

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET MEMBER FOR ALL AGE LEARNING

DATE: 17 JULY 2018

LEAD OFFICER: DAVE HILL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LEARNING

SUBJECT: CHANGING THE AGE RANGE AND INCREASING PUPIL NUMBERS AT THE SPECIALIST CENTRE AT ASHFORD PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL



SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

Ashford Park Primary School is a two form entry primary school in the Spelthorne area of Surrey with a 'good' Ofsted rating. It currently operates a Learning and Additional Needs (LAN) centre for junior age (key stage 2) pupils only.

Officers are proposing to extend the age range of the specialist centre for pupils with LAN in order to align the SEND offer with the school age range. This means that the school would be able to accommodate pupils from Reception year who could stay through until year 6, if their needs are still able to be met by the school. It is proposed that numbers in the centre increase from 16 to 25.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for All Age Learning approves the change in age range and increase in pupil numbers at Ashford Park Primary School's specialist LAN centre, taking into account the outcome of the informal and statutory consultation period.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Increasing the age range at the LAN centre would aim to enable the specialist centre to have an age range aligned with the rest of Ashford Park School. This will enable greater integration, a smoother transition between key stages, increased efficiency and improved sustainability of the provision.

Demand for specialist centre provision in the north west area for pupils with LAN needs is high and other provision in the local area is operating at high levels of occupancy. The provision of additional key stage 1 places in a specialist LAN centre will help support local families who otherwise have to travel further afield. This will enable a decrease in home to school travel times and costs.

DETAILS:

Proposal

1. Officers are proposing to extend the age range of the specialist centre for pupils with LAN in order to align the SEND offer with the school age range. This means that the school would be able to accommodate pupils from

Reception year who could stay through until year 6, if their needs are still able to be met by the school.

2. It is proposed that the number of places changes from the current total of 16 planned places (notionally 4 per year group in key stage 2 only) to 25 (notionally 3 per year group for key stage 1 and 4 per year group at key stage 2). This will enable the provision to remain sustainable, to meet local demand and for it to match the age range of the rest of the school.

Rationale

3. Increasing the age range at the LAN centre would aim to enable the specialist centre to have an age range aligned with the rest of Ashford Park School. This arrangement would allow pupils to integrate when possible with their mainstream peers but also will enable the school to provide adequate resources to provide the appropriate level of specialist support. The school seeks to ensure these pupils receive a fully inclusive education within the LAN centre which allows them to thrive and progress through the school in a supportive environment and be fully prepared for a smooth, confident transition to their next phase of education.
4. Demand for specialist centre provision in the north east area for pupils with Special Educational needs is high and other provision in the local area is operating at high levels of occupancy. The provision of additional key stage 1 places in a specialist LAN centre will help support local families who otherwise have to travel further afield. This will enable a decrease in home to school travel times and costs.

Pupil Placement

5. There will be no impact on any of the current Ashford Park LAN centre pupils who will continue their education in the school until they are ready for secondary transition. New pupils into year R will be allocated places in the LAN centre through the EHCP and admissions processes.
6. Appropriate pupils for this provision would be identified and placed at Ashford Park's LAN centre using the Education Health Care Plan and subsequent review pathways. The document 'SEND admissions processes for referrals for specialist placement for school age children' describes how this process works and is available on the Surrey Local Offer website.

Benefits of the proposal

7. Aligning the age range of the SEND provision to the mainstream school will improve the offer for SEND families, providing more consistency and ensuring the provision is more sustainable. Enabling SEND pupils to integrate when possible with their mainstream peers will also be a benefit for these young people.
8. There are also likely to be cost savings as more pupils can be educated closer to home in maintained provision rather than being placed in costly NMI settings.
9. Meeting local demand and therefore enabling more pupils to be educated closer to home will provide an improved resident experience.

CONSULTATION:

10. A 4 week informal consultation period has taken place, where parents at Ashford Park Primary School and other stakeholders were provided with a consultation report and the opportunity to attend a public meeting. Nobody attended the consultation meeting and there were 3 responses to the consultation, all 3 respondents agreed with the proposals.
11. This informal consultation period was followed by a 4 week statutory consultation period. The Statutory Notice period ran from 4 June to noon on 3 July 2018 and generated 1 further response to the proposal. This respondent did not agree with the proposal and raised concerns about the impact of increased pupil numbers resulting in less focus for all pupils. The Local Authority believes that the school will make the necessary arrangements for the pupils in different age groups to be educated appropriately and with the increased funding levels available due to additional places this will allow any potential impact on existing pupils to be minimised.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

12. One risk of expanding the provision at Ashford Park would be if there were insufficient pupils to fill the proposed new places. Given the significant demand for LAN places in the north east and north west areas and as additional capital resources are not required to create the additional places, this risk likelihood is considered low and the impact would also be low.

Financial and Value for Money Implications

13. Due to the increase in places there will be an additional annual cost for the number of planned places. Each planned place will be funded at a base level of £6000 in addition to the usual pupil funding, age weighted pupil unit (AWPU). For each pupil that attends the centre a top up sum is also applied, this is approximately £4000 for LAN pupils or £6000 for High COIN pupils. Should there be under occupancy in the centre the Local Authority incurs an additional cost of £4000 per vacant place.
14. Due to the increase in places there will be an additional annual cost to ensure that additional speech and language therapy is available to the extra pupils accessing the centre. The additional therapy required equates to an annual cost around £16,000.
15. In order to support the creation of additional places for KS1 pupils capital resources are not required. The school site is able to accommodate a 25 place LAN centre across both KS1 and KS2.
16. By increasing provision in a Surrey maintained school more pupils with SEND will be able to be educated in maintained provision, thus saving on otherwise more costly placements in non-maintained independent settings (NMI). Transport costs are also likely to be lower with more pupils educated closer to home.

Section 151 Officer Commentary

17. The County Council is currently under significant financial pressure, so recommendations need to demonstrate value for money. The section 151 officer confirms there are additional revenue costs with this proposal, but it will enable SEND pupils to be educated in maintained provision, which is generally more cost effective than an external placement. A process for vacancy management will also need to be applied so that payments for vacant places are kept to an absolute minimum.
18. There is no requirement for capital expenditure in this proposal.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

19. There is a requirement for consultation in this context as set out in The School Organisation Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools (England) Regulations 2013.
20. Such consultation will need to involve those directly affected by such changes together with relevant representative groups. It will be important that the material presented to consultees provides sufficient information to allow for intelligent consideration and response in relation to the proposals. This information will need to be presented in a way that consultees will understand. The responses to the consultation will need to be conscientiously taken into account when the Cabinet Member makes the decision.
21. Section 13 of the Education Act 1996 places a general duty on the Council to secure that efficient primary and secondary education is available to meet the needs of the population in its area. This includes meeting the special educational needs of pupils where relevant. In doing so, the Council is required to contribute to the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community. Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on the Council to secure that sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary education are available in its area. There is a legal duty on the Council therefore to secure the availability of efficient education in its area and sufficient schools to enable this.

Equalities and Diversity

22. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed, this has identified potential positive impacts and a negative impact on groups with the protected characteristics of age and disability.
23. In relation to a potential negative impact on pupils identified in the EIA for pupils with a disability that may experience difficulties with change it is proposed that the school outlines a plan to prepare pupils for changes that may happen in the future.

Other Implications:

24. The potential implications for the following council priorities and policy areas have been considered. Where the impact is potentially significant a summary of the issues is set out in detail below.

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	Set out below
Environmental sustainability	Set out below
Public Health	No significant implications arising from this report

Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults implications

25. For vulnerable pupils with SEND, the provision of additional places, closer to home, will be beneficial. This may reduce travel time for many families and will also limit the number of school transitions as pupils will be able to stay in a single school throughout the primary phase.

Environmental sustainability implications

26. The provision of additional LAN places closer to home for residents with SEND will enable shorter travel distances and therefore a positive impact on environmental sustainability.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

27. If approved, the change in age range and number of places will take place from September 2018. The centre will admit a higher number of pupils and will start to admit pupils into key stage 1 where it is appropriate to individual pupil need. The usual SEND admissions process will be applied.

Contact Officer:

Julie Beckett, School Commissioning Officer (SEND), 01483 518109

Consulted:

Cabinet Member for All Age Learning
 Headteacher and Governing Body of Ashford Park Primary School
 Parents and carers at Ashford Park Primary School
 Surrey Primary Schools
 Liz Mills, Assistant Director, Schools and Learning
 Denise Turner-Stewart, Local County Councillor
 Local Borough Councillors
 Dioceses
 Unions

Annexes:

Equality Impact Assessment

Sources/background papers:

School Organisation consultation paper
<https://www.surreysays.co.uk/csf/ashford-park-centre/>

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