

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

To: Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education

Subject: Proposal to increase the designated number of the Aspen Specialist Resource Provision at Whitfield Aspen Primary School from 96 to 112 places.

Decision Number: 19/00033

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: None

Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Member decision

Electoral Division: Dover West

Summary: This report sets out the results of the public consultation on the proposal to increase the designated number of the Aspen Specialist Resource Provision at Whitfield Aspen Primary School from 96 to 112 places.

Recommendation(s): The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education is asked to authorise the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education to issue Public Notice to increase the designated number of the Aspen Specialist Resource Provision at Whitfield Aspen Primary School from 96 to 112 places.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Kent County Council (KCC) as the Strategic Commissioner of Education Provision in the County is responsible for ensuring there are sufficient high-quality school places for all learners, including pupils with Special Educational Needs.
- 1.2 The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent (KCP) 2019-23, noted that the demand for specialist places will continue to increase in line with population growth, and set out our intentions to commission a further 1,351 places across the next three academic years as follows:

Special School Commissioning Intentions

(included planned SRPs, expansions to special schools, new special schools and satellites).

by 2019-20	by 2020-21	by 2021-22
347 places	466 places	538 places

- 1.3 New SEN places will be commissioned in a variety of settings, including new special schools, satellites of special schools and specialist resourced provisions (SRPs) within mainstream schools. Commissioning specialist places in this way increases choice for families and supports KCC in assuring there are sufficient places in the right place at the right time.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 We are proposing to increase the designated number of the Aspen Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) at Whitfield Aspen Primary School from 96 to 112 places from September 2019.
- 2.2 The Aspen provision at Whitfield Aspen School, Dover is a SRP for pupils with PSCN. Dover does not have a dedicated PSCN special school. At secondary age, the PSCN provision is via an SRP based at Dover Christ Church Academy, known as Aspen 2.
- 2.3 The designated number for the SRP at Whitfield Aspen School is 96. Currently the school has 110 pupils on roll who have Aspen set out as their provision within their Education, Health and Care Plans. This number is expected to increase to 112 in September 2019. It is necessary, therefore, to regularise this situation and increase the designated number of the SRP via the statutory process.
- 2.4 A low key consultation has been undertaken, informing parents and statutory consultees of the need to formally increase the designated number. As the children are, in the main, already on roll at the School families will see no difference in their School's operation.

3. Consultation outcomes

- 3.1 No responses were received to the public consultation.

4. Views

- 4.1 The view of the Local Member- Cllr Geoff Lymer

I welcome the small increase in the designated number as more pupils can attend the SRP.

- 4.2 The views of the HT and the Governing Body

Mr Jason Cook, Jason Cook- Headteacher Whitfield Aspen Primary School:

Aspen is the Specialist Resource Provision within Whitfield Aspen School. In 2008 it was redesigned and rebuilt with purpose-built classrooms for the SRP children as well as YR4-6 main school children. Due to high demand for the Specialist Provision we have used every available space to accommodate a growing pupil population. We have a satellite class within a local primary school which accommodates 14 children which has helped us with physical space. Increasing our designated number to 112 for 2019/20 is something the school supports going forward because we are expecting the extension to our school to be ready by Easter 2020. We currently operate with this number anyway. Space for additional children above 112 is non-existent – the SEN assessment officers will not be able to apply a 10% above the designated number policy because we are full.

Mr Roger Knight- Chair of Governors

The Governing Body supports KCC's proposal to increase the designated number of the Aspen SRP from 96 to 112 places. However, we are concerned that this number will be breached as it has been many times in the past. We agree with the view of the Headteacher that there is no space within the school to expand further than 112 places.

We expect that KCC SEN assessment officers agree and understand that by increasing this number to 112 places, we are firm that we cannot accept any further pupils. They must not assume that we can take a further 10% which would amount to 11 extra pupils, quite clearly that would not be possible.

The School is proud of the inclusion that takes place between pupils in the SRP and the mainstream classes. Governors are already aware of the impact that increasing numbers has put on inclusion. Unrealistic additional SEN pupil numbers will affect the current high quality and meaningful inclusion work delivered within the school, putting increased pressure on existing and making future facilities extremely challenging.

4.3 The Views of the Area Education Officer, David Adams

As the number of pupils on role in the Aspen SRP has exceeded the present designated number by more than 10%, legislation requires that we hold run a statutory process to regularise the current situation and increased the designated number.

We appreciate that the school has been under pressure prior to the delivery of the satellite. We will continue to work with the school to manage the pressure for specialist places until the satellite is delivered.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 a. Capital – The increase in the designated number proposed in this paper does not have any capital costs, the pupils already being in the school. Separately, £7,990,000 has been committed from the Children’s, Young People and Education Capital budget for the agreed expansion of Whitfield Aspen School via a satellite site. This includes further specialist provision for the Aspen SRP.
- b. Revenue –SRP places will be funded in line with the Primary and Secondary Schools Funding Guidance 2019-20.
- c. Human – Schools will appoint additional staff as required, as the school size increases and the need arises.

6. Vision and Priorities for Improvement

- 6.1 The proposals will help to secure our ambition that “Every child and young person should be able to go to a good or outstanding Early Years setting and school, have access to the best teaching, and benefit from schools and other providers working in partnership with each other to share the best practice as they continue to improve” as set out in Vision and Priorities for Improvement 2018-2021.

7. SEND Strategy 2017-19

- 7.1 This proposal support three overarching aims of the SEND Strategy 2017-19:
- Improve the educational, health and emotional wellbeing outcomes for Kent’s children and young people with SEN and disabilities.
 - Ensure Kent delivers the statutory changes (required by the Children and Families Act 2014).

- Address the gaps in provision for children and young people with SEN and disabilities, improve the quality of provision, develop the broadest range of providers, and encourage a mixed economy of provision.

8. Delegation to Officers

- 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.

9. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed as part of the consultation. To date no comments have been received and no changes are required to the Equality Impact Assessment.

10. Recommendation(s)

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education is asked to authorise the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education to issue Public Notice to increase the designated number of the Aspen Specialist Resource Provision at Whitfield Aspen Primary School from 96 to 112 places.

11. Background Documents

- 11.1 Vision and Priorities for Improvement

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/education-skills-and-employment-policies/vision-and-priorities-for-improvement>

- 11.2 'Working Together, Improving Outcomes' Kent's Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 2017-2019

https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/13323/Strategy-for-children-with-special-educational-needs-and-disabilities.pdf

- 11.3 Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2019-23

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/education-provision/education-provision-plan>

12. Contact details

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