

## EXECUTIVE DECISION

From: **Matt Dunkley CBE, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education**

To: **Shellina Prendergast, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**

Subject: **Proposal to make prescribed changes to Meadowfield (Foundation) Special School from September 2022**

- **Establish a satellite provision for 16 primary aged pupils at Sunny Bank Primary School**
- **Increase the designated number from 348 to 366.**

Decision Number: **22/00043**

Key decision

- *It affects more than 2 Electoral Divisions*
- *It involves expenditure or savings of more than £1m*

Classification: **Unrestricted**

**Past Pathway of report:** Children's and Young People's Cabinet Committee – 10 May 2022

**Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision Electoral Division:**

Sittingbourne South – John Wright  
Sittingbourne North – Mike Dendor.

**Summary:** This report sets out the proposal to establish a primary satellite provision of Meadowfield Special School at Sunny Bank school for 16 primary pupils from September 2022. Meadowfield Special School is unable to expand on its main school site and demand for PSCN special school places in Swale district is increasing. The establishment of satellite provisions on mainstream education sites provides additional capacity whilst also enabling the school's expertise to be shared with the host school and provides Meadowfield students the opportunity to integrate, (where appropriate) with their mainstream peers.

### **Recommendation(s):**

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills is asked to agree the proposed decision to make prescribed changes to Meadowfield Special School and agree to:

Issue a public notice to:

- (i) Establish a satellite provision for 16 primary aged pupils at Sunny Bank Primary School.
- (iii) Increase the designated number from 348 to 366

And, subject to no objections being received to the public notice:

- (i) Establish a satellite provision for 16 primary aged pupils at Sunny Bank Primary School.
- (iii) Increase the designated number from 348 to 366

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2022-2026 sets out KCC's commissioning intentions and identified the need for additional Special School capacity. The proposal to expand Meadowfield Special School by establishing a primary satellite provision at Sunny Bank Primary School will help to meet this need.
- 1.2 Meadowfield (Foundation) Special School is a day provision for boys and girls aged 3 to 19 with Profound, Severe and Complex Needs (PSCN) including Autism. In addition to the main building at Swanstree Avenue Sittingbourne, the school also operates a 6th form provision at Ufton Lane Sittingbourne. The new satellite at Sunny Bank Primary School will provide additional opportunities and choice for integration for Meadowfield pupils.

## **2. The Proposal**

- 2.1 This proposal will help to secure our ambition "to ensure that Kent's young people have access to the education, work and skills opportunities necessary to support Kent business to grow and be increasingly competitive in the national and international economy" as set out in 'Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council's Strategic Statement (2017 - 2022)'.
- 2.2 Meadowfield Special School is unable to expand any further on its main school site and demand for PSCN Special school places in Swale district is increasing. The establishment of satellite provisions on mainstream education sites provides additional capacity whilst also enabling the school's expertise to be shared with the host school and provide Meadowfield students the opportunity to integrate, (where appropriate) with their mainstream peers.
- 2.3 Meadowfield Special school cannot be expanded on their main school site and options to open a satellite on a primary school in Sittingbourne was investigated. Sunny Bank Primary School was identified as a possible site for a satellite due to its proximity to Meadowfield, the support of the academy trust for the proposal and having accommodation which could easily be reconfigured in order to open a satellite within the timescales.
- 2.4 The pupils attending the satellites would continue to have access to all the support they require and would be on the roll of Meadowfield Special School. Their Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) would name Meadowfield as their school. Significant benefits have been identified as the proposal will develop and strengthen partnership between the provisions and enable staff skills and expertise to be developed through joint training, curriculum development and the sharing of good practice. Pupils will benefit from inclusive school
- 2.5 Sunny Bank Primary School has identified an area within the school that can provide its own dedicated accommodation of three classrooms and additional intervention space and external play area. The children would have a class

base where they can receive some individual and small group teaching. The class would also provide a base for specialist staff who will support the children when they are included in mainstream teaching groups with children of the same age. The children will be on the school roll of Meadowfield School and the specialist teachers and teaching assistants will also be provided by Meadowfield School. A specialist assessment of the children's needs will identify that they are suitable for the mainstream school satellite. The headteachers of the schools will discuss who is most appropriate and should be admitted, if supported by parents.

### **3. Consultation**

3.1 The Education consultation was held by KCC, Meadowfield and Sunny Bank Primary School from 1 March to 29 March 2022. The consultation documents were distributed to parents/carers, school staff and governors, County Councillors, Members of Parliament, the Diocesan Authorities, the relevant Clinical Commissioning Group, local libraries, Swale District Council, and others. The consultation documents were also available on the KCC consultation website where an on-line response form could be completed. The consultation documents were also available on both school's websites. An opportunity was also provided to send in written responses via a response form to the school consultations email address.

The consultations closed on 29 March 2022 and a total 45 responses were received, 24 were supportive of the proposal with 12 against and 9 were undecided.

3.2 The Headteacher and Governing body of Meadowfield and the Governing Body of Sunny Bank Primary School are all in support of the proposals.

3.3 The Area Education Officer for East Kent fully supports the expansion of Meadowfield through the establishment of the proposed satellite provision.

3.4 The Members for Sittingbourne have been consulted on the proposal during the consultation period.

### **4. Financial Implications**

4.1 Sunny Bank Primary School has identified an area which can be reconfigured and redecorated and will ensure the satellite has its own dedicated accommodation of 3 classrooms and additional intervention space and external play area. The capital costs for refitting and reconfiguration of classrooms at Sunny Bank Primary School and creation of an external play area will be £300K and will be funded through the KCC Basic Need Capital Budget.

4.2 Revenue funding will also be allocated to enable the school to resource each new learning space. At present this is at a value of £6,000 per classroom.

### **5. Legal implications**

5.1 A service level agreement specifying the responsibilities of each party and any revenue costs to be covered will be put into place between Meadowfield Special School and Sunny Bank Primary School.

- 5.2 The provision of sufficient school places is a statutory duty and contributes to the Strategic Business Plan Priorities to ensure that “Children and Young People in Kent get the best start in life

## **6. Equalities implications**

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been produced and the assessment identified the following positive impacts:

- Ensure there are sufficient special school place available for children in Swale district.
- Ensure that there is sufficient local provision through satellites at mainstream school sites.
- Children with Complex needs and ASD will be able to attend satellite provision in mainstream primary and secondary schools.

No adverse impacts were identified during the assessment.

## **7. Other corporate implications**

- 7.1 None identified.

## **8. Governance**

- 8.1 The Officer Scheme of Delegation; under Appendix 2 part 4 of the Council's Constitution provides a clear and appropriate link between this decision and the actions needed to implement it. The proposed decision will authorise the Director of Infrastructure, Strategic and Corporate Services in consultation with the General Counsel and Director of Education to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council. It will also authorise the Director of Infrastructure, Strategic and Corporate Services to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts.

## **9. Conclusions**

- 9.1 The increasing demand for special school places in Swale district, particularly for pupils with complex learning difficulties including ASD, has led to Meadowfield taking additional children. Meadowfield is unable to expand on its main school site in Sittingbourne. To meet the increasing demand the establishment of satellite provisions on mainstream school sites creates the additional required capacity, enables the school's expertise to be shared with the host provisions and also provides Meadowfield students with the opportunity to integrate, where appropriate, with their mainstream peers.

## **9. Recommendation(s):**

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills is asked to agree the proposed decision to make prescribed changes to Meadowfield Special School and agree to:

Issue a public notice to:

- (i) Establish a satellite provision for 16 primary aged pupils at Sunny Bank Primary School.
- (iii) Increase the designated number from 348 to 366

And, subject to no objections being received to the public notice:

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## **10. Background Documents**

### 10.1 Consultation documents

[www.kent.gov.uk/schoolconsultations](http://www.kent.gov.uk/schoolconsultations)

### 10.2 Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision

[www.kent.gov.uk/educationprovision](http://www.kent.gov.uk/educationprovision)

### 10.3 Setting the Course - Our Interim Strategic Plan

[Setting the Course - Our Interim Strategic Plan - Kent County Council](#)

## **11. Contact details**

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