

Significant Change Proposal: Establishment of Two SEN Units at The Byrchall

About this proposal

This proposal is made in accordance with the Department for Education guidance on making significant changes to an academy. The Byrchall High School seeks approval to establish two SEN Units within its mainstream secondary setting for pupils with SEND and/or an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan who have been identified as requiring specialist provision by Wigan Council.

Description of the change

The Byrchall High School and Wigan Council have worked together to establish two SEN Units, each with 8 places as follows:

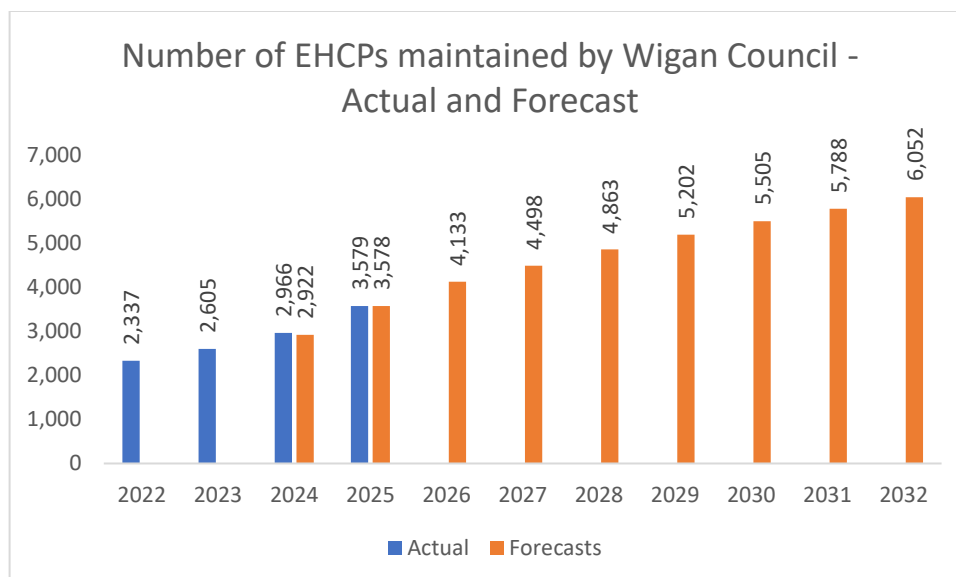
- One Unit for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils with Cognition and Learning Difficulties and an EHC Plan.
- One Observation and Assessment Unit for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils who may have an EHC Plan or be placed for the purposes of carrying out an EHC needs assessment.

Wigan Council will work with the leadership team at the school to allocate places into both SEN Units. This is NOT intended provision for mainstream students currently on roll at the school with an EHC Plan.

These Units operate on the school site and adopt a special school model of delivery for pupils with EHC Plans while maintaining access to mainstream opportunities as deemed appropriate.

Rationale for change

The number of children and young people with special educational needs requiring an EHC Plan and living in Wigan has significantly increased over the last four years from 2,337 and 3,579 between 2022 and 2025 and is forecasted to rise by 69% by 2032.



The increasing numbers of EHC Plans maintained by Wigan Council coupled with the complexity and severity of some children's needs means that Wigan faces significant pressures in its state-funded special schools and to address these challenges, the Council is working with school leaders in Wigan to expand specialist support within mainstream schools through the use of SEN Units and Resourced Provision.

Impact assessment

The proposal will positively impact pupils with SEND by providing local, inclusive provision. It is not expected to adversely affect other schools. Staff will receive training to support the integration of SEN units within the school's wider operating context.

Consultation

Consultation will be undertaken with parents, staff, local authority, SEND partnerships, and other stakeholders in accordance with statutory requirements.

Capacity and site details

The SEN Units are located within The Byrchall High School's existing site on Warrington Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield in the Teague Block.

Housed in the Teague block of the school is a suite of rooms adjacent to the Learning Base containing 4 classrooms plus a smaller former inclusion/intervention room. The block has had new toilet suites installed and a disabled toilet.

The block is on the school's IT network and has CCTV coverage.

A dedicated entrance with coded reception and car parking is already in existence and provides a soft landing for pupils, parents and visiting professionals. A separate discrete garden area with pond serves the Learning Base and is available to the pupils accessing the SEN Units.

Changes have been made to the building to upgrade it to the standard as the main school building and work was carried out in the summer of 2025.

Pupils in the SEN Units also benefit from dedicated mainstream specialist teaching when required from the main school provision and from the main school resources (physical and human) to support delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum.

Funding and value for money

Funding for changes to the school's site has been provided by Wigan Council from the High Needs Capital Programme Allocation. Likewise, funding for staffing and resources has also been provided by Wigan Council.

A contract has been established between the Council and the school to enable the provision to run effectively and to guarantee a source of continued funding for the provision.

This investment will deliver long-term savings for the Council by reducing reliance on costly specialist placements.

Governance and leadership

The SEN Units are governed by The Byrchall's Governing Body and managed by the school leadership team, ensuring accountability and high standards.

Admissions and curriculum

Admissions are managed by Wigan Council in consultation with The Byrchall and in line with the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Regulations.

Pupils typically require an EHC Plan or be subject to an EHC needs assessment.

Curriculum will be adapted to meet individual needs while maintaining access to mainstream opportunities.

Implementation timeline

The SEN units opened in September 2025, following completion of adaptations and staff training.

How to make representations

Within four weeks from the date of publication, any person may support, object to, or comment on the proposal sending this via email to:

Danielle Park - dpark@byrchall.wigan.sch.uk

Annexes

Annex A: Local SEND context and EHC Plan growth data

Annex B: Site plans and adaptation details

Annex C: Consultation plan and timeline