

Consultation Proposal

Local Authority: Blackburn with Darwen	
School: Newfield School	
Proposal: Consultation on the proposed changes – <ul style="list-style-type: none">- School Expansion and an increase in the Published Admission Number (PAN) by 65 places in a phased roll out- Change in age range from ages 2 to 19 to ages 4 to 19.	
Consultation Start Date: Friday 13 th September 2024	
DfE: 889/7107	URN: 132051

Why are we consulting?

The “Making significant changes (‘prescribed alterations’) to maintained schools, January 2023” informs that Blackburn with Darwen as the Admissions Authority for Newfield School are required to undertake statutory consultation to add additional classrooms, make an increase in the published admission number (PAN) by 65, and change the age range from 2 to 19 to 4 to 19. The Local Authority is keen to hear parents, carers and other interested stakeholders’ views on the proposal.

Requirements for Notification and Publication

The “Making significant changes (‘prescribed alterations’) to maintained schools 2023” can be found at: [Making significant changes \(‘prescribed alterations’\) to maintained schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/114222/making-significant-changes-to-maintained-schools-2023.pdf)

Background

Currently Newfield School operates as a 2- to 19-year-old intake nursery, primary, secondary and sixth form school for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This means that the school admits children from nursery age through to sixth form age.

Evidence of Demand: Blackburn with Darwen has had a shortfall of places in resourced provisions, special schools, and pupil referral units for school age pupils. Currently, approximately 100 Blackburn with Darwen students are placed out of the Local Authority’s area.

Demographic Information

Population: The school continues to allocate all class places each September and is continuously over net capacity. Locally and nationally the number of students with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) is on the rise.

Newfield does not currently have any nursery aged pupils on roll. There is sufficient childcare and early educational provision across the borough for children aged 0-5 years old. Early educational childcare providers in consultation with parents and carers are able to support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The Local Authority’s family information service is able to offer advice, guidance and a brokerage service to support parents and carers in finding suitable childcare to meet their child’s needs.

Specific Proposal

The local authority, as the admissions authority for Newfield School, proposes to:

- increase the net capacity of the school estate.
- increase in the published admission number (PAN) by 65 students in a phased roll out commencing September 2024
- reduce the age range from 2 to 19 to 4 to 19 with effect from spring term 2025.

The proposal will not negatively affect staff currently employed to work at Newfield School.

The local authority, as the admissions authority, will consider any views from the consultation exercise before making any decision on the proposal.

How would this Increase Educational Standards?

Most students with special educational needs and/or disabilities can generally be supported in mainstream schools, however a number of students are unable to access the National Curriculum at age related expectations. The expansion of places at Newfield School provides more opportunity for those students that cannot access mainstream education to get a full well-rounded education in a setting which is more suited to their needs. Additionally, Blackburn with Darwen has seen an increase in demand for specialist school places, resulting in a number of students that require more specialist placements being offered places out of borough. Whilst there will always be a demand for some out of borough specialist provision for those who have a complexity of need that cannot be managed in borough, the percentage of students accessing specialist provision out of borough could be reduced.

What is the Impact on other Educational Institutions?

The expansion and increase of 65 places would have a positive impact on other local schools, as it could enable Newfield to accommodate more students that cannot access mainstream education. In relation to the impact on other resourced provisions, special schools and pupil referral units; the proposed changes would positively impact these provisions as it would decrease their place pressure. It would also mean that more specialist places are available in borough, reducing the need to transport students daily often for long periods of time to out of borough settings. The age range change will have a positive impact on early year's providers, as it will reduce surplus nursery places, in this phase, where the borough already has an oversupply of vacancies. Blackburn with Darwen also supports Early Years providers with Specialist SEND Practitioners (SSPs), who work in Early Years settings to support staff to meet the needs of children with SEND. All Early Years providers can also apply for various funding streams including Special Educational Needs Inclusion Funding (SENI) and emergency high needs funding. Along with this, there are a number of teams of advisory staff, teachers and SSP's who offer advice and guidance to parents and carers.

Who are we consulting with?

During this consultation period, we want to seek views from:

- Parents and carers of children already attending the school;
- School staff;
- Trade unions;
- School Governors;
- Early Years Providers in Blackburn with Darwen.
- Primary, infant, junior and secondary schools (including any associated Academy Trust) in Blackburn with Darwen;
- Councillors and MP's;
- Resourced provisions, SEN Units, special schools and pupil referral units;
- Blackburn Church of England Diocese and Salford Roman Catholic Diocese;
- Relevant local authority departments;
- Any local authority that has commissioned a place within the school.

Timeline for the Consultation Period

Date	Action
13/09/2024	Start of the consultation.
11/10/2024	End of the consultation period/deadline for submitting views to the Local Authority.
W/C 14/10/2024	Analysis of consultation views and preparation of information to be considered by the LA.
29/10/24	To be presented at the Senior Policy Team (SPT) meeting, within Blackburn with Darwen Council.
November 2024	Executive member decision meeting to consider views and make a formal decision on these proposals.

When would any Changes come into Effect?

It is planned that as a result of the expansion works, additional places should start to be realised from September 2025. The proposed change to the schools age ranges from 2 to 19 to 4 to 19, would be introduced from spring term 2025 onwards. Currently there are no pupils on roll at Newfield below statutory school age.

Implementation and Projected Costs

Each place within Newfield School is commissioned and funded by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council as the admission authority. When extra places are available, they will be allocated by the local authority.

How to Respond

This consultation will run for a period of 4 weeks from **Friday 13th September 2024**. You are invited to submit views in writing about the proposal above to the Local Authority. You can share your views via this online form [Online Response Form](#), or send by post or email to the following addresses –

Blackburn with Darwen Council
Pupil Support & Admissions Team,
Children's Services & Education Department,
10 Duke Street,
Blackburn,
Lancashire,
BB2 1DH.
Email: childcareandeducation@blackburn.gov.uk

All views must be received by **5pm on Friday 11th October 2024**. Views received after this specified time and date will not be considered.