

Special School Review

Chair of Governors Meeting

25th June 2024

6-8pm

Mercure, Great Danes Hotel

Maidstone ME17 1RE

Welcome

- Alison Farmer, Assistant Director Principal Educational Psychologist.
- We welcome your questions and will pause throughout the presentation to allow for them to be answered in an organised way.
- The meeting will be minuted and will be shared following the event.
- Please engage in the consultation (19th June – 31st July 2024) and give as much feedback as possible.

The Review: Aims & Objectives

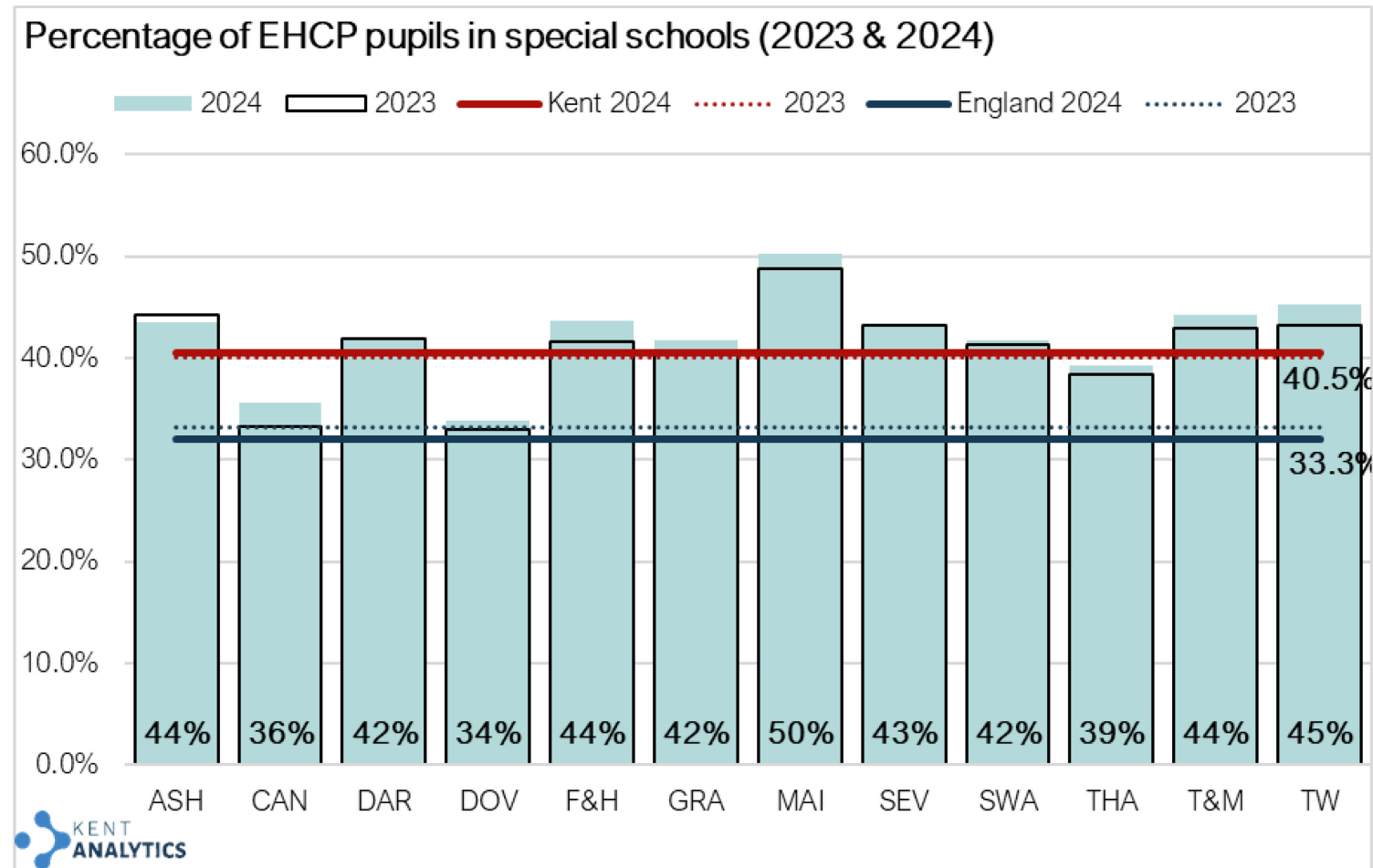
Between November '22- February '24 Kent CC has reviewed Kent's state-funded special school provision with a view to:

- Inform planning of special school places over the medium-long-term for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) for whom the Local Authority maintains an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and decides to place in a special school.
- Inform the designation and admission guidance for special schools.
- Update the principles of funding to ensure a financially sustainable approach to funding state-funding special schools.
- Identify opportunities for strategic system change to improve SEND provision, enhance educational outcomes, and promote inclusivity for children and young people with complex and severe needs in their local communities.
- Propose options for the future that foster collaboration towards building a more equitable and effective educational landscape for all children in Kent.

Overview

- The Special School Review was carried out by Local Authority Officers with input from external consultants.
- The review was carried out in three stages referred to as: Exploration, Analysis and Shaping the Future.
- On 16th May The Special School Review proposals and next steps were presented to CYPE Cabinet Committee as part of the report on SEND Whole System Change. The report includes proposals for mainstream schools through the introduction of a 'Localities Model', the outcomes of the SRP and special school reviews.
- Today we will be sharing the proposals that relate to special school provision – these have been formed as a result of the engagement and consultation that has taken place over the course of the review to date.

23/24 EHCP pupils in a special school



HIGH NEED SPEND BY DISTRICT 2021-22

(BEFORE £10m TRANSFER FROM SCHOOLS BLOCK – showing relative spend and overspend by district)

£'ms	Individual Child Mapping				PRORATED ON ACTIVITY			OTHER SPEND	TOTAL SPEND	BUD GET	OVER SPEND	
	Main stream	SRP	Special incl EPN	INMSS	Contracts: AP & STLS	Post 16	Other					
Ashford (S)	3.5	1.0	11.1	5.8	1.3	1.5	0.8	1.6	26.7	21.1	5.5	26%
Canterbury (E)	3.6	1.7	9.0	5.7	1.5	2.2	1.2	1.6	26.6	21.8	4.8	22%
Dartford (N)	2.0	1.3	9.9	3.5	1.4	1.0	0.5	1.3	20.9	17.9	3.0	17%
Dover (S)	2.9	3.5	6.7	4.9	1.4	1.4	0.5	1.4	22.7	18.5	4.2	23%
Folk & Hythe (S)	2.4	0.9	8.3	4.0	1.3	1.6	0.5	1.4	20.4	18.5	1.8	10%
Gravesend (N)	1.8	1.3	9.0	3.0	1.5	1.2	0.5	1.4	19.7	19.0	0.7	3%
Maidstone (W)	4.2	1.2	12.4	4.7	1.6	1.5	0.8	1.9	28.2	25.6	2.6	10%
Sevenoaks (N)	2.2	0.9	8.2	5.2	0.8	1.5	0.8	1.2	20.8	15.7	5.0	32%
Swale (E)	4.7	2.6	13.9	7.2	2.0	1.9	1.2	2.1	35.7	28.8	6.9	24%
Thanet (E)	2.7	0.9	12.0	7.9	2.0	2.3	1.1	2.0	30.8	27.3	3.5	13%
Ton and Malling (W)	3.2	1.4	9.6	4.4	1.4	1.5	0.6	1.4	23.5	19.4	4.1	21%
Tunbridge Wells (W)	2.4	0.6	6.1	3.9	1.1	1.8	0.5	1.1	17.5	15.3	2.2	14%
NO MATCH	0.2	0.2	2.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	2.4	0.0	5.3	0.0	5.3	
OLA	0.0	0.4	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	2.0	
	35.7	18.1	120.0	60.3	17.3	19.3	11.6	18.4	300.7	249.0	51.7	

Key Findings and Issues (1 of 2)

- There has been an over-reliance on placement of children with SEND in the special school sector.
- The Local Authority must place children with an EHC Plan in a mainstream school unless to do so would be incompatible with the wishes of the child's parents or the young person or the provision of the efficient use of resources
- All mainstream schools can predictably expect to provide education for children with children and young people with SEND, who have low attainment, may have Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH), speech, language communication and language needs and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and/or a combination of these needs
- Kent has a duty to plan sufficiency of school places, including for children with SEND, by commissioning special school places, and setting out the designation and admission criteria

Key Findings and Issues (2 of 2)

- To meet duties to provide sufficiency of special school places and provide education that is both suitable and an efficient use of resources the Local Authority needs to make decisions that are consistent and ensure proactive forward-looking planning of special school places for those children and young people whose SEND are severe and complex such that an adapted curriculum needs to be provided
- The combined effect of issues relating to the lack of medium to long-term planning for placement of children and young people with severe and complex SEND due to historic practice and processes has led to some CYP travelling out of area/long distances and high home to school transport costs.
- There is not a consistent understanding of the provision made by special schools for children with severe and complex SEND and there are inconsistencies in the provision that special schools provide.
- There has been no substantive changes to the special school funding system since it was reviewed in 2010

Whole System Transformation

the continuum of SEN Provision

The Local Authority provides a continuum of support for children with SEND in:

- Mainstream schools through the provision set out in the mainstream core standards, which includes assessment of a child's special educational needs, planning and meeting the child's needs through provision that can be provided from within a school's resources for children identified as having SEN Support needs, and for some children with an EHCP.
- Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) in a mainstream school with access to specialist teaching and an adapted curriculum which includes education alongside mainstream peers. Children placed in an SRP will have an EHC Plan maintained by the Local Authority.
- Special schools for children who have an EHC Plan and severe and complex special educational needs. The findings of the review have informed proposals for the future provision of special school places.

Proposals

- Proposals address the issues identified through the review of state-funded special school provision in relation to:
 - Sufficiency of state-funded special school places
 - Designation and admission guidance
 - Principles for the special school funding model
 - The role of special schools supporting the inclusion of children and young people with (SEND).
- It is the intention of the Local Authority to undertake a public consultation in relation to proposals set out in this paper and plans for implementation.

Special School Designations and Admission Guidance (1 of 2)

- To fulfil its duty in planning sufficiency of provision for children with SEND, making efficient use of High Needs Funding, the Local Authority has responsibility for determining the children for whom education provision will be provided in special schools, and as such determining the designation and the admission criteria of its state-funded special schools.
- To address this issue and ensure that as far as possible there is local state-funded special school provision for children with severe and complex special educational needs within the area of Kent that they live it is proposed that special schools in Kent have **one of three** designations.
- Proposed changes would apply to the new intake of children and young people with an EHC Plan **from 2026/27**. Children already attending special schools for which proposed changes to designation apply, would remain on roll, with the expectation that consideration of children's SEN needs, provision and school placement is addressed through annual review, as appropriate.
- This proposal and an associated implementation plan will form the basis of a public consultation. Specifically, we will seek to understand the impact if the proposal was implemented and considerations that should be taken into account to support best outcomes for children and young people.

Proposed Special School Designations and Admission Guidance (2 of 2)

Designation: Complex Learning Needs – Profound, Severe, Complex Needs

Admission guidance: learners have a range of needs including profound, multiple learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties, autism spectrum condition, communication disorders and social, emotional mental Health.

Designation: Social, Emotional, Mental Health Needs

Admission guidance: All pupils have social, emotional and mental health difficulties with associated challenging behaviour, many have had adverse childhood experiences and/or have additional needs, including autistic spectrum condition, speech, language and communication difficulties, ADHD.

Designation: Neurodivergent with Learning Difficulties

Admission guidance: All pupils have complex special educational needs, they are neurodivergent and may have a diagnosis of autism, ADHD or other conditions. The pupils have severe social communication difficulties, learning difficulties and may have social, emotional mental health needs associated with neurodiversity, including severe social anxiety.

Designation Proposed Change

Current designations	Proposed designations
Profound, severe, complex needs (PSCN)	Complex learning needs – profound, severe and complex needs
Social, emotional mental health (SEMH)	Social, emotional, mental health needs
Physical Disabilities (PD)	Complex learning needs - profound, severe and complex needs
Communication and interaction (C&I)	Neurodivergent with learning difficulties
Communication and interaction (C&I) and learning	Complex learning needs – profound, severe and complex needs

Impact of Proposal: North

Current Schools				
School	Current Designation	Proposed Designation	Admission Criteria Change	Commissioned Places 24/25
Milestone Academy	PSCN	PSCN	No	363
Ifield School	PSCN	PSCN	No	266
Rowhill School	SEMH	SEMH	No	150
Valence (incl residential)	Physical Disabilities	PSCN	Yes	115
New School				
Swanley Free Special School	PSCN		Planned opening: September 2026	250

Impact of Proposal: East (1 of 2)

Current Schools				
School	Current Designation	Proposed Designation	Admission Criteria Change	Commissioned Places 24/25
Meadowfield School	PSCN	PSCN	No	389
Aspire	C & I	Neurodivergent & Learning Needs	Yes	174
Foreland Fields School	PSCN	PSCN	No	244
Laleham Gap School	C & I	Neurodivergent & Learning Needs	Yes	207
The Orchard School	SEMH	SEMH	No	100
St Anthony's School	SEMH	SEMH	No	98
St Nicholas School	PSCN	PSCN	No	340
Stone Bay School (incl residential)	C & I with Learning	PSCN	Yes	103

Impact of Proposal: East (2 of 2)

New Schools			
School	Designation		Commissioned places
Whitstable Free Special School	PSCN	Planned opening: September 2026	120
Nore Academy	SEMH	Planned opening: during academic year 2024/25	120

Impact of Proposal: South

Current Schools				
School	Current Designation	Proposed Designation	Admission Criteria Change	Commissioned Places 24/25
The Beacon	PSCN	PSCN	No	408
Elms School	SEMH	SEMH	No	152
Goldwyn	SEMH	SEMH	Yes	195
The Wyvern School	PSCN	PSCN	No	352
Portal House School	SEMH	SEMH	Yes	80
Whitfield Aspen 1 and 2	Specialist Resource Provision for CYP with PSCN		No	165

Impact of Proposal: West

Current Schools				
School	Current Designation	Proposed Designation	Admission Criteria Change	Commissioned Places 24/25
Bower Grove School	SEMH	SEMH	No	225
Five Acre Wood School	PSCN	PSCN	No	838
Nexus School	PSCN	PSCN	No	295
Oakley School	PSCN	PSCN	No	212
Snowfields Academy	C & I	Neurodivergent & Learning Needs	Yes	324
Broomhill Bank School	C & I	Neurodivergent & Learning Needs	Yes	393
Grange Park School	C & I	Neurodivergent & Learning Needs	Yes	211

Residential Special School Places

- One hundred and thirty-seven children and young people with an EHC Plan are currently (academic year 2023/24) placed in residential special schools of these 29 are joint funded between SEN (Dedicated Schools Grant) and Social Care (General Fund)/Health.
- Initial findings suggest that there is a pattern that children are more likely to be placed in a residential special school as they get older, and parents/carers are less able to manage their physical behaviours (KS 3 – KS 5).
- Kent should plan to provide residential school places for those young people for whom there is an assessed care need and an assessed special educational need, for some young people there will additionally be an assessed complex health need. Where this is the case we would expect placement to be joint funded between education, social care and health.
- Strategic planning of the number of residential special school places needed in the medium to long term is being finalised based on analysis of trends and forecasts.

Special School Capital Programme

- Kent has historically invested in special school buildings; as the demand for special education places has grown over time, space and facility constraints have increased. Capacity and suitability surveys of Kent's state-funded special school buildings carried out in 2021-22 indicated some special schools were providing education in buildings that were over-capacity in terms of the number of students or had aspects of the building that were unsuitable.
- Young people have informed us that in order to learn, they need to feel physically safe in their school environment.
- Some headteachers have identified the accessibility of buildings and/or the limitations of special school buildings as obstacles to the admission of some students and/or the maintenance of special school placements
- The existing capital programme for High Needs includes works relating to the development of new places in special schools, along with increasing the capacity of SEN provision in mainstream schools, in line with the SEN sufficiency plan. It is proposed the programme will be updated, in line with the resources available, to include capital works needed to ensure on-going suitability of buildings in some Kent special schools.

Special School Funding Model

(1 of 2)

The following principles are proposed for Kent's future special school funding:

- It should aim to support sustainability and financial planning over the medium to long-term.
- Needs to align with Government's wider direction of travel with the proposed introduction of a tariff s system, the Local Authority proposes adopting a tariff model of funding for the specialist continuum of high needs funding for children placed in special schools.
- School funding will be graduated according to the level of resourcing and the extent to which adaptation of the curriculum is integral to provision of suitable education.
- The approach adopted leads to the proportionate and equitable distribution of resources.

Special Schools Supporting Inclusion

The proposed way forward:

- A school-to-school model of support, with special schools being key to local collective responsibility for children with SEND within an area (across mainstream and special schools).
- Collaboration between special schools and mainstream schools within an area, to address the support needs of local schools in a responsive way. Locality based resources and the development of mainstream approaches to co-ordinating, collaboration will evolve. Current relationships between schools are facilitated through LIFT Exec and/or by virtue of existing working relationships, these will evolve with the Locality model over time.
- Countywide development of an outreach offer that is joined up and consistent with the whole system change that is being led by the Local Authority and NHS (for example, supporting Autism Education Trust standards framework as the evidence informed approach to good autism practice in schools, drawing on the LA's published Local Offer).
- Focus on special schools and mainstream schools or FE colleges working together to plan young people's pathway from special to mainstream with a specific focus on post 16 transfer and planning for young people to transition into FE college or specialist post 16 institutions, with the aim of enabling young people to develop skills for independence in adulthood

Public Consultation



**SPECIAL SCHOOLS
REVIEW**

Consultation on proposed changes to designations and admissions guidance

Have your say by 31 July 2024

 www.kent.gov.uk/specialschoolsreview

Prescribed Alterations

- Statutory guidance does not explicitly clarify whether the changes we propose amount to a change in the type of special educational need provision for **special schools**.
- KCC has decided to take a cautionary approach.
- Proposed changes are being treated as a “prescribed alteration” and a proposed change in the type of SEN provision.
- This means that if the proposals are agreed in principle, the steps that follow would depend on whether the individual schools affected are maintained schools or part of an Academy Trust.

High Level Timeline

Activity	Date	
Public consultation	19 June	31 July
Key stakeholder engagement events	20 June	24 July
Analysis of consultation results	August	
Development of final recommendations	August - September	
CYPE Cabinet Committee	Autumn	
CYPE Cabinet Committee: Decision published	3 weeks after CYPE Cabinet Committee	

Engagement Events

Audience	Details	Date
Special Headteachers	In Person	20 June 1700-1830
	In Person	25 June 1800-2000
Chair of Governors	In Person	25 June 1800-2000
Children and Young People (Young People Project)	In Person	25 June onwards
Parent & Carers	Online event Book via consultation webpage	26 June 1100-1230
		10 July 1600-1730
		16 July 1700-1830
		22 July 1730-1900
Mainstream Headteachers	Online (North)	19 July 1345-1445
	Online (South)	19 July 1615-1515
	Online (East)	23 July 1030-1130
	Online (West)	23 July 1215-1315
Other Local Authorities	Online	24 July

Public Consultation Questions

Question: Expectation Statement

KCC is proposing that the children for whom special school places are planned, are those who have both an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan and also have severe and complex special educational needs. Special school places would not be planned for those with lower levels of need that could be met through an adapted curriculum in a mainstream school.

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree that KCC should be planning special school places for those children who have severe and complex needs?

	Strongly agree
	Tend to agree
	Neither agree nor disagree
	Tend to disagree
	Strongly disagree
	Don't know

Please tell us the reasons for your response.

Question: Designation and Admission Guidance

We propose moving from 5 designations to 3. This is with the intention of creating equity of access to special school places for those children with severe and complex SEND and to support these children and young people in becoming independent within or near their local community as adults.

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree that moving to three designations for special schools will enable us to achieve the aim of providing special school provision for children and young people in Kent with severe and complex special educational needs?

	Strongly agree
	Tend to agree
	Neither agree nor disagree
	Tend to disagree
	Strongly disagree
	Don't know

Please tell us the reasons for your response.

Question: Proposed Implementation

KCC proposes to implement a graduated change starting from September 2026. From this date, the new designation and admission guidance would apply to children and young people requesting special school places. Those already attending a special school will remain enrolled at that school, subject to the annual review process as per the current statutory requirement. This suggested approach would result in a gradual change over time, year by year.

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this graduated approach to the change over time?

	Strongly agree
	Tend to agree
	Neither agree nor disagree
	Tend to disagree
	Strongly disagree
	Don't know

Please tell us the reasons for your response.

Question: Proposed School-to-School Model of Support

Q. If Kent were to adopt the proposed school-to-school model of support, please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following actions being part of the model?

Proposed Action	5 Point Sliding Scale	
Special schools supporting transition for children or young people (re)integrating into mainstream settings	One End: Strongly Agree	One End: Strongly Disagree
Special schools designating specific days when mainstream colleagues from their locality are invited to visit, shadow special school staff and observe their practices.		
Mainstream settings being able to request a one-to-one consultation with lead teachers from special schools on specific aspects of education.		
Special schools proactively working with local Further Education colleges and other providers to improve adapted curriculum and access to specialist teaching facilities in the Post-16 sector.		

Question: Equality Impact Assessment

An **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)** has been carried out to assess the potential impacts of the proposals being put forward in this consultation on the protected characteristics. These are: age, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, disability, race, religion/belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Q. We welcome your views on our equality analysis and if you think there is anything we should consider relating to equality and diversity, please add any comments below.

Parent/Carer Events

Online parent/carers meetings

- 26th June: 11:00am-12:30pm
- 10th July: 3:30pm-5:00pm
- 15th July: 5:00pm-6:30pm
- 22nd July: 5:30pm-7:00pm



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