

School Organisation Consultation

Proposal to expand the existing SEN Unit at Stepgates Community School

November 2022



Introduction

This paper outlines a proposal for the development of places for primary age pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and who have Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) identified as their primary need. The processes and timescales are outlined below to expand the existing SLCN designated SEN Unit provision at Stepgates Community Primary School by 8 places.

Background and Proposal

Stepgates Community School is a one-form entry (1FE) primary school in the borough of Runnymede in Surrey. The school was rated 'Good' by Ofsted in November 2017.

In agreement with the school's Headteacher and Governing Body, Surrey County Council is proposing that Stepgates Community School expands their SLCN designated SEN Unit by 8 places, from 21 places to 29 places in total. All pupils placed by Surrey County Council in the SEN Unit will have a diagnosis of Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) and will have an EHCP specifying the specialist provision within the school as an appropriate placement to meet their individual needs.

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

Table1: Proposed timeline

Phase	Date
Informal Consultation	Monday 7 November – Monday 5 December 2022
Review of consultation responses	December 2022
Outcome of the consultation published on www.surreysays.co.uk	December 2022
Statutory notices	December 2022 – January 2023
Lead Cabinet Member Decision	February 2023
Implementation	September 2023

It is proposed that:

1. The expansion of the existing SLCN designated unit will be for up to 8 children with SLCN needs in Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6).
2. There will be no change to the mainstream published admission number (PAN) of 30.
3. The SEN Unit pupils will be above the mainstream published admission number (PAN).
4. There will be no change to the number of nursery places at the school.
5. The main intake point will be key stage transfer groups in Year R and Year 3 although, where there are spaces and demand, new children may be accepted in the school in non-key stage transfer groups.
6. 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. Children who attend the SEN Unit will also be integrated into mainstream classes around 40-60% of the school day

every day but withdrawn for specialist teaching in small groups, and for speech and language therapy. 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.

Current Specialist Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision at the school

Stepgates Community School is a primary school with a mainstream published admission number (PAN) of 30 with an overall mainstream capacity of 210. The SEN Unit at the school has 21 planned places for children who have SLCN needs and have an EHCP. The SLCN unit currently has 18 pupils on roll and is running at 86% capacity. There are 228 pupils currently on roll across the whole school. **Table 2** shows the number of pupils on roll in each year group across the school.

Table 2: Number of Pupils on roll at Stepgates Community Primary School by National Curriculum Year (NCY) Group (provided by the school, September 2022)

Number of pupils	Year R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
Specialist unit	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	18
Mainstream school	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	210

(3 spaces in SLCN unit – 1 in Reception, 1 in Year 1, 1 in Year 2 - September 2022)

There are seven classes across the school and each class is taught by a qualified teacher, one of whom has the national SENDCo qualification. There are 2/3 Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) who also support the children in the unit classes and then continue to support the same children in the afternoons when they are integrated into their mainstream classrooms to ensure continuity.

Staff

Staff have a clear understanding of pupil need, and responsibility for pupils placed in the SEN Unit is shared across the entire staff team. There are two teachers who provide specialist teaching in Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and 2.

Continued Professional development (CPD) is high priority across the school. Training for all staff is provided from Speech and Language Therapists to ensure consistency of approach. Currently, senior and middle leaders work closely alongside class teachers to support differentiation and curriculum development.

Curriculum

The current provision for pupils in the SLCN unit at Stepgates is to attend either the Early Years/Key Stage 1 class or the Key Stage 2 class every morning for English, Maths, Speech and Language, and Attention Autism (which is a learning approach designed by a specialist Speech and Language Therapist). Pupils also attend occupational therapy and physiotherapy sessions which are delivered in the main school, away from the unit.

SEN Unit staff attend planning meetings with mainstream teachers. Teaching and learning is planned at different levels. This 'differentiation' of tasks is a vital factor in ensuring equality of access to the National Curriculum for all pupils and also to ensure that the identified needs and provision to meet those needs as identified in individual children's EHCPs is delivered. Those pupils placed by the local authority in the SEN Unit have equal opportunities to participate in horse riding, forest school, and have use of the swimming pool on site.

The children who attend the existing SEN unit are in the unit in the mornings for their English and Maths and in their mainstream classes in the afternoon for all other curriculum areas. When there is a themed day or week, the children from the SEN unit stay in their mainstream classes with their peers.

The long-term aim of the SEN unit is to enable children to access mainstream classes with decreasing levels of support, thereby developing independence skills from an early stage.

Assessment of pupil performance, progress, and behaviour

- All pupils' EHCPs identify specific outcomes, which are broken down into termly targets on their Individual Support Plan (ISP) and agreed with parents or carers.
- Pupil progress towards EHCP outcomes is closely monitored, and targets are updated on a termly basis in agreement with parents and carers. All professionals and outside agencies involved contribute to the ISP review process.
- EHCP Annual Review meetings are held twice a year with parents or carers and multi-agency professionals (as appropriate) until a pupil turns five and then statutory Annual Review meetings are held once a year thereafter.
- Progress of those children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is assessed at the end of their Reception year through the use of the EYFS Profile. All children undertake statutory assessments at the end of the Key Stages 1 and 2. The tasks and tests are modified for pupils with an EHCP.
- In addition to the formal assessment of pupil progress, there are several ways that pupils' more 'holistic' progress is reported, including end of year reporting, home-school communication books. This provides pupils with the opportunity to build their confidence and language skills.

Involving children and families

- Pupil and parent contributions to termly target setting and the statutory EHCP annual review process are highly valued and an important part of the statutory process.
- Successful inclusion of pupils is ensured by close liaison with parents and professionals in order to ascertain and meet individual needs.
- To help aid the transition of pupils to their next academic year group, planned transition activities are organised by the school for prospective parents and new starter parents in the form of Stay and Play, meeting with families, home visits, Steps to Stepgates programme, tour of the school and a transition meeting and setting.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to attend 'Parents in School Week' and parents' evenings.
- Other methods of reporting on pupil progress and general updates including daily contact made through home school link books and reading records. Communication through e-mail and phone calls is also used where needed.
- Parents' views are also sought through the use of questionnaires and surveys.

- The school operates an open door policy. Parents are encouraged to come in and talk with staff and therapists and to observe taught sessions.

Working with partner agencies to support pupils

Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Educational Psychologists and School Nurses work closely with the school.

The school currently has four Speech and Language Therapist / Assistants, who work across two days each week. The Inclusion Lead for the school liaises with them on a weekly basis ensuring the best provision for the children is provided. The Therapist will work with the children alongside adults from school to ensure the strategies are used throughout the week. Some children may have a need for an Occupational Therapist and they will visit the school and work alongside the child and an adult from school to ensure strategies are used throughout the week. There is an Educational Psychologist assigned to the school, who comes in to support the children and assess for statutory assessment, when needed. They will also attend review meetings, if available. There is also a Mental Health Lead assigned to the school, who will advise when needed.

What do we want to achieve?

Surrey's SEND Capital Programme:

Between 2019-2022, Cabinet approved £139.6m capital investment to deliver 2,300 additional specialist school places in Surrey through 77 capital projects. This is in order to expand the county's specialist education estate up to 6,000 state maintained specialist school places by 2030/31, which is aligned with the adopted county-wide commitment to root children in their local communities and ensure no one is left behind. As of September 2022, around 800 new specialist school places have already been delivered across Surrey through 35 Capital projects.

Stepgates is a well-established community school with a good reputation. Pupils and families benefit from a well-established ethos, clear vision, values, and a skilled, innovative, energetic, and committed staff team with a strong record of providing high-quality education to pupils with speech, language and communication needs. This is a fantastic opportunity to extend that offer to a greater number of local Surrey pupils and their families.

Stepgates Community School Vision

Stepgates Community School is a school of the community for the community, consistently providing:

- An outstanding curriculum that challenges and nurtures all children
- A safe, happy, caring environment
- Inclusive opportunities for all

The school mission statement, vision and aims can be found on the school [website](#).

What will be provided through the permanent expansion?

Stepgates Community School will continue to provide a curriculum based on the needs of the individual pupils and focused on developing speech, language, and communication skills alongside the academic subjects.

As part of Surrey's SEND Partnership Strategy 2019-22, there are five key principles of transformation:

1. Children with special educational needs are identified earlier and supported in a timely and effective way in order to improve their outcomes and wellbeing.
2. There is an increased focus on earlier intervention and prevention to offer help and meet needs at the earliest opportunity, reducing the demand on high cost, high need interventions.
3. Children and young people are helped to become resilient and independent so that they can lead independent and fulfilling lives in their own communities.
4. The voices of our children, young people and families are heard so they can shape and inform how we work together to get the best results.
5. Surrey's early years settings, schools, colleges and other providers are able to support children to live, learn and grow up locally and achieve their full potential.

Reasons for expanding Stepgates Community Primary School

Demand for specialist unit provision in the North West of Surrey for pupils with SLCN is high. As a result, other specialist provisions in Surrey are operating at or above capacity. The provision of an additional 8 places will help support local families who would otherwise have to travel further afield. This will increase availability of specialist school 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.

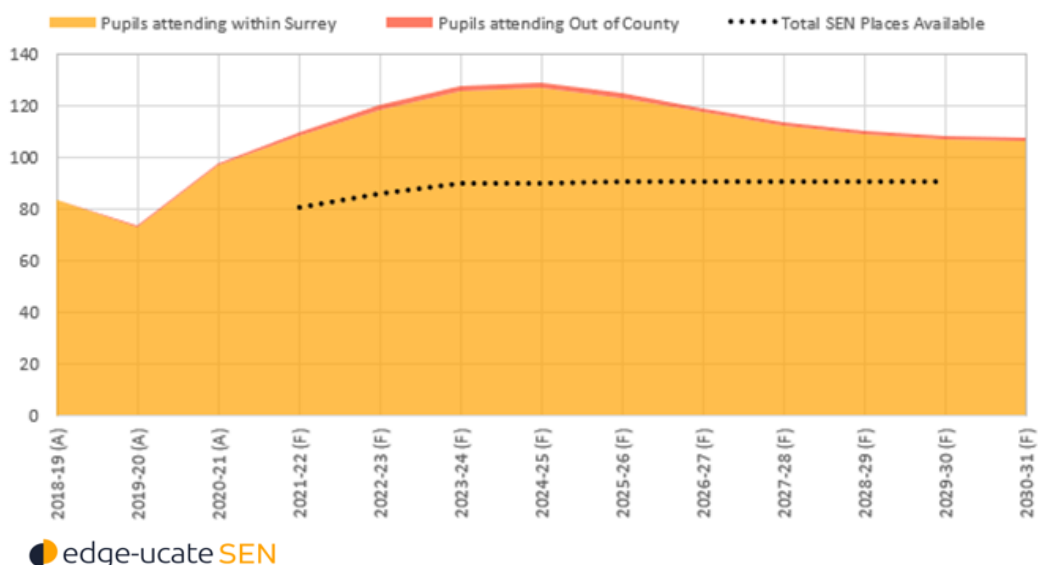
Demand for specialist unit places in Surrey

In the academic year 2020-2021, there were 1,071 children with an EHCP in NCY years R to 6 with a primary need of SLCN, making it the second most prevalent need type in the county. Of these children, 382 required a specialist educational placement with 172 (45%) attending a specialist school and 210 (55%) attending a specialist unit.

The specialist unit at Stepgates Community School caters for children from across North Surrey – 70% of children attending the unit live in the North West of the county and 30% live in the North East of the county.

The number of children living in the North of Surrey with an EHCP in Years R to 6 with a primary need of SLCN has increased by 17% since 2018. Latest sufficiency modelling projects growth of 31% by 2024-2025, along with a 30% shortage of specialist unit places within this timescale.

Graph 1: Demand for specialist unit places from children in north Surrey with an EHCP in Years R-6 and a primary need of SLCN



Graph 1 illustrates that the demand for specialist unit places for pupils with a primary need for SLCN in Years R-6 will peak in 2024-2025. This is then followed by a forecast decrease in the number of specialist unit SLCN places required by 2030-2031. This follows the county-wide demographic trend as pupils born at the peak in 2012 will be leaving the primary sector.

Table 3: NW and NE quadrant residents in Years R-6 who attend specialist units with SLCN identified as their primary need and projected demand for additional places in 2024-25 and 2030-31

District or Borough	Actuals 2020-21	Projected demand for places in 2024-2025	Projected growth from 2020-21 to 2024-2025	Projected demand for places in 2030-2031	Projected growth from 2020-2021 to 2030-31
North West	41	63	54%	54	32%
North East	57	66	16%	54	-5%
Rest of Surrey	112	129	15%	118	5%

This data illustrates the projected demand for additional specialist unit places in and across Surrey over the next ten years. The North West of Surrey is forecast to have the highest percentage growth over the forecast period. There is a forecast decrease for specialist places needed in North East Surrey and a smaller demand for specialist SLCN unit placements across the rest of Surrey.

SLCN specialist unit provision in Surrey

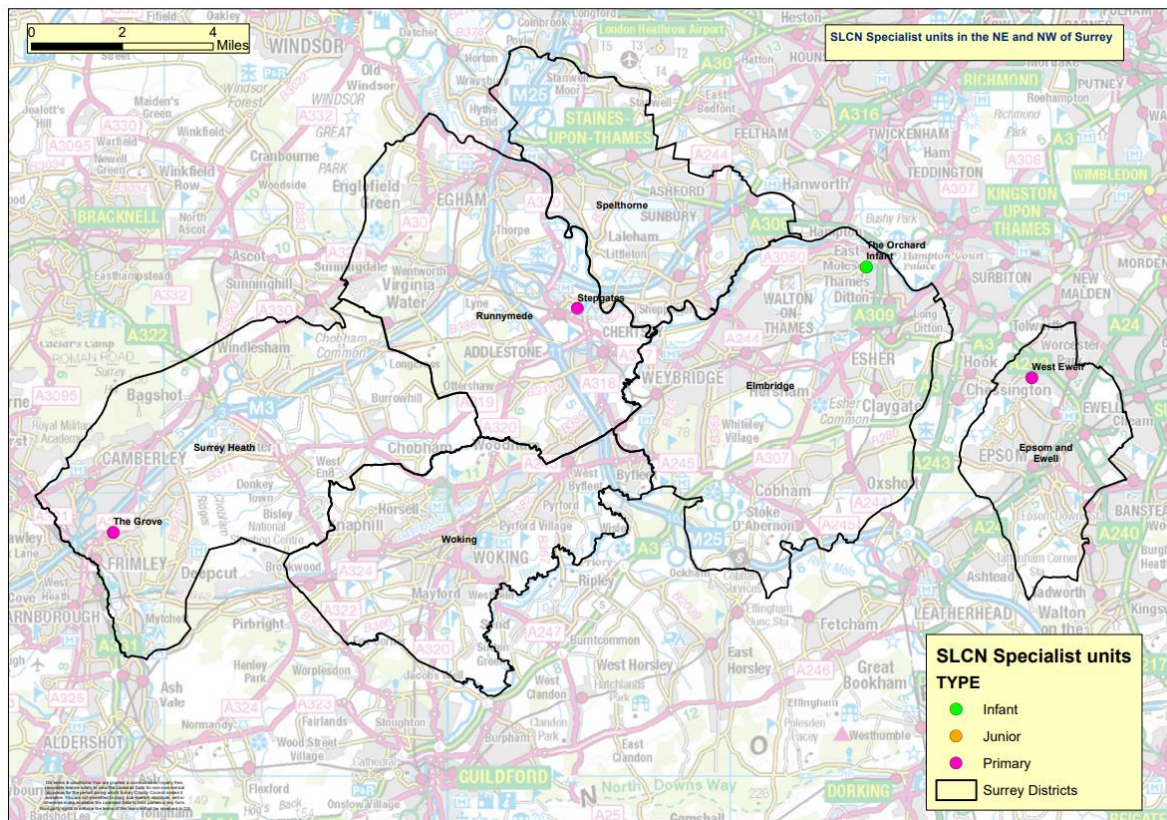
More details of our specialist unit provision can be found in the booklet “Finding the right primary school in Surrey” on the [Surrey Local Offer website](#).

Table 4 provides a summary of specialist units designated to meet the needs of pupils with SLCN as their primary presenting need.

Table 4: SLCN specialist units in Surrey primary phase schools

School	Designation	District	Planned Places	Age Range	Occupancy as of Sept 2021	Planned Expansion under Surrey's SEND Capital Programme
West Ewell Primary School	SLCN	Epsom & Ewell (NE)	21	3-7	62%	0
Burpham Primary School	SLCN	Guildford (SW)	13	4-7	69%	0
Cranleigh CofE Primary School	SLCN	Waverley (SW)	10	4-7	30%	0
Dovers Green Infant School	SLCN	Reigate & Banstead (SE)	16	4-7	100%	Planned expansion to 24 places
The Orchard Infant School	SLCN	Elmbridge (NE)	6	4-7	100%	0
Bletchingley Village Primary	SLCN	Tandridge (SE)	21	3-11	95%	0
Leatherhead Trinity Primary	SLCN	Mole Valley (SE)	21	3-11	95%	0
Stepgates Community Primary School	SLCN	Runnymede (NW)	21	4-11	81%	Planned expansion to 29 places
The Grove Primary School	SLCN	Surrey Heath (NW)	14	4-11	107%	0
Northmead Junior	SLCN	Guildford (SW)	15	7-11	100%	0

Map 1 shows the location of four specialist units that provide statutory special school education for pupils who have SLCN identified as their primary need in North East and North West Surrey.



Key Outcomes and Benefits

Expanding sufficient and sustainable specialist primary school provision in Runnymede will provide local children who have SEND and their families with:

- Enhanced opportunities to be better connected to the local communities where they live.
- Greater choice and control so that children and young people who have SEND can attend their nearest, most appropriate school closer to home, as local pupils who do not have SEND do.
- Availability of specialist school places that are matched appropriately to children and young people's SEND need-type, phases of education and geographic location.
- Reduced travel time between home and specialist school provision so they can play an integral part in their local communities. This also maximises opportunities for developing independent travel skills, which in the medium to long term will reduce local congestion and traffic flow around school sites.
- More opportunities to be educated by local specialist providers and supported by local family-oriented support services, who have the expertise, which enables better long-term outcomes so they are fully prepared for adulthood.

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: Stepgates Community School will receive £6,000 per pupil per year for each agreed planned place commissioned (29 places). The school will also receive a "top up" sum for each pupil on roll at the SEN Unit, appropriate to the needs of individual children.

Staffing

Stepgates Community School will continue to employ staff at their current site.

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 requirements and changes to existing space on the school site to accommodate the SEN Unit. Capital works will be funded by Surrey County Council.

Growth Model

The proposed expansion of Stepgates' SEN unit will provide additional places in Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6) with SLCN needs. The expansion will result in an additional 8 places in the unit from September 2023.

Table 5: Growth model for the SEN unit at Stepgates Community School

	Year R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
2022/23	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	21
2023/24	3	3	3	5	5	5	5	29

Consultations, approvals and overall timescales

1. It is proposed that the expansion commences from 1 September 2023. The proposed expansion requires 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 open on Monday 7 November. During this period Surrey County Council will share its proposals with the wider professional network, local 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. The consultation will also be shared with local councillors and residents, SEND Advice Surrey and Family Voice Surrey.
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 analyse the feedback and will report to the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning.

Have your say

Surrey County Council and Stepgates Community School would like to know what people in the area feel about the proposal. The consultation will open on Monday 7 November.

You can respond by:

- a) Accessing the consultation online on the 'Surrey Says' website: 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 the address below.

Stepgates School Specialist Unit Expansion
Education Place Planning
Quadrant Court
35 Guildford Road
Woking GU22 7QQ

Email: schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk with the subject: FAO Stepgates Specialist Unit Expansion

All responses must be received by **Monday 5 December 2022**.

What happens next?

We will hold a virtual public engagement meeting for parents and any other interested parties to discuss the proposals and to hear views. As a public meeting, anyone who wishes to may attend.

Thursday 24 November 2022 at 6pm
Microsoft Teams – virtual meeting

Please email schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk to register your interest and you will be sent a link to the online meeting. The meeting will consist of a short presentation followed by questions and answers.

Please come along to share your views and ask questions. You do not have to have a child at the school to attend the meeting. After the engagement meeting, we will publish all questions asked and answers provided on the website.

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 Stepgates Community Primary School SLCN unit. 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 Lifelong Learning.