

Consultation on the proposed establishment of a Specialist Resources Provision (also known as a Specialist Base) at Edenbridge Primary School for pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder and/or those with speech, language and communication needs

Introduction

Kent County Council's vision is for pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) to achieve independence and employment, whenever possible, in or near their local community so that they can live fulfilled lives and be active contributors to Kent's future. Kent has high aspirations for pupils and young people with SEND. This will be achieved through improved joint working between education, health and social care services to include our pupils, young people and their parents and carers.

Kent County Council have a number of mainstream schools with Specialist Resources Provision (SRP) for primary pupils, however this is insufficient for the number of pupils requiring this support leading to pupils either being sent to out of borough provision which is problematic for families and costly for the authority, or being sent to special or mainstream only schools, which may be unsuitable to meet the needs of these pupils.

Rationale for the Edenbridge Primary School SRP

There is insufficient specialist provision for pupils in the Sevenoaks District, and additional provision is needed to ensure that pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and/or those with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) can access the support they need to achieve their academic potential. Edenbridge Primary School already has the capacity to house this provision.

The proposal

The Pioneer Academy is proposing to establish a specialist resource provision at Edenbridge Primary School for up to 20 pupils with ASD and/or SLCN to be implemented from September 2027, if approved.

The Pioneer Academy is a well-established Multi-Academy Trust with a proven track record of supporting a similar provision at eleven of its other sites. Edenbridge Primary School is considered by the Local Authority as an appropriate location for an SRP to be sited.

The SRP at Edenbridge Primary School will meet the needs of pupils with an EHCP, identified as ASD and/or SLCN, but whose needs are not so complex as to require a place at a special school. The proposed SRP will enable these pupils to have their additional needs met while accessing education at a primary school through a flexible approach tailored and adapted to their needs.

The establishment of an SRP at Edenbridge Primary School will build on the broad and balanced education already being delivered at this school and will further enhance the education offer the school provides to the community. The school has developed good working relationships with the Local Authority's SEND team and we are confident that this relationship will grow to support a wider range of pupils with learning difficulties.

The new facility will enable pupils with ASD and/or SLCN to have their needs met through a flexible approach, tailored and adapted to the needs of each individual child. It will be for pupils who will require specialist support to enable them to access a mainstream primary curriculum. It is proposed that the pupils will split their time between the mainstream classes and having bespoke support within the SRP, but with a very clear aim that time in the mainstream classes is maximised for each individual pupil. The SRP will be staffed by a team of teachers and support staff with knowledge and experience of working with pupils with ASD and/or SLCN. The purpose of the SRP will be to support these pupils to achieve their academic potential and also to explore ways to develop skills to enable them to access the next stage of their education.

What will be the impact of the new facility on other pupils in the school?

It is not envisaged that the new SRP will impact negatively on other pupils in the school. The impact is expected to have a positive effect in that having pupils with ASD and/or SLCN in the school will provide opportunities for other pupils to see their peers who access the provision as valuable members of the school community and society as a whole. Opportunities can be provided for pupils to understand, learn and contribute to the support for pupils in the SRP.

Admission and Pupil Numbers

Admissions to the SRP will follow a different procedure from that operating for the rest of the school. Admissions into the SRP will be determined by KCC SEND. This will not impact on pupils who are only in the mainstream setting at the school. Pupils attending the SRP would be in addition to the mainstream Published Admission Number (PAN) of 60. There would be up to 20 planned places in the SRP.

Funding

SRPs in Kent will be normally funded in accordance with a Place Led Funding approach that complies with the Government's SEND Funding Reforms which came into effect in April 2018.

What happens next?

The consultation is an opportunity for interested parties and stakeholders to express views and ask questions on the principle of establishing the SRP for pupils with ASD and/or SLCN at Edenbridge Primary School during the consultation period.

The consultation period starts on **Friday 18th September 2026** and will close on **Friday 16th October 2026**.

Edenbridge Primary School is part of The Pioneer Academy, so will have to follow the process for making significant changes to an academy; as the local authority is not the decision maker for academy organisational changes. The final decision as to whether this proposal is approved for implementation will be made by the Regional Advisory Board on behalf of the Department for Education.

The process for making significant changes to academies can be viewed in more detail here: Making significant changes to an open academy (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Have your say...

You can state whether you support this proposal or not by emailing consultation@thepioneeracademy.co.uk

This consultation document is being sent electronically to all parents/carers, governors, school teachers and support staff who work at Edenbridge Primary School and the trustees of The Pioneer Academy. Electronic copies are also being sent to all Kent primary, secondary and special schools, Kent County Council, ward members, MPs, Church Dioceses, all Early Years and Childcare providers, community groups, unions and other stakeholders.

The document will also be available on the Edenbridge Primary School website throughout the consultation period.