

School Organisation Consultation

Expansion of Freemantles School

February
2021



SURREY

Introduction

1. The [Surrey Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\) Partnership Strategy 2019 - 2022](#) includes an action to create additional school places in Surrey for children with SEND, both in special schools and in specialist provision in mainstream schools. This will reduce travel time, enable pupils with SEND to be more a part of their local community, and help to increase their progress, attainment and outcomes.
2. On 24 September 2019, Cabinet approved a 10 year [Strategy for Specialist Placements](#), including a four year plan to provide an additional 883 specialist school places in Surrey¹. Subsequent capital investment approved by Cabinet in 2020 and 2021 totals a combined SEND capital investment of £79.6m which will create over 1,500 additional specialist school places in Surrey towards the total projected demand.
3. Surrey County Council (SCC) is consulting on one of the specific projects listed in the 2019 strategy: the proposal to expand Freemantles School in Woking, North West Surrey.

Background and proposal

4. Freemantles School is a specialist all-through school in Woking for pupils aged 4 - 19. The school provides highly specialist teaching and support primarily for pupils with complex Autism (ASD) and associated learning difficulties which is known locally in Surrey as Complex Social and Communication Needs (CSCN). The school has an 'Outstanding' Ofsted rating from the most recent inspection on 2 December 2016.
5. The school has previously admitted one form of entry (9 pupils) into each year group in National Curriculum Years Reception to 11, with one form of entry (8 pupils) from Years 12-14. This gave a total planned place number of 132.
6. In recent years, Surrey County Council (SCC) has needed to ask the school to accommodate temporary bulge classes of pupils in order to meet demand for specialist school places, meaning that they currently have two forms of entry (18 pupils) in National Curriculum Years Reception to 6.
7. SCC is now proposing that Freemantles School is permanently expanded to accommodate a total of 270 pupils by providing an additional 72 places in National Curriculum Years 7 to 14. The main point of intake will remain at Reception year. The expansion will utilise space on the school's current site.
8. Overall, new accommodation will be provided for 135 additional permanent places, which takes into account the current temporary bulge classes moving through the school.

¹ Cabinet papers dated 24th September 2019, item 152/19, "School Place Planning: Strategy for Specialist Placements" and associated annex containing list of projects.

Rationale

9. This expansion is proposed to meet the increased demand for specialist placements for pupils with a primary need of ASD. The demand for maintained specialist school places in Surrey has grown significantly over the past 4 years from 2,859 planned places in 2017-18 to 3,477 planned places in 2020-21, and increasing again to 3,513 in 2021-22.
10. Developing and maintaining high quality specialist provision in Surrey is vital to ensure appropriate placements for the county's most vulnerable children and young people who have complex SEND and require specialist educational provision.
11. Since 2015, the number of children with an EHCP who live in Surrey and require a specialist school place has increased by 73%. This is in comparison to a growth of just 5% in the five years from 2010 and can potentially be attributed, in part, to the increase in the birth rate, the changes brought about by the Children and Families Act and the SEND Regulations in 2014, the 0-25 SEND Code of Practice in 2015, and the improvements to earlier identification and diagnosis of need.
12. The table below shows the number of new EHCPs issued across Surrey and in the North West of the county, against the number of pupils identified as requiring a specialist placement in an ASD education setting in the academic year 2019/20:

	Total EHCPs issued	No. requiring ASD provision	Percentage of total EHCPs issued
Surrey	1,598	474	30%
North West Surrey	381	115	30%

13. The demand for maintained specialist school places in Surrey for children and young people with SEND has grown significantly over the past 4 years from 2,859 planned places in 2017-2018 to 3,513 in 2021-22. As the county's specialist estate has not expanded at the same rate as the demand, this in turn has increased reliance on the independent sector to ensure all pupils are able to access suitable full-time education.
14. The Department for Education's 2019-2020 High Needs Benchmarking Tool identifies Surrey as an outlier with 4.4 per 1000 of the 2-18 population of children and young people with SEND placed in the independent sector; almost twice as many as compared to an average of benchmarking counties including Hampshire, Essex, Kent, East Sussex and Hertfordshire who have 2.25 per 1000. This results in approximately £71.5m cost on the current cohort of 1,350 pupils educated in non-maintained independent provision per year.
15. As part of the Strategy for Specialist Placements, SCC is proposing to expand Freemantles School because the school has a strong and established special school offer, experience of supporting pupils with complex Autism (ASD) and associated learning difficulties and a desire to meet growing demand from local parents for all-through specialist provision. The expansion will enable SCC to offer more pupils and their families local, high-quality ASD provision.

Pupil placement

11. It is proposed that:

- The expansion will provide 72 additional permanent places across Years 7 to 14 (age 11 – 19).
- New accommodation will be provided for 135 additional permanent places, which formalises the current temporary bulge classes moving through the school and will facilitate the expansion to become a two form entry, all-through ASD provision.
- The main intake point will be Reception although, where there are spaces and demand, new children may be accepted in the school in other year groups, where appropriate.
- Class sizes will typically be 9 in Years Reception to 14 and pupils will be grouped according to individual needs and learning styles.

12. School places are allocated in accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014, which requires the Local Authority to take into account the pupil's special educational needs, parental request for schools, and the formal view of the schools requested before making a decision. Places will be allocated based on parental requests wherever possible, unless:

- the school is unsuitable for the child's age, ability, aptitude or SEN
- the placement would be incompatible with the efficient education of the other children with whom your child would be educated, and
- the placement would be incompatible with the efficient use of resources.

13. Further details on the admissions process for SEND specialist provision in Surrey can be found here: [Applying for a school place for children pre-16 with SEND \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](http://surreycc.gov.uk)

14. Numbers at the expanded school will grow incrementally, but will take into account the additional pupils already attending the school in the temporary bulge classes. It is expected that the expanded school will reach its new full capacity of 270 by September 2028.

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
2020/21	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	198
2021/22	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	207
2022/23	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	9	9	9	9	9	9	216
2023/24	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	9	9	9	9	9	225
2024/25	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	9	9	9	9	234
2025/26	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	9	9	9	243
2026/27	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	9	9	252
2027/28	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	9	261
2028/29	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	270

15. Although the main intake point will be Reception, there may be an opportunity to provide an additional intake at Year 12 to enable the school to expand at a faster pace. This will be contingent on when the associated building works are completed and in agreement with the school.

Building work

16. Subject to the outcome of this consultation, new permanent accommodation would be provided on the existing school site. This would be subject to the requirements for planning permission and building control, which can be commented on separately to this education consultation.

Finance and resourcing

17. Freemantles School will receive additional revenue funding to cover the costs of the future expansion and the increased number of pupils in the expanded provision. This includes a sum of £10,000 per additional place, Top Up funding based on the published band rates and Individual Pupil Support Budgets (IPSB) where appropriate. Existing funding and provision for pupils currently attending the school will remain the same.
18. Freemantles School will recruit additional staff for the expanded school.

Consultations, approvals and overall timescales

19. The proposal is that Freemantles School starts to bring online additional places from September 2021. The proposed changes require a period of consultation, the publication of Statutory Notices and the agreement of Surrey County Council's Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning if the proposal is to proceed.
20. The first stage of consultation will be informal and opens on Monday 22 February 2021. During this period, Surrey County Council will share its proposals with schools including head teachers and chairs of governors, with unions, parent representatives, partner agencies, local residents and with the staff, parents and pupils of Freemantles School.
21. Following the informal consultation period, it is proposed to publish a Statutory Notice for a four week period. This is when the local authority formally states the changes that it intends to make. This will be the final opportunity for consultees to make their views known before a final decision is taken. Following this, the feedback will be summarised and reported to the Cabinet Member for All-age Learning. A decision is due in June 2021.

Have your say

Surrey County Council and Freemantles School would like to know what people think about the proposal. The consultation opens on Monday 22 February 2021.

You can respond by:

- a) Using the online survey. You can access the consultation online on the ['Surrey Says' website](#) by searching for "Freemantles School" or by scrolling through the list of open consultations.
- b) Completing the consultation response form that is available alongside this document and emailing it to schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk with the subject "FAO Freemantles School Expansion"
- c) Printing and completing the consultation response form that is available alongside this document and sending it back to the address below:

Freemantles School expansion
Education Place Planning - FAO Lauren Comer
Quadrant Court
35 Guildford Road
Woking
Surrey GU22 7QQ

All responses must be received by **Monday 19 April 2021**.

What happens next?

We will hold an online public meeting for parents and any other interested parties to discuss the proposals and to hear the views that people have. As a public meeting, it is open to all. If you would like to attend, please email schoolorg@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 **Tuesday 16 March at 7pm**. 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, SCC will collate and review all of the responses received and share these with the school and publish them on the Surrey Says website.

Consultation response form

Proposal to expand Freemantles School

Please give us your views. Please tick the box that best shows what you think about the proposed expansion and also give us any comments you have. You can write on the other side of this sheet if you want more space to write comments.

1. Do you agree with the proposal to expand Freemantles School from September 2021?		
Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Your comments:		

3. Please tick the box(es) that apply to you.

A parent/carer of a child at the school	<input type="checkbox"/>
A parent/carer of a child at another school	<input type="checkbox"/>
Someone who works at the school	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Governor of the school	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some other link to the school	<input type="checkbox"/>
A local resident	<input type="checkbox"/>
Someone else with an interest – please give details	<input type="text"/>

4. If possible, please provide your postcode

5. Please tick if you have also written comments on a separate sheet

Please return to:
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