



Morecambe Bay Community Primary School  
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Friday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Dear Parent/ Carer,

I am writing to you to let you know about an exciting development for our school. We are proposing to open a Specialist Unit attached to the school which will assist children in the local area with special needs to be supported successfully alongside mainstream school provision. There are many different types of Special Educational Need, but the focus we are proposing to address is that of children with social communication and interaction needs including autism spectrum disorder/social emotional and mental health needs. We are working closely with local authority specialist leads to help us get this proposal right.

At present there is a shortage of local area SEND provision, meaning that many children have to travel long distances each day to access a school facility that meets their needs. Other areas in the country have a much higher level of children attending such units – 5% of children nationally, compared to 0.4% in Lancashire. Lancashire County Council is therefore looking to open 12 Primary units across the County and 12 Secondary Units. The Units will be well funded and would contribute to the financial security of our school, whilst recognising and rewarding the work our school already does to promote good outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disability.

Such a unit would allow us to make really good use of the specialist rooms, resources and staff expertise that we have in school. We are being considered as a suitable school because of the recognised expertise we have in meeting the needs of all children, regardless of their level of need. We are eligible because our school has consistently been graded as Good by OFSTED with outstanding provision for Pastoral and specialist care.

The Unit would contain up to 8 Foundation Stage/ Key Stage 1 children who live within the area of Lancaster and Morecambe and would be highly staffed with specialist practitioners. In addition, the children and staff would receive outside specialist support and advice. This expertise and support would inform and enrich provision throughout the school not just in the unit.

Recognising our current expertise and successful SEND provision, County believes that such a unit would build capacity in the local area through the local schools' network and ensure that the provision is seen as a beacon of best practice and provider of school to school support.

The Unit would be self-contained within the Foundation Stage Unit, with their own room, facilities and outside area. That said, one of the aims is to facilitate managed interaction with

mainstream children, possibly building up to their full-time reintegration into a mainstream setting of the families choosing. Such a unit would make use of space which is currently available, would bring additional resources and would not detract from provision available to the rest of the children in school.

This will not happen quickly, first of all there is a public consultation exercise which needs to happen. This will open from the 19<sup>th</sup> of March and a link to the web site which will hold the consultation is as follows: <https://wh1.snapsurveys.com/s.asp?k=161591260804> You can get the same information in a booklet if you contact the school office.

On Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March at 6pm, we will hold a zoom meeting to discuss the unit and answer any questions you may have. A member of Lancashire County Council's Inclusion Service will also be at the meeting to answer any questions you may have. Details are below...

Parent consultation meeting SEND Unit

<https://zoom.us/j/92291221147?pwd=YmdsRTBUdGJGQmI2TDRIU2hyOWhJdz09>

Meeting ID: 922 9122 1147

Passcode: J0menR

Following the consultation, the findings will be discussed within County and a decision made about which sites to proceed with in September. Sites that are selected to house a unit will then need to carry out refurbishment/ building works that may be necessary. All building costs will be met by County, in addition to our existing repair/ building budgets. Our proposed unit would require a minimum level of alterations/ repair. Units are expected to open to children from January 2022.

The link will be further publicised using our existing communication systems. Please do take some time to respond to the consultation, it is not a long-winded exercise but will really help us alongside County to shape proposals so that the unit can be as effective as possible. You can contact Lancashire County Council by email [Inclusion.South@Lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:Inclusion.South@Lancashire.gov.uk) or phone 01772 531597 if you would like any more information about this.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs S. Collingwood