



**WISE**  
ACADEMIES  
We Inspire Success and Excellence

## **WELBECK ACADEMY**

### **ADDITIONALLY RESOURCED PROVISION (ARP)**

### **CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**

**24<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2025 – 22<sup>nd</sup> APRIL 2025**

# FOREWORD

WISE Academies is a successful Multi Academy Trust operating throughout the North-East of England. We are proud to be the sponsors of Welbeck Academy in Newcastle-upon-Tyne since the school joined our Trust in September 2012. We also operate 15 other academies in Northumberland, Sunderland, South Tyneside and Durham.

We have operated an Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) at Welbeck Academy since its inception. We are now seeking to make changes to that ARP offer which is the subject of this consultation exercise.

This consultation will run from 24<sup>th</sup> March to 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2025. This document sets out the background, the proposals and how interested parties can contribute to the consultation process.

There will be an opportunity for parents / carers and the wider educational community to engage with representatives of WISE Academies as part of our commitment to communicate with all stakeholders.

We hope that you will contribute to our consultation exercise and help us to shape the educational provision that we need at Welbeck Academy.



Zoe Carr O.B.E.  
CEO of WISE Academies



Louise Saunders  
Headteacher of Welbeck Academy

# CONTEXT

Welbeck Academy has been part of the WISE Academies family of schools since 1<sup>st</sup> September 2012. From the outset there was an Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) for Speech, Language and Communication. This serves the whole of Newcastle Upon Tyne and the Local Authority commissions places at Welbeck's ARP as part of its Local Offer for SEND.

Welbeck Academy is a vibrant and popular school with around 480 pupils, serving the Walker area in the East End of Newcastle. Typically, 80% of the pupils attending Welbeck are disadvantaged and 26% of pupils have SEND (5% have an EHCP). There is extensive support available to pupils and families from the academy and we know that this is greatly appreciated by those who access it.

The Local Authority undertook a review of its local SEND offer during 2022 and this meant that there was a reduction in the number of children attending the Welbeck ARP provision. It reduced the numbers from 16 to 12 pupils as a result of this review.

These diminishing pupil numbers have fundamentally changed the viability of the Welbeck Academy ARP, which exists alongside the mainstream provision for children aged between 2 and 11 years old.

The primary focus of Welbeck Academy must always be to ensure that all of its children get the best possible start in life and achieve their full potential. Leaders have identified that they need to prioritise their attention on their main school pupils to ensure they receive the highest quality education.

The combination of these factors has led WISE Academies to take the difficult but necessary decision to propose a re-organisation of provision at Welbeck Academy which will mean the discontinuation of the small number of remaining ARP places. This change will allow academy leaders to focus their attention on ensuring that there is an outstanding education for all children aged 2 to 11.

# RATIONALE FOR CHANGE

This proposal will involve the cessation of the Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP). This change will ensure that we can offer the best education for the children aged 2 to 11, continue to support the local community and sustain Welbeck Academy into the future.

If approved, the practical effects of this change will be seen from August 2025 and for this reason we are already formulating plans to ensure the minimum disruption and the smoothest possible transition for the very small number of pupils affected by this change.

The Local Authority are in support of the proposed ARP closure.

The key reasons are given below:

## **Reduced demand/surplus capacity**

The school has provided additionally resourced provision on behalf of the Local Authority for over a decade. This has, over time, changed in nature to reflect the needs of the Local Authority.

The most recent review of services, in 2022, found surplus capacity in the area of speech and language. As a result, the number of places were reduced from 16 to 12. The ARP has run below this capacity for periods of time since this reduction, and currently has surplus places. Projections for 2025/26, based on known pupils at the ARP currently, indicate that only three pupils will continue to need full time speech and language provision from September. While this will no doubt increase through new placements via the ARP Panel (which decides the award of a place at speech and language provision), the final number would appear to lead to having surplus places again at the Welbeck ARP next year.

Working with the Local Authority, we are led to believe that there is sufficient capacity in the system to allow these three pupils to attend a similar speech and language ARP. The only difference is that this ARP is attached to a different primary school, in another part of the city. Therefore, one possible implication is that some of the children may need to make applications for funded transport, depending on where their home address is.

We are uniquely placed this year to support children's transitions to other schools. Two of our pupils will leave the ARP naturally as part of their move to Year 7. Our assessment indicates only three children will continue to need full-time speech and language support next year. **We understand there is sufficient capacity in the system to meet this need without disadvantaging any pupils.** The remaining children have made sufficient progress and return to their mainstream schools.

Given the pressures on SEND finances, it would seem sensible to close the ARP, **therefore removing surplus places from the system.** This could be done **without any detrimental impact** on meeting speech and language need based on current figures, and with the Local Authority still able to meet its local offer.

## Financial viability

Each year, Welbeck Academy go through a process to set a budget to best meet business needs. Over the recent years, the school has taken the decision – supported by Trustees – to staff the ARP on the same basis as when 16 children were attending. This is to enable the wide needs of pupils to be adequately met. In essence, it means one experienced teacher teaching the class, supported by an experienced HLTA. There are also additions to this staffing profile as appropriate depending on the needs of pupils, e.g. where one to one support is specified within an Education and Health Care plan (EHCP).

In 2024-25, the cost of providing the ARP facility was in excess of the income received. This has been supplemented from the main school budget.

The school has reviewed all expenditure in relation to the ARP. The main expenditure is staffing costs. To this we then have direct costs, such as curriculum resources, consumables etc. There are also indirect costs which we allocate on a per pupil basis, such as leadership support, administration, maintenance costs, utilities expenses etc.

Without reducing staffing numbers – an action we feel would make us unable to provide appropriate educational provision for children in the ARP – **we are not able to make the ARP financially viable in 2025-26.**

## Priorities for the school

As has already been mentioned, the school and the Trust are proud to contribute to the wider educational offer provided across the city. The school have provided additionally resourced provision since the school joined the Trust in 2012.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the school and the local community. One of the impacts of the pandemic, as with similar schools, was a regression in children's academic ability, increased pastoral and mental health needs, an increase in the number of pupils joining school without the pre-requisite skills, and an overall increase in the number of families needing wider support.

As a result, we feel it is appropriate to prioritise the academic outcomes of pupils in the school. Attainment was very low for our pupils in the 2023 statutory tests. This has begun to improve, but significant further work is required to enable our pupils to make up for lost learning due to the pandemic. This needs to be leaders' focus for the coming months and years.

We are also facing a turbulent period in the education system. The challenges around SEND are very well publicised. Welbeck is acutely aware of this given our context – we have double the number of children with an EHCP for example. Currently there is a review of the National Curriculum taking place, the outcomes of which will undoubtedly result in necessary changes needing to be made within the school. The third significant pressure will arise in the summer when the new Ofsted framework is published. The school is scheduled to be one of the first inspected under the new framework. As a result, we anticipate significant CPD time to be devoted to the understanding and implementation of this new framework. We therefore feel that the school needs to focus on the successful implementation of these things above. **We do not have capacity within our leadership team to focus on developing and managing provision in the ARP** alongside all of the above pending changes and new priorities.

# YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

## Why change anything?

Welbeck's specialist Speech, Language and Communication ARP is now operating below the capacity that it once was. The changes made by the Local Authority took effect in 2022 and this reduced level of pupil intake to the ARP has continued since.

The proposed change to the Welbeck ARP is a response to the changes that have taken place to Newcastle's SEND Local Offer, which has resulted in a reduced number of children being placed in the setting.

Operating without the ARP will help to free up resources to provide more effective education for the hundreds of pupils aged 2 to 11 at Welbeck Academy. We are confident that we will be able to deliver increasingly sustainable high-quality provision at Welbeck Academy after this change has been implemented.

The proposed change creates a system that is sustainable and viable a long way into the future, retaining a highly skilled workforce at Welbeck Academy.

## Why is this consultation happening now?

We plan to implement this change at the end of the summer term 2025 and this timescale has been the subject of discussion with the Local Authority.

WISE Academies has given a firm commitment to engage and communicate with parents and the wider community regarding this change. We therefore feel that now is the right time to launch this consultation. This will be particularly important for the small number of pupils still attending the ARP and where parents may need to make choices around future provision.

## What does the Local Authority think of this proposal?

We know that Newcastle City Council regularly reviews its SEND (Special Educational Needs & Disability) offer to ensure suitability and sufficiency of specialist places for children across the City. A previous review resulted in a reduction in the need for ARP places at Welbeck Academy.

WISE Academies has been working closely with officers of Newcastle City Council for some time to discuss the future requirements for ARP capacity at Welbeck and there is a mutual agreement between the two organisations that there is a case for making changes to the provision.

The Local Authority (LA) has a duty to ensure there are sufficient places in the right locations and appropriate to the needs of pupils in the City. However, the Local Authority can only implement statutory changes in respect of schools that are maintained by them. Local Authority's cannot do this for academies and, as the proprietor of Welbeck Academy, it is the responsibility of WISE Academies to consult on proposals which affect this establishment.

## **What will happen to the children currently placed at the Welbeck ARP as a result of this change?**

Firstly, it is important to underline that this consultation has absolutely no impact on the overwhelming number of pupils attending Welbeck Academy. The only children affected will be the small group who still attend the specialist speech and language provision.

WISE Academies is already working with the Local Authority's special needs and admissions teams to discuss the future provision for the small number of children who are currently accessing the ARP provision depending on the different possible outcomes of the consultation. This means that an individual solution will be found for each of the children currently placed in the ARP if the outcome of the consultation is to close the provision. The parents of these children will be kept informed of the options that are available to them in making decisions around the future provision for their child. Families and young people will be supported throughout, including how this may affect children with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP).

Some of the pupils will be moving to secondary education in September 2025. Others may need to attend specialist Speech and Language provision. Some pupils may be ready to return to their mainstream primary school and receive additional speech and language support. Again, these decisions will be considered depending on the outcome of the consultation.

WISE Academies has a vision to improve the lives of all children to prepare them for the next steps in their education. We will work with other providers to make sure that parents have access to the support they need and that the ARP children have high quality transition and continuity of learning.

## **My child currently attends Welbeck Academy but is not in the ARP. What will happen when this change takes place in summer 2025?**

Parents of almost all children at Welbeck Academy from 2-year old upwards need take no action. Nothing will change for these pupils.

If the proposal is approved children from the current ARP cohort will remain in the current provision until summer 2025 and there will be a clear pathway for their future education agreed with the Local Authority and the child's parent or carer. There are no more than 12 children impacted as a result of this change.

## **What about the staff?**

The implications for staff in the ARP will be carefully managed.

If the proposed changes are implemented, those staff who are currently assigned solely to the pupils in the ARP will be retained and will be integrated back into the wider staffing establishment at Welbeck Academy. They will put their expertise to good use in benefiting all pupils on roll at Welbeck, particularly those with special educational needs.

## **What will happen to the area of the buildings currently used as the ARP?**

Welbeck Academy has a very healthy pupil roll and it is not unusual for it to be oversubscribed with requests from parents for places. Space to undertake small group work is therefore at a premium and the rooms currently used by the ARP can be utilised for a range of learning activities after the cessation of the provision.

### **What alternatives have been considered?**

The only alternative to this proposal is to maintain the current provision. The reduced pupil numbers, and decrease in overall funding indicates that this is unviable.

### **How do WISE Academies support children with SEND?**

All settings within WISE Academies are highly inclusive and have a range of different SEND pupils attending. Some of our academies have much higher than average numbers of SEND children. In total across the Trust we have 34% pupils who have a special educational need. We also operate a special school which specialises in provision for children with social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) so it can be seen that WISE Academies already does, and will continue to, provide for the diverse needs of learners throughout the north-east of England.

Welbeck Academy will continue to meet the needs of SEND pupils as it does now. The only difference will be that children placed at the academy by the Local Authority as part of its SEND Local Offer will not be educated within the ARP setting as they are now. Welbeck Academy will continue to welcome children with Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) and this remains explicit within our admissions policy.



# CONSULTATION

WISE Academies considers that this proposal is in the best interests of the children at Welbeck Academy and the wider school community across Newcastle. We would like your views on these proposals.

It is important for us to have as much feedback as possible to help us in reaching our decision.

## **What has WISE Academies done so far?**

WISE Academies firmly believes in parental and community engagement. In formulating these proposals representatives of WISE Academies have met with Local Authority representatives and relevant Welbeck staff to give a clear view of the strategy for the ARP.

## **Who can respond to this consultation?**

We welcome responses from any Parent / Carer, Welbeck staff (and their trade unions), other schools / academies and the Local Authority.

## **Timescales and Next Steps**

- 24<sup>th</sup> March to 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2025 - consultation phase (parents, staff, surrounding schools, Local Authority etc.);
- An analysis of responses to the dedicated e-mail address will then be undertaken;
- The WISE Academies Board of Trustees will receive all responses;
- April / May 2025 - A formal submission will be made to the Department for Education (DfE) requesting consent for a significant change to discontinue the ARP;
- May-July 2025 – WISE Academies to liaise with Local Authority and other relevant schools to ensure an appropriate pathway for any children affected;
- August 2025 – Welbeck ARP is discontinued.

Throughout this WISE Academies will be listening, carefully planning and engaging in vital conversations with the Local Authority, DfE and parents.

## **How to respond to this consultation**

You will be able to respond in any of the following ways:

- By email to [consultations@wiseacademies.co.uk](mailto:consultations@wiseacademies.co.uk); or
- By writing to: WISE Academies Head Office, Consultations, Borodin Avenue, Sunderland SR5 4NX.

**Responses to be received by 3.30 p.m. on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2025.**