

Consultation on the proposal to close the resource base for children with hearing impairment located at Rush Common School

23 June 2014 – 20 July 2014

Produced by Oxfordshire County Council in partnership with
Rush Common Academy Trust ("RCAT") 2013-14
and SENSS Hearing Impairment Team

Background

Rush Common School is an academy in Abingdon. Since 1989 it has hosted the primary resource base for children with hearing impairment for the south area of Oxfordshire.

Since the introduction of the Newborn Hearing Screening Programme (NHSP) to Oxfordshire in 2001 the confirmation of hearing loss in infants has happened at a much earlier age. This has allowed for earlier intervention, including the provision of new technologies such as digital hearing aids and cochlear implants.

These advances have meant that children with severe and profound hearing loss are generally developing much better communication and language skills than previously. This in turn means many more children can attend their local school rather than specialist provision elsewhere.

Additionally, the Special Educational Needs Support Services (SENSS) Hearing Impairment Team has developed a strong outreach programme, helping schools and other settings to provide effective learning environments for children and young people with hearing impairment.

Teaching and advisory support from qualified teachers of the deaf will continue to be available in a wide range of local educational provision across south Oxfordshire including home visits, pre-school settings, maintained schools, academies, free schools and colleges. There will be no change to the support provided by the SENSS Hearing Impairment Team for children and young people aged 0-25 years, with all levels of hearing impairment, mild to profound continuing to be supported. Children with hearing impairment at Rush Common School will continue to receive teaching and advisory support, as appropriate, from the SENSS Hearing Impairment Team with no change to their current provision. This will include provision and maintenance of specialist equipment such as radio aids and training to mainstream staff.

Why are we consulting?

As a consequence of the above, the demand for places for Oxfordshire children with more severe and profound hearing losses, requiring additional specialist support, has decreased over the period that Rush Common School has hosted a resource base. The school will have no children on roll who need a resource base placement in September 2014.

This continues a trend as the number of pupils attending the resource base at Rush Common School has reduced over recent years:

Academic Year	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Number pupils in resource base	3	3	4	2	1	1	0

There are no children of early years age, currently supported by SENSS (Hearing Impairment Team) in the south area that have the level of need that would make them eligible for a resource base placement at Rush Common School. In the event of such children moving in to Oxfordshire, alternative provision can be made either in a local school e.g. Rush Common School if the child was in the catchment area for the School or in the primary resource base hosted by New Marston Primary School in Oxford.

Projections suggest that the resource base at New Marston Primary School will have viable numbers of children with hearing impairment, who meet the admissions criteria for a primary resource base without becoming oversubscribed.

One of the functions of a resource base for hearing impaired children is to provide a peer group of children with similar experiences of hearing loss. SENSS anticipates that this will continue to be available at the resource base at New Marston Primary School whereas it hasn't been available at Rush Common recently.

What we want to do

Oxfordshire County Council, supported by the Headteacher of Rush Common School, RCAT and the SENSS Hearing Impairment Team, wishes to close the resource base for children with hearing impairment at Rush Common School.

We think there is no longer a need for this type of provision in the south area of Oxfordshire. Should such a need arise in the future, it is anticipated that the need would be better met either in a local school or in the primary resource base for children with hearing impairment attached to New Marston Primary School for the reasons explained above.

The SENSS South Area Hearing Impairment Team will continue to outreach from Abingdon. The team will be based at Larkmead School where the resource base for children and young people with hearing impairment will also continue. There will be no change to the teaching and advisory outreach services provided by the SENSS South Area Hearing Impairment Team to children and young people with hearing impairment. Staff numbers within the SENSS Hearing Impairment Team will remain the same.

We want to know your views about whether you are in agreement with the closure of the resource base for children with hearing impairment, hosted by Rush Common School.

Your views

Please take the time to tell us what you think. This consultation is about the principle of closing the resource base for children with hearing impairment at Rush Common School.

Public consultation is taking place until 20 July 2014. You have until midnight on that date to respond.

This consultation is to help inform the decision on this proposal. If, following this consultation, the proposal is taken forward, the next step would be to publish a Statutory Notice.

We currently expect the statutory notice period would be in September / October 2014. The county council Cabinet Member for Education will then make the final decision on this permanent change.

How you can respond to this consultation

There are several ways to respond:

- complete the response form at the end of this document, or write your own response, and send it to the Freepost address shown on the form;
- respond using an online form on the OCC consultations webpages at <http://myconsultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk>;
- email your response to:
RushCommonHI-manager@myconsultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Parents are asked to complete only one form, even if you have more than one child at the school or supported by the SENSS Hearing Impairment Team.

Please return your form as soon as possible, but by **20 July 2014** at the latest.

Response Form

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Alternative formats of this can be made available. These include other languages, large print, Braille, Easy Read, computer disc or email. Please telephone 01865 816445 or email SchoolOrgPlan@oxfordshire.gov.uk

I/we wish to make the following comments:

Name.....

Address (optional)

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- Parent of a child at Rush Common School
- Parent of a child at another school (please specify)
- Parent of a child not yet at school
- Parent of a child with a hearing impairment
- Parent of a child with a hearing impairment at Rush Common School
- Parent of a child with a hearing impairment not yet at school
- Governor/staff at Rush Common School
- Local resident
- Other (specify)

.....

Please tick all of the above that apply to you.

Please return by 20 July 2014 to:

**Diane Cameron
School Organisation & Planning**

CMDCEF4

Annex 1

County Hall
FREEPOST OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
(No stamp required)