the pupils currently on the roll of Vernon House Special School.

Arrangements will be made for each child currently on the roll of Vernon House Special School to plan for their continuing education with the full involvement of the parent/carer and the child concerned. The proposed change to a broader designation for Vernon House Special School will provide the option to stay in a placement at the school until secondary transfer. Other options to consider would include transferring to a suitable alternative special school place within Brent or suitable placement at a maintained special school in a neighbouring borough. Consideration would also be given to a supported placement in a mainstream school. Planning would be based on latest information about progress, views of all staff involved with the child and on parents and child's views. Decisions would also be guided by options to plan the best appropriate pathway towards successful transition to an appropriate secondary school placement.

4. The growing demand for ASD places

The proposed change in designation will provide parents with increased options for special school places. Currently there is no additional capacity in Brent special schools for pupils with these types of SEN. The tables below illustrate the increasing need to place pupils with SEN in independent/non maintained special schools outside the Borough boundary over the last 5 years. Many of these places involve pupils having to travel long distances. The proposed changes to Vernon House Special School will develop the school's future in line with the staff's experiences and the future incidence of SEN and demand for special school places, providing school places within the Borough closer to pupils' homes.

Demand for Special School Places

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Maintained day	473	466	494	515	526	509
Independent/non-maintained	93	105	125	139	156	183

Source: SEN 2

Demand for ASD Special School Places (all ages)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Maintained day	115	129	140	155	165
Independent/non-maintained	54	60	71	82	100

Source: Tribal SEN

5. The need for more special school places in the future

Brent Council is addressing the increased demand for special school places through a number of initiatives guided by careful analysis of SEN incidence data and the development of projections that take account of the overall projected increase in the Borough's population. This proposal should be viewed in the context of other recent developments that have provided additional special school places aimed at providing good quality provision close to home address.

6. We would like to hear from you

Brent Council is currently consulting all interested parties including parents and staff at the school, all schools in Brent, staff within Brent Council and neighbouring boroughs with an aim to receive feedback on the proposal.

Brent Council would welcome your views on the proposal to change the character of Vernon House School. If you have any comments that you would like to make in relation to this proposal you can either use the attached tear-off response form or write to:

**Judith Joseph, School Place Planning,
3rd Floor, Chesterfield House,
9 Park Lane,
Wembley,
HA9 7RH**

Or

Send an email to: **judith.joseph@brent.gov.uk**

Copies of this consultation document are also available at the school reception and from Brent Council at Chesterfield House, 9 Park Lane, Wembley, HA9 7RH.

Alternatively, this document can be downloaded from:

<http://www.brent.gov.uk/currentconsultations>

A limited translation service can be provided for this document on request to judith.joseph@brent.gov.uk

All written comments must be received by: **Friday 24 February 2012**

7. You can also attend public meetings for parents, carers and the community which have been arranged to discuss the proposed change of character of Vernon House School. The same meeting will take place 3 times on the same day.

Date: Tuesday 21 February 2012

Time: 2pm / 3.30pm / 5pm

**Venue: The Front Hall
Vernon House Special School
Drury Way
London,
NW10 0NQ**

8. The procedures for reorganisation

Brent Council in partnership with Vernon House School intends to meet with staff, parents and the local community, to receive their views.

If, after the consultation, the Council decides to proceed with the changes then a statutory proposal will be published in the local papers and will also be placed at public places e.g. the Town Hall and on the main entrances to Vernon House School. Thereafter, a 6 week representation period will commence during which anybody can write to make formal representations on the proposals. Representations can be in the form of support, suggestions or objections to the proposal. All representations will be presented to Brent Council's Executive Committee which will make a decision on the proposal.

9. Consultees

This document is being sent to:

Vernon House School: parents, staff, governors and student council

All maintained schools and Academies in Brent

Brent Council

Westminster Diocesan Education Service

London Diocesan Board for Schools

London Borough of Ealing

London Borough of Barnet

London Borough of Camden

London Borough of Harrow

London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham

London Borough of Westminster

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Local Resident Associations

All Councillors

Local Member of Parliament

All Brent Customer Service Shops

All Brent Libraries

Brent Children Centres

Sport England

Secretary of State, School Organisation Unit

Local private nurseries

Any trade unions who represent staff of Vernon House Special School

Representatives of main trade unions in Brent

Any local partnerships including Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership

Vernon House School Consultation Response Slip

Please tear off and return by: **Friday 24 February 2012**

I agree / disagree with the Council to change the character of Vernon House School . *Delete as appropriate*

Comments:

(Please use the back of this form if you require more space)

Signed

Parent / member of staff / other*please specify*

Please send to:

**Judith Joseph, School Place Planning,
Chesterfield House,
9 Park Lane
Wembley
HA9 7RH**

Or email: judith.joseph@brent.gov.uk

Comments continued:

About you

By answering the following questions, you will help us ensure that we deliver a fair service to all our community. You do not have to give us this information, but we hope you will. All information will be treated in the strictest of confidence and will only be used to monitor and improve Brent Council services.

Gender (please tick one):

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
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My age group (please tick one):

16-24	<input type="checkbox"/>	25-34	<input type="checkbox"/>
35-44	<input type="checkbox"/>	45-54	<input type="checkbox"/>
55-64	<input type="checkbox"/>	65-74	<input type="checkbox"/>
75+	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

Which one of these groups do you feel you belong to (please tick one)?

Asian Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed White and Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed White and Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
White British	<input type="checkbox"/>	White Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Ethnic Group	<input type="checkbox"/>