



Northern House School
Academy Trust



Solihull
METROPOLITAN
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Consultation on the proposal to establish
Northern House School (Solihull)
an academy to replace
Oaklands Special School**

Closing date for responses Friday 11 April 2014

1. What is being proposed?

We are consulting on a proposal to establish an all age special academy to replace Oaklands Special School in North Solihull, from September 2014.

The new academy will be called Northern House School (Solihull) and will cater for the needs of children from across Solihull aged 4 – 16 with statements of special educational needs.

The sponsor for the proposed academy will be Northern House School, a highly successful Special School based in Oxford, which is currently rated as outstanding by Ofsted. The sponsor has received three outstanding OFSTED reports in succession. Its staff are leaders in their field, often delivering training events for teachers and teaching assistants throughout Oxfordshire and beyond. Oxford pupils present with a range of needs, including ASD, a diagnosis that is becoming more frequent, and the academy has recently been commissioned by Oxford Brookes University to prepare a training event on the presentation of ASD in children, and how best to meet their needs in a school setting.

2. How will Northern House School (Solihull) be different to Oaklands Special School?

Age Range - Oaklands Special School currently caters for up to 40 secondary age pupils with Emotional and Social Difficulties. As part of the conversion to an Academy the Sponsor will change the age range of the school so that it caters for primary age pupils as well as secondary age pupils. In order to achieve this, some modifications will be made to the building and the grounds so that it is suitable to accommodate the wider age range of pupils. The Sponsor will also ensure that the primary division is equipped with the very latest and best aids to learning, to make sure that some of the pupils' favourite subjects – such as IT, Art, Music, Science, PE and Dance - can be taught in innovative and exciting ways.

Special Needs - The school will cater for children and young people with emotional and social difficulties. Increasingly children's needs are becoming more complex and often the children and young people attending Northern House School (Solihull) will have a number of associated additional needs such Autistic Spectrum Disorder, and significant speech, language and communication difficulties. The sponsor has long and successful experience in helping youngsters with these difficulties.

Curriculum - All pupils in the new academy will be taught a broad and balanced curriculum. It will be based on the revised National Curriculum, but adjusted to meet individual needs. The Northern House School curriculum recognises that not all learning takes place in the classroom. For this reason, local trips, outward bound activities and residential and forest school experiences will feature strongly for all pupils from key stage 2 through to key stage 4. Indeed, the beauty of Forest School activities is that it can and does happen in any weather, toughening up the pupils

and providing them with a range of social and practical skills that are simply not teachable in the traditional classroom setting. For this reason the school will engage a full time forest school leader.

Outcomes for Pupils - Many pupils referred to Northern House School (Solihull) will have experienced failure in the past. The new academy will work with pupils and their parents to ensure positive outcomes for everyone. While close attention will be paid to the pupil's individual needs (behavioural, emotional or social), the relentless focus will be on teaching and learning.

The best therapy for pupils who have failed is to help them succeed. At Northern House School (Solihull) they will be challenged to succeed hour by hour, day by day.

We will monitor pupils' academic progress on a daily basis. Pupils will be involved in their own target-setting and encouraged to achieve at a level they may never have thought possible.

Where appropriate, we will help pupils transfer back into mainstream school, although for some a special school environment remains the best pathway until the age of 16.

Key stage 4 pupils will leave the school with academic and/or vocational qualifications appropriate to their abilities and aspirations.

To encourage great outcomes for pupils (both behavioural and academic), the new academy will feature a rewards shop on its website. The pupils will be able to exchange work and behaviour credits for rewards which they can choose from a basket of options.

Standards – In return for offering a superb educational experience for pupils and an exciting, creative, caring and nurturing atmosphere for the whole school community, the new academy will have the very highest expectations of both pupils and staff. Northern House School (Solihull) will, from day one, adopt a 'no excuses' approach to matters of discipline, attendance, application to work and conformity to simple and reasonable school rules.

- Pupils will be expected to be in school every day, on time, and properly dressed and equipped for learning.
- There will be dress codes for all members of the school community.
- Pupils will be expected to wear the new academy uniform and to comply with clear rules about hairstyle, jewellery and make-up.
- The new academy will inform parents and pupils before admission about policies with regard to the bringing on site of mobile electronic devices, including phones.

- The new academy will insist on good manners, safe and sensible behaviour, and mutual respect at all times.
- The new academy will have zero tolerance towards the possession or consumption of drugs of any kind on the school premises – and this includes tobacco, tobacco products and alcohol. The only exception to this will be when a pupil requires medication prescribed by a doctor. In these circumstances, clear procedures will be in place and such medication will be kept under lock and key until such time as it is required.
- The new academy will recruit the best possible staff to deliver outstanding opportunities for all pupils to learn and thrive and will monitor staff performance closely.

3. Staffing

The proposed closure of the Oaklands Pupil Referral Unit has required a revised staffing structure for a secondary EBSD school within an agreed budget framework that meets the Curriculum needs. The new proposals are currently being implemented and have been well communicated to those affected. The result of this action is that some staff members of Oaklands School will transfer to the academy and be employed by the Trust of the Academy. Other staff will be recruited through local and national advertising networks.

Being part of the Northern House School Academy Trust will mean that there can be a two-way transfer of skills, with staff at both the Solihull School and the Oxford School sharing staff training and development activities etc.

4. Pupils

Pupils with a statement of special educational needs that names Oaklands School will transfer to the newly established academy, Northern House School (Solihull).

Northern House School (Solihull) will also begin to accept new pupils from September 2014 where the school is named on their statement of Special Educational Needs or Single Plan.

5. Oaklands Pupil Referral Unit

Oaklands Pupil Referral Unit is presently located within the same building as Oaklands Special School. It caters for secondary age pupils that are permanently excluded from school and live in North Solihull.

It is proposed that Oaklands Pupil Referral Unit will close from 31 August 2014 and will not form part of the academy provision.

Future provision for excluded pupils will be made through an agreement with North Solihull Secondary Schools, specifically Smith's Wood Sports College, Park Hall

Academy, CTC Kingshurst Academy, Grace Academy, Coleshill School (Warwickshire) and John Henry Newman Catholic College to take collective responsibility for making provision for pupils who might otherwise have been permanently excluded.

All pupils presently on the roll of the Pupil Referral Unit will have a personalised education plan put in place. Some of the young people will have Statements of Special Educational Needs and transfer to Northern House School (Solihull). Others will undertake programmes provided either through the Northern Headteachers Positive Pathways Programme or where appropriate be integrated into mainstream school or college provision.

6. The Consultation Process

What is the consultation asking?

In this consultation Solihull Council and the Northern House School Academy Trust are seeking your views on the proposal to replace Oaklands Special School with an all age special academy for children with Emotional and Social Difficulties sponsored by Northern House School Academy Trust, from September 2014.

In addition the Council is seeking your views on the closure of Oaklands Pupil Referral Unit.

How can I find out more?

As part of the consultation process we are holding a consultation event at Oaklands School. At this event you can take the opportunity to talk to the Chief Executive Officer of Northern House School Academy Trust and Officers from the Council and find out more about the proposed changes.

Please feel free to drop in any time **between 3.00 pm and 5.30 pm** on:

Tuesday 25 March at Oaklands School, Lanchester Way, Castle Bromwich

Who is being consulted?

The Council and the Sponsor are interested in hearing all views in particular we will be consulting with:

Parents of pupils attending Oaklands School and Pupil Referral Unit

Pupils attending Oaklands School and Pupil Referral Unit

Staff of Oaklands School and Pupil Referral Unit

Professional Associations and Trade Unions

Primary and Secondary Schools in Solihull
Special Schools and other special provisions in Solihull
Neighbouring Councils
Parish Councils
Solihull and Meriden MPs
Relevant Ward Members
Relevant Parent and Support Groups

How can I make my views known?

The consultation document is published on the Council website at www.solihull.gov.uk/consultation. Information has also been published on the website for Northern House School (Oxford) at www.northern-house.oxon.sch.uk

You can let us know your views by emailing or writing. Please respond to:

Email: oaklandsconsultation@solihull.gov.uk

Post: School Place Planning Team, Council House, Manor Square, Solihull.
B91 3QB

Individual replies will not be made to consultation responses. However you will receive an acknowledgement to confirm that your response has been received.

The closing date for responses is **Friday 11 April 2014**.

Your views are really important to us and they will be used to help inform the Academy conversion process.