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**Consultation on proposals to expand Watermill School's Provisions,  
(Additional Specialist School Site for Children with Special Education Needs  
and Disabilities)  
from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024 (subject to change)**

**Introduction**

This proposal is made by Orchard Community Trust (OCT) and Watermill School, in conjunction with Stoke-on-Trent Local Authority.

Stoke-on-Trent Local Authority has been reviewing High Needs Provision across the city with a view to create more in city placements. One of the objectives is to create specialist places for children with special education needs and disabilities. Our proposal is part of this strategy.

**Current provision**

Currently, Watermill School provides 236 places for children with EHCPs in a specialist school building, for children from the age of 3 up to 16 years old. Watermill School offers educational school placements for pupils with a wide range of needs including cognition/learning, communication/Interaction and physical/sensory.

All children who are placed at Watermill School are supported through provision as outlined in an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Children who attend make good progress in all areas of need as Identified in their EHCP.

All the children are registered as pupils at Watermill School for the duration of their time at The School.

Please click on the link for the website of the current provision – [Watermill School](#)

**Proposal**

We are consulting on the proposal to expand Watermill School's provision by:

- Opening a second site of the school based in the former Middlehurst School Site, approximately a quarter of a mile along Turnhurst Road from Watermill School.
- We will provide an additional 82 places at this site focusing on Years 4-11 children, to enable us to provide additional provision within the city for children with an EHCP.
- This provision is needed to allow us to offer two bespoke school sites where we can focus on meeting the needs of children with very different needs. The Watermill site will cater to pupils with more complex needs. The Middlehurst site will focus on pupils with additional learning needs.

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**Please note;**

The implementation date of the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024 is subject to Regional Director/DFE approval, recruitment of staff, placement of identified children and building completion.

The places will be allocated through the SENMAS/SEND team at the Local Authority via the Education Panel meetings and consultation process. Watermill School will then be named on the children's EHC plans.

Watermill School will also identify children who currently attend the Watermill School site, who may benefit from accessing their education in the new Middlehurst site. This may be for certain sessions of the timetable or for their entire education. The new Middlehurst site is a continuation of Watermill and will operate with the same ethos, values, processes and procedures. The Middlehurst site will share the Senior Leadership Team with the Watermill Site and staff may teach across both buildings.

**What are the benefits of this proposal**

The expansion of Watermill School will:

- Support more children aged 3-16 across both school sites, with special educational needs and disabilities to be educated in their local area and community.
- Ensure that more needs can be met locally avoiding the need for children to spend unnecessary time travelling to an appropriate school further away. This is better for children and young people and saves the LA and tax payer money in transport costs.
- Provide an increase of places to meet the needs of children with SEND.
- Provide specialist support and services to children at each stage of their educational journey and ensure that the right provision can be identified for the next phase of the children's education post 16.
- High quality pastoral support for vulnerable SEN children and their families.

**How can you have your say**

If you would like to comment on the proposal, you can have your say by:

- Emailing - [aclewlow@watermillschool.co.uk](mailto:aclewlow@watermillschool.co.uk)
- Accessing our online survey - <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/LQ9XST8>

The consultation will close at 1pm 16/11/23

**What happens next**

The results of the consultation will be analysed and forwarded to DfE for presentation as part of the significant change proposal to the RD West Midlands Advisory Board.

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