

EDUCATION INVESTMENT STRATEGY CAERDYDD 2024 - 2033 CONSULTATION DOCUMENT 2026

SPECIALIST PROVISION FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY AGE LEARNERS WITH COMPLEX LEARNING NEEDS

9 FEBRUARY - 26 MARCH 2026



This document can be made available in Braille.
A summary version of this document is available at
[Additional Learning Needs \(ALN\) provisions](#)

Information can also be made available in other community languages if needed.
Please contact us at [029 2087 2720](tel:02920872720) to arrange this.



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INTRODUCTION

What is this booklet about?

This booklet is for parents/carers, school staff, school governors and anyone who has an interest in education in Cardiff.

It will be of particular interest to parents/carers of children and young people attending or expecting to attend specialist Additional Learning Needs provision and those that have or currently work with children and young people with Complex Learning Needs.

Children and young people with Complex Learning Needs have a range of issues and combination of layered needs. These could include needs related to learning, communication, physical or sensory disabilities.

The Council wants to make changes to the provision for primary and secondary age learners with Complex Learning Needs.

This booklet sets out a range of proposals to increase the number of Specialist Resource Base and special school places for learners aged 3 – 19 with Complex Learning Needs and the reasons for these proposed changes

What are we proposing to do?

To meet demand for specialist places for learners with Complex Learning Needs it is proposed to:

- Establish a new 10 place Complex Learning Needs Specialist Resource Base at Adamsdown Primary School from January 2027 within the existing buildings
- Establish a new 20 place Complex Learning Needs Specialist Resource Base at Pencaerau Primary School from January 2027 within the existing buildings
- Establish a new 20 place Complex Learning Needs Specialist Resource Base at Peter Lea Primary School from January 2027 within the existing buildings
- Increase the designated number of places at Meadowbank Special School from 98 to 110 from January 2027
- Increase the capacity of Tŷ Gwyn Special School from 240 places to 300 places, utilising the existing buildings and the vacated accommodation at Riverbank Special School, Vincent Road, Ely for a transition period from January 2027. The expanded school would transfer to new build accommodation on the Tŷ Glas site in Llanishen with a further increase in capacity to 320 places from September 2030
- Increase the capacity of Woodlands High School from 240 places to 300 places from January 2027. The school would be accommodated across two sites including the Fairwater Campus site and the existing Vincent Road campus site. The capacity of the school would be further increased to 360 places from September 2032 upon completion of new build accommodation at the Vincent Road campus site

Information specific to each proposal can be found at pages 23 - 60.

The Council is also consulting on separate proposals to increase provision for learners with:

- Autism/Social Communication Needs
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing Needs

You can find details of these proposals at [Additional Learning Needs \(ALN\) provisions](#)

Consultation

Who are we consulting with?

The consultation process must follow the Welsh Government guidelines as set out in the School Organisation Code 2018.

As part of the consultation, we are asking people what they think about the changes we are proposing. There are a number of ways for people to tell us their views.

Table 1 below sets out who the Council is consulting:

Table 1: Groups the Council is consulting with	
Children and young people	Welsh Ministers
Parents/carers	Police & Crime Commissioner
School staff	Cardiff School Improvement Service
School Governing Bodies	Welsh Language Commissioner
Local residents	Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg (RhAG)
Local Members/Members of the Senedd (MS)/ Regional Members of the Senedd/ Member of Parliament (MPs)	Trade Unions
Diocesan Directors of Education	Childcare providers
Neighbouring Authorities	Mudiad Meithrin
All Cardiff schools	Wales Pre-School Providers Association
Estyn	Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids Club
Communities First Partnership	National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) Cymru
Early Years Wales	PACEY Cymru
Play Wales	Mentrau Iaith
Community Councils	Future Generations Commissioner
Children's Commissioner	Cardiff and Vale University Health Board
Voluntary Sector organisations	Cardiff and Vale College
St David's College	Welsh Education Forum (WEF)
Out of County/Non-maintained Additional Learning Needs providers	

Views of children and young people on the proposed changes

Cardiff is committed to being a child-friendly city where children are able to inform decisions that affect their lives and the services they access.

The Council will consult with pupils in the schools included as part of these proposals and the information gathered in these sessions will be included in the final consultation report.

How you can find out more and let us know your views?

- This consultation document is available on the Cardiff Council website at [Additional Learning Needs \(ALN\) provisions](#)
- If you are unable to access the information on-line, you can request that a printed copy of this consultation document is posted to you. You can request this by e-mailing schoolresponses@cardiff.gov.uk or by telephoning **029 2087 2720**.
- We will advise families with children at the schools included as part of these proposals on how they can access a copy of the document.
- We will hold public meetings and drop-in sessions for anybody to attend where the changes we are proposing will be explained. You will have an opportunity to ask questions as part of these sessions. Both in-person and online sessions will be offered.
- Council officers will meet with the Governing Bodies and staff (as required) of the schools included as part of these proposals.
- You can also write to the Council to tell us what you think.

The dates of the consultation meetings are set out below:

Table 2: Consultation Meeting Dates

Nature of consultation	Date/Time	Venue
Drop-in session	Thursday 19 February 2026 9:30am - 11:30am	Llanishen Hub
Drop-in session	Friday 27 February 2026 10:30am - 12:30pm	Ely and Caerau Hub
Drop-in session	Friday 6 March 2026 11:30am - 1:30pm	Star Hub
Drop-in session	Monday 9 March 2026 12 noon - 2pm	Loudon Culture and Media Centre
Drop-in session	Wednesday 18 March 2026 11am - 1pm	St Mellons Hub
On-line drop-in session	Wednesday 18 February 2026 12 noon - 1pm	Teams
On-line drop-in session	Monday 23 February 2026 1pm - 2pm	Teams
On-line drop-in session	Tuesday 24 February 2026 2pm - 3pm	Teams
On-line drop-in session	Monday 2 March 2026 5pm - 6pm	Teams
On-line drop-in session	Friday 13 March 2026 12:30pm - 1:30pm	Teams
Public meeting (in person)	Thursday 19 March 2026 5:30pm - 6:30pm	Central Library

Your views are important to us

Your views matter and we want you to tell us what you think about the changes we have suggested in this document.

You can do this by:

- Attending an in-person drop-in session. You do not need to pre-book for these sessions. Just attend the venue at the date and time specified
- Attending an online drop-in session. Please contact us via e-mail to schoolresponses@cardiff.gov.uk confirming which session you would like to attend, and we will provide a link and instructions on how you can access the meeting

- Attending the in-person public meeting. Please contact us via e-mail to schoolresponses@cardiff.gov.uk stating which meeting you would like to attend, and we will reply to confirm arrangements.
- Completing the electronic response form which you can find at [Additional Learning Needs \(ALN\) provisions](#)
- Printing and completing the consultation response form, which you can find at Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provisions and returning the form by post to School Organisation Planning Team, Room 463, County Hall, Cardiff, CF10 4UW
- Writing to the School Organisation Planning Team by e-mail to schoolresponses@cardiff.gov.uk or by post to Room 463, County Hall, Cardiff, CF10 4UW. This can include requesting an officer call back if you have a specific question that you feel you would like further information about.

Please note that all comments sent in writing or by e-mail must contain the full name and postal address of the person making the comments.

The closing date for responses to this consultation is 26 March 2026.

Unfortunately, we will not be able consider any consultation responses received after this date.

Explanation of terms used in this document

Please note the following terms used throughout this document:

Admission Number - all maintained schools admit pupils up to at least their Published Admission Number (PAN). The admission number is the number of pupil places available in each year group between Reception Year and Year 11.

ALN (Additional Learning Needs) - a child or young person is considered to have Additional Learning Needs if they have difficulties that have a significant long-term impact on their learning. Difficulties may be related to learning; communication and interaction; a physical or sensory disability; or behavioural emotional and social development. (ALN is sometimes referred to as Special Educational Needs).

ALNCo (Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator) - a staff member at a school who is responsible for managing support for students with ALN and promoting inclusion within the school. Their role includes liaising with pupils, parents, teachers, and external agencies, monitoring the effectiveness of support and interventions, maintaining IDPs and organising training for other school staff.

Autism - a lifelong developmental disability which affects how people communicate and interact with the world. Autism is a spectrum. This means everybody with autism is different. Some autistic people need little or no support. Others may need help from a parent or carer every day.

Collaborative Learning Partnership (CLIP) - structured partnerships between schools that have been established to support continuous improvement in schools and to raise outcomes for all learners.

Community Schools - a primary or secondary school where the Council arranges school admissions.

Complex Learning Needs - children and young people with complex learning needs have a range of issues and combination of layered needs. These could include needs related to learning, communication, physical or sensory disabilities.

Emotional Health and Wellbeing Needs - children and young people with emotional health and wellbeing needs have issues with thinking, feeling and behaving. This impacts on managing how life affects them, how they cope, how they engage with others and the choices they make. This is sometimes as a result of trauma. Children and young people may display anxiety, low self-esteem, school phobia, or behavioural difficulties.

Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) - education provision to meet specific needs of pupils who, for various reasons, cannot attend a mainstream or special school. EOTAS refers to education provided by the Council and does not encompass elective home education.

Free School Meals (FSM) - all primary school children in Wales can now access universal primary free school meals. However, eligibility for Free School Meals (eFSM) is still recorded where possible, as it is a way to identify social deprivation and used to determine funding allocations and grants for both schools and families. A child may be eligible for Free School Meals if their parent receives certain types of income support or credits, or if they are supported under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act.

In-County Provision - Council maintained and funded places at schools or Specialist Resource Bases within Cardiff.

Individual Development Plan (IDP) - all children and young people with an identified need that requires an additional learning provision will have a mandatory Individual Development Plan (IDP). The plan sets out a child's or young person's additional learning needs and actions needed to support them. IDPs replaced statements of SEN. Every child in a special school or a Specialist Resource Base has an IDP. IDPs will be the responsibility of either schools or a Council.

Mainstream - a mainstream school is a school run by the Council which is not a special school. Council maintained mainstream/special schools are not selective and do not require students to pay fees.

Number on Roll (NOR) - the number of pupils at a school (not including nursery pupils).

Out of County provision - where the Council does not have suitable provision for pupils requiring a specialist place, places may have to be funded in a school or Specialist Resource Base in another Council area or in provision run by an independent organisation.

PLASC - Pupil Level Annual School Census. In January of every year, the Welsh Government collects information from schools. This includes the number of pupils at each school, their age groups, home addresses, ethnicity, and data on Welsh language, Additional Learning Needs, first language and pupils who meet the Free School Meal eligibility criteria.

PMED (Physical and Medical Difficulties) - learners with permanent or temporary mobility issues, chronic illnesses, or sensory impairments. The impact on learners varies widely with some experiencing little effect on learning while others require significant support and adjustments.

PMLD (Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities) - learners with severe learning disabilities combined with other significant challenges like physical disabilities, sensory impairments, complex health needs and communication difficulties, requiring high levels of support for learning, personal care, and tailored curricula, often with specific approaches like sensory stimulation and alternative communication methods.

Special School - a school for children and young people with an additional learning needs or disability, whose needs cannot be met in a mainstream school. The pupils at a special school have an Individual Development Plan (IDP).

Specialist Resource Base (SRB) - A small class in a mainstream school for pupils with significant additional learning needs. All pupils attending an SRB have an Individual Development Plan (IDP) and are taught by specialist teachers and learning support assistants, and have opportunities to learn, play or socialise with other mainstream pupils.

Statement of SEN - a document that describes in detail the needs of children and young people with significant additional learning needs and specifies the provision being made to support them. These are now being replaced by Individual Development Plans (IDPs).

Statutory Notice - a statutory notice is the formal publication of a finalised proposal. This will only be undertaken if a decision is made by the Council Cabinet to proceed with a proposal following consideration of all responses from the consultation process. This is a legal requirement as outlined in the School Organisation Code (2018).

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) - a statutory plan that each Council in Wales must prepare, stating how it will improve the planning of Welsh-medium education and improve standards in Welsh-medium education, with targets set and agreed by Welsh Ministers.

Why are we proposing these changes?

Stronger Fairer Greener

The Council's 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener' policy prioritises education as the key to reducing poverty and driving long-term prosperity, committing to make every Cardiff school a good school through investment, improved attainment, and support for vulnerable children from early years to higher education.

Stronger Fairer Greener is available to view at [Stronger Fairer Greener](#)

Cardiff 2030

Cardiff's 2030 aims to establish 'A Learning Entitlement', in which all children and young people are able to:

- Access appropriate routes into education and learning opportunities
- Thrive and fulfil their potential
- Realise their individual dreams and ambitions

A key focus is improving outcomes for Cardiff's most vulnerable learners, many of whom face barriers to engagement in education and learning

Addressing inequality is key.

Cardiff's 2030 vision is available to view at [Cardiff 2030](#)

Inclusion Strategy

The Inclusion Strategy aligns with Cardiff 2030 values and outlines actions for the Council and partners under five key areas:

- Deepening and embedding inclusive practice
- Strengthening learner engagement
- Providing the right provision and best support
- Meeting the needs of all learners
- Supporting and strengthening the workforce

To meet the needs of all learners, Cardiff wants an education system where the majority of learners with Additional Learning Needs can thrive and have their needs met in their local mainstream school.

When specialist provision is in the best interests of learners the ambition is that learners should be placed in a Cardiff maintained school. This would reduce the spend on more costly, independent provision which can also ‘dislocate’ learners from their wider community.

Cardiff’s Inclusion Strategy is available to view at [Education Inclusion Strategy](#)

Education Investment Strategy Caerdydd 2024 – 2033

The Education Investment Strategy Caerdydd 2024–2033 is designed to strengthen Cardiff’s education system in line with the city’s priorities outlined in Stronger, Fairer, Greener.

It sets a long-term vision for the organisation of education aligning with national priorities and Cardiff’s commitment to equitable, aspirational, and sustainable education.

The Education Investment Strategy Caerdydd 2024 – 2033 is available to view at [Education Investment Strategy 2024 to 2033](#)

Cardiff’s Sustainable Communities for Learning Rolling Programme 2024-2033

The Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme is a long-term strategic investment in the educational estate throughout Wales.

It is a unique collaboration between Welsh Government, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), Councils, colleges and diocesan authorities.

The Cardiff Sustainable Communities for Learning Rolling Programme 2024-2033 sets out the need for strategic investments that align with local and national goals to improve educational outcomes.

The investment principles within Cardiff’s Sustainable Communities for Learning Rolling Programme 2024-2033 are:

- (i) Alignment with local and national education policies agendas to improve education outcomes
- (ii) Targeting investment through maintenance or new build to improve the condition of the estate.
- (iii) Ensuring sustainable levels of surplus.
- (iv) Delivering an appropriate level of Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision.
- (v) Meeting legislative requirements
- (vi) Maximising “invest to save” strategies to reduce reliance on borrowing.
- (vii) Follow a thorough options appraisal process to support decision making.

Cardiff's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)

In 2017 the Welsh Government published its 'Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers' strategy for the promotion and facilitation of the use of the Welsh language. This sets out the long-term approach to achieving a target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

Councils are required to publish a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), setting out a ten-year target for increasing Year 1 learners educated in Welsh. Each Council must set its target in line with the range provided by the Welsh Government in order to contribute toward the overall national target.

The Cardiff Welsh in Education Strategic Plan includes targets to:

- Increase the number of 3 year olds and 5 year olds receiving their education through the medium of Welsh.
- Increase the number of learners who continue improving their Welsh language skills as they move from one stage of education to the next
- Increase the number of learners taking qualifications through the medium of Welsh
- Increase opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school
- Increase Welsh-medium provision for learners with Additional Learning Needs
- Expand the Welsh-medium teaching workforce

Outcome 6 of the WESP sets out the Council's intention to increase in the provision of Welsh-medium education for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) (in accordance with the duties imposed by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018

The Cardiff Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is available to view at [Cardiff Welsh in education strategic plan.pdf](#)

The Approach to Supporting Additional Learning Needs in Cardiff

An effective, inclusive approach to supporting additional learning needs in Cardiff includes the following principles:

- Schools and settings that deliver an innovative curriculum with effective whole school approaches to teaching and learning, emotional health and wellbeing
- Excellent specialist services to enhance the capacity of schools and other settings to include children and young people with a range of additional learning needs
- Effective early identification and research-based intervention to prevent the escalation of additional learning needs wherever possible
- High levels of accessibility in every school building with sufficient flexible accommodation in every school appropriate to the age and stage of learning
- Strong partnerships to ensure a holistic, collaborative response to a child or young person's additional learning needs (including health, children and adult services, early years and Further Education providers)
- Effective multi-agency transition planning at every stage, from early years through to primary, secondary, post 16 and adult destinations, to support admission without delay

The number of children and young people requiring specialist placement as a result of their learning disabilities has been increasing in Cardiff.

The proposals set out in this consultation document seek to improve access to education in line with the above principles of inclusion.

Specialist Resource Bases

A Specialist Resource Base (SRB) is a facility within a mainstream school designed to support learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) while allowing them to integrate with their peers where appropriate and suitable.

The budget and responsibility for management of the bases is delegated to the Governing Body of the mainstream school, but admissions are managed by the Council. The Council's specialist services coordinate a range of training and professional learning for resource base staff and support Governing Bodies in the process of appointing and developing specialist teaching and support staff.

Key features of a Specialist Resource Base in Cardiff, in addition to provision within a mainstream classroom, include:

- **Dedicated Space:** The resource base typically has its own classrooms and facilities within the mainstream school, providing a safe and supportive environment for learners with ALN
- **Qualified, Experienced and Specialised Staff:** The base is staffed by teachers and teaching assistants who are trained to work with learners with various disabilities and learning difficulties
- **Therapeutic Services:** The resource base has access to services such as Educational Psychology, Specialist Teacher Teams, Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy to support learners' holistic development
- **Small Class Sizes and higher ratio of staff: learners:** Smaller class sizes and increased staffing allow for learners to receive tailored support and intervention based on their specific needs, which may include a balance of individualised, paired, small group or whole class work
- **Inclusion in mainstream learning:** the autism bases and hearing impairment bases focus on learners with mainstream learning needs. Staff to learner ratios remain high, but the focus is on supporting as much access to mainstream learning as possible

Details of Specialist Resource Base provision for learners with Complex Learning Needs can be seen at Appendix 1.

Special Schools

Special schools provide tailored education and support to help learners with a range of learning difficulties or disabilities achieve their full potential.

Key features of a special school or centre in Cardiff, in addition to features of a mainstream school, include:

- **Additional Learning Provision:** Special schools create customised learning plans for each learner, addressing their unique needs and goals
- **Qualified, Experienced and Specialised Staff:** These schools employ teachers, therapists, and support staff who are trained to work with learners with various disabilities
- **Adaptive Curriculum:** The curriculum is modified to accommodate different learning styles and abilities, ensuring that all learners can access the Curriculum for Wales.
- **Assistive Technology:** Special schools utilise technology and tools to aid learning, such as communication devices, adaptive software, and specialised equipment
- **Small Class Sizes and higher ratio of staff: learners:** Smaller class sizes and increased staffing allow for more individualised, paired and small group work tailored to support for each learner's specific need
- **Therapeutic Services:** The special schools have access to services such as Educational Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy to support learners' holistic development, often onsite

Details of special school provision for learners with Complex Learning Needs can be seen at Appendix 1.

Sufficiency in the Special Sector

Cardiff Council is committed to the principles of inclusion.

The majority of learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) attend a local mainstream school, and benefit from effective Additional Learning Provision (ALP).

These learners do not need to attend a special school or Specialist Resource Base.

However, it is recognised that in order to thrive and fulfil their potential, children and young people with the most complex additional learning needs require access to the specialist environments and expertise of a special school or Specialist Resource Base.

The number of pupils with severe and complex needs, who need a place in a special school or Specialist Resource Base has continued to grow.

This is due to:

- Improved survival rates for children born with significant disabilities, resulting in a higher number of pupils with severe and complex disabilities
- Increased complexity in needs, which has meant that the demand for specialist provision has continued to grow. The range of expertise, specialist support and facilities required in special schools and Specialist Resource Bases has also increased
- Increased incidence and identification of specific needs such as autism, ADHD, physical disabilities and sensory impairments
- More children and young people with Emotional Health and Wellbeing Needs. This was a trend before COVID 19 but has been exacerbated by school closures and other measures to manage the pandemic

Provision for learners with Complex Learning Needs

Current provision

Cardiff currently maintains four special schools and twelve Specialist Resource Bases for learners with Complex Learning Needs.

Table 3 sets out maintained Complex Learning Needs provision currently available in Cardiff.

Table 3 sets out Primary Complex Learning Needs and Autism Spectrum Condition provision currently available in Cardiff

Table 3: Complex Learning Needs provision in Cardiff 2025/26		
School	Age Range	Designated Places
Meadowbank Special School	4-11	98
Riverbank Special School	4-11	78**
Tŷ Gwyn Special School	3-19	240
Woodlands High School	11-19	180**
Bryn Hafod Primary School (Specialist Resource Base)	4-11	20
Greenway Primary School (Specialist Resource Base)	4-11	20
Llanedeyrn Primary School (Specialist Resource Base)	4-11	20
Llanishen Fach Primary School (Specialist Resource Base)	4-11	30
Marlborough Primary School (Specialist Resource Base)	4-11	30
Moorland Primary School (Specialist Resource Base)	4-11	20
Severn Primary School (Specialist Resource Base)	4-11	20
Tŷ Calon, Whitchurch High School (Specialist Resource Base)	11-19	100
Willows High School (Specialist Resource Base)	11-19	30
Windsor Clive Primary School (Specialist Resource Base)	4-11	20
Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf (Welsh Medium) (Specialist Resource Base)	11-19	30
Ysgol Gynradd Pwll Coch (Welsh Medium) (Specialist Resource Base)	4-11	20

**Designated places at Riverbank Special School and Woodlands High School will increase to 112 places and 240 places respectively, following transfer to the Fairwater Community Campus site in 2026.

Whilst there are a number of existing specialist settings across Cardiff, there are not enough places available. The number of children who would benefit from a place has increased in recent years and is projected to increase further over coming years.

As there are not enough special school and Specialist Resource Base places in Cardiff, the Council has also funded some places at special schools in other council areas or in independent schools.

The total spend on these places for learners of all ages was £15.4m in 2024/25. The budget for 2025/26 for these types of places is currently set at £16.9m.

Expanding Council maintained provision would be more cost-effective than continued reliance on places in independent schools.

Demand for places

In April 2025, the Council undertook an analysis of learners with Individual Development Plans (IDPs) that require placement in specialist provision.

This included both learners' resident in Cardiff and Children Looked After for whom the Council has corporate responsibility who may live outside the Council area and attend maintained or independent settings.

The analysis included:

- Learners with Individual Development Plans who were placed in maintained specialist provision, out of county or independent provision
- Learners of statutory school age for whom a specialist placement has not yet begun
- Learners registered as Education Other Than at School (EOTAS), but not placed in specialist provision
- Learners who are Electively Home Educated (EHE)

A survey was issued to schools in May and June 2025 to identify learners by age group who may require specialised placements within the next school year, and their primary additional learning need. This supplemented the data of learners for whom a formal assessment had already been progressed.

An annual comparison of the above data against the total pupil population can be plotted to identify trends, and to inform projected 'demand for places' in future years. However, the recent transition from the Special Education Needs categorisation to Additional Learning Needs categorisation means that there is not sufficiently consistent data to plot trends at this time.

Modelled scenarios can be plotted against the projected pupil population to identify the relative impact of further growth.

Using the NHS GP registration data, primary phase (ages 4–11) population data has been modelled up to 2027/28. Beyond this, modelling includes an extension of recent birth rates.

Summary analysis is presented by age phase rather than year group to account for small cohort sizes, placements in learning stages, and the tendency for greater fluctuation in smaller cohorts.

Demand for places in primary-age specialist provision

Table 4 sets out the formal capacity of special school provision for primary age learners with Complex Learning Needs currently available in Cardiff and projected future demand.

Learners in such provision may have one or more needs in the following areas:

- Speech language and communication
- Specific learning difficulty
- Physical, medical or sensory needs (PMED / PMLD)
- Autism.

The total designated capacity of Tŷ Gwyn Special School is 240 places. For the purpose of analysis, 80 places are attributed to primary age provision. However, in April 2025, the number of primary age learners enrolled was 89.

Table 4

Table 4								
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32
Meadowbank	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98
Riverbank	78	78	112	112	112	112	112	112
The Hollies	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
Tŷ Gwyn (primary age phase)	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80
Total Designated Capacity	406	406	440	440	440	440	440	440
Temporary arrangements	-4	42	45	0	0	0	0	0
Operational Capacity	402	448	485	440	440	440	440	440
NOR /Projections - Complex Needs	602	616	631	640	651	662	673	684
NOR /Projections Complex Needs including PMED/PMLD	56	57	59	60	61	62	63	64
Total NOR /Projected demand	658	674	689	700	712	724	736	748
Surplus / deficit	-256	-226	-204	-260	-272	-284	-296	-308

Table 5 sets out the formal capacity of SRB provision for primary age learners with Complex Learning Needs currently available in Cardiff, and projected future demand.

Table 5								
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32
Bryn Hafod Primary SRB	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Greenway Primary SRB	0	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Llanedeyrn Primary SRB	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Llanishen Fach Primary SRB	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Marlborough Primary SRB	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Moorland Primary SRB	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Severn Primary SRB	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Windsor Clive Primary SRB	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Ysgol Gymraeg Pwll Coch SRB	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Total Designated Capacity	180	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Temporary arrangements	0	13	-2	0	0	0	0	0
Operational Capacity	180	213	198	200	200	200	200	200
NOR /Projections CLN/ASC	196	201	205	208	212	216	219	223
Total NOR /Projected demand	196	201	205	208	212	216	219	223
Surplus / deficit	-16	12	-7	-8	-12	-16	-19	-23

Demand for places in secondary-age specialist provision

Table 6 sets out the formal capacity of special school provision for secondary age/ post-16 learners with Complex Learning Needs currently available in Cardiff and projected future demand.

The total designated capacity of Tŷ Gwyn Special School is 240 places. For the purpose of analysis, 160 places are attributed to secondary age/ post 16 provision. However, in April 2025, the number of secondary age/ post 16 age learners enrolled was 165.

The Marion Centre and Tŷ Calon are formally designated as Specialist Resource Bases. The Marion Centre is formally designated as a provision for learners with Autism and the needs of placements at this base include Autism but also include complex needs. Tŷ Calon is formally designated as a provision for learners with complex needs.

However, many of the arrangements within these bases more closely align with special school provision, including but not limited to:

- Management and staffing
- Operational practice
- Limited integration with the host school
- Size of provision
- Additional Learning Needs of learners enrolled.

For the purpose of analysis, each of these is therefore considered as a special school.

Table 6								
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32
Tŷ Gwyn	160	160	160	160	160	160	160	160
Woodlands	180	180	240	240	240	240	240	240
The Marion Centre, The Bishop of Llandaff CiW High School**	66	66	66	66	66	66	66	66
Tŷ Calon, Whitchurch High School**	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total Designated Capacity	506	506	566	566	566	566	566	566
Temporary arrangements	16	41	27	0	0	0	0	0
Operational Capacity	522	547	593	566	566	566	566	566
NOR /Projections - Complex Needs	509	521	533	541	550	560	569	578
NOR /Projections Complex Needs including PMED/PMLD	138	141	145	147	149	152	154	157
Total NOR /Projected demand	647	662	678	688	700	712	723	735
Surplus / deficit	-125	-115	-85	-122	-134	-146	-157	-169

Table 7 sets out the formal capacity of Secondary SRB CLN provision currently available in Cardiff, excluding The Marion Centre and Tŷ Calon, and projected future demand.

Table 7								
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32
Willows High School SRB	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf SRB	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Total Designated Capacity	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60
Temporary arrangements	-10	-10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Operational Capacity	50	50	60	60	60	60	60	60
NOR /Projected demand	103	106	108	110	112	114	115	117
Surplus / deficit	-53	-56	-48	-50	-52	-54	-55	-57

Increasing provision for learners with Complex Learning Needs

The Council is committed to further developing and increasing provision for learners with Additional Learning Needs in specialist provision where permanent placements are appropriate.

The development of proposals has been prioritised to ensure there is an appropriate balance in the number and type of specialist places for Cardiff learners.

A range of potential proposals have been identified and will be rolled out on a phased basis to allow for the further development of proposals, the ongoing review of population data and demand for additional learning needs places, the necessary statutory processes and effective implementation.

An initial phase of proposals to address immediate demand for Complex Learning Needs places are set out in this consultation document.

An initial phase of proposals to address demand for Autism/Social Communication Needs and Emotional Health and Wellbeing Needs are also being consulted on with details available at [Additional Learning Needs \(ALN\) provisions](#)

The proposals seek to strike an appropriate balance between removing surplus mainstream places in existing buildings, and adding to school sites and buildings citywide, whilst increasing the number of specialist places available within a reasonable timescale.

This set of proposals would provide 262 additional permanent Complex Learning Needs specialist places.

The range of proposals focuses on supporting pupils in mainstream schools, where this is appropriate, and on sustainable growth of established and successful specialist provision.

This would reduce the Council's reliance on out of county and independent places in coming years.

The overall increase in provision, to more closely match the projected need for places, would enable a greater number of learners to be placed in provision that is within or closer to their local community and would reduce travel times.

Further proposals to expand provision for primary and secondary age learners, focused on utilising existing school sites and buildings will be brought forward later in 2026, and would form part of a separate consultation.



Adamsdown Primary School

Proposal to establish a Complex Learning Needs Specialist Resource Base at Adamsdown Primary School

Adamsdown Primary School is an English-medium community primary school for pupils aged 3 – 11. The school is located at System Street, Adamsdown, Cardiff, CF24 0JF.



To meet increasing demand for primary Specialist Resource Base places for learners with Complex Learning Needs it is proposed to:

- Establish a new 10 place Complex Learning Needs Specialist Resource Base at Adamsdown Primary School from January 2027.

It is proposed that the base would be accommodated within the existing school buildings.

The number of places at the school

Table 8 below provides details of mainstream places available at Adamsdown Primary School.

School	Current Published Capacity (age 4 – 11)	Places per year group (age 4 – 11)	Nursery Places	Language medium and Category of School
Adamsdown Primary School	420	60	80	English-medium community primary school

The current capacity of Adamsdown Primary School is 420 places and the school had 327 primary-age learners on roll in January 2025.

Demand for mainstream places at the school

Table 9 below sets out details of recent and projected numbers on roll at Adamsdown Primary School.

Table 9: Recent and projected numbers on roll at Adamsdown Primary School – primary age pupils										
School	Numbers on Roll (PLASC)					Pupil projections*				
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Adamsdown Primary School	353	363	345	353	327	315	310	292	276	259

* Future school pupil demand based on population projections and/or ALN trend data capped to school capacity

Condition and Suitability of School Buildings

All schools in Cardiff are given a Condition rating from A (performing as intended / operating efficiently) to D (life expired / risk of imminent failure).

Schools in Cardiff are also given a Suitability rating from A (good – facilities suitable for teaching, learning & wellbeing) to D (bad – building seriously inhibit the staff’s ability to deliver the curriculum).

Table 10: Condition and suitability gradings

Grading	Condition	Suitability
A	Good and operating efficiently	Good. Facilities suitable for teaching, learning and wellbeing in school
B	Satisfactory but with minor deterioration	Satisfactory. Performing as intended but does not effectively support the delivery of the curriculum in some areas
C	Poor with major defects	Poor. Teaching methods inhibited/adverse impact on school organisation
D	End of Life; life has expired or risk of imminent failure	Very poor. Buildings seriously inhibit the staff’s ability to deliver the curriculum

Adamsdown Primary School was most recently rated B for condition and B for suitability.

The site, and local infrastructure off-site, would support the development of Specialist Resource Base provision.

Specialist Resource Base Accommodation

It is proposed that the base would be accommodated within the existing buildings.

The majority of schools citywide have had falling intakes in recent years relating to the low birth rate. This allows the Council and schools to work together in partnership to consider how best to use available accommodation to best meet pupils’ needs.

The Council has developed a specification for resource bases that can be adapted for various settings. The Council works with schools to identify appropriate locations within the existing buildings, with appropriate investment provided to ensure that the facilities are fit for purpose.

The Specialist Resource Base would require a classroom set up to provide a nurturing environment, including a withdrawal room for children to self-regulate and with access to a secure outside learning area and toilets.

The Council is working with the Governing Body of Adamsdown Primary School to agree and progress the development of a refurbishment scheme that re-purposes surplus classroom space. There would still be sufficient places retained at the school and in neighbouring schools to accommodate the local demand for mainstream places.

Quality and Standards

The following information has been provided by the Cardiff School Improvement Team regarding quality and standards at Adamsdown Primary School:

The school has strong systems for self-evaluation and improvement planning, involving all stakeholders. Evaluations use varied evidence such as learning walks, lesson observations, pupil work, feedback, surveys, and progress data to accurately identify strengths and areas for development. Improvement planning is driven

by these evaluations, aiming to raise standards and teaching quality, with leadership consistently engaged at all levels.

Staff benefit from professional learning opportunities and partnerships, positively impacting classroom practice. Leadership development, especially through coaching and mentoring, encourages reflection, collaboration, and growth.

The school offers a well-structured curriculum that meets pupils' needs effectively. Teachers regularly reflect on pupils' learning, adapting both their teaching and the curriculum content to ensure it remains relevant and responsive. The cluster model, supported by strong assessment practices, allows for effective differentiation and consistently good teaching and learning. Inquiry-based learning is embedded in classrooms, providing authentic and engaging experiences. Ongoing collaboration with the local cluster supports curriculum development, and there is a focused plan in place to improve Welsh, in line with Estyn recommendations.

Safeguarding is a fundamental part of the school's ethos, with pupils feeling safe, respected, and well cared for. The school takes a consistent, whole-school approach to wellbeing and emotional health, effectively meeting individual needs through various therapeutic and restorative practices. Its strong focus on mitigating the effects of poverty and supporting families is a notable strength. Restorative approaches, including peer mediation, help pupils feel valued and encourage responsibility for one another. Pupil voice is highly valued, with committees providing opportunities for leadership and school improvement. Attendance has significantly improved since the Estyn inspection in May 2023, now standing at 91.7%.

The school benefits from a skilled and effective senior leadership team that works collaboratively to drive pupil progress and improvement. With a strong ethos of inclusion and robust support for both pupils and families, the school successfully addresses the impact of poverty and fosters a strong community spirit. Leadership roles are clearly structured, allowing for meaningful contributions from middle leaders, while senior leaders prioritise developing leadership capacity through support and professional development. Governors are actively involved and understand the school's priorities well.

The most recent Estyn inspection of the school in May 2023 gave an overview of the school as follows:

Adamsdown Primary School provides a warm, inclusive environment where pupils thrive academically and emotionally. Its School of Sanctuary status underpins strong support for wellbeing and language acquisition, especially for pupils from conflict-affected countries.

The school fosters ambition, respect, and happiness through nurturing partnerships with parents and the community.

Pupils make excellent progress, actively shape their learning, and develop a deep understanding of concepts and future pathways.

The curriculum promotes equity, justice, and empathy, though opportunities to use Welsh regularly are limited.

Staff benefit from strong professional development, contributing to continuous improvement, but leaders have yet to share their curriculum approach more widely to support other schools.

Inspection findings in relation to progress of and provision for pupils with ALN at the school was positive:

- Children with additional learning needs make very good progress in their learning from their differing starting points during their time in the school. In addition, pupils with additional learning needs take on leadership roles from Year 1 to Year 6.
- Teachers understand the individual nature of the school, and pupils often-complex needs well. They design learning that thoughtfully and sensitively meets the needs of all pupils and enables them to make strong links in their learning through an interesting range of authentic and relevant experiences.

- The provision for pupils with ALN meets statutory requirements. The additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo) ensures that everyone works together to identify and monitor the progress that pupils with ALN make. This enables staff to adjust planning, teaching and intervention appropriately to meet pupil needs.

The full report can be found at:

[Adamsdown Primary School - Estyn](#) (ENG)

[Adamsdown Primary School - Estyn](#) (CYM)

How would standards at the school be affected by the proposed change?

The Council has made a clear commitment to continuing the investment in, and improvement of, Cardiff schools to make sure every child has the best possible start in life.

The Council works closely with the Governing Bodies of schools to make sure that standards in schools are high, that teaching is good and that leadership and governance is strong.

Standards at the school are good and it is not expected that the establishment of the Specialist Resource Base provision at the school would impact negatively on the quality and standards of education at the school.

Teaching and learning experiences

The proposal is not expected to have any negative impact on teaching and learning experiences at the school.

The setting would provide small class learning tailored to the learning needs of the pupils, including interventions to support literacy and numeracy, speech language and communication.

The opportunity to employ specialist staff and to work more closely with specialist services in Cardiff would enhance the school's capacity for inclusion and benefit all pupils in the school.

Care support and guidance

All schools have an appropriate range of policies and provision in place to promote pupils' health and wellbeing.

The school is committed to providing an environment in which learning is valued, and pupils achieve their potential in a happy, safe environment in which they show respect and tolerance for each other.

The Council manages admissions to the special schools and Specialist Resource Bases. Every learner placed in the proposed Specialist Resource Base would have an Individual Development Plan, which is a statutory document identifying what is 'important to' and 'important for' the child or young person, the desired outcomes and the additional learning provision to be implemented in order to achieve the outcomes.

The Council would work with the leadership of the school to make sure everyone understands their responsibility for helping to improve and sustain care support and guidance.

Leadership and Management

The leadership and management of Specialist Resource Bases is delegated to schools. Governing Bodies of schools determine the most appropriate management model for the setting, in line with the whole school leadership and management approach and the goal of ensuring the base is a fully integrated part of the school. The Council can provide advice and support in relation to specialist appointments.

The Council provides a range of specialist support to schools including specialist staff, support for staff development, ALNCo forums, cluster ALNCo meetings, termly additional learning needs updates for Headteachers and regular updates for Governing Bodies.

The proposed changes would be planned carefully so that the school's leadership and governance are not disrupted, which could have a negative impact on educational standards.

Human Resources Matters

The proposal to establish a Specialist Resource Base at Adamsdown Primary School would require the Governing Body to consider the workforce requirements in readiness for the expansion. The Governing Body would be encouraged to undertake this work in line with the School Organisation Planning HR Framework.

A summary overview of staffing and resourcing requirement for a primary Complex Learning Needs Specialist Resource Base is as follows:

- Classes of 10 pupils
- One teacher, 0.5 HLTA, 2.5 Grade 4 Teaching Assistants, one Midday Supervisor per class
- One teacher will also be funded as a lead teacher role, with a TLR allowance
- All posts are fully funded and include an ALN allowance
- Specific funding for each pupil's learning resources
- Staff are employed by the school's Governing Body, and are subject to the school's policies
- The Council's Inclusion Service play an advisory role on appointment of teachers
- The Council provides a range of professional learning opportunities
- Education Psychology time allocation
- The mutual supply fund provides first day cover for SRB staff

The Council's HR People Services department would work with the Governing Body to address the HR implications arising from the establishment of a Specialist Resource Base at the school and the resulting need for additional staffing.

Where the Governing Body have adopted the Council's School Redeployment and Redundancy Policy, any new vacancies arising as a consequence of the establishment of the Specialist Resource Base would provide opportunities for school-based staff on the school redeployment register.

Have your say

This is your chance to let the Council know what you think about the proposals.

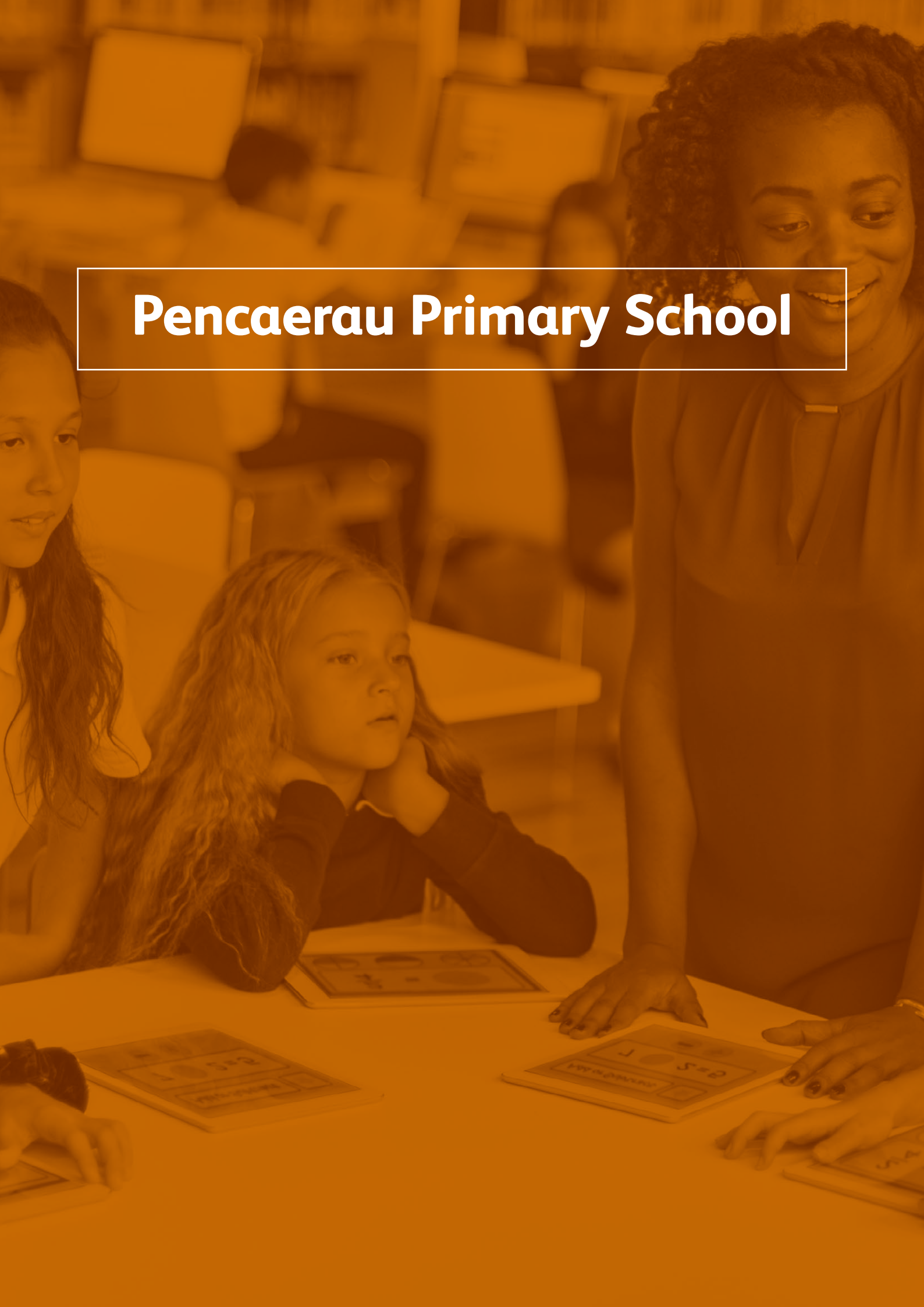
You can send us your views in one of the following ways:

- Complete the online response form at [Additional Learning Needs \(ALN\) provisions](#)
- Email your views to schoolresponses@cardiff.gov.uk
- Write to us at the following address: School Organisation Planning, Room 463, County Hall, Atlantic Wharf, Cardiff, CF10 4UW

Alternatively, you can attend a public meeting or a drop-in session. Details of these are at page 8.

The closing date for responses to this proposal is 26 March 2026.

Pencaerau Primary School



Proposal to establish a Complex Learning Needs Specialist Resource Base at Pencaerau Primary School

Pencaerau Primary School is an English-medium community primary school for pupils aged 3 – 11. The school is located at Cyntwell Ave, Caerau, Cardiff, CF5 5QN.



To meet increasing demand for primary Specialist Resource Base places for learners with Complex Learning Needs it is proposed to:

- Establish a new 20 place Complex Learning Needs Specialist Resource Base at Pencaerau Primary School from January 2027.

It is proposed that the base would be accommodated within the existing school buildings.

The number of places at the school

Table 11 below provides details of mainstream places available at Pencaerau Primary School.

School	Current Published Capacity (age 4 – 11)	Places per year group (age 4 – 11)	Nursery Places	Language medium and Category of School
Pencaerau Primary School	210	30	48	English-medium community primary school

The current capacity of Pencaerau Primary School is 210 places, and the school had 202 primary-age learners on roll in January 2025.

Demand for mainstream places at the school

Table 12 below sets out details of recent and projected numbers on roll at Pencaerau Primary School – primary age pupils

Table 12: Recent and projected numbers on roll at Pencaerau Primary School – primary age pupils										
School	Numbers on Roll (PLASC)					Pupil projections*				
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Pencaerau Primary School	208	207	209	205	202	201	200	201	200	200

* Future school pupil demand based on population projections and/or ALN trend data capped to school capacity

Condition and Suitability of School Buildings

All schools in Cardiff are given a Condition rating from A (performing as intended / operating efficiently) to D (life expired / risk of imminent failure)

Schools in Cardiff are also given a Suitability rating from A (good – facilities suitable for teaching, learning & wellbeing) to D (bad – building seriously inhibit the staff’s ability to deliver the curriculum).

Table 13 Condition and suitability gradings

Grading	Condition	Suitability
A	Good and operating efficiently	Good. Facilities suitable for teaching, learning and wellbeing in school
B	Satisfactory but with minor deterioration	Satisfactory. Performing as intended but does not effectively support the delivery of the curriculum in some areas
C	Poor with major defects	Poor. Teaching methods inhibited/adverse impact on school organisation
D	End of Life; life has expired or risk of imminent failure	Very poor. Buildings seriously inhibit the staff’s ability to deliver the curriculum

Pencaerau Primary School was most recently rated B for condition and B for suitability.

The site, and local infrastructure off-site, would support the development of Specialist Resource Base provision.

Specialist Resource Base Accommodation

It is proposed that the base would be accommodated within the existing buildings.

The majority of schools citywide have had falling intakes in recent years relating to the low birth rate. This allows the Council and schools to work together in partnership to consider how best to use available accommodation to best meet pupils’ needs.

The Council has developed a specification for resource bases that can be adapted for various settings. The Council works with schools to identify appropriate locations within the existing buildings with appropriate investment provided to ensure that the facilities are fit for purpose.

The Specialist Resource Base would require two classrooms set up to provide a nurturing environment, including a withdrawal room for children to self-regulate and with access to a secure outside learning area and toilets.

The Council is working with the Governing Body of Pencaerau Primary School to agree and progress the development of a refurbishment scheme that re-purposes surplus classroom space.

There would still be sufficient places retained at the school and in neighbouring schools to accommodate the local demand for mainstream places.

Quality and Standards

The following information has been provided by the Cardiff School Improvement Team regarding quality and standards at Pencaerau Primary School:

Self-evaluation and school improvement are now well established, led by the headteacher and involving a wider range of staff, teachers, and governors. Regular reviews and the introduction of self-evaluation weeks have ensured honest assessments, which accurately identify strengths and areas for development. These findings directly inform a well-constructed improvement plan, structured around key inspection areas and overseen by senior leaders.

Teaching and learning have benefited from the use of an assessment matrix and improved data analysis, helping staff track pupil progress and refine provision. Developments in literacy, numeracy, Welsh, and digital skills are ongoing, with staff supported by external experts. The teaching and learning charter has established consistency, and curriculum design work is progressing, with collaboration among teachers driving bespoke curriculum planning.

Pupil wellbeing remains central to the school's ethos, supported by high-quality provision and targeted interventions. Exclusions are low and new specialist resources have been introduced. Attendance is below the Cardiff average, but the school employs a range of strategies and staff to support improvement. Pupils' rights are promoted through leadership opportunities and the Rights Respecting Silver award.

Leadership is clear and decisive, with responsibilities widely distributed among staff and governors. The school has a strong, inclusive vision, underpinned by a robust improvement plan. Professional development for staff is prioritised, including external training and international exchanges. Cluster and partnership work is expanding, with new collaborative groups already having a positive impact, especially in attendance and reading.

The most recent Estyn inspection of the school in July 2019 judged the school's wellbeing and attitudes to learning and care support and guidance as excellent; standards, teaching and learning experiences and leadership and management were judged as good.

Inspection findings in relation to progress of and provision for pupils with ALN at the school was positive:

- Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is very strong.
- The special needs co-ordinators analyse data carefully to identify pupils who need extra support with their learning or wellbeing.
- Regular meetings between the special needs co-ordinators and other members of staff enable them to share constructive advice about how to support identified pupils.
- Very well-trained support staff deliver high quality interventions that improve pupils' literacy, numeracy or personal skills.
- As a result, nearly all targeted pupils make good progress from their starting points.

The full report can be found at:

[Pencaerau Primary School - Estyn](#) (ENG)

[Pencaerau Primary School - Estyn](#) (CYM)

How would standards at the school be affected by the proposed change?

The Council has made a clear commitment to continuing the investment in, and improvement of, Cardiff schools to make sure every child has the best possible start in life.

The Council works closely with the Governing Bodies of schools to make sure that standards in schools are high, that teaching is good and that leadership and governance is strong.

Standards at the school are good and it is not expected that the establishment of the Specialist Resource Base provision at the school would impact negatively on the quality and standards of education at the school.

Teaching and learning experiences

The proposal is not expected to have any negative impact on teaching and learning experiences at the school.

The setting would provide small class learning tailored to the learning needs of the pupils, including interventions to support literacy and numeracy, speech language and communication.

The opportunity to employ specialist staff and to work more closely with specialist services in Cardiff would enhance the school's capacity for inclusion and benefit all pupils in the school.

Care support and guidance

All schools have an appropriate range of policies and provision in place to promote pupils' health and wellbeing.

The school is committed to providing an environment in which learning is valued and pupils achieve their potential in a happy, safe environment in which they show respect and tolerance for each other.

The Council manages admissions to the special schools and Specialist Resource Bases. Every learner placed in the proposed Specialist Resource Base would have an Individual Development Plan which is a statutory document identifying what is 'important to' and 'important for' the child or young person, the desired outcomes and the additional learning provision to be implemented in order to achieve the outcomes.

The Council would work with the leadership of the school to make sure everyone understands their responsibility for helping to improve and sustain care support and guidance.

Leadership and Management

The leadership and management of Specialist Resource Bases is delegated to schools. Governing Bodies of schools determine the most appropriate management model for the setting, in line with the whole school leadership and management approach and the goal of ensuring the base is a fully integrated part of the school. The Council can provide advice and support in relation to specialist appointments.

The Council provides a range of specialist support to schools including specialist staff, support for staff development, ALNCo forums, cluster ALNCo meetings, termly additional learning needs updates for Headteachers and regular updates for Governing Bodies.

The proposed changes would be planned carefully so that the school's leadership and governance are not disrupted, which could have a negative impact on educational standards.

Human Resources Matters

The proposal to establish a Specialist Resource Base at Pencaerau Primary School would require the Governing Body to consider the workforce requirements in readiness for the expansion. The Governing Body would be encouraged to undertake this work in line with the School Organisation Planning HR Framework.

A summary overview of staffing and resourcing requirement for a primary Complex Learning Needs Specialist Resource Base is as follows:

- Classes of 10 pupils
- One teacher, 0.5 HLTA, 2.5 Grade 4 Teaching Assistants, one Midday Supervisor per class
- One teacher will also be funded as a lead teacher role, with a TLR allowance
- All posts are fully funded and include an ALN allowance
- Specific funding for each pupil's learning resources
- Staff are employed by the school's Governing Body, and are subject to the school's policies
- The Council's Inclusion Service play an advisory role on appointment of teachers
- The Council provides a range of professional learning opportunities
- Education Psychology time allocation
- The mutual supply fund provides first day cover for SRB staff

The Council's HR People Services department would work with the Governing Body to address the HR implications arising from the establishment of a Specialist Resource Base at the school and the resulting need for additional staffing.

Where the Governing Body have adopted the Council's School Redeployment and Redundancy Policy, any new vacancies arising as a consequence of the establishment of the Specialist Resource Base would provide opportunities for school-based staff on the school redeployment register.

Have your say

This is your chance to let the Council know what you think about the proposals.

You can send us your views in one of the following ways:

- Complete the online response form at [Additional Learning Needs \(ALN\) provisions](#)
- Email your views to schoolresponses@cardiff.gov.uk
- Write to us at the following address: School Organisation Planning, Room 463, County Hall, Atlantic Wharf, Cardiff, CF10 4UW

Alternatively, you can attend a public meeting or a drop-in session. Details of these are at page 8.

The closing date for responses to this proposal is 26 March 2026.



Peter Lea Primary School

Proposal to establish a Complex Learning Needs Specialist Resource Base at Peter Lea Primary School

Peter Lea Primary School is an English-medium community primary school for pupils aged 3 – 11. The school is located at Carter Place, Fairwater, Cardiff, CF5 3NP.



To meet increasing demand for primary Specialist Resource Base places for learners with Complex Learning Needs it is proposed to:

- Establish a new 20 place Complex Learning Needs Specialist Resource Base at Peter Lea Primary School from January 2027.

It is proposed that the base would be accommodated within the existing school buildings.

The number of places at the school

Table 14 below provides details of mainstream places available at Peter Lea Primary School.

School	Current Published Capacity (age 4 – 11)	Places per year group (age 4 – 11)	Nursery Places	Language medium and Category of School
Peter Lea Primary School	320	45	80	English-medium community primary school

The current capacity of Peter Lea Primary School is 320 places, and the school had 245 primary-age learners on roll in January 2025.

Demand for mainstream places at the school

Table 15 below sets out details of recent and projected numbers on roll at Peter Lea Primary School.

School	Numbers on Roll (PLASC)					Pupil projections*				
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Peter Lea Primary School	292	285	278	269	245	228	214	199	189	185

* Future school pupil demand based on population projections and/or ALN trend data capped to school capacity

Condition and Suitability of School Buildings

All schools in Cardiff are given a Condition rating from A (performing as intended / operating efficiently) to D (life expired / risk of imminent failure)

Schools in Cardiff are also given a Suitability rating from A (good – facilities suitable for teaching, learning & wellbeing) to D (bad – building seriously inhibit the staff’s ability to deliver the curriculum).

Table 17 Condition and suitability gradings

Grading	Condition	Suitability
A	Good and operating efficiently	Good. Facilities suitable for teaching, learning and wellbeing in school
B	Satisfactory but with minor deterioration	Satisfactory. Performing as intended but does not effectively support the delivery of the curriculum in some areas
C	Poor with major defects	Poor. Teaching methods inhibited/adverse impact on school organisation
D	End of Life; life has expired or risk of imminent failure	Very poor. Buildings seriously inhibit the staff’s ability to deliver the curriculum

Peter Lea Primary School was most recently rated C+ for condition and B for suitability.

The site, and local infrastructure off-site, would support the development of Specialist Resource Base provision.

Specialist Resource Base Accommodation

It is proposed that the base would be accommodated within the existing buildings.

The majority of schools citywide have had falling intakes in recent years relating to the low birth rate. This allows the Council and schools to work together in partnership to consider how best to use available accommodation to best meet pupils’ needs.

The Council has developed a specification for resource bases that can be adapted for various settings. The Council works with schools to identify appropriate locations within the existing buildings with appropriate investment provided to ensure that the facilities are fit for purpose.

The Specialist Resource Base would require two classrooms set up to provide a nurturing environment, including a withdrawal room for children to self-regulate and with access to a secure outside learning area and toilets.

The Council is working with the Governing Body of Peter Lea Primary School to agree and progress the development of a refurbishment scheme that re-purposes surplus classroom space.

There would still be sufficient places retained at the school and in neighbouring schools to accommodate the local demand for mainstream places.

Quality and Standards

The following information has been provided by the Cardiff School Improvement Team regarding quality and standards at Peter Lea Primary School:

Leaders regularly evaluate strengths and areas for improvement using feedback and lesson observations. This ongoing process ensures high teaching standards and meets learners' needs. Focused priorities support progress in pupil outcomes, teaching quality, and well-being, with staff engagement and professional development. Partnerships with parents, carers, and the community also enhance learning and well-being for pupils.

The school ensures effective, consistent teaching across all classes, using diverse lesson strategies and innovative assessments to track pupil progress. Teachers use a range of methods, including self and peer assessment, to support academic and personal growth. Lessons are carefully planned to build skills and knowledge, fostering an environment where pupils are motivated, resilient, and engaged.

Safeguarding is prioritised through a comprehensive self-assessment process, with staff vigilant in supporting pupils' welfare. The school's inclusive ethos ensures all pupils are treated fairly, and positive relationships foster a sense of belonging. Pupils are given meaningful opportunities to develop leadership skills through the School Senedd.

The head teacher provides clear direction and sets high expectations, supported by robust monitoring and distributed leadership. Leaders swiftly address recommendations and manage resources strategically, linking spending to improvement priorities for maximum impact. Governors are proactive, knowledgeable, and effectively hold leaders to account, ensuring strong progress for all pupils.

The most recent Estyn inspection of the school in July 2018 judged the school's standards, wellbeing and attitudes to learning, teaching and learning experiences, care support and guidance and leadership and management as good.

Inspection findings in relation to progress of and provision for pupils with ALN at the school was positive:

- Pupils with additional learning needs receive effective provision that helps them to make good progress.
- The school fosters good working relationships and partnerships with a variety of agencies and takes beneficial account of their advice.
- Parents appreciate the workshops the school provides about how to support children's learning and wellbeing at home. For example, the school shared with parents the recently introduced restorative approach to managing behaviour.
- Helpful support for families of pupils with additional learning needs enables pupils to make good progress.

The full report can be found at:

[Peter Lea Primary School - Estyn](#) (ENG)

[Peter Lea Primary School - Estyn](#) (CYM)

How would standards at the school be affected by the proposed change?

The Council has made a clear commitment to continuing the investment in, and improvement of, Cardiff schools to make sure every child has the best possible start in life.

The Council works closely with the Governing Bodies of schools to make sure that standards in schools are high, that teaching is good and that leadership and governance is strong.

Standards at the school are good and it is not expected that the expansion of the Specialist Resource Base provision at the school will impact negatively on the school.

The proposal is not expected to have any negative impact on the quality of standards of education at the school as a result of the proposed changes.

Teaching and learning experiences

The proposal is not expected to have any negative impact on teaching and learning experiences at the schools.

The setting would provide small class learning tailored to the learning needs of the pupils, including interventions to support literacy and numeracy, speech language and communication.

The opportunity to employ specialist staff and to work more closely with specialist services in Cardiff would enhance the school's capacity for inclusion and benefit all pupils in the school.

Care support and guidance

All schools have an appropriate range of policies and provision in place to promote pupils' health and wellbeing.

The school is committed to providing an environment in which learning is valued, and pupils achieve their potential in a happy, safe environment in which they show respect and tolerance for each other.

The Council manages admissions to the special schools and Specialist Resource Bases. Every learner placed in the proposed Specialist Resource Base would have an Individual Development Plan which is a statutory document identifying what is 'important to' and 'important for' the child or young person, the desired outcomes and the additional learning provision to be implemented in order to achieve the outcomes.

The Council would work with the leadership of the school to make sure everyone understands their responsibility for helping to improve and sustain care support and guidance.

Leadership and Management

The leadership and management of Specialist Resource Bases is delegated to schools. Governing Bodies of schools determine the most appropriate management model for the setting, in line with the whole school leadership and management approach and the goal of ensuring the base is a fully integrated part of the school. The Council can provide advice and support in relation to specialist appointments.

The Council provides a range of specialist support to schools including specialist staff, support for staff development, ALNCo forums, cluster ALNCo meetings, termly additional learning needs updates for Headteachers and regular updates for Governing Bodies.

The proposed changes would be planned carefully so that the school's leadership and governance are not disrupted, which could have a negative impact on educational standards.

Human Resources Matters

The proposal to establish a Complex Learning Needs Specialist Resource Base at Peter Lea Primary School would require the Governing Body to consider the workforce requirements in readiness for the expansion. The Governing Body would be encouraged to undertake this work in line with the School Organisation Planning HR Framework.

A summary overview of staffing and resourcing requirement for a primary Complex Learning Needs Specialist Resource Base is as follows:

- Classes of 10 pupils (NB at least 2 classes per base, one for FP and one for KS2)
- One teacher, 0.5 HLTA, 2.5 Grade 4 Teaching Assistants, one Midday Supervisor per class
- One teacher will also be funded as a lead teacher role, with a TLR allowance
- All posts are fully funded and include an ALN allowance
- Specific funding for each pupil's learning resources
- Staff are employed by the school's Governing Body, and are subject to school's policies
- The Council's Inclusion Service play an advisory role on appointment of teachers
- The Council provides a range of professional learning opportunities
- Education Psychology allocation
- The mutual supply fund provides first day cover for SRB staff

HR People Services would work with the Governing Body to address the HR implications arising from the establishment of a Specialist Resource Base at the school and the resulting need for additional staffing.

Where the Governing Bod have adopted the Council's School Redeployment and Redundancy Policy, any new vacancies arising as a consequence of the establishment of the Specialist Resource Base would provide opportunities for school-based staff on the school redeployment register.

Have your say

This is your chance to let the Council know what you think about the proposals.

You can send us your views in one of the following ways:

- Complete the online response form at [Additional Learning Needs \(ALN\) provisions](#)
- Email your views to schoolresponses@cardiff.gov.uk
- Write to us at the following address: School Organisation Planning, Room 463, County Hall, Atlantic Wharf, Cardiff, CF10 4UW

Alternatively, you can attend a public meeting or a drop-in session. Details of these are at page 8.

The closing date for responses to this proposal is 26 March 2026.



Meadowbank Special School

Proposal to increase the number of places at Meadowbank Special School

Meadowbank Special School is an English-medium special school for pupils aged 4 – 11 with speech and language difficulties and communication needs and complex learning needs.

The school is located at Colwill Road, Gabalfa, CF14 2QQ.



The Council consulted in 2021/22 on a proposal to increase the capacity of the school from 40 to 98 places from September 2022, and the proposal was determined by Cabinet at its meeting of 14 July 2022.

Works have been undertaken to provide new accommodation and facilities and adaptation of the existing accommodation, to facilitate the growth of the school.

To meet increasing demand for primary special school places for learners with Complex Learning Needs it is proposed to:

- Increase the designated number of Meadowbank Special School from 98 to 110 from January 2027

It is proposed that the additional pupils be accommodated within the existing accommodation.

Cardiff's special school provision for learners with additional learning needs is currently provided through the medium of English only. Community special schools in Wales do not have a designated language category by default, according to the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025.

The Council will work with each of Cardiff's special schools including Meadowbank Special School, and with Welsh-medium primary and secondary schools and other relevant stakeholders, to develop provision for learners identified as being eligible for a special school place for whom Welsh-medium or dual-language education is required or preferred.

The number of places at the school

Table 17 below provides details of specialist ALN places available at Meadowbank Special School

School	Age Range	Category of school	Current Published Capacity
Meadowbank Special School	4-11	Special School	98

The current capacity of Meadowbank Special School is 98 places, and the school had 97 pupils on roll in January 2025.

Demand for specialist ALN places at the school

Table 18 below sets out details of recent and projected numbers on roll at Meadowbank Special School

Table 18: Recent and projected numbers on roll at Meadowbank Special School										
School	Numbers on Roll (PLASC)					Pupil projections*				
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Meadowbank Special School	40	50	62	75	97	97	110	110	110	110

* Future school pupil demand based on population projections and/or ALN trend data capped to school capacity

Condition and Suitability of School Buildings

All schools in Cardiff are given a Condition rating from A (performing as intended / operating efficiently) to D (life expired / risk of imminent failure)

Schools in Cardiff are also given a Suitability rating from A (good – facilities suitable for teaching, learning & wellbeing) to D (bad – building seriously inhibit the staff's ability to deliver the curriculum).

Table 19 Condition and suitability gradings

Grading	Condition	Suitability
A	Good and operating efficiently	Good. Facilities suitable for teaching, learning and wellbeing in school
B	Satisfactory but with minor deterioration	Satisfactory. Performing as intended but does not effectively support the delivery of the curriculum in some areas
C	Poor with major defects	Poor. Teaching methods inhibited/adverse impact on school organisation
D	End of Life; life has expired or risk of imminent failure	Very poor. Buildings seriously inhibit the staff's ability to deliver the curriculum

Meadowbank was most recently rated B for condition and B for suitability.

The site, and local infrastructure off-site, would support the expansion of special school provision.

School accommodation

Works have been undertaken to provide new accommodation and facilities and adaptation of the existing accommodation, to facilitate the growth of the school.

There is sufficient accommodation available to allow for the proposed increase in numbers at the school.

Quality and Standards

The following information has been provided by the Cardiff School Improvement Team regarding quality and standards at Meadowbank Special School:

Self-evaluation at Meadowbank School is accurate and has evolved to meet increasingly complex pupil needs. Monitoring is regular and thorough, with oversight from the improvement partner through activities like class reviews, book looks and learning walks. Leaders and staff use pupil data to identify next steps, supported by clear systems that demonstrate the quality of teaching and learning.

The school has created a tailored curriculum that meets Curriculum for Wales requirements and incorporates WG nursery curriculum language, supporting the diverse needs of its pupils. Staff use this framework to offer varied levels of provision. Meadowbank's bespoke approach addresses pupil needs effectively across activities. Additionally, the school has developed its own assessment tool (The Rainbows System) which helps staff track current learning levels and plan next steps.

The school leadership has developed a highly effective pupil progress system that tracks pupil progress from individual baselines and helps staff plan next steps across the curriculum. The school have also collaborated with an IT company to digitise this system for tracking progress and mapping skills. Their bespoke tool aligns with the Curriculum for Wales and supports all pupils at Meadowbank.

The leadership team have well-defined roles and responsibilities, enabling a smooth transition after a recent member's departure. They prioritise effective staff planning and support, while continually seeking new approaches to help complex pupils succeed.

The most recent Estyn inspection of the school in November 2019 judged the school's wellbeing and attitudes to learning as good. Standards, teaching and learning experiences, care support and guidance and leadership and management were judged as adequate and needing improvement.

An Estyn review in January 2022 judged the school to have made sufficient progress in addressing the recommendations from the Section 28 inspection. The school was removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn review. There was no further monitoring activity in relation to the November 2019 inspection.

The full report and follow up review can be found at:

[Meadowbank Special School - Estyn](#) (ENG)

[Meadowbank Special School - Estyn](#) (CYM)

How would standards at the school be affected by the proposed change?

The Council has made a clear commitment to continuing the investment in, and improvement of, Cardiff schools to make sure every child has the best possible start in life.

The Council works closely with the Governing Bodies of schools to make sure that standards in schools are high, that teaching is good and that leadership and governance is strong.

Standards at the school are good and it is not expected that the proposed expansion will impact negatively on the school.

Teaching and learning experiences

The proposal is not expected to have any negative impact on teaching and learning experiences at the school.

The setting provides small class learning tailored to the learning needs of the pupils, including interventions to support literacy and numeracy, speech language and communication.

Care support and guidance

All schools have an appropriate range of policies and provision in place to promote pupils' health and wellbeing.

The school is committed to providing an environment in which learning is valued, and pupils achieve their potential in a happy, safe environment in which they show respect and tolerance for each other.

The Council manages admissions to the special schools and Specialist Resource Bases. All learners placed in Meadowbank Special School have an Individual Development Plan which is a statutory document identifying what is 'important to' and 'important for' the child or young person, the desired outcomes and the additional learning provision to be implemented in order to achieve the outcomes.

The Council would work with the leadership of the school to make sure everyone understands their responsibility for helping to improve and sustain care support and guidance.

Leadership and Management

The Council would continue to work with the leadership of the school to make sure everyone understands their responsibility for helping to improve and sustain high performance. It would support the school to have a good relationship with parents and other partners so that pupils receive a high-quality education.

The Council provides a range of specialist support to schools including specialist staff, support for staff development, ALNCo forums, cluster ALNCo meetings, termly additional learning needs updates for Headteachers and regular updates for Governing Bodies.

The proposed changes would be planned carefully so that the school's leadership and governance are not disrupted, which could have a negative impact on educational standards.

Human Resources Matters

The proposed increase in pupil numbers for the school would require the Governing Body to plan for the workforce requirements in readiness for the expansion.

The Governing Body would be encouraged to undertake this work in line with the School Organisation Planning HR Framework. The Council's HR People Services department would provide advice, support and guidance to the Governing Body for the workforce planning and consequential recruitment processes.

Where the Governing Body have adopted the Council's School Redeployment and Redundancy Policy, any new vacancies arising as a consequence of an increase in the numbers on roll would provide opportunities for school-based staff on the school redeployment register.

Have your say

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- Complete the online response form at [Additional Learning Needs \(ALN\) provisions](#)
- Email your views to schoolresponses@cardiff.gov.uk
- Write to us at the following address: School Organisation Planning, Room 463, County Hall, Atlantic Wharf, Cardiff, CF10 4UW

Alternatively, you can attend a public meeting or a drop-in session. Details of these are at page 8.

The closing date for responses to this proposal is 26 March 2026.



Tŷ Gwyn Special School

Proposal to increase the number of places at Tŷ Gwyn Special School and transfer the school to new build accommodation at Tŷ Glas

Tŷ Gwyn Special School serves children aged 3–19 with profound and multiple learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties, autism, and complex medical needs.



Originally based in Cyncoed, the school moved to a purpose-built site at Vincent Road in Caerau in 2010.

The school offers specialist facilities such as hydrotherapy pools, sensory rooms, and therapy spaces, supported by multidisciplinary teams.

It admits pupils from across Cardiff and was expanded from 198 to 240 places in 2022 but currently accommodates 264 learners due to increased demand.

Tŷ Gwyn Special School has been part of the Western Learning Federation with Riverbank Special School and Woodlands High School since January 2018. Riverbank Special School and Woodlands High School are also currently located at Vincent Road, on adjacent sites, but each will transfer to new build accommodation at the Fairwater Community Campus in 2026.

The school provides highly specialised provision unavailable elsewhere in Cardiff. Very few places of this type of provision exist within the independent sector in Cardiff and surrounding areas.

Surveys undertaken in 2024 and 2025 have identified structural issues with the Tŷ Gwyn Special School buildings. Further investigations are underway to assess the nature of the concerns, however there are no immediate Health and Safety concerns.

Whilst some learners could be provided for at Riverbank Special School and Woodlands High School, there is not sufficient capacity overall long term. The permanent accommodation for Tŷ Gwyn Special School requires specialist facilities and capacity for further expansion.

To meet increasing demand for specialist places and to accommodate Tŷ Gwyn Special School learners the Council is therefore proposing that a new build replacement Tŷ Gwyn Special School is developed at the earliest opportunity.

The transfer of Tŷ Gwyn Special School to new build accommodation on a new site would enable the Council to increase the school's capacity, to meet the needs of learners at the earliest opportunity. It would also allow for any works necessary at the vacated Tŷ Gwyn Special School site to be undertaken from 2030 onwards, when the site is vacated and for the building to return to use for specialist provision after these works are completed.

To meet increasing demand for primary and secondary special school places for learners with Complex Learning Needs it is proposed to:

- Increase the capacity of Tŷ Gwyn Special School from 240 places to 300 places, utilising the existing buildings and the vacated accommodation at Riverbank Special School, Vincent Road, Ely for a transition period from January 2027.
- The expanded school would transfer to new build accommodation on the Tŷ Glas site in Llanishen with a further increase in capacity to 320 places from September 2030.

Whilst the capacity of the school would be formalised at 300 learners from January 2027, and at 320 places from September 2030, it is anticipated that the admission of learners to the school would be phased.

Cardiff's special school provision for learners with additional learning needs is currently provided through the medium of English only. Community special schools in Wales do not have a designated language category by default, according to the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025.

The Council will work with each of Cardiff's special schools including Tŷ Gwyn Special School, and with Welsh-medium primary and secondary schools and other relevant stakeholders, to develop provision for learners identified as being eligible for a special school place for whom Welsh-medium or dual-language education is required or preferred.

The number of places at the school

Table 20 below provides details of specialist ALN places available at Tŷ Gwyn Special School

Table 20: Places at Tŷ Gwyn School			
School	Age Range	Category of school	Current Published Capacity
Tŷ Gwyn Special School	3-19	Special School	240

The current capacity of Tŷ Gwyn Special School is 240 places and the school had 250 pupils on roll in January 2025.

Demand for specialist ALN places at the school

Table 21 below sets out details of recent and projected numbers on roll at Tŷ Gwyn Special School

Table 21: Recent and projected numbers on roll at Tŷ Gwyn Special School – primary age pupils										
School	Numbers on Roll (PLASC)					Pupil projections*				
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Tŷ Gwyn Special School	196	204	220	235	250	250	288	298	300	300

* Future school pupil demand based on population projections and/or ALN trend data capped to school capacity

Condition and Suitability of School Buildings

All schools in Cardiff are given a Condition rating from A (performing as intended / operating efficiently) to D (life expired / risk of imminent failure)

Schools in Cardiff are also given a Suitability rating from A (good – facilities suitable for teaching, learning & wellbeing) to D (bad – building seriously inhibit the staff’s ability to deliver the curriculum).

Table 22 Condition and suitability gradings

Grading	Condition	Suitability
A	Good and operating efficiently	Good. Facilities suitable for teaching, learning and wellbeing in school
B	Satisfactory but with minor deterioration	Satisfactory. Performing as intended but does not effectively support the delivery of the curriculum in some areas
C	Poor with major defects	Poor. Teaching methods inhibited/adverse impact on school organisation
D	End of Life; life has expired or risk of imminent failure	Very poor. Buildings seriously inhibit the staff’s ability to deliver the curriculum

The most recent assessment of Tŷ Gwyn Special School, consistent with the methodology for all schools in Cardiff rated the school as C for condition and A for suitability.

However, surveys undertaken in 2024 and 2025 have identified structural issues with the Tŷ Gwyn Special School buildings. Further investigations are underway to assess the nature of the concerns, however there are no immediate Health and Safety concerns.

Riverbank Special School site (Vincent Road)

Tŷ Gwyn Special School would initially increase from 240 to 300 places in January 2027 utilising the existing school buildings at the Riverbank Special School site at Vincent Road. These buildings will be vacated by Riverbank Special School in summer 2026.

It is proposed that the existing Tŷ Gwyn Special School buildings would accommodate up to 265 learners during the transition period ahead of transfer to the Tŷ Glas site.

The Riverbank buildings would accommodate up to 35 Tŷ Gwyn learners, operating at 50% of its previous occupancy.

Alongside investment to refurbish the Riverbank Special School building, this reduced occupancy would ensure Riverbank is fit for purpose, addressing the suitability rating. The building was rated as “C” for condition and “D” for suitability at the time of the most recent survey in 2018.

It is anticipated that the expanded Tŷ Gwyn Special School would transfer to the Tŷ Glas site from September 2030 when construction is completed.

Tŷ Glas site, Llanishen

The Council has undertaken a comprehensive review of potential sites in Cardiff suitable for school development.

The Tŷ Glas site in Llanishen, acquired by the Council in 2022, has been identified as appropriate for secondary and/or special school provision.

Preparatory works have been undertaken to enable future development.

The Council proposes relocating Tŷ Gwyn Special School to the Tŷ Glas site to provide modern, highly specialised facilities and minimise disruption to teaching and learning from September 2030.

The new Tŷ Gwyn Special School would utilise part of the Tŷ Glas site with the remainder of the site retained for future proposals.

Map of Tŷ Glas site



Facilities included in a school

Any new buildings would meet Welsh Government funding conditions and be designed in accordance with the Department of Education; Area guidelines which set out that the following facilities need to be included in any school:

- Teaching spaces
- Internal and external halls / dining area
- Learning resource areas
- Staff and administration
- Storage
- Toilets and personal care
- Kitchen facilities
- Circulation, plant and internal walls
- Withdrawal areas to support small group/Additional Learning Needs working

The design process for the new school has not yet commenced.

Detailed designs would be agreed with the Headteacher and Governing Body if the proposals are progressed to implementation. The input of children and young people into developing plans would be integral to project implementation at all stages.

There would be opportunities for stakeholders to comment on detailed plans at the pre-planning and planning application stages, should the proposal be progressed.

Quality and Standards

The following information has been provided by the Cardiff School Improvement Team regarding quality and standards at Tŷ Gwyn Special School:

The school's improvement planning is systematic, with regular reviews to monitor progress and make prompt adjustments. Though current report commentaries are placeholders, the framework shows a commitment to evidence-based evaluation. Priorities align with learner input and national standards, reflecting a responsive culture.

The curriculum is engaging, personalised, and supports key skills development with a focus on inclusivity. Future evaluations should prioritise measurable outcomes like learner attainment and progression, directly linked to curriculum changes and teaching methods.

The school fosters supportive environments and prioritises wellbeing alongside academic progress, emphasising trust and collaboration between staff and learners for a holistic educational approach.

The headteacher demonstrates strong leadership, setting a clear vision that shapes the school's strategic direction. This vision is well shared, creating a unified culture focused on continuous improvement. Strategic priorities are learner-focused and values-driven, with leadership development supporting pupil progress. Leaders drive teaching and curriculum quality, promote professional growth, and encourage collaboration. Current initiatives include moving to a professional development review system and preparing for changes at the new school site.

The most recent Estyn inspection of the school in November 2022 judged that Tŷ Gwyn Special School is a happy, caring and safe community that supports its pupils and their families exceptionally well. The school provides a calm and welcoming learning environment for its pupils, which contributes significantly to pupils' personal development.

Most pupils across the school make strong progress against their individual targets and starting points in relation to their individual needs and abilities. They develop a worthwhile range of valuable skills that help them to make progress during their time in school and in their future lives. This strong progress that pupils make over time is a highly effective feature of the school

The full report can be found at:

[Western Learning Federation Ty Gwyn Special School](#) - Estyn (ENG)

[Western Learning Federation Ty Gwyn Special School](#) - Estyn (CYM)

How would standards at the school be affected by the proposed change?

The Council has made a clear commitment to continuing the investment in, and improvement of, Cardiff schools to make sure every child has the best possible start in life.

The Council works closely with the Governing Bodies of schools to make sure that standards in schools are high, that teaching is good and that leadership and governance is strong.

Standards at the school are good and it is not expected that the proposed expansion will impact negatively on the school.

Teaching and learning experiences

The proposal is not expected to have any negative impact on teaching and learning experiences at the school.

The setting provides small class learning tailored to the learning needs of the pupils, including interventions to support literacy and numeracy, speech language and communication.

Care support and guidance

All schools have an appropriate range of policies and provision in place to promote pupils' health and wellbeing.

The school is committed to providing an environment in which learning is valued, and pupils achieve their potential in a happy, safe environment in which they show respect and tolerance for each other.

The Council manages admissions to the special schools and Specialist Resource Bases. All learners placed in Tŷ Gwyn Special School have an Individual Development Plan which is a statutory document identifying what is 'important to' and 'important for' the child or young person, the desired outcomes and the additional learning provision to be implemented in order to achieve the outcomes.

The Council would work with the leadership of the school to make sure everyone understands their responsibility for helping to improve and sustain care support and guidance.

Leadership and Management

The Council would continue to work with the leadership of the school to make sure everyone understands their responsibility for helping to improve and sustain high performance. It would support the school to have a good relationship with parents and other partners so that pupils receive a high-quality education.

The Council provides a range of specialist support to schools including specialist staff, support for staff development, ALNCo forums, cluster ALNCo meetings, termly additional learning needs updates for Headteachers and regular updates for governing bodies.

The proposed changes would be planned carefully so that the school's leadership and governance are not disrupted, which could have a negative impact on educational standards.

Human Resources Matters

The proposed increase in pupil numbers for the school would require the Governing Body to plan for the workforce requirements in readiness for the expansion.

The Governing Body would be encouraged to undertake this work in line with the School Organisation Planning HR Framework. The Council's HR People Services department would provide advice, support and guidance to the Governing Body for the workforce planning and consequential recruitment processes.

Where the Governing Body have adopted the Council's School Redeployment and Redundancy Policy, any new vacancies arising as a consequence of an increase in the numbers on roll would provide opportunities for school-based staff on the school redeployment register.

Have your say

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- Complete the online response form at [Additional Learning Needs \(ALN\) provisions](#)
- Email your views to schoolresponses@cardiff.gov.uk
- Write to us at the following address: School Organisation Planning, Room 463, County Hall, Atlantic Wharf, Cardiff, CF10 4UW

Alternatively, you can attend a public meeting or a drop-in session. Details of these are at page 8.

The closing date for responses to this proposal is 26 March 2026.



Woodlands High School

Proposal to increase the number of places at Woodlands High School

Woodlands High School is a special school located at Vincent Road, Caerau.

The school admits pupils from across the authority aged 11 – 19 with Complex Learning Needs and/or Autism.



The Council consulted in February/March 2019 on a proposal to increase the capacity of the school from 140 places to 240 places from September 2023, by relocating the school into new larger purpose-built facilities on the Cantonian High School site. The proposal was determined by the Welsh Government Minister for Education in July 2020.

The proposal as agreed by the Welsh Ministers was determined for implementation in September 2023. However, the Covid 19 pandemic, along with operational issues and the need to optimise the site layout and building design for learners, significantly delayed the progression of the proposals and the planned works.

In order to ensure the provision of sufficient suitable places in the interim period, it was agreed that the capacity of Woodlands High School increase from 140 places to 180 places in September 2023, ahead of the permanent expansion to 240 places when works are completed and the school transfers to its new build accommodation on the Fairwater Community Campus site; the additional places to be provided through the use of new temporary accommodation on the existing school site.

The school will be transferring to the new site at the Fairwater Community Campus, Fairwater from September 2026.

To meeting increasing demand for secondary special school places for learners with Complex Learning Needs and/or autism it is proposed to:

- Increase the capacity of Woodlands High School from 240 places to 300 places from January 2027.
- The school would be accommodated across two sites including the Fairwater Community Campus site and the existing Vincent Road campus site.
- The capacity of the school would be further increased to 360 places from September 2032 upon completion of new build accommodation at the Vincent Road campus site.

Cardiff’s special school provision for learners with additional learning needs is currently provided through the medium of English only. Community special schools in Wales do not have a designated language category by default, according to the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025.

The Council will work with each of Cardiff’s special schools including Woodlands High School, and with Welsh-medium primary and secondary schools and other relevant stakeholders, to develop provision for learners identified as being eligible for a special school place for whom Welsh-medium or dual-language education is required or preferred.

The number of places at the school

Table 23 below provides details of specialist ALN places available at Woodlands High School

School	Age Range	Category of school	Current Published Capacity
Woodlands High School	11-19	English-medium special school	180

The current capacity of Woodlands High School is 180 places, and the school had 181 pupils on roll in January 2025.

The capacity of the school will be increasing to 240 places from September 2026 when works are completed and the school transfers to its new build accommodation on the Fairwater Community Campus site.

Demand for specialist ALN places at the school

Table 24 below sets out details of recent and projected numbers on roll at Woodlands High School

School	Numbers on Roll (PLASC)					Pupil projections*				
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Woodlands High School	140	142	157	171	181	180	218	230	240	240

* Future school pupil demand based on population projections and/or ALN trend data capped to school capacity

Condition and Suitability of School Buildings

All schools in Cardiff are given a Condition rating from A (performing as intended / operating efficiently) to D (life expired / risk of imminent failure)

Schools in Cardiff are also given a Suitability rating from A (good – facilities suitable for teaching, learning & wellbeing) to D (bad – building seriously inhibit the staff’s ability to deliver the curriculum).

Table 25 Condition and suitability gradings

Grading	Condition	Suitability
A	Good and operating efficiently	Good. Facilities suitable for teaching, learning and wellbeing in school
B	Satisfactory but with minor deterioration	Satisfactory. Performing as intended but does not effectively support the delivery of the curriculum in some areas
C	Poor with major defects	Poor. Teaching methods inhibited/adverse impact on school organisation
D	End of Life; life has expired or risk of imminent failure	Very poor. Buildings seriously inhibit the staff’s ability to deliver the curriculum

Woodland High School was most recently rated C+ for condition and B for suitability.

The site, and local infrastructure off-site, would support the expansion of special school provision.

School accommodation

The school would be accommodated across two sites including the Fairwater Community Campus site and the existing Vincent Road campus site.

Quality and Standards

The following information has been provided by the Central South Consortium regarding quality and standards at Woodlands High School:

Woodlands prioritises continuous improvement with structured self-evaluation. Leadership teams track progress on priorities and align actions with the School Development Plan. The school’s strategic vision is well-communicated and supported with regular monitoring. Woodlands is preparing for significant transitions, including its relocation in 2026.

The school focuses on helping pupils engage with the curriculum and developing essential, personalised skills. Key actions include reviewing learning pathways, maintaining high teaching standards, providing diverse indoor and outdoor experiences, and emphasising communication, literacy, numeracy, Welsh language, and progress tracking for personalised outcomes.

Woodlands prioritises pupil wellbeing and safety, aiming for regular attendance and a secure learning environment. Efforts include promoting health via the RSE curriculum, refining IDPs, involving pupils in decisions, and pursuing awards for equality, rights, and sustainability.

Leadership development is a strength, with defined roles to advance pupil progress. Leaders improve teaching and curriculum through staff development and collaboration. Priorities include shifting to a professional review system and planning for changes related to the new school site.

The most recent Estyn inspection of the school in November 2022 summarised findings as follows:

Since the last inspection the school has continued with its improvement journey and is run by highly capable and effective leaders who are motivated in providing the best possible learning experiences for all pupils. The school continues to be affected by staffing shortages but manages these difficulties to the best of its ability. The school has a strong culture of support for pupils and provides particularly effective formal and informal wellbeing support for all staff.

Overall, Woodlands is very caring and nurturing school. Pupils develop their social skills very well and enjoy happy and respectful relationships with other pupils and staff. Staff understand and respond to the needs of pupils well. Nearly all pupils make suitable progress that is in line with their needs and ability. Staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour. Where teaching is most effective, staff are enthusiastic and plan well for the individual needs of pupils.

The school has developed a creative enquiry curriculum, and pupils are engaged in curriculum planning. The school also supports pupils' understanding of different cultures and traditions well and provides beneficial opportunities for pupils to experience these. Pupils are provided with valuable opportunities to learn in the local community, for example through worthwhile opportunities to undertake work experience and intern placements with businesses.

These provide pupils with exciting opportunities to learn more about the world of work but more importantly pupils are valued by the host organisations for their dedication and commitment. This contributes very positively to pupils' self-esteem.

Overall, pupils at Woodlands are polite, pleasant and respectful of themselves and others.

The full report can be found at:

[Western Learning Federation Woodlands High School](#) - Estyn (ENG)

[Western Learning Federation Woodlands High School](#) - Estyn (CYM)

How would standards at the school be affected by the proposed change?

The Council has made a clear commitment to continuing the investment in, and improvement of, Cardiff schools to make sure every child has the best possible start in life.

The Council works closely with the Governing Bodies of schools to make sure that standards in schools are high, that teaching is good and that leadership and governance is strong.

Standards at the school are good and it is not expected that the proposed expansion will impact negatively on the school.

Teaching and learning experiences

The proposal is not expected to have any negative impact on teaching and learning experiences at the school.

The setting provides small class learning tailored to the learning needs of the pupils, including interventions to support literacy and numeracy, speech language and communication.

Care support and guidance

All schools have an appropriate range of policies and provision in place to promote pupils' health and wellbeing.

The school is committed to providing an environment in which learning is valued, and pupils achieve their potential in a happy, safe environment in which they show respect and tolerance for each other.

The Council manages admissions to the special schools and Specialist Resource Bases. All learners placed in Woodland High School have an Individual Development Plan which is a statutory document identifying what is 'important to' and 'important for' the child or young person, the desired outcomes and the additional learning provision to be implemented in order to achieve the outcomes.

The Council would work with the leadership of the school to make sure everyone understands their responsibility for helping to improve and sustain care support and guidance.

Leadership and Management

The Council would continue to work with the leadership of the school to make sure everyone understands their responsibility for helping to improve and sustain high performance. It would support the school to have a good relationship with parents and other partners so that pupils receive a high-quality education.

The Council provides a range of specialist support to schools including specialist staff, support for staff development, ALNCo forums, cluster ALNCo meetings, termly additional learning needs updates for Headteachers and regular updates for Governing Bodies.

The proposed changes would be planned carefully so that the school's leadership and governance are not disrupted, which could have a negative impact on educational standards.

Human Resources Matters

The proposed increase in pupil numbers for the school would require the Governing Body to plan for the workforce requirements in readiness for the expansion. The Governing Body would be encouraged to undertake this work in line with the School Organisation Planning HR Framework. The Council's HR People Services department would provide advice, support and guidance to the Governing Body for the workforce planning and consequential recruitment processes.

Where the Governing Body have adopted the Council's School Redeployment and Redundancy Policy, any new vacancies arising as a consequence of an increase in the numbers on roll would provide opportunities for school-based staff on the school redeployment register.

Have your say

This is your chance to let the Council know what you think about the proposals.

You can send us your views in one of the following ways:

- Complete the online response form at [Additional Learning Needs \(ALN\) provisions](#)
- Email your views to schoolresponses@cardiff.gov.uk
- Write to us at the following address: School Organisation Planning, Room 463, County Hall, Atlantic Wharf, Cardiff, CF10 4UW

Alternatively, you can attend a public meeting or a drop-in session. Details of these are at page 8.

The closing date for responses to this proposal is 26 March 2026.



**Information Relevant
to all Proposals**

Information Relevant to all Proposals

Benefits of the proposed changes

The proposals in the main utilise existing school accommodation, consolidating mainstream provision and reducing surplus places to support the expansion of specialist provision.

The proposals would:

- Increase the number of Additional Learning Needs places for learners with Complex Learning Needs and contribute towards meeting projected demand
- Maximise the use of the existing school estate preventing underused spaces from becoming liabilities and support long-term asset management strategies
- Provide opportunities to meet local demand for specialist provision and reduce out of county placements
- Provide a better distribution of Additional Learning Needs places closer to home allowing learners to stay within their communities, reducing travel time and improving family engagement
- Support inclusion for learners with additional learning needs, promoting integration and social interaction, while still providing targeted support
- Improve wellbeing, with additional learning needs learners benefiting from environments designed for accessibility and inclusion, which can be achieved through thoughtful retrofitting of existing spaces
- Allow for phased development, starting small and expanding as demand grows, without committing to large-scale capital projects upfront
- Minimising the impact on local communities of large-scale building projects
- Avoid demolition waste and the embodied carbon of new builds, aligning with net-zero and sustainability goals
- Allow for adapted spaces to be reconfigured again if demographic trends change, offering resilience against fluctuating pupil numbers.

The provision of new build accommodation for Tŷ Gwyn Special School would also:

- Increase the number of special school places for learners with Complex Learning Needs and contribute towards meeting projected demand
- Provide new build high quality learning environments, which improve learning choices and opportunities for pupils. The Cardiff 2030 vision sets out the need to provide high quality school places. High quality learning environments have a strong impact on improving pupil outcomes.
- Provide fully accessible buildings compliant with the Equality Act 2010

Potential disadvantages of the proposed changes

The proposals could:

- Increase traffic congestion around the school sites at the start and end of the day. The Council would work with Governing Bodies to develop Travel Plans to minimise any potential disruption.
- The proposals to provide new build accommodation for Tŷ Gwyn Special School at the Tŷ Glas site would allow for any building works to be completed without any disruption for pupils however some pupils with additional learning needs can find change difficult. They may find moving to a new building on a new site unsettling. We know they will need carefully planned support to adapt to the new setting. However, there would be sufficient time and well-established processes to plan and support such a transition.

Risks

- Should the need for any building, adaptation and refurbishment works be necessary, the implementation of the proposed change could be impacted due to unforeseen difficulties including appointing appropriate contractors, delays in project delivery or securing sufficient funding. The Council does however have significant experience in the successful delivery of a range of school building projects as a result of progressing a large and growing school organisation programme and the lessons learnt through this would limit the impact of any unexpected matters that may arise.

Alternative options

Alternative options to establishing/expanding Complex Learning Needs provision at the schools identified, and set out for each proposal within the consultation document, could include:

- Do nothing – however, there are not enough specialist places in Cardiff. An expansion of in-county provision would provide a more efficient and effective use of the Council's financial resources than reliance on places in independent schools.
- The establishment of new specialist provision on other school sites and/or a different number of places in the current or proposed bases.

The Council has undertaken an assessment of all mainstream and special school sites in Cardiff.

A range of potential proposals have been identified and will be rolled out on a phased basis to allow for the further development of proposals, the ongoing review of population data and demand for additional learning needs places, the necessary statutory processes and effective implementation.

The proposals included in this document are the initial phase to address immediate demand for Complex Learning Needs places.

Standards at the schools subject to proposals are good and the schools have a proven track record of high-quality support for learners with Additional Learning Needs. The location of the schools also supports the distribution of Complex Learning Needs across the city and there is scope to develop the required accommodation within the existing buildings.

The proposals put forward are therefore considered to be the preferred options.

Additional Support for Pupils

Table 26 below shows the percentages of

- Pupils with Additional Learning Needs
- Pupils eligible to receive Free School Meals
- Pupils with English as an Additional Language
- Minority Ethnic pupils

at the schools included in this consultation.

Table 26: The percentage of pupils with Additional Learning Needs, known to be eligible for Free School Meals; with English as an Additional Language and identified as Minority Ethnic pupils					
School	% of pupils with a statement of ALN	% of pupils with an IDP	% of Free School Meal Pupils – 3 Year Average	% of Pupils with English as an additional language	% of Minority Ethnic Pupils
Adamsdown Primary School	*	3.4%	58.6%	69.8%	81%
Pencaerau Primary School	*	6.3%	51%	4.6%	21.3
Peter Lea Primary School	*	4.0%	38%	3.6%	25.6%
Meadowbank Special School	*	*	*	*	*
Tŷ Gwyn Special School	*	*	*	*	*
Woodlands High School	*	*	*	*	*
Cardiff average (primary)	*	6.0%	26.9%	20.5%	40.3%
Wales average (primary)	0.4%	5.2%	21.7%	7.4%	16%

Source: mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk

*This data item is disclosive, not sufficiently robust for publication, not applicable or is otherwise unavailable.

Further information can be found on the website: mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk. My Local School is a website designed to open up access to school data for parents and all others with an interest in their local school.

How would support for learners with additional learning needs be affected?

The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021 (the ALN Code) and regulations came into force on 1 September 2021 to ensure children and young people can access additional support to meet their needs that is properly planned for and protected, with learners at the heart of the process.

The current expertise at the schools would be maintained. The establishment of new Specialist Resource Base provision would provide opportunities for staff development in mainstream schools, and for enhancing pupils' learning.

The Council acknowledges that a change in environment can be unsettling and upsetting for children with additional learning needs. Individual learners with additional learning needs would only be impacted by the proposed changes at the point they are admitted to a specialist setting.

Cardiff schools have well-established processes for planning and supporting transition between settings. The pupil's current and proposed schools work with the learner and their family, and any other specialists who may be involved, to ensure the child or young person is well-prepared and experiences success. This process will be the same, whether the learner is admitted to an existing specialist setting or a newly opened setting.

How would support for learners with English as an Additional Language be affected?

Pupils that receive support because they have English as an additional language can be supported in any school in Cardiff. The standards at the schools included in the proposed changes are good. There is no information available that suggests that the proposals would have a negative effect on how children with English as an additional language are supported. All schools would continue to provide support that is appropriate to the individual needs of each pupil.

How would learners known to be eligible for Free School Meals be affected?

Some of the funding that a school receives is based on the number of pupils in the school known to be eligible to receive free school meals. All schools in Cardiff receive funding for these pupils. The standards at the schools where changes are proposed are good. There is no information available that suggests that the proposals would have a negative effect on pupils who are known to be eligible to receive free school meals.

How would Minority Ethnic learners be affected?

The standards at the schools included in the proposed changes are good. The needs of individual pupils are assessed and provided for as appropriate. There is also no information available that suggests that the proposals would have a negative effect on provision for any ethnic group.

How would the changes affect other schools?

Special schools and Specialist Resources Bases in Cardiff provide specialist provision for the whole of the City and County of Cardiff. There are not enough places to meet demand in maintained provision. This has an impact on existing schools where in some cases there may be a greater number of pupils on roll than the Published Admission Number (PAN) or desired number in a specialist resource base.

Cardiff currently has to rely on purchasing some places in out of county provision and independent schools to fulfil its statutory duties. There could be a longer-term impact on out of county providers and on independent schools as there is likely to be a reduction in the number of places purchased by the Council.

Admissions Arrangements

There are no planned changes to the Council's policy on the admission of children to schools as a result of these proposals.

The Council has recently consulted on its Admissions Arrangements 2027/28. These arrangements will be determined by the Council's Cabinet at its meeting on Thursday 19 March 2026.

Detailed information about admission arrangements is in the Council's Admission to School booklet. You can find this information on the Council's website at www.cardiff.gov.uk

Admissions to specialist provision are managed by the Council, in accordance with the ALN Code. Placements are decided by a specialist provision placement panel. The panel aim to place children as close to their home address as possible, however each provision offers places to pupils from across the city to ensure maximum flexibility.

Decisions regarding which pupils would be proposed to attend the newly established/expanded provisions would be made on an individual basis. It is not anticipated that learners will transfer from existing specialist settings unless this is requested by their parents.

The majority of learners begin in a mainstream class and transfer at an appropriate point to specialist education. High quality planning and support for transition is well established in Cardiff and is tailored where necessary to the specific needs of parents and learners.

Cardiff schools have well-established processes for planning and supporting transition between settings. The Council continues to work with schools to identify appropriate transition arrangements for pupils with additional learning needs. The arrangements are dependent on individual need and are progressed as required. The pupil's current and proposed schools work with the learner and their family, and any other specialists who may be involved, to ensure the child or young person is well-prepared and experiences success. This process will be the same, whether the learner is admitted to an existing specialist setting or a newly opened setting.

Learner Travel Arrangements and Traffic and Transport

Under these proposals there are no plans to change the Council's policy on the transport of children to and from schools.

Any pupils affected by these proposals would be offered the same support with transport as is provided throughout Cardiff and in accordance with the same criteria that apply across Cardiff.

The Council's transport policy can be viewed on the Council's website www.cardiff.gov.uk

There is a statutory legal obligation on the Council to provide free home to school transport to primary school pupils who live 2 miles or more from the nearest suitable school and secondary school pupils who live 3 miles or more from the nearest suitable school, as measured by the shortest available walking route.

The Council provides free home-to-school transport for special school and Specialist Resource Base pupils based on statutory walking distance criteria. Some pupils living within 2–3 miles of the school may also get free transport due to individual needs or social issues.

Pupils who can travel independently or with parents living within the two-mile or three-mile qualifying distance may not qualify for free home to school transport.

When deciding which is the nearest suitable school, the Council must consider any disability a child has and any Additional Learning Needs (ALN).

There is a separate individual needs-based assessment for school transport in addition to the distance-based criteria.

Should the proposals to expand provision be implemented, most special school pupils would still be eligible for free home to school transport. However, shorter travel distances, due to more local specialist provision, may allow some to travel independently with initiatives like Independent Travel Training, cycle training, and simpler public transport routes supporting active and sustainable travel.

New or expanded school sites must ensure safe transport access and may require Transport Assessments (for large projects) or Transport Statements (for smaller projects).

In some cases, improvements to support safe transport access including active travel will be required off-site.

Where a school relocates, a full re-scheduling of all the school transport logistics would be required by the School Transport team.

Each school location whether on a new or existing site, with new or increased demand for Learner Transport vehicles, will require suitable new, improved and / or expanded facilities for drop-off and pick-up within the site.

The areas required would need to accommodate appropriate numbers of vehicles which may approximate to one taxi for up to 3 pupils. In some cases, minibuses may be suitable, but this is also dependent on individual pupil needs, home locations and co-ordination of routes.

The reorganisation and reallocation of existing parking and vehicle circulation space would be considered.

Car parking provision at new schools would be in line with the Council's parking standards, although allocations for special schools and specialist resource bases are agreed on a case-by-case basis.

Some of the proposed changes set out in this document would incur capital costs for the Council, for building works and / or adaptation of buildings. All proposals would also incur revenue costs for the Council, in employing staff.

Capital funding of proposed changes

The Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme is a long term plan to improve school buildings across Wales. This supports the Council to invest in building new schools or upgrading current schools so that all children can learn in modern, high quality environments.

For eligible special schools and specialist resource base projects, the Welsh Government funds 75% of the building costs. The remaining costs would be funded by the Council.

The Welsh Government also provide a separate Additional Learning Needs (ALN) capital grant, which helps schools create better, more inclusive spaces for pupils with ALN. This may be used for smaller projects which require relatively minor adaptation works.

Some of the projects planned are in schools classed as "Condition C", which would greatly benefit from investment.

For larger projects, Welsh Government match funding through the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme depends on approval of a business case from Government Ministers.

However, some smaller projects - including temporary adaptations at the former The Court Special School, Woodlands High School, and Riverbank Special School - are not expected to qualify for match funding. These would be paid for by the Council, partly using ALN capital Grant funding.

To make sure there are enough specialist places for children who need them, and to prevent delays in getting the right support, the Council is proposing to start work on refurbishing buildings now, rather than waiting for all decisions to be finalised. Acting early would help children access the right specialist placement sooner, reduce the number of expensive independent placements, and ease pressure on mainstream schools.

If, after consultation, a proposal does not go ahead, the newly refurbished spaces would still be used by schools — for example for nurture provision, wellbeing support, or other adaptations to meet pupils' needs.

Some projects involve building entirely new facilities. These larger projects would need match funding from Welsh Government and Ministerial approval.

The Council is also planning to start the design work on these proposals now. This means the new provision could be ready around a year earlier than if the design work were delayed.

Revenue funding of school placements

Funding for mainstream schools is based mainly on the number of pupils they have, along with several fixed lump sum payments for each school.

Placements in special schools and Specialist Resource Bases (SRBs) cost the Council more than placements in mainstream schools. This is largely because there are fewer pupils in a specialist class and a higher ratio of staff to pupils.

When a pupil needs a specialist placement but the Council's own special schools and SRBs are full, the Council relies on independent education providers until a place becomes available. This ensures that a pupil is able to access appropriate provision. However, these independent placements are usually more expensive than places in special schools or Specialist Resource Bases.

Expanding the number of places in maintained special schools and SRBs would help reduce the Council's dependence on costly independent placements. It would also ensure that specialist places are available across the city where they are needed.

When a pupil with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) moves from mainstream education to specialist provision, the mainstream school no longer receives per pupil funding for that pupil. However, the cost to mainstream schools of employing the extra support staff required for some pupils with ALN is much higher than the funding they receive for those pupils. A number of Cardiff schools are already in budget deficit because they have had to employ additional staff to provide appropriate support for pupils with ALN.

The revenue costs for these additional places will need to be funded from the existing delegated schools budget.

Increasing specialist provision would shift a larger share of total funding towards specialist settings and it would reduce the budget share to mainstream schools. However, it would ultimately make the overall system more efficient. It would help reduce the financial strain on mainstream schools caused by supporting pupils with significant ALN needs.

The establishment of, or expansion of, a Specialist Resource Base at a school would not be expected to have a negative impact on a school's budget. The funding for staff and resources for the Specialist Resource Base meets or exceeds the cost to the school of hosting the Base.

The Council will also have to fund schools transport costs for each proposal. The overall cost to the Council of transporting a greater number of pupils to specialist provision may increase. The improved spread of places would, in time, mean that many pupils are able to access a specialist placement closer to their home. This would limit the increase in home to school transport costs.

Health Provision

Some of the pupils who attend Cardiff's schools have additional health or medical needs which require schools to work with NHS Services and positive senior level discussions are taking place in relation to the ALN proposals.

There have been a broad range of joint projects undertaken by Education and NHS services, to enhance the skill-base of education staff in special and mainstream school settings, increasing their capacity to implement advice from health services, to benefit individuals and groups.

For example, Education has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy Services to ensure capacity for a range of training and preventive services in mainstream schools and resource bases. There is an SLA with the Joint Equipment Store, for provision of mobility aids, and the Disability Inclusion Specialist Teacher Team provides support and advice in relation to Manual Handling and Healthcare Plans, signposting to nursing services for training in relation to various conditions including Diabetes and Epilepsy.

The health board has recently appointed a project officer to lead on a local project: 'Special School Growth Project', which is looking at creating a model of multi-agency working in order to best support the health needs of children in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan schools. Officers will be working with health colleagues in order to help move this project forward.

Developing the education workforce

The planned expansion of specialist educational provision will impact school workforce requirements over time. As more learners move from mainstream to specialist settings, fewer staff will be required in mainstream schools, while additional roles will be created in newly established or expanded specialist provision. Whilst increasing Council maintained specialist places will reduce reliance on independent providers, this will provide opportunities to create new specialist teaching and support roles and for existing staff to be retained, including teachers, Higher Level Teaching Assistants, Teaching Assistants, Mid-Day Supervisors and other support staff.

Intakes to primary schools have fallen, with future numbers on roll expected to be c20% lower than in 2020, meaning fewer mainstream teaching and support roles will be needed whilst there will a need to expand the workforce in specialist provision. This will impact the secondary sector similarly, with a seven-year delay.

Cardiff's Inclusion Strategy emphasises the need for a workforce strategy to support inclusion goals. This includes diversifying staff at senior levels and governing bodies, and ensuring sufficient skilled staff for expanded specialist provision, including Welsh-medium provision.

The Council has established a Workforce Development Group with stakeholders including school representatives, working with the Higher and Further Education sectors and other partners, to support the recruitment, training, ongoing development and retention of school staff and to consider how best to implement staffing models appropriate for all learners in each specialist provision.

Governance Arrangements

The proposed changes relate to the establishment of new provisions at maintained schools and the expansion of existing additional learning needs provisions.

There would be no change to existing governance arrangements with the Headteacher and Governing Body of each school responsible for the management and governance of the additional learning needs provisions.

Impact of the proposals on the Welsh Language

The schools included in this consultation document are existing English-medium mainstream schools and special schools that currently facilitate teaching and learning in English.

Specialist Resource Base provision for learners with additional learning needs is available through the medium of English or Welsh. Special school provision for learners with additional learning needs is currently provided through the medium of English only.

The planned changes would increase the number of English-medium Specialist Resource Base places for learners with Complex Learning Needs to address the current deficit of places.

There are sufficient Welsh-medium Specialist Resource Base places in existing provision. Welsh-medium Specialist Resource Base provision for primary age learners with Complex Learning Needs is available at Ysgol Gymraeg Pwll Coch and for secondary age learners at Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf.

The Council does not expect any negative impact on the Welsh Language arising from the planned changes.

The Council is also consulting on proposals to increase the number of Welsh-medium Autism/Social Communication Specialist Resource Base places and the number of Welsh-medium Emotional Health and Wellbeing Specialist Resource Base places for primary aged learners.

You can find details of these proposals at [Additional Learning Needs \(ALN\) provisions](#)

Feedback from surveys issued to schools in May and June 2025 indicated that there is a need to increase Welsh-medium specialist provision. However, this survey information does not indicate the proportion of learners who may be eligible for a special school place or a Specialist Resource Base place.

The Council has considered in conjunction with Cardiff Special School Headteachers how best to provide for Welsh-medium learners requiring a special school place.

Community special schools in Wales do not have a designated language category by default, according to the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025. They may voluntarily designate a language category if their provision aligns with one of the standard categories (e.g., Primarily Welsh or Dual Language).

This is because:

- Community special schools often cater for pupils with complex or diverse additional learning needs, which may require highly individualised educational approaches
- Flexibility in language provision allows special schools to tailor their curriculum to the specific needs of their pupils without being constrained by a fixed category
- The voluntary designation option ensures that schools with strong Welsh language provision can still be recognised for it

Community special schools must prepare a Welsh language education delivery plan, which outlines:

- The amount of Welsh language education provided.
- Proposals to promote Welsh language ethos and culture.
- Support for parents who may not be confident in Welsh.

The Council will work with special schools, Welsh-medium primary and secondary schools and other relevant stakeholders to develop provision for learners identified as being eligible for a special school place for whom Welsh-medium or dual-language education is required or preferred.

Wellbeing of Future Generations

In line with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act the Council is committed to providing Local Schools for Local Children, together with encouraging use of sustainable modes to travel to schools, such as walking and cycling.

Each school project takes into account key transport issues when they are being designed and the firm need to provide safer routes to encourage walking, cycling and other active travel modes to schools.

With the current investments in ICT across the city, student movements may be further reduced as mobile technology develops further allowing for flexible teaching methods. These have the potential to result in a more efficient Travel Plan and further contribute to the Council's targets to reduce its carbon emissions.

Equalities

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on public services to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a process that looks at a policy, project or scheme to make sure it does not discriminate against anyone based on the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion/belief, sex, sexual orientation).

An initial Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is available to view at [Additional Learning Needs \(ALN\) provisions](#)

This assessment will be reviewed and updated after the consultation and at key points if the proposals were to proceed.

Community Impact

A Community Impact Assessment assesses the potential impact that proposed changes could have on the local community. When considering the potential for impact on the wider community as a result of a proposal, the following are taken into account: Public Open Space, parkland, the current use of school facilities by the community, noise and traffic congestion. Officers will work with schools and any community group to make sure that the proposal avoids negative impacts if possible.

An initial Community Impact Assessment has been carried out and is available to view at [Additional Learning Needs \(ALN\) provisions](#)

This assessment will be reviewed and updated after the consultation and at key points if the proposals were to proceed.

Potential Disruption to Pupils

The Council has significant experience in the successful delivery of building, adaptation and refurbishment projects on the sites of occupied schools as a result of progressing a large and growing school organisation programme.

In the event of the proposed changes being progressed a project lead officer would be assigned to work with the relevant Governing Bodies to oversee the development of workstreams to support the project.

Any works carried out would be managed effectively in consultation with the schools included in these proposals to ensure that the curriculum continues to be delivered and that high education standards and safety standards are maintained.

Wherever possible any adaptations to existing buildings and sites would be undertaken during the school holidays to minimise any potential impact on teaching and learning. Cardiff schools have well-established processes for planning and supporting transition between settings.

What happens next?

Key Dates

The Council will collect and summarise the feedback from this consultation. Council officers will then report this to the Council's Cabinet to report stakeholder views to elected members and to inform decision making. This consultation report will be available for anyone to view/download on the Council website. You can also get a copy by using the contact details in this document.

If the proposals are agreed to proceed following consultation, there are a number of further stages that the Council would have to go through before a final decision is made.

These stages are set out in Table 27 below.

Table 27: Future stages (This timetable may be subject to change)

Statutory Process	Timescale
Consultation Period	09 February - 26 March 2026
Consultation report considered by the Council Cabinet and published on the Council website	May 2026
Expected date for start of Objection Period, when statutory notice has been issued (when formal objections can be made)	June/July 2026
Expected date for end of Objection Period	July 2026
Final decision (determination) by the Council's Cabinet	September 2026
Objection report published on the Council website and notification of Cabinet's decision	September 2026

Consultation period

The consultation period for these proposals starts on 09 February and ends on 26 March 2026.

See page 8 for further details of how to respond and make your views known.

The Council will publish a consultation report on its website. The report must be published at least two weeks prior to the publication of a statutory notice.

You can also ask for a hard copy of the report.

The report will set out the issues raised during the consultation period and give the Council's response to these issues. The report will contain Estyn's view of the proposals and any formal responses received from elected members, school governing bodies, headteachers and any representative bodies. The points raised in individual responses will be summarised and considered but not published in full.

The Council's Cabinet will consider the consultation report and decide whether or not to go ahead with the proposed changes.

If the Cabinet decides to continue with the changes the Council must publish a document called a 'statutory notice'. This is an official statement saying that the changes will go ahead.

Statutory Notice

A statutory notice is the formal publication of a finalised proposal. The approval to publish a statutory notice must be given by the Council's Cabinet. This would only be considered after the Cabinet have received a report on all the consultation responses. This is a legal requirement as outlined in the School Organisation Code 2018.

The Council would publish the statutory notice(s) on its website. It would also put copies of the notice(s) at or near the main entrance to the school(s)/site(s) affected by the notice. Schools that are affected would also be given copies of the notice to give out to pupils, parents, guardians, and staff members (the school may also distribute the notice by email). The notice sets out the details of the proposals and asks anyone who wants to object to do so. Objections must be written. They must be sent to the Council within the dates given on the notice.

Determination of the proposals

Cardiff Council Cabinet would determine the proposals. This means they will make a final decision on whether the changes go ahead. The Cabinet may decide to approve or reject the proposals, or they may approve the proposals with some changes (modifications). The Cabinet will take any objections received in the Objection Period into account when making this decision.

Decision Notification

After determination, Cardiff Council would let everyone affected by the proposal know what the decision was. It will also be published on the Council's website.

Appendix 1

Additional Learning Provision in Cardiff

Additional Learning Provision (ALP) is the support given to a child or young person with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) that is additional to, or different from, what is generally available to others of the same age. The provision must be included in a learner's Individual Development Plan (IDP). In Wales, ALP maintained by a Local Authority may be within:

- Mainstream schools
- Specialist Resource Bases, or
- Special schools

Provision for learners in mainstream schools

Inclusive education in mainstream schools focuses on creating an environment where all learners, regardless of their abilities, additional learning needs or disabilities, can learn together.

Good quality teaching and learning for learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) involves several key principles and practices that ensure all learners can access the curriculum and achieve their full potential.

Important aspects of this provision include:

- Inclusive Environment:** Creating a welcoming and supportive classroom atmosphere where all learners feel valued and included. This involves promoting positive relationships and respect among learners and staff.
- Differentiation:** Adapting teaching methods and materials to meet the diverse needs of learners. This might include using visual aids, hands-on activities, and varying the pace of instruction to accommodate different learning styles.
- Targeted Support:** Providing tailored support and interventions based on each learner's specific needs. This could involve a balance of individualised, paired, small group work, or additional resources to help learners succeed.
- Support Services:** Schools can offer specialists to work with the staff to ensure that the needs of the learners are met and provided for with the most appropriate additional learning provision provide; these include Educational Psychology, Specialist Teacher Teams, Special School Outreach and School Based Counselling
- Positive Behaviour Support:** Implementing strategies to promote positive behaviour and emotional, health and wellbeing, creating a supportive and inclusive classroom/ school environment.
- Use of Assistive Technology:** Incorporating technology and tools that aid learning and communication, such as adaptive software, communication devices, and specialised equipment where appropriate

- (vii) **Delegated funding:** every school receives an ALN Support budget as part of their delegated school budget, to cover staff and resource costs of Early Intervention and Additional learning Provision
- (viii) **Partnerships with health:** a range of collaborative and joint arrangements with the NHS to support early identification and intervention
- (ix) **Professional learning:** all schools have access to a range of professional learning and development opportunities provide by the Education Psychology Service, specialist teaching teams and the ALN Statutory Team, often in collaboration with health services.

Provision for learners in Specialist Resource Bases

A Specialist Resource Base (SRB) is a facility within a mainstream school designed to support learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) while allowing them to integrate with their peers where appropriate and suitable.

The budget and responsibility for management of the bases is delegated to the governing body of the mainstream school, but admissions are managed by the local authority. Local authority specialist services coordinate a range of training and professional learning for resource base staff and support governing bodies in the process of appointing and developing specialist teaching and support staff.

Key features of a specialist resource base in Cardiff, in addition to provision within a mainstream classroom, include:

- (i) **Dedicated Space:** The resource base typically has its own classrooms and facilities within the mainstream school, providing a safe and supportive environment for learners with ALN.
- (ii) **Qualified, Experience and Specialised Staff:** The base is staffed by teachers and teaching assistants who are trained to work with learners with various disabilities and learning difficulties.
- (iii) **Therapeutic Services:** The resource base have access to services such as Educational Psychology, Specialist Teacher Teams, Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational therapy to support learners' holistic development.
- (iv) **Small Class Sizes and higher ratio of staff: learners:** Smaller class sizes and increased staffing allow for learners to receive tailored support and intervention based on their specific needs, which may include a balance of individualised, paired, small group or whole class work.
- (v) **Inclusion in mainstream learning:** the autism bases and hearing impairment bases focus on learners with mainstream learning needs. staff: learner ratios remain high, but the focus is on supporting as much access to mainstream learning as possible

Specialist Resource Bases in Cardiff

The current Specialist Resource Bases are set out below, with a clarification of the criteria for admission, the range of provision provided.

Complex Learning Needs Specialist Resource Bases	
Pupil needs	Type of provision needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have assessed and identified needs which relates to learning difficulties • A history of achieving progress at a slower rate than their peers • Sustained and long-term difficulties in the acquisition of language, literacy, and numeracy skills, affecting access to the curriculum • Difficulties with independent learning skills that are barrier to learning, such as listening and speaking, completing work in their own and asking for help <p>In addition, learners may have one or more needs in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech language and communication • specific learning difficulty • physical, medical or sensory needs • autism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A calm, small class environment with a higher adult to learner ratio which provides a nurturing approach to personalised learning • Teaching and support staff have specialist expertise, training and experience in meeting the needs of learners with learning difficulties or disabilities • Tailored support and intervention based on their specific needs, which may include a balance of individualised, paired, small group or whole class work • A multi-sensory approach with a highly differentiated curriculum based on the pupil's strengths and interest • Teaching and support staff have specialist expertise, training and experience in meeting the needs of learners with learning difficulties or disabilities • Targeted support and interventions for learners identified with specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia • Access to expert advice from an Educational Psychologist (EP) Specialist Teachers, Speech and Language and Occupation Therapist from the Local Authority.

Schools with Complex Learning Needs Specialist Resource Bases	Age Range	Designated Places
Bryn Hafod Primary School	4-11	20
Greenway Primary School	4-11	20
Llanederyn Primary School	4-11	20
Llanishen Fach Primary School	4-11	30
Marlborough Primary School	4-11	30
Moorland Primary School	4-11	20
Severn Primary School	4-11	20
Ty Calon, Whitchurch High School	11-19	100
Willows High School	11-19	30
Windsor Clive Primary School	4-11	20
Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf (Welsh Medium)	11-19	30
Ysgol Gynradd Pwll Coch (Welsh Medium)	4-11	20

Autism/Social Communication Specialist Resource Bases

Pupil needs	Type of provision needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A diagnosis of autism or on the neurodevelopmental pathway with the primary barrier of communication and interaction. • Cognitive profile which falls within the moderate learning difficulties to above average range • High potential to learn and succeed in mainstream but require significant support in social communication and understanding • Barriers to learning due to significant sensory/ social communication/ emotional regulation difficulties • Ability to participate in some aspects of school life/ classroom learning <p>In addition, some or all maybe present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social communication and social interaction challenges • Repetitive and restrictive behaviour • Being over or under sensitive to the school environment • Highly focused interests or hobbies • Extreme anxiety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small class environment with a higher adult to learner ratio • Teaching and support staff have specialist expertise, training and experience for supporting learners with autism/ social communication difficulties • Tailored support and intervention based on their specific needs, which may include a balance of individualised, paired, small group or whole class work • A low arousal space with a highly structured, predictable environment where visual support strategies are used consistency and tailored to the learner's needs • An individualised curriculum, based on each learner's strengths, needs, and interests, but remains broadly aligned with the mainstream curriculum with opportunities for integration • SCERTS assessments used to monitor progress and set targets for social communication and emotional regulation skills • Use of PECS and visual symbols to help develop communication skills • Use of TEACCH strategies such as structured workstations • Learners are supported to build relationships, manage anxiety, and cope with changes using strategies tailored to their individual profiles • Access to mainstream lessons and a peer group for lessons, assemblies, break times, or extracurricular activities, based on their readiness and needs. • Integration is carefully planned and supported, with regular communication between staff teams and parents • Access to expert advice from an Educational Psychologist (EP) Specialist Teachers, Speech and Language and Occupation Therapist from the Local Authority.

Schools with Autism/Social Communication Specialist Resource Bases	Age Range	Designated Places
Cantonian High School	11-19	30
Cathays High School	11-19	50*
Coed Glas Primary School	4-11	20
Llanishen High School	11-19	45
Pentrebane Primary School	4-11	24
Springwood Primary School	4-11	28
The Bishop of Llandaff High School (Marion Centre)	11-18	66
Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf (Welsh Medium)	11-19	30

*Phased expansion to 50 places, temporarily capped at 20 places until new build Cathays High School completed.

Emotional Health and Wellbeing Specialist Resource Bases

Pupil needs	Type of provision needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant emotional and behavioural needs; functionally 2 -3 years behind their peers in this area which is identified as a barrier to their learning • Cognitive profile which falls within the moderate learning difficulties to above average range • High potential to learn and succeed in mainstream but require significant support with their emotional health and wellbeing • Potential to return to their local mainstream school within 1-2 years • Attachment difficulties with learners have not learned to make a trusting relationship with adults or to relate appropriately to other children • The type of behaviour can range from socially withdrawn/passive replicating autistic like presentation, to overtly compliant to hostile, aggressive and openly defiant <p>In addition to this, they may also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have difficulties in forming relationships • Need support to regulate their emotions • Need support with interactions with peers • Have significant difficulties with school routines and expectations • Demonstrate behaviours that negatively impact their and/or others' progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small, calm and structured class environment with a higher adult to learner ratio • Teaching and support staff have specialist expertise, training, and experience of a trauma informed approach to supporting learners with emotional health and wellbeing needs. • Tailored support and intervention based on their specific needs, which may include a balance of individualised, paired, small group or whole class work • Access to mainstream lessons and social interaction with mainstream peers • Reintegration package to support the child's planned return to their home school on a full time basis • Access to expert advice from an Educational Psychologist (EP) Specialist Teachers, Speech and Language and Occupation Therapist from the Local Authority.

School with Emotional Health and Wellbeing Resource Bases	Age Range	Designated Places
Baden Powell Primary School	7-11	8
Cardiff West Community High School	11-18	20
Fairwater Primary School	7-11	8
Lakeside Primary School	4-7	16
Springwood Primary School	4-7	8
Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr (Welsh Medium)	11-18	20

Speech and Language Specialist Resource Base	
Pupil needs	Type of provision needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant and specific speech and language difficulty • Cognitive profile which falls within the moderate learning difficulties to above average range • Potential to return to their local mainstream school within 1 year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small, calm, and structured class environment with a higher adult to learner ratio • Teaching and support staff have specialist expertise, training and experience of supporting learners with speech and language difficulties • A flexible placement between 2 – 9 terms • A differentiated mainstream curriculum tailored to each individual • Specific speech and/or language interventions based on the child’s individual needs and embedded into the their daily routine • A range of individual and group strategies and interventions to develop receptive and expressive language skills and facilitate the development of speech sounds and linguistic skills • Other strategies can be used such as Makaton, Cued Articulation, POPAT (programme of Phonological Awareness Training) and the consistent use of visuals to support targeted speech sounds and/or understanding of language • Access to expert advice from an Educational Psychologist (EP) Specialist Teachers, Speech and Language Therapist from the Local Authority • Liaison, advice and guidance between the Early Intervention Class and the home school

Schools with Speech and Language Specialist Resource Base	Age Range	Designated Places
Fairoak Primary School	5-7	8**

**Places are not formally ‘designated’; learners attend temporarily and remain on the register of a home school.

Hearing Impairment Specialist Resource Base

Pupil needs	Type of provision needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A medical diagnosis of moderate/severe or profound hearing-loss, which is identified as their primary Additional Learning Need • Not reaching their potential within a mainstream school/early year setting or there is evidence that the attainment gap is widening with their peers • Require access to a Sign language environment to develop their communication skills and access the curriculum e.g. BSL / SSE • Would benefit from access to a Deaf signing peer group and Deaf culture <p>This may include one or more as a result</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant delay in language development • Significant difficulty with accessing the curriculum within a mainstream setting, despite training, support, specialist equipment and reasonable adjustments <p>In addition, some learners may present with secondary or additional learning need such as a learning, emotional or physical need.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small class environment with a higher adult to learner ratio • Teaching and support staff have specialist expertise, training and experience for supporting deaf children and young people • A structured approach to language delivery and development • Techniques and approaches designed for deaf children ie. Visual phonics, auditory training, listening programmes • An acoustic environment with appropriate listening devices e.g. cochlea implant, hearing aids, radio hearing aids, sound field systems • Different approaches to develop language and communication skills. For example, some will use listening, speaking and lip reading • Provision is flexible dependent on pupil needs and can include individual, small group and mainstream teaching. • The curriculum includes the Deaf studies curriculum and learning about deaf role models. • Deaf children and young people have access to a Deaf peer group and daily access to qualified specialist staff.

Schools with Hearing Impairment Resource Bases	Age Range	Designated Places
Coed Glas Primary	4-11	20
Llanishen High	11-18	20

Provision for learners in special schools or centres

Special schools provide tailored education and support to help learner with a range of learning difficulties or disabilities achieve their full potential.

Key features of a special school or centre in Cardiff, in addition to a mainstream school, include:

- (i) **Additional Learning Provision** Special schools create customised learning plans for each learner, addressing their unique needs and goals.
- (ii) **Qualified, Experienced and Specialised Staff:** These schools employ teachers, therapists, and support staff who are trained to work with learners with various disabilities.
- (iii) **Adaptive Curriculum:** The curriculum is modified to accommodate different learning styles and abilities, ensuring that all learners can access the Curriculum for Wales.

- (iv) **Assistive Technology:** Special schools utilise technology and tools to aid learning, such as communication devices, adaptive software, and specialised equipment.
- (v) **Small Class Sizes and higher ratio of staff: learners:** Smaller class sizes and increased staffing allows for more individualised, paired and small group work tailored to support for each learner’s specific need
- (vi) **Therapeutic Services:** The special schools have access to (often onsite) services such as Educational Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational therapy to support learners’ holistic development.

Special Schools in Cardiff

NB Three of the special schools- Woodlands, Riverbank and Meadowbank, offer placement to meet more than one area of need: both autism/ social communication needs and learning needs. For clarity in relation to criteria and range of provision, these schools are listed twice.

A special school or centre for learners with Autism/Social Communication Needs	
Pupil needs	Type of provision needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Severe developmental delays of 50-75% or more, impacting life skills such as toileting, eating, and drinking On the Neurodevelopmental Pathway or a diagnosis of Autism Attention levels- fleeting- readiness to learn impacted Significantly impaired social development Rigidity of behaviour thought and communication, severely impeding learning and everyday functioning. Behaviour/ dysregulation- Endanger to self/ others- needed to be kept safe (eating of inedible objects, climbing and risk-taking behaviours, no sense of danger Significant sensory processing High levels of anxiety highly likely to be present Transitions and the challenges of change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A small class environment with a high adult to learner ratio which provides a nurturing environment with personalised learning, therapy support, life skills development, and accredited courses to prepare learners for adulthood and independence All teaching and support staff have specialist expertise, training and experience of working with learners with autism or social communication difficulties Tailored support and intervention based on their specific needs, which may include a balance of individualised, paired, small group or whole class work A calm, safe environment which removed the barriers of the busy, socially demanding context of a mainstream school Systematic direct teaching, modelling and prompting required for development of expressive language/ communication skills (Augmentative and alternative communication systems/Total Communication approach) A systematic programme to support understanding of verbal and non-verbal communication. Highly structured activities to promote skills for interacting with adults or peers. SCERTS assessments used to monitor progress and set targets for social communication and emotional regulation skills Use of PECS and visual symbols to help develop communication skills Use of TEACCH strategies such as structured workstations Collaboration with various professionals, including educational psychologists, health professionals, and social workers, to provide a holistic approach

Appropriate schools/centres	Age Range	Designated Places
Meadowbank School	4-11	98
Riverbank Special School	4-11	78***
The Hollies School	4-11	150
Woodlands Special High School	11-19	180***
The Marion Centre	11-19	66

***Designated places at Riverbank Special School and Woodlands High School will increase to 112 places and 240 places respectively, following transfer to the Fairwater Campus site in 2026.

A special school for learners with Complex Learning Needs	
Pupil needs	Type of provision needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe developmental delays of 50-75 %, leading to attainments which are well below that of age equivalent peers • A track record of achieving progress at a slower rate than their peers • Sustained and long-term difficulties in the acquisition of language, literacy and numeracy skills, affecting access to the curriculum • A range of associated difficulties, notably in speech and language development and in social/ emotional development, sensory dysregulation and limited emotional literacy. • Significant difficulty following classroom routines and expectations • Cannot access a mainstream curriculum or environment <p>Some or all the following factors may be present: ·</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical or physical difficulties • Delayed social communication / play skills (turn taking / sharing) • Unpredictable / rigid behaviours that can result in significant disruption / aggressive / oppositional/ risk taking behaviours • High levels of anxiety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A calm, safe, small class environment with a high adult to learner ratio which provides a nurturing environment with life skills development, and accredited courses to prepare learners for adulthood and independence for post 16 • All teaching and support staff have specialist expertise, training and experience of supporting learners with learning difficulties and disabilities • Tailored support and intervention based on their specific needs, which may include a balance of individualised, paired, small group or whole class work • Highly bespoke and differentiated curriculum tailored to personalised learning that inspires learners to achieve • A systematic programme to support understanding of verbal and non-verbal communication • Targeted support and interventions for specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia, which can impact learning • Collaboration with various professionals, including educational psychologists, health professionals, and social workers, to provide a holistic approach

Appropriate schools	Age Range	Designated Places
Meadowbank School	4-11	98
Riverbank School	4-11	78***
Woodlands School	11-19	180***

***Designated places at Riverbank Special School and Woodlands High School will increase to 112 places and 240 places respectively, following transfer to the Fairwater Campus site in 2026

A special school for learners with Profound and Multiple Learning Needs or Autism/Social Communication Needs

Pupil needs	Type of provision needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe, profound, and multiple learning disabilities, including medical, autism and sensory needs • Profound developmental delay of 75%+ with severe cognition and learning needs • Significant sensory, communication, or mental health difficulties • Non-verbal and limited ability to communicate need • Behaviour/ dysregulation- Endanger to self/ others- needed to be kept safe (eating of inedible objects, climbing and risk-taking behaviours, no sense of danger) • Reliant on others for all or most basic care needs such as feeding, drinking, changing position. • Transitions and the challenges of change <p>In addition, some learners may have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex healthcare needs requiring therapy and nursing care throughout the school day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small class environment with a high adult to learner ratio which provides a nurturing environment with personalised learning, therapy support, life skills development, and accredited courses to prepare learners for adulthood and independence • All teaching and support staff have specialist expertise, training and experience • Tailored support and intervention based on their specific needs, which may include a balance of individualised, paired, small group or whole class work • A holistic approach to children and young people's development supporting the social and emotional development and the functional skills young people need to support independence in daily living • Personalised learning programmes built on strengths and developing lifelong skills; many are not yet able to access subject specific learning. • A calm, safe environment suitable for learners who cannot cope with the busy, socially demanding context of a mainstream school • A systematic programme to support understanding of verbal and non-verbal communication. • Teaching is multi-sensory with alternative and augmentative forms of communication used routinely throughout the day. • Highly structured activities to promote skills for interacting with adults or peers. • Intensive tactile and sensory stimulation • Collaboration with various professionals, including educational psychologists, health professionals, and social workers, to provide a holistic approach <p>In addition, some learners may require the following provision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapies and nursing care throughout the school day. • Extensive mobility equipment such as wheelchair, standing frames, hoisting etc. • Specialist equipment such as augmentative communication systems, sensory environments, hydrotherapy pool

Appropriate schools	Age Range	Designated Places
Ty Gwyn School	3-19	240

A special school for learners with Emotional Health and Wellbeing Needs	
Pupil needs	Type of provision needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe and persistent social emotional or mental health needs, frequently expressed through challenging or risk-taking behaviours that impede learning and restrict academic progress. • Unable to access learning in a mainstream environment, without risk of harm to self or others, despite sustained and appropriate support. • Dangerous risk-taking behaviours including county lines, drug abuse, persistent absconding, self-harm, use of weapons etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small class environment with a high adult to learner ratio which provides a nurturing environment with personalised learning • A safe and structured environment tailored to the needs of a learner's profile and ALP specified in their IDP • Tailored support and intervention based on their specific needs, which may include a balance of individualised, paired, small group or whole class work • Targeted strategies, interventions, and a nurturing environment to foster resilience and academic progress • An approach focusing on understanding the reasons behind challenging behaviours and teaching new skills to replace them • Social skills, such as communication, cooperation, and conflict resolution, through modelling, role-playing, and feedback • Self-regulation strategies and interventions • Restorative Practices focusing on repairing harm and restoring relationships • Collaboration with various professionals, including educational psychologists, counsellors, and social workers, to provide a holistic approach

Appropriate schools	Age Range	Designated Places
Ysgol Cynefin	7-11	42****
Greenhill School	11-19	64

****Designated places at Ysgol Cynefin will increase to 72 places, following transfer to the Fairwater and Llanrumney sites in 2026.

All provision in Cardiff includes:

- (i) **Ongoing Assessment:** Regularly assessing learners' progress and adjusting instruction as needed. This helps to identify areas where learners may need additional support and ensures that teaching strategies are effective.
- (ii) **Professional Development:** Providing ongoing training and support for teachers and staff to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to effectively support learners with ALN.
- (iii) **Parental Involvement:** Encouraging active participation from parents and caregivers in their child's education. This collaboration helps to create a consistent and supportive learning environment both at school and at home.