



Monday 4th March 2024

Dear Stakeholder,

Consultation: Enhanced Special Educational Needs Provision

I am writing to inform you of some proposed changes to enhance the current education provision at The Fernwood School.

We are working in partnership with Nottingham City Inclusion Education Service (IES) to provide additional focused provision places at The Fernwood School for pupils in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. This provision will be designed for students who have moderate learning difficulties (MLD) whose learning is well below age related expectations at the end of Key Stage 2 - usually at about Year 1 level. Some of these pupils will have additional needs, such as Autism.

As you may be aware, children currently on roll at The Fernwood School who meet this criterion, are supported through our nurture groups: one group in year 7 and one group in year 8, with approximately 15 pupils per year group currently being supported at this level.

In partnership with Nottingham City's IES we are aiming to create an enhanced provision to provide up to 24 places. These places will be phased in, beginning with 8 students in key stage 3 for September 2025, 4 more for September 2026 and 8 more for September 2027. These additional 20 places will be allocated through the Focus Provision Panel, with 4 places remaining which will be commissioned by the school.

Our vision is for the students who are offered the additional places to be fully involved Fernwood students who are supported in accessing our curriculum as much as is possible and appropriate. Our curriculum is designed to meet the specific learning needs as well as the social and emotional needs of each pupil with an emphasis on oracy to support communication and interaction; understanding the world around us to develop cultural capital; development of independent learning, personal safety and life skills; and integration within the mainstream environment (where curriculum and structures allow). Pupils are empowered to learn within their group because lessons are pitched at where each pupil is 'at', enabling them to achieve their next steps securely and with confidence. Key Stage 4 pupils work towards Entry Level qualifications and GCSEs where possible.

As part of this plan, we are aiming to build an additional block comprising: four classrooms; breakout spaces; a social space; and an office. This will be situated on the site where the unoccupied Caretakers house currently stands adjacent to the main building. The build will be paid for through High Needs Capital Funding, which the Department for Education has allocated to Nottingham City Council to increase SEND capacity in the city. It is also proposed to allocate a Section 106 funding contribution which the Council is in receipt of, linked to the housing development at Woodyard Lane.

These changes will not affect the children who already attend The Fernwood School, or those who will apply in the normal way in the coming years. It will, however, further enhance the quality of our provision in our already highly regarded nurture groups by providing custom-built spaces. Importantly, the changes will provide additional places for children who may otherwise face significant additional barriers in attending a mainstream setting due to the intensive support required to help them make progress.

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The new provision will be led by the existing school leadership team, supported by staff who have developed expertise in this area. We will also be recruiting additional staff to work with us. We plan to open this new resource in September 2025, building work permitting.

We are seeking views from stakeholders such as yourself so please get in touch if you have any questions or feedback. We particularly want to work proactively with neighbouring schools and trusts. Please email any feedback to SENDadmin@fernwood.school putting 'SEND: Enhanced Resource Base' in the subject line.

We will endeavour to reply to all responses as quickly as we can. The consultation period runs from today, for 4 school weeks beginning Monday 4th March until midnight, Monday 1st April 2024.

Yours faithfully



Mr Chris Gell
CEO & Headteacher of The Fernwood School Academy Trust.



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