


Summary of meeting

11^h June 2026 @1630

This was a one agenda item meeting for governors at Wade Deacon to discuss the Trust proposal to Establish Specialist Inclusion Bases within the Wade Deacon Trust in partnership with the Halton local authority. The Primary area of need identified at Wade Deacon High School is Speech, language and communication needs. 

As part of the consultation process, WDT is liaising with its schools, and CF was keen to ensure Governors' input was captured at this meeting. The tender documentation had already been shared with Governors and several Governor's had provided some written comments in advance of this meeting.

Q: Do we know how many children fall into the category that might be joining? Can current pupils join?

A: 8 in first year and 8 in second year. 16 pupils in total is the aim. These pupils will not spend their entire time in the Inclusion centre, likely around 80% but that will not be determined until the pupils' specific needs are fully understood. The Executive Principal's Report that was presented at the last LGC sets out the number of pupils in categories that might be appropriate for this support i.e. 46 pupils across all year groups have SEND/EHCP in place, 3% of the pupils on school roll.

Pupils who will be admitted through this process are likely to result in a higher number of pupils in lower school with an EHCP: currently 7 in Yr7 and 12 in Yr8. In general school can expect more pupils with EHCP as education policy moves more children and young people into mainstream provision.

There will be a three-year SLA in place with the local authority. Admissions body must run consultation so therefore WDT are responsible for this consultation. In terms of process, the LA admissions code and WD admissions policy will still be in place. Priority groups may mean in year admissions. There will be a separate admissions panel representation of headteachers across the LA. BH understands the LA needs places for around 29 pupils for September 2026. He sees the separate admissions panel as positive to ensure potential pupils are treated fairly.

Q What would happen if there is a need for 'managed moves' if placements are not going as expected including pupils from other local authority areas.

A: Children from other LAs may apply for places and there is potential for more applications to WDHS as a strong school. A child with an EHCP tends to stay within the same school for stability purposes, therefore. BH's view is that it is less likely for children in this new cohort to ask to move.

Q What about tensions about children from other LAs – some parents may object to the perceived impact this will have on PAN as it could take the school over that limit.

A: There is the potential for this to result in the school roll being over the PAN. If children left, they would not increase PAN. These pupils will not take places of other children.

Q: With regard to the estimate of 20% of time outside of the Inclusion Centre, this will impact overall teaching resource. How will that be handled?

A: There will be staffing impacts, but school would employ additional staff. There will also be upskilling opportunities and development for staff who take on other 20% of these pupils' time in school.

Q: Will there be any required adjustments to building?

PAN will remain at 350, and the additional pupils would spend most of their time in the Inclusion Centre with the staff recruited as part of the exercise – 1 teacher and 2 TAs per 8 pupils.

BH confident that the IC is able to take 16 children over two years. If it resulted in more than 16 children, there would have to be discussions with the local authority as it has some input on where each pupil is placed.

Q: Are we confident that we have capacity for 16 students.

A: Some adjustments might be necessary but will not be determined until the needs of the pupils are fully understood. Full funding for 16 children will be received in year one that can help fund any preparatory work including any adjustments e.g. therapy room introduction. Some remodelling might be necessary, but school will be better able to decide and plan when pupils are identified. It is likely that some bespoke provision will be required as pupils progress through the school to ensure they will continue to thrive.

A trust-based relationship with LA is crucial to underpin the relationship/arrangements and ensure pupils' needs are met as fully and efficiently as possible.

When the LA hands over children, it is on us to make sure the provision is excellent.

Q: Staffing v timescale. When do we envisage first cohort?

A: Disappointingly, still not clear and schools cannot recruit staff until SLA is signed off. As with all appointments, school will look for high calibre staff but as the resignation date has passed for a September start, this is a potential problem. It is crucial to maintain a positive, trust-based relationship with the local authority during the process including summer holiday period. Local authority has not yet allocated places.

Q: Is this something we can influence as part of consultation to ensure the pupils are at the heart of decision making in terms of timescales etc?

A: We will still be requesting funding to prepare for full 16 cohort?

What can we cater for responsibly? It reverts to admission to make decision in this area. To make decision about whether it is fair overall for school. What will make sure a placement is successful for that child and school?

Need to make sure that our queries are fed back as part of consultation. WDHS is well placed to contribute positively.

At heart of decision making is the confidence that we can make the right decision in terms of individual children and 'do it properly' but not prejudice the education and wellbeing of existing pupils – there is nothing to suggest this would happen.

Timescales not ideal and that remains a risk.

Discussion ended at 1720

In response to the Trust consultation document Please see the statement below.

The governing board support the school in agreeing the Trust proposal in partnership with the LA, for a specialist SEND inclusion base for Speech, Language and Communication & Cognition and Learning at Wade Deacon High school.

Whilst in agreement with the proposal governors expressed concern regarding the following:

That no timescale had been set for when the school would be expected to start receiving pupils assigned to the school.

Potential lack of time to advertise and recruit the specialist staff to meet the additional capacity needed to support additional pupil needs.