

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL –PROSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

**Roger Gough,
Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and
Education**

DECISION NO:

19/00036

Unrestricted

Key decision: **YES**

Subject: Proposed changes to Grange Park School, Borough Green Road, Wrotham, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN15 7RD.

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education, I propose to:

- (i) increase the designated number of places offered at Grange Park School from 100 to 150;
- (ii) alter the lower age range of Grange Park School from 11 to 8 (11-19 to 8-19 years);
- (iii) establish a 36 place Key Stage 2 satellite provision of Grange Park School at the former Stansted CE Primary School site at Malthouse Road, Stansted, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN15 7PH.

Changes to be implemented from 1st July 2019.

Reason(s) for decision:

- 1.1 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. This duty applies to Special School provision, as well as mainstream settings. The County Council's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2019-23 is a five-year rolling plan which is updated annually. It sets out our future plans as Strategic Commissioner of Education Provision across all types and phases of education in Kent.
- 1.2 Within the Specialist Provision section of the Commissioning Plan, Kent details plans to provide increased Special Educational Needs (SEN) places to meet the demand for places and to reduce the proportion of pupils attending independent placements.
- 1.3 In recent years, Kent has experienced place pressure through all phases of education, including SEN, with the number of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) continuing to increase as a result. The increased place pressure has been evident for all the main SEN need types, with autistic spectrum Disorder (ASD) being the most prevalent and fastest growing need type.
- 1.4 Of the pupils with an EHCP in Kent, 40% have ASD, which is significantly higher than the national figure of 27%. Of the children with ASD, 32% are in Key Stage 2 (KS2). Currently there are insufficient Kent special school places to cater for this age range. This has led to an increasing number of KS2 children with ASD being placed in the independent sector at an average cost of £36,200; which costs around £17,000 more than a placement in a Kent special school.
- 1.5 The pressure for places at Grange Park has continued to rise commensurately with the

increased county demand, with strong parental preference. Grange Park is a specialist provision for children and young people aged between 11 and 19 with an Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC). The school is based on four sites: the main site at Wrotham (11-19) as well as partnership sites for Key Stage 5 at Mid Kent College, Gillingham, Mid Kent College, Maidstone and Hadlow College.

1.6 In order to meet the demand for local places, it is proposed that Grange Park School will increase its designated number of places offered from 100 to 150, alter the lower age range from 11 to 8 years and to establish a 36 place Key Stage 2 satellite facility at the former Stansted CE Primary School site from 1st July 2019. The 36 places in the Satellite provision would be included within the new designated number of 150.

1.7 The main Grange Park school site is currently full to its designated number of 100 places and there is limited capacity on the site for physical expansion of the school. The new satellite would take advantage of an existing building that was designed for education use. The former Stansted CE Primary School site is situated approximately 3 miles from the Grange Park site at Wrotham. This close proximity would enable Grange Park to viably extend its provision to a greater number of children within their local area.

1.8 Through the proposed increase in the designated number, the Wrotham site's designated capacity would increase to 114 places for pupils aged 11-19 and the Stanstead satellite provision would have a designated capacity of 36 KS2 places.

Equality Implications

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the education consultation in accordance with the Council's equality duty, having due regard to equality considerations when commissioning additional school capacity. The full document can be found via this link:

<https://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/Grangepark/consultationHome>

Financial Implications

Capital – There is no additional capital expenditure required for this proposal.

Revenue – Grange Park will receive additional revenue funding in accordance with the Pupil Growth Policy established by KCC and the Schools' Funding Forum.

Human - The schools will appoint additional staff as and when appropriate.

Legal Implications

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. This duty applies to Special School provision, as well as mainstream settings.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

The County Council's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2019-23 is a five-year rolling plan which is updated annually. It sets out our future plans as Strategic Commissioner of Education Provision across all types and phases of education in Kent. All alternatives were explored as part of this process.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

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signed

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date