

# School Organisation Consultation

Proposal to expand and change the designation of the SEN Unit at Ashford Park Primary from a designation of MLD to a designation of ASD

September 2022



**SURREY**  
COUNTY COUNCIL

## School Organisation Informal Consultation

### Local Authority Details:

<b>Local Authority</b>	Surrey County Council
<b>Address</b>	Quadrant Court 35 Guildford Road Woking GU22 7QQ

### School Details:

<b>Name of School</b>	Ashford Park Primary School
<b>Category of School</b>	Primary School
<b>Type of School</b>	Community School
<b>URN</b>	125113
<b>Address</b>	Station Crescent, Staines-upon-Thames, Ashford
<b>Postcode</b>	TW15 3HN

## Introduction

This paper outlines a proposal to expand the SEN unit at Ashford Park Primary School from 21 to 25 places and change the designation from MLD to a designation of ASD<sup>1</sup>.

This document explains the proposed process and timescales to expand and change the designation of the SEN Unit at Ashford Park Primary School.

## Background Information

The SEN Unit at Ashford Park Primary has a designation of MLD. In July 2018 a decision was made at the [Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning meeting](#) to expand the SEN Unit from 16 to 25 places. Due to the low numbers of pupils in Year R (Reception) to Year 2 requiring a MLD designated specialist school place and the increased demand for specialist school places for autistic pupils and those with communication needs the local authority agreed with the school for the infant year groups to be available for autistic pupils and those with communication and interaction needs. Current capacity constraints mean that the physical space required for a 25 place SEN Unit has not increased and therefore the existing provision can only accommodate a maximum of 21 planned places.

This consultation is a proposal to secure places for autistic pupils and those with communication and interaction needs by changing the designation of the SEN Unit from MLD to ASD. The SEN Unit will expand from 21 planned places to 25 planned places. A feasibility study has informed the development approach required to repurpose, remodel and expand the SEN Unit at Ashford Park Primary School to ensure long-term sustainability.

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<sup>1</sup> Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is the term used by the Department for Education (DfE) as the school designation that meets the needs of autistic pupils and those with communication and interaction needs. Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) is the DfE school designation, known locally in Surrey as Learning and Additional Needs (LAN).

## Proposal

Surrey County Council and the Governing Body of Ashford Park Primary School are proposing to expand the SEN Unit from 21 places to 25 places and to change the designation from MLD to ASD.

Table 1 shows the proposed timeline for the changes to take place on 1 September 2023. Dates and steps in the timeline may change based on the outcome of this consultation.

**Table 1: Proposed timeline**

Phase	Date
Consultation	27 Sept – 6 Nov 2022
Review of consultation responses	Nov 2022
Outcome of consultation published on <a href="http://www.surreysays.co.uk">www.surreysays.co.uk</a>	Nov 2022
Statutory notices	Nov / Dec 2022
Lead Cabinet Member Decision	Jan 2023
Implementation	Sept 2023

It is proposed that:

1. The school designation changes from MLD (known locally in Surrey as Learning and Additional Needs (LAN)) to a designation of ASD (school designation for autistic pupils and those with communication and interaction needs).
2. The SEN Unit will expand from 21 places to 25 places to allow an additional intake in Key Stage 2. There will be 9 places in Year R to Year 2 and an extra intake of 1 place at the key stage transfer in in Year 3 to create 16 places in Year 3 to Year 6.
3. There will be no change to the mainstream provision.
4. All pupils placed at the SEN Unit by Surrey County Council would have an EHCP specifying the school as an appropriate placement to meet their individual needs. Further details on the admissions process for SEND specialist provision in Surrey can be found on the [Surrey Local Offer website](#). 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 County Council website.
5. A feasibility study has informed the development approach required to repurpose, remodel and expand the SEN Unit at Ashford Park Primary School to ensure long-term sustainability.

## Making Representations, Objections and Comments

1. This is an informal consultation which starts on Tuesday 27 September 2022 and concludes 6 November 2022.
2. A number of organisations are available locally to support families of children who have special educational needs and/ or disabilities (SEND) and young people who have SEND to share their views. Please see [Information, Advice and Support – SEND Advice Surrey](#)

3. Any person can make comments, agree, or object to the proposal by sending representations to the Local authority through the following channels:

<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.surreysays.co.uk">www.surreysays.co.uk</a>
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk">schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk</a>
<b>Post</b>	Jane Keenan Education Place Planning Surrey County Council Quadrant Court 35 Guildford Road Woking GU22 7QQ

## Background

Ashford Park Primary School is a 3-form entry primary school with a Special Educational Needs (SEN) Unit in the borough of Spelthorne in Surrey. The school was rated 'Good' by Ofsted in a full inspection in December 2014 and sustained a 'Good' in a short inspection in September 2018.

**Table 2: Number of Pupils on roll at Ashford Park Primary School by National Curriculum Year (NCY) Group (September 2022)**

	Year R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
<b>Number of pupils currently at add name School</b>	92	91	89	89	88	91	82	615

## School Vision and Curriculum

More information about the school's vision and curriculum can be found at the school website [Ashford Park Primary School](#)

## Current Special Educational Needs provision

The SEN Unit at Ashford Park Primary currently has 21 places and a designation of MLD.

The school have been committed to meeting the special educational needs of pupils and ensuring that they make good progress.

Due to the low numbers of pupils in Year R to Year 2 requiring a MLD designated specialist school place and the increased demand for specialist school places for autistic pupils and those with communication needs the local authority agreed with the school for the infant year groups to be available for autistic pupils and those with communication and interaction needs. Although the places in the Junior year groups remained available for pupils with MLD, historically when there has been space and the pupils needs can be met by the school, autistic pupils and those with communication needs who have attended the SEN Unit in the infant year groups have transitioned to the Junior Year groups of the SEN Unit.

In Sept 2022 there are 10 pupils attending the SEN Unit in Year R to Year 2. A SEN Unit for autistic pupils and those with communication needs has been identified as part of their EHCP. As some pupils have moved up from Year 2 to Year 3, there is currently a mix of autistic pupils and those with

communication and interaction needs, and pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) in Year 3 to Year 6. There are 13 pupils in Year 3 to 6 85% have a diagnosis of communication and interaction needs 15% of pupils in Year 3 to 6 have a diagnosis of MLD.

## **What do we want to achieve?**

The aim of the proposal is to expand and change the designation of the SEN unit at Ashford Park Primary School, from a designation of MLD to ASD. This will secure places for autistic pupils and those with communication needs.

## **What will be provided through the SEN Unit?**

Pupils attending Ashford Park Primary would be in addition to the mainstream Planned Admission Number (PAN) of the school, as there is an expectation that a minimum of 50% of the school day would be spent in the Acorn Centre. This would enable meaningful inclusion into the mainstream classes which is wholly individualised to the needs of the pupil. Some pupils may spend more time in the Acorn Centre than others and it would be the responsibility of the school to manage the specialist offer and inclusion levels in partnership with the parents and Local Authority officers.

### **Curriculum and Educational Offer**

The Acorn Centre will provide Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision for autistic pupils and those with communication and interaction needs from Reception to Year 6

Pupils will spend around 60% of the school day in the Acorn Centre. The remaining 40% of the time will be spent in their mainstream class, accessing the mainstream curriculum, alongside their peers. Their school day will start at 8:40am and will end at 3:15pm. Pupils will be supported in a group of up to 3 in their mainstream class by a Learning Support Assistant (LSA) in Reception and Key Stage 1, and up to 4 in Key Stage 2.

The Acorn Centre will continue to offer specialist teaching of literacy, numeracy, Personal Social Health and Economic (PSHE), social skills and life skills. Pupils will spend the mornings in the centre covering these subjects, equating to around 1 hour of literacy and 1 hour of numeracy. The remainder of the time in the Centre will be spent covering PSHE, social skills, life skills and time for interventions. In the afternoon, pupils will include with their mainstream class, covering science and foundation subjects; approximately 2 hours a day.

Pupils will have access to a broad and balanced curriculum which is personalised to meet their needs. The Acorn Centre will continue to run a three-year rolling curriculum using key themes and quality text as a vehicle to teach literacy and numeracy alongside scaffolds and programs to support the children's learning, such as Colourful Semantics and Numicon. Other autism-specific strategies and interventions will be implemented including Attention Autism, Intensive Interaction, TEACCH®, comic-strip conversations, social stories, Lego-based therapy, Emotional Regulation and Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS®). Pupils will receive these interventions as necessary. These will sometimes be outlined in their EHCPs.

Centre staff will continue to receive support and advice from professionals, including speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and educational psychologists to help support pupils. Some of this support will include on-site sessions for pupils and training for staff.

A regular programme of exercise is offered to all the pupils. Professionals from other agencies including physiotherapy, occupational therapy and health are welcomed to the school to support pupils with specific needs and their advice is incorporated into individual plans.

## **Staff**

The staff team in the Acorn Centre include experienced members who have worked with autistic pupils and those with communication and interaction needs for a number of years. The Acorn centre manager has a specialism in working with autistic pupils. All staff have had either internal or external training on autism-specific strategies including Attention Autism Bucket, PECS®, TEACCH® and social stories. They have also had training and experience in other appropriate strategies and approaches including comic strip conversations, colourful semantics and Zones of Regulation.

By changing the designation from MLD to a designation of ASD, staff can focus their professional development on continuing to progress their knowledge and understanding in how best to support autistic pupils and those with communication needs. This will also benefit the whole school, as staff can share their expertise and resources.

## **Reasons for the expansion and change of designation of the SEN unit at Ashford Park Primary School.**

Surrey County Council has identified a long term sufficiency gap for additional specialist places across Surrey. Demand for specialist provision in the north east of Surrey for autistic pupils and those with communication and interaction needs is high. As a result, other specialist provision in the local area are operating at or above capacity. The provision of an additional 16 places, will help support local families who would otherwise have to travel further afield for their child to receive an appropriate full-time education. The proposed expansion and change in designation at Ashford Park Primary SEN Unit will increase availability of specialist places that are matched appropriately to need-type, phases of education and geographic location, as well as reduce home to school journey times and associated costs.

SEN Units with a designation of ASD in Mainstream Schools support autistic pupils and those with communication and interaction needs whose additional needs are such that they are able to spend approximately 50% of the taught curriculum in mainstream classes with support. This type of provision supports pupils who benefit from the specialist support of the SEN unit while accessing inclusion in mainstream classes. By developing local specialist provision, children can learn and flourish in their own community and be part of a familiar setting which supports their unique way of learning.

Demand data for both Special Schools and SEN Units is included in the graphs below. There are fewer SEN Unit places than Special School places and pupils tend to attend SEN Units closer to home. Where SEN Unit places are not available autistic pupils and those with communication & interaction needs may be placed out of county in non-maintained independent schools. Therefore the data shown below is forecasting the number of pupils who need a specialist place either in an SEN Unit or Special School.

In academic year 2020-2021, 1190 of Surrey resident pupils aged 4-11 years old who are autistic or have communication & interaction needs attended SEN Units or specialist schools. 13% of this cohort were placed out of county due to a lack of placement availability in Surrey. Latest sufficiency modelling projects growth of 15% from 1190 in 2020-21 to 1368 in 2025-2026.

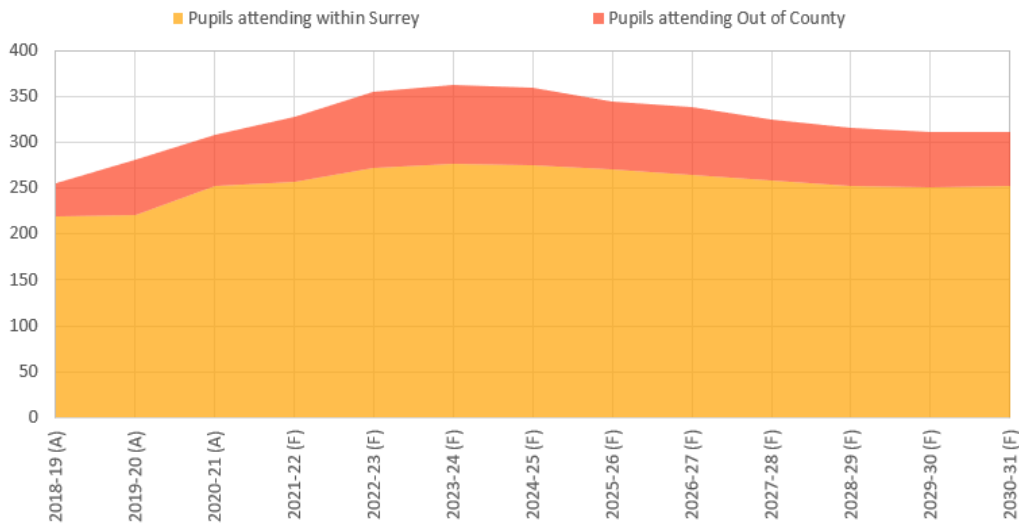
In academic year 2020-2021, 149 of Surrey resident pupils aged 4-11 years old who have a primary need of Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) attended SEN Units or specialist schools. 8% of this cohort were placed out of county. Latest sufficiency modelling projects decreasing demand of -45% from 149 in 2020-21 to 82 in 2029-2030.



## Autistic pupils and those with communication and interaction needs

Graph 1 shows that North East projections indicate 17% growth in the total number of autistic pupils and those with communication & interaction needs, with EHCPs who need a specialist school or SEN unit place from 2020-21 (309) to the peak in 2023-24 (363), with 12% growth remaining in 2025/26 (345).

**Graph 1: North East - Forecast of demand for special school and SEN Unit places from Year R to Year 6 for pupils with an EHCP with a primary need of autism or communication and interaction needs**

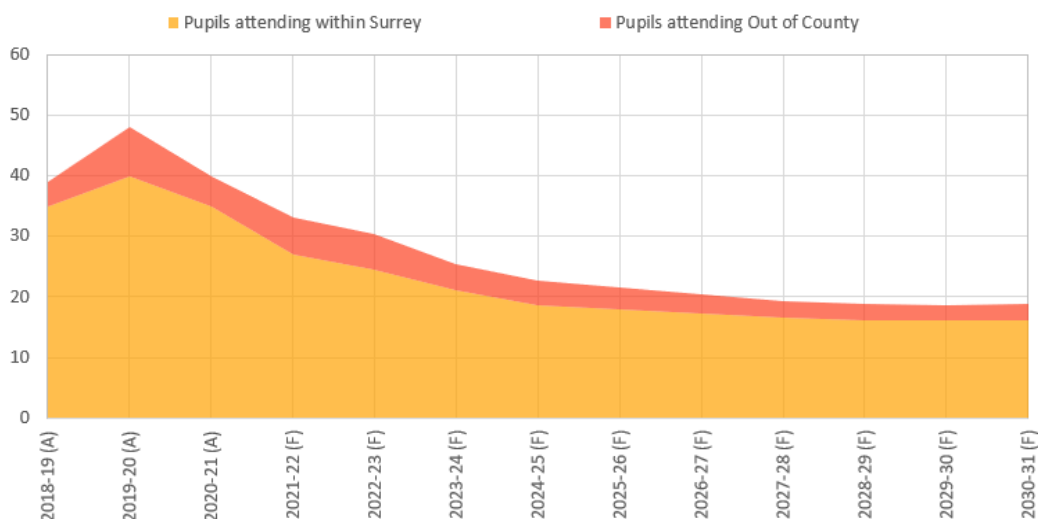


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## Pupils with a primary need of Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)

Graph 3 shows that North East projections indicate -53% decrease in demand in the total number of pupils with the primary need Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) in their EHCP, who need a specialist school or SEN unit place from 2020-21 (40) to 19 in 2030/31 (19).

**Graph 3: North East - Forecast of demand for special school and SEN Unit places from Year R to Year 6 for pupils with an EHCP with a primary need of Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)**



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## ASD and MLD SEN Unit provision in Surrey

More details of our specialist provision can be found in the booklet “Finding the right primary school in Surrey” on the [Surrey Local Offer website](#).

Table 3 provides a summary of 8 SEN Units designated to meet the needs of autistic pupils and those with communication & interaction as their primary presenting needs.

**Table 3: Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) and Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) Designated SEN Units in Mainstream Schools in Surrey**

School	Designation	District	Planned Places	Age Range	Planned Expansion under Surrey’s SEND Capital Programme
Ashford Park Primary School	ASD/MLD	Spelthorne	21	4 – 11 years old	
Meadhurst Primary School	ASD	Spelthorne	29	4 – 11 years old	
Sunbury Manor School	Speech & Language	Spelthorne	20	11 – 16 Yrs old	
Bell Farm Primary School	ASD	Elmbridge	21	4 – 11 years old	
Chandlers Field Primary School	ASD	Elmbridge	18	4 – 11 years old	Growing to capacity of 25 places by 2024/25
Three Rivers Academy	ASD	Elmbridge	18	11 – 16 years old	Growing to capacity of 30 places by 2024/25
The Orchard Infant School	Speech & Language	Elmbridge	6	4 – 7 years old	
Hinchley Wood School	ASD (Cullum Centre)	Elmbridge	20	11 – 16 years old	
Thames Ditton Junior School	MLD	Elmbridge	16	7 – 11 years old	
Cuddington Community Primary School	ASD	Epsom & Ewell	14	4 – 11 years old	
Epsom Primary and Nursery School	ASD	Epsom & Ewell	12	4 – 11 years old	Growing to capacity of 21 places by 2025/26



## Key Outcomes and Benefits

Expanding Outstanding sufficient and sustainable special school provision for Surrey resident primary age pupils in Spelthorne will provide the following benefits as stated in the [Developing local Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Provision](#) report to Cabinet on 25 January 2022:

1. Benefits realisation ensures Surrey's maintained specialist education provision is fit for purpose and creates additional employment/supported internship opportunities for residents around areas of expansion.
2. Children, young people, and families can access the same level of high-quality support wherever they live in Surrey. We have a good, shared understanding of our children and young people who have SEND in Surrey and our support offer matches their identified needs.
3. Expanding Surrey's specialist provision aligns with the Preparation for Adulthood programme and strategy for Post-16 to create local further education and employment pathways such as apprenticeships and supported internships. This enables young people who have SEND to make a successful transition to adulthood and secure employment.
4. Capacity created locally will also make certain that SEND home to school transport distance and costs are reduced so that pupils attend their closest most appropriate school with shorter journey times. Opportunities for developing independent travel skills can be maximised as a result of children and young people being educated closer to home. This will also address local congestion around school sites as well as traffic flow around the county, which will be of benefit to Surrey's Green Agenda
5. The distribution and occupancy of current Special Schools and SEN Units in mainstream schools clearly illustrates that there is insufficient provision of Autism and Communication & Social Interaction Needs, Moderate Learning Difficulties, Severe Learning Difficulties and Social Emotional Mental Health Needs Special places.
6. The approved remedification and expansion programme will ensure that additional places are matched appropriately to need type, phases of education and geographic locations.

An Equality Impact Assessment is being completed throughout the consultation process and will be published as part of the Lead Cabinet Member Decision Meeting.

## Implementation Plan

### Finance and Resourcing

Revenue income: Ashford Park Primary School will receive £6,000 per year for each agreed planned place commissioned (25 places). The school will also receive a "Top up" sum for each pupil in attendance. Top up rates are reviewed annually by the Local Authority.

### Staffing

The set up and running of the provision of the SEN unit within the school would be led and managed by a strong existing team.

### Capital planning and buildings

The Capital project is part of Phase 4 of the SEND Capital Programme agreed by Surrey County Council Cabinet on 25 January 2022. A feasibility study will inform refurbishment and changes to existing space in the school to accommodate the SEN Unit.

## Growth Model

It is proposed that there will be 25 places available in September 2023 (3 in each year group from Year R to Year 2 and 4 in each year group from Year 3 to Year 6). There will be an intake of 3 places in reception each year. The table below shows how the SEN Unit will grow from September 2022 to full capacity in September 2026. The growth model may change depending on timescales and the outcome of the property feasibility study.

**Table 4: Growth Model for the SEN Unit at Ashford Park Primary School (Autistic Pupils and those with communication and interaction needs)**

Academic Year	Numbers of learners per National Curriculum Year Group							
	NCY 0	NCY 1	NCY 2	NCY 3	NCY 4	NCY 5	NCY 6	TOTAL
2023-2024	3	3	3	4	3	3	2	21
2024-2025	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	23
2025-2026	3	3	3	4	4	4	3	24
2026-2027	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	Year on Year availability							

**Table 5: Growth Model for the SEN Unit at Ashford Park Primary School (Pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD))**

Academic Year	Numbers of learners per National Curriculum Year Group							
	NCY 0	NCY 1	NCY 2	NCY 3	NCY 4	NCY 5	NCY 6	TOTAL
2023-2024					1	0	1	2
2024-2025						1	0	1
2025-2026							1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	Year on Year availability							

## Consultations, approvals and overall timescales

1. It is proposed that the changes commence from 1 September 2023. The proposed changes require a period of consultation, the publication of Statutory Notices and the agreement of Surrey County Council's Cabinet Member for Education and Learning if the proposal is to proceed.
2. The first stage of consultation will be informal and will be open 27 September 2022 to 6 November 2022. During this period the Surrey County Council will share the proposal with the wider professional network, schools including headteachers and chairs of governors, with unions, parent representatives, partner agencies and with the staff and parents of the school subject to the proposals.
3. Following the informal consultation period, it is proposed to publish a Statutory Notice for a four-week period. The publication of Notices is when the local authority formally states that it intends to implement the proposed changes. This will be the final opportunity for consultees to make their views known before a final decision is taken.

Following the consultation periods officers will summarise the feedback and will report to the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning.

## Have your say

Surrey County Council and Ashford Park Primary School would like to know what people in the area feel about the proposal. The consultation will open on Tuesday 27 September 2022 and close on 6 November 2022.

You can respond by:

a) Accessing the consultation online on the 'Surrey Says' website: [www.surreysays.co.uk](http://www.surreysays.co.uk) and searching for the school's consultation (school name or post code), or by scrolling through the list of open consultations.

b) Completing the consultation response form that is available alongside this document. You can email the form or print it, complete it and send it back to Jane Keenan, Commissioning Manager, at the address below.

SEN Ashford Park Primary School  
Education Place Planning  
Quadrant Court,  
35 Guildford Road,  
Woking  
GU22 7QQ.

Email: [schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk) with the subject: FAO SEN Ashford Park Primary School

All responses must be received by 11.59pm on Sunday 6 November 2022.

## What happens next?

We will hold an online public meeting for parents and any other interested parties to discuss the proposals and to hear your views. As a public meeting, anyone who wishes to may attend, please email [school.org@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:school.org@surreycc.gov.uk) to register your interest and you will be sent a link to the online event. The online event will be held on Thursday 13 October at 6pm, there will be a short presentation followed by questions and answers.

Please join to share your views and ask questions. You do not have to have a child at the school to join the meeting.

At the end of the consultation period, we will review all the responses received and share these with the school and publish them on the Surrey Says website.

Subject to the outcome of the consultation we intend to publish a Statutory Notice at the school, in a local newspaper and on the Surrey Says website stating our intention to expand and change school designation of the SEN Unit at Ashford Park Primary School. There will be a four-week statutory consultation period for further representations to be received by the council.

All representations will be reviewed before a final decision is taken by the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning