



School Expansion

Within Northamptonshire there is a growing pressure on the need for places for students in special schools and additionally those who have significant cognition and learning needs such as Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties

Northamptonshire is facing a shortage of special school places, with all special schools at, or above, capacity. Wren Spinney has reached the agreed number of students, after growing from 46 students 3 years ago to above capacity of 60 to 66 this year. The local authority is wishing to place at least an additional 14 students at Wren Spinney, taking the school to a proposed 80 on roll September 2021. Therefore, increasing the student numbers supports the local authority, within current admissions arrangements, in placing those students who require a highly specialised school provision at Wren Spinney.

Students with a complex and profound learning needs require a curriculum that caters for their significant learning difficulties including specific resources to support their physical and sensory development, such as sensory and interaction rooms. The school have worked with the Local Authority to identify resource developments to ensure the needs of this very vulnerable group of learners can be met within school.

Wren Spinney is funded by central government and the local authority for the number of students they have on roll. As a small school therefore Wren Spinney receives a relatively small amount of money, however still needs to fund the high running costs that a very highly specialised school has. The expansion of Wren Spinney will enable the school to be sustainable and continue to offer a curriculum in a personalised and bespoke manner to ensure some of the most vulnerable young people in our community have the opportunity to develop the skills they need, in the environment they need.

This expansion is within the current systems and process that are currently in place at Wren Spinney, therefore there is no need for a further build, and with the local authority's help to refurbish key areas, the ability to use a wider range of resources means that there is minimal increase in staffing numbers as resources can be better utilised.

The additional numbers will have a minimal impact upon the local area as we are using existing space within the school. There may be a slight increase in traffic, we calculate maybe an additional 3 vehicles, however our aim is to always minimise any disruption, such as traffic backing up on Westover Road. The introduction of residents only parking has greatly reduced the issue of school staff and visitor parking on the street and we will work with parents and the local authority transport to implement a traffic plan to stagger arrival times

If the business case is not approved there will be a number of consequences, not only on the individual students, but on the school and Local Authority. If Wren Spinney is not able to expand its provision then, and then resources will be stretched beyond capacity and the school may become unviable. If this occurs the Trust will need to consider other alternatives, for example as relocating to a new site and handing the current land back to the local authority. If the Local Authority cannot place the students within the current school provision, then costly independent and out of county placements will be required.