

EXECUTIVE DECISION

From: **Sarah Hammond, Interim Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education**

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

Subject: **Governing Body proposal to make prescribed changes to Laleham Gap (Foundation) Special School from September 2022**

- **Change the age-range of Laleham Gap (Foundation Special) School from 4-17 years to 4-18 years**
- **Increase the designated number of the school from 178 to 188.**

Decision Number: **22/00060**

Key decision

- *It requires a Statutory process and Cabinet Member decision.*

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of report: Children's and Young People's Cabinet Committee 19 July 2022

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

Ramsgate – Karen Constantine
Trevor Shonk

Summary: This report sets out for consideration the results of the consultation held by the Governing Body of Laleham Gap (Foundation Special) School and the subsequent statutory public notice published by the Governing Body to make the following prescribed alterations

- I Change the age-range of Laleham Gap School from 4-17 years to 4-18 years
- II. Increase the designated number of the school from 178 to 188.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills is asked to agree the proposal by the Governing Body of Laleham Gap School and determine that the school should implement their proposal to change the age range from 4-17 to 4-18 years increase the designated number of the school from 178-188.

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. As the strategic commissioner of school provision, the Local Authority has a duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places for the residents of Kent, including sufficient special educational needs places. The Commissioning Plan outlines the requirement for the need to significantly increase the number of supported internships and study programmes that

include personalised support and high-quality work experience placements post 16. The post-16 provision will give the students the additional time they need for a more successful transition into their college place.

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 Laleham Gap School is a Special School and has a designated number of 178. The school specialises in providing education for pupils aged 4-17 years who have Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) with Speech, Language and Communication Needs. All pupils have an Education, Health & Care plan.
- 2.3 The Governing Body is proposing that in addition to their existing year 12 provision, they will offer a limited number of up to 5 year 12 and up to 5 year 13 places. These will be two-year placements for young people that have been identified through the annual review process. This new two-year programme, in addition to transition work, will provide more opportunities for the young people to gain qualifications that will assist them in their next educational placement or employment.
- 2.4 These proposals will improve support to students who need additional support to move onto further education or into work and are intended to reduce the dropout rate from pupils attending college from Laleham Gap and reduce NEETs.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 The Education consultation was undertaken by the Governors of Laleham Gap with support from KCC from 7 January 2022 to 4 February 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, Thanet District Council, and others. The consultation documents were available on KCC’s education webpage and on the school’s website. The link to the websites was circulated to statutory stakeholders. All interested parties were provided with the opportunity to send in responses via the school, by post and email.

3.2 The consultation timeline

Agreement from Governing Body to hold the consultation	November 2021
Public Consultation period	7 January 2022 to 4 February 2022
Public Meeting date	4pm on 18 January 2022 via Teams
Outcome decision from Governing Body on	March 2022

consultation	
Public Notice period	20 April 2022 – 18 May 2022
Outcome decision from Governing Body on Public Notice	25 May 2022
CYPE CC meeting (record of decision)	19 July 2022
Four-week appeal period	2 August – 30 August 2022
Implementation	September 2022

3.3 A virtual drop-in consultation event was organised by the school on 18 January 2022. This provided the opportunity for parents and carers to ask any questions regarding the proposal..

3.4 The consultation closed on 4 February 2022 and a total of 22 responses to the education consultation were received with all the responses supportive of the proposal.

3.5 The view of the local Members:
Karen Constantine and Trevor Shonk, the Local Members have been informed of the proposal.

3.6 The view of the Area Education Officer
Laleham Gap School is a good and popular school, and we support its proposal to change its age range to enable the school to offer a small number of two year placements for years 12 and 13. This will give the small number of pupils who need the additional time in school the support they may need to successfully transition into their college or work placements.

3.7 The Governing body considered the outcome of the education consultation and made the decision to publish the Public Notice.

4. Statutory Public Notice

4.1 The Public Notice for Laleham Gap was published on 20 April 2022 for 4 weeks in the local Kent Messenger. Laleham Gap Governing Body received no responses to the Public Notice. The Governing Body met on 25 May 2022 and decided to proceed with the proposal and to request that the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills make the final determination and agree that the proposal can be implemented.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 Capital

There will be limited alterations to the Phoenix building at Laleham Gap school to accommodate the proposed two year placements. This can be met within the school's own resources.

5.2 Revenue

The LA will agree the commissioned number of post 16 places with the school, based on actual level of need, up to a maximum of 10, on an annual basis. The commissioning cycle which commences each autumn will confirm the number of known students who will require a place for the following September. Approved changes can be made during the academic year if required and funding will follow.

6. Legal implications

6.1 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

7. Equalities implications

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

- There will be more places available to meet the needs of children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) with Speech, Language and Communication Needs
- The additional places and change of age-range will mean that more families and children will benefit from the specialist facilities provided by the school. It is especially expected to benefit students aged 16+ and help to address the current drop out rate when students move onto FE college.

No adverse impacts were identified during the assessment.

8. Other corporate implications

8.1 None identified.

9. Governance

9.1 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.

10. Conclusions

- 10.1 The proposal to change the age range of Laleham Gap will enable the school to offer 5 2-year places (10 in total) for Years 12 and 13 with effect from September 2022. This new two-year programme, in addition to transition work, will provide more opportunities for the young people to gain qualifications and help them make a successful transition to college or into work. It is intended to help address the needs of some students who struggle to manage in college or other placements and would help them achieve qualifications whilst developing the life skills required to help them cope with their next step.

11. Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills is asked to agree the proposal by the Governing Body of Laleham Gap School and determine that the school should implement their proposal to change the age range from 4-17 to 4-18 years increase the designated number of the school from 178-188.

12. Background Documents

- 12.1 Consultation documents
www.kent.gov.uk/schoolconsultations
- 12.2 Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision
www.kent.gov.uk/educationprovision
- 12.3 Setting the Course - Our Interim Strategic Plan
[Setting the Course - Our Interim Strategic Plan - Kent County Council](#)

13. Contact details

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