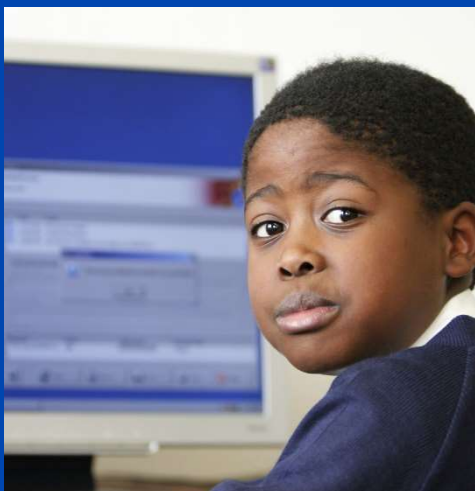


Restructure of Alternative Provision in Medway

23 September to 17 November 2019



Raising achievement through quality learning environments

Restructure of alternative provision in Medway

This document is designed to:

- **Notify you of proposals to restructure alternative provision in Medway by amalgamating The Rowans and The Will Adams Centre into a single provision.**
- **Explain why these changes are being proposed**
- **Invite your comments on these proposals**

What is alternative provision?

Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places for pupils of statutory school age. Pupils who are unable to attend their normal school because of exclusion, illness, or other reasons, are still entitled to an appropriate education that enables them to fulfil their potential.

Alternative provision is education arranged by local authorities for these pupils. There are two publicly funded Alternative Provision schools in Medway. These are The Rowans, which provides for pupils from key stages 3 and 4, and The Will Adams Centre which caters for key stage 4 only. There are two independent alternative provision schools operating within Medway. These are The GFC School, rated 'Good' by Ofsted, and Manorway Academy rated as 'Inadequate'.

Alternative provision schools are intended to be short stay, with pupils returning to their original school after a period of directed and focused support to enhance learning and facilitate pupils achieving their learning objectives and aspirations in later life. Alternative provision provides support for pupils at challenging times in their lives and has the potential to transform a child's life chances.

The statutory process

There is no formal process for amalgamating alternative provision schools. However, the Department for Education (DFE) has set out the requirements and processes for amalgamating and making changes to maintained schools in the guidance 'Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools.', and 'Opening and closing maintained schools'

The purpose of the guidance is to ensure that local authorities do not take decisions that will have a negative impact on other schools in the area, and that changes can be implemented quickly and effectively where there is a strong case for doing so. It is also expected that, where possible, additional new places will only be provided at schools that have an overall Ofsted rating of 'good' or 'outstanding'.

Therefore in order to be transparent, to ensure the council takes into account the views of all interested parties, this guidance will be used as a basis for consulting on the changes being proposed.

The Rowans is an academy, while The Will Adams Centre is a Local Authority maintained school. The Regional Schools Commissioner will be the decision maker on the expansion of The Rowans, while the Council will be the decision maker on the technical closure of The Will Adams Centre. The LA and the RSC will work closely on the proposals moving forward to ensure the clear aim which is to focus on the child'.

Why is there a need to restructure alternative provision in Medway?

Historically Medway has had some of the highest exclusion rates nationally. Pupils are rarely reintegrated back into mainstream school. This has resulted in there being insufficient space in the two Medway Alternative Provision schools to accommodate even half of permanently excluded children. This forces the local authority to place in settings that are either independent, less than Ofsted rated 'good' or are outside of Medway.

A review of alternative provision was carried out in 2018 which was chaired by an independent professional and consisted of senior school leader representatives across the education sector including both Alternative Provision Schools. The aim of the review was to assess how the local authority can help to retain more pupils in mainstream schools and how the Council can transform alternative provision to make sure these education settings provide high quality teaching and an education that meets the individual needs of all pupils, regardless of their circumstances. This review recommended that:

- The number of alternative provision places should be increased to around 120 places, with the extra places used for pupils with a reintegration plan. This would reduce the cost of placing pupils in independent alternative provision and help increase the amount of reintegration.
- The amount of reintegration should be increased. This would allow more pupils who need a period of alternative provision to access it. This would improve outcomes for more pupils.
- The local authority should restructure alternative provision to establish a single, all-through service on one site.

Why is the amalgamation of The Rowans and The Will Adams Centre being proposed?

The review of alternative provision recommended that a single alternative provision service should be established to provide:

- a short stay provision for permanently excluded primary pupils and secondary pupils in key stage 3
- time limited behaviour modification places for referred primary pupils and secondary pupils in key stage 3
- educational placements for pupils in key stage 4 for whom reintegration is not appropriate
- outreach services to schools
- all primary and secondary pupils up to the end of year nine should be on a reintegration plan.

The amalgamation of The Rowans and The Will Adams Centre would be the first step on the process to achieve this. Initially the amalgamated provision would operate across the two existing sites. At the appropriate time the provision would move completely to the current Rowans site.

No pupils will be displaced and all pupils at the schools will be guaranteed a place at the newly created Alternative Provision should it be the most appropriate setting for them.

The new all-through Alternative Provision would provide comprehensive outreach, both preventative, aimed at reducing exclusion at source, as well as supporting pupils after reintegration into their mainstream schools. The outreach element would provide training and advice to schools to help build the skills and incentives to develop effective strategies and interventions to address poor behaviour to prevent escalation to exclusion.

The Local Authority has also taken into consideration the principles set out in the letter from the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) in February 2017 to all Medway Schools, stating there is a high ratio of small academy trusts operating in Medway and outlining the benefits of belonging to a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) of an appropriate size; shared expertise, clear career paths, development opportunities and economies of scale. The letter further sets out the vision of MATs coming together to form larger trusts in Medway.

The next stages

The results of this consultation will be presented to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Any recommendations and comments they make will be then be included in the outcomes report to Cabinet.

Consultation timetable – subject to change as necessary

Consultation period	23 September to 17 November 2019
Report to Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee with outcomes of consultation	3 December 2019
Report outcome of consultation to Cabinet for decision	14 January 2020
Formal Implementation of expansion proposals if approved	1 September 2020

No decisions will be made until the consultation has been completed and local views have been carefully considered.

How to make comments

We would like to hear your views on these proposals.

Email your comments to **prim.reorg@medway.gov.uk**

Alternatively, you can hand in the form below or send it to: **FREEPOST RRUY-ZBTJ-CZZC, School Organisation, Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham ME4 4TR**

Unfortunately it will not be possible to acknowledge receipt. A copy of our privacy notice can be found at www.medway.gov.uk/privacynotice

All responses must be received by **Sunday 17 November 2019**.

For your comments to be taken into account please provide the following.

Name

Address

I am a (please tick)

Parent/ guardian

Member of staff

None of the above (please specify)

Governor

Local Resident

With regard to the proposal to amalgamate The Rowans and The Will Adams Centre;

Please provide responses to the following

Do you agree it is important to provide a centre of excellence for those pupils who require additional support within Medway?

If not, please explain your answer

Do you agree it is important to increase the number of alternative provision places in Medway?

If not, please explain why

Do you think Will Adams is better placed to be an Academy or remain as a Local Authority maintained school?

Yes or No

Do you agree pupils are more likely to receive a better education in an Ofsted graded outstanding school?

The Regional Schools Commissioner in his letter to schools dated February 2017 stated that there is a high ratio of small trusts within Medway. Do you agree?

Comments

Please give your reasons as fully as possible to help us build the arguments for and against the proposals.

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This information can be made available in other formats from **01634 333333**

If you have any questions about this leaflet and you want to speak to someone in your own language please ring 01634 335577

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