



Full Proposal Document

Name of School: Skilts Special School

*Proposal to permanently
change the age range
(upper age limit).*

Introduction

Birmingham City Council, as the Local Authority for Birmingham, is consulting on a proposal to make changes to Skilts Special School.

- Skilts Special School is one of 27 Birmingham special schools and can offer up to 90 places for pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) for Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs, (SEMH). Skilts Special School is a Birmingham School that is currently located outside of the City of Birmingham boundary, in Worcestershire.
- The school currently offers education in key stage 1 (infants; reception to Year 1) and key stage 2 (juniors: Year 2 to Year 6).

School Information

Type:	Special School (Local Authority Maintained)		
Name:	Skilts Special School	DFE:	3307037
Address:	Gorcott Hill, Redditch, Worcestershire B98 9ET		
Ward:	Sambourne	District:	Stratford-Upon-Avon
Age Range:	5 – 11 years	Capacity:	90
Last Ofsted:	5th December 2017	Ofsted Rating	Overall Effectiveness: 4 (inadequate - special measures)

What changes are proposed?

We are proposing to carry out the following change to Skilts Special School:

- Permanently change the upper age limit;
- Change the age range to aged 5 – 14 years (reception to Year 9)
- The school will offer KS3 (secondary: Year 7 to Year 9) education

If this proposal is approved, when will these changes happen?

- 1st September 2021

Background:

- The school is currently located outside the City on Birmingham City Council owned land in Worcestershire.
- The school is relocating to a new purpose-built site within Birmingham at Hallmoor Road, Birmingham B33 9QY from 1st September 2021. The new school will have increased physical space so that in the future the school can offer up to 120 pupils (the current accommodation can offer up to 90 places).
- Skilts Special School received an OFSTED rating of “inadequate” following an inspection on 5th December 2017.
- The School became subject to a Directive Academy Order on 5th February 2018 and is in the process of converting to academy status with the approved academy trust being Forward Education Trust.
- An Interim Executive Board (IEB) was established at the School on 10th July 2018 and replaced the Governing Body.

- Along with Birmingham City Council as the Local Authority, the academy trust is supporting the school on its improvement journey until conversion to academy status is complete.

Temporary Changes to the Age Range

The IEB has approved two temporary changes to the age range as follows;

1. Change the Age range from aged 5 – 11 years (Reception to Year 6) to aged 5 – 12 years (Reception to Year 7) with effect from 1st September 2020 for one year.
2. Change the Age range from aged 5 – 11 years (Reception to Year 6) to aged 5 – 14 years (Reception to Year 9) with effect from 19th April 2021 to 31st July 2022.

Why do we want to do this?

The above changes implemented by the IEB are only temporary, this means that they can only be in effect for a maximum of 2 years.

This means that currently, pupils who stay on in Year 7 and 8 (and any pupils who join in Year 9) will have to leave Skilts Special School at the end of the school year in July 2022.

The temporary changes have proved popular with families and the Local Authority are now proposing to permanently change the age range of Skilts Special School to 5 – 14 years. This will mean that if approved, pupils could stay on after Year 6 and would not need to transfer to another school until the end of Year 9.

How will the places be organised across the school?

Whilst the new school has been built to accommodate up to 120 pupils the school will continue to admit up to 90 pupils for the time being. Having a greater capacity in the new accommodation offers a level of flexibility to meet demand based on the sufficiency of places across the City and parental preference. It is anticipated that the school will grow over the years as places are filled year to year.

The 90 places that the school currently offers are allocated across all year groups to meet demand.

Current and Forecasted Numbers on Roll

The tables below show the current number on roll, the forecast for the number on roll in May 2021, when the second change to the age range is in place and the forecast for September when the new school year begins.

Table (i)

Current Number on Roll at January 2021.

R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
0	1	4	7	15	10	21	11	69

Table (ii)

Forecast of Number on Roll for May 2021 (after the second temporary change to age range up to aged 14)

R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
To be confirmed	1	4	7	15	10	21	11	7	-	76

Table (iii)

Forecast of Number on Roll for September 2021

R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	total
To be confirmed	To be confirmed	1	4	7	15	10	21	11	7	76

Why has this school been chosen?

The temporary age range that the IEB has approved has proven popular with many pupils opting to remain at Skilts in Year 7 in September 2020.

Skilts Special School is on an improvement journey with additional support from the incoming academy trust. It is anticipated that the school will convert to academy status later this year (2021).

Permanently changing the age range of the school allows for;

- extended education continuity
- provision for a wider age range of pupils
- enabling the offer of more places to pupils that need them.

The additional places offer greater financial stability and maximises the benefit of the new purpose-built school for a wider age range of pupils within the City.

How will this affect pupils at the school?

If the proposals are approved, pupils will no longer need to leave Skilts Special School at the end of Year 6. Where appropriate, pupils who opt to stay on will be able to do so until the end of Year 9, allowing pupils to take more time to consider their future and prepare for the transition to a Key Stage 4 provision.

What happens at the end of Year 9?

Pupils will be fully supported by the school and the Local Authority Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review (SENAR) Service/Team who will work closely with the pupils and their families to agree appropriate pathways to meet the pupil’s needs as set out in their EHCP’s and to make suitable transition arrangements.

How will the proposal increase educational standards and parental choice?

Birmingham City Council as the Local Authority, in discussion and collaboration with the IEB of Skilts Special School, consider that making a permanent age range change would benefit the current and future pupils of the school. The transition to a new school at Year 7/age 11 is often a difficult time for many pupils. There is strong evidence that continuity and consistency of learning has a significant impact on a pupil’s progress. Research shows that the fewer moves children have during their school career, the better they perform.

There are also benefits in terms of the children's personal and social development, which can be supported throughout the Key stages 1,2 & 3 without a change of school at age 11.

The wider age range would increase parental choice when offering such places to families/carers of such pupils. The relationship between families and the school can also build over a longer period, allowing the school to better provide for the needs of each pupil, in particular identifying the right pathways at Key Stage 4 through the continuous assessment over a greater period of time.

Will there be any effect on other schools, academies and educational institutions within the area?

There should be no negative effects on any other SEMH School. There is a continued need for SEMH places City wide.

In February 2021 a school organisation proposal was approved to close Hunters Hill College with effect from 31st August 2021. If the proposal to change the age range at Skilts Special School is approved it will allow for pupils who may have transferred to Hunters Hill College to remain at Skilts Special School in Years 7, 8 and 9, if they wish to do so.

How will this affect staff?

A school offering both primary (Key Stage 1 and Key stage 2) and Secondary (Key stage 3) provision may offer staff the opportunity for career development with potential opportunities for staff who wish to teach across Key Stages, and this will be for the school to decide.

What are the project costs for this proposal and how is it funded?

There are no project costs associated with the change to the age range.

Will this definitely happen?

No, there is a statutory process we must follow to make these sorts of changes to schools;

Part One: Pre-Publication 22nd March 2021 to 1st April 2021

We sent a pre-publication letter to all parents, pupils and staff on 22nd March 2021, asking for any comments by 1st April 2021. Comments from part one of the process are for the attention of Local Authority officers developing the proposal (these comments are not forwarded to the decision maker).

We did not receive any comments during this pre-publication period.

Part Two: Statutory Representation Period: 22nd April 2021 to 20th May 2021

This document is the full proposal for statutory public consultation, referred to as the "representation period". All comments received during part two, the representation period, will be forwarded to the decision makers for consideration.

Decision: By 20th July 2021

Within two months of the end of the representation period (by 20th July 2021) the Council's Cabinet Member for Education Skills and Culture will make a final decision. It is only at that point that we will be able to say with certainty whether the permanent

age range of Skilts Special School will change from 5 – 11 years to 5 – 14 years with effect from 1st September 2021.

What will happen if this proposal is rejected?

If this proposal is rejected, the age range of Skilts Special School will revert to 5 -11 from September 2022 when the secondary temporary change approved by the IEB, comes to an end. All Pupils in Year 6, 7,8 and 9 will need to find a new secondary school place for September 2022. In the future all pupils at Skilts Special School will need to leave the school at the end of Year 6 and transfer to a new school.

How can I make my views known?

We welcome comments within the four - week statutory consultation (representation) period between **22nd April 2021 and 20th May 2021.**

Anyone wishing to make comments, support or objections to this proposal may do so through the BeHeard consultation website:

www.birminghambeheard.org.uk/people-1/skiltschangeage

Or in writing to;

Birmingham City Council’s School Organisation Team through:

Education and Infrastructure

PO Box 15843

Birmingham B2 2RT

Or by emailing: edsi.enquiries@birmingham.gov.uk

Please include Skilts in the email subject

A consultation response form can be found at the end of this document and can be used if anyone would like to send their comments in writing or by email.

What happens next?

The dates set out below meet the government requirements for us to consult fully with the people affected by the proposal.

Key dates

Action	Date
Statutory notice to be published	22nd April 2021
Beginning of 4-week consultation period	22nd April 2021
End of 4-week consultation period	20th May 2021
Final decision to be made no later than	20th July 2021
Implementation date	1st September 2021

Skilts Special School:

Proposal by Birmingham City Council to Change the age range from 5 – 11 years to 5-14 years

Thank you for taking the time to send us your comments/views on these proposals.

Consultation Response Form

Please help us to analyse your response by completing the following:

Your name (optional): _____

Your contact details (optional, if you would like a reply)

Are you in favour of the proposal (please circle one answer)?

Yes	No	Neither/Don't know
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Your interest in the proposal (please indicate one of the below):

Pupil	
Parent	
School Governor	
School Staff	
Local Resident	
Local Councillor	
Member of Parliament	
Other (please specify)	

Please provide your comments to the proposal.