

Have
your
say...

...on changes to
**Special Schools and
Additional Resource
Provisions within
mainstream schools**

This consultation is open from
February 3, 2021, to May 5, 2021.

You can have your say online at
www.schoolsforthefuture.co.uk/SEND





Introduction

This consultation is about how we propose to provide more school places for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in both mainstream schools and specialist provision that meets the needs of the young people in Central Bedfordshire in the future.

We expect the number of local residents in Central Bedfordshire to grow in the coming years, with around 43,000 new homes expected to be built by 2035 – and that means more SEND school places will be needed.

Because of the changes, local schools have been working together, with Central Bedfordshire Council, on the ambitious Schools for the Future programme, which is a long-term plan to raise education standards and make sure we have:

- **The right schools**
- **In the right places**
- **Delivering the best education**

Through this, we will aim to ensure that the following outcomes are achieved:

- **Health** – children and young people with SEND will be as healthy as possible
- **Wellbeing** – the wellbeing of children and young people with SEND will be optimised
- **Aspiration** – children and young people with SEND will learn and develop to the best of their ability
- **Independence** – children and young people with SEND will be enabled to reach their potential
- **Involvement** – children and young people with SEND and their families will be able to influence their services

This consultation is in the following parts:

Part 1: Central Bedfordshire's 132 mainstream schools all support children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This document outlines a draft plan to support mainstream schools to better meet the needs of children and young people with Special Education Needs and (SEND).

Part 2: This document outlines a draft plan to forecast the future demand for additional places for Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) within mainstream schools, called Additional Resource Provision. These provide support to children and young people with additional needs. Children and young people get a balance between the mainstream curriculum and support from the Additional Resource Provisions. This means that children can stay in a mainstream school but move between the classroom and the Additional Resource Provision, in support of their needs.

Part 3: This document also outlines a draft plan to forecast the future demand for places in Central Bedfordshire's Special schools. These schools offer provision that is different from, or in addition to, that which is normally available to pupils of the same age. Need for a Special School is determined through the Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP) process and offers students an educational setting that is appropriate for their needs.



Your consultation responses are part of a range of factors that are taken into consideration before coming to a decision, but no decisions have yet been made.

So, we invite everyone who has an interest in the future of SEND in our area to have their say on what is proposed.

Background

The proposals in this consultation have been the result of a collaboration between Special School headteachers, headteachers of the mainstream schools with Additional Resource Provision and Central Bedfordshire Council, to consider:

- The forecast future demand due to housing growth in the area up to 2035
- what needs should be catered for
- what age ranges should be catered for

The [methodology and the data sources used](#) was outlined in the papers that were considered by Central Bedfordshire Council's Executive Committee on January 5, 2021. A webcast of the meeting can also be [viewed here](#).

Further discussions focused on how places should be forecast, including:

- The volume of Central Bedfordshire Council-maintained Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
- Where the need is in Central Bedfordshire
- The primary need of the child (e.g. Autism Spectrum Disorder or Moderate Learning Difficulties etc)

Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs)

As of June 2020, Central Bedfordshire Council had approximately 1,850 Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) for pupils in Reception to Year 14. Of these:

- over 85% are attending settings within Central Bedfordshire.
- around 57% of pupils with EHCPs are at mainstream schools / colleges, including nearly 70% of pupils with ECHPs in the primary phase, 50% in the secondary phase, and 40% in post 16.
- approximately 35% of EHCPs have a primary need of Autism Spectrum Disorder, approximately 20% each have Social Emotional Mental Health or Speech Language Communication Need as their primary need and 10% have Moderate Learning Difficulties.

A glossary of the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and terms outlined in this document can be found [on Central Bedfordshire Council's Local Offer page](#).

Current provision in Central Bedfordshire

While the focus of this consultation is the longer-term growth needs of children and young people with SEND in Central Bedfordshire, we recognise that there is already a shortfall in places. There are currently transformation projects underway within Central Bedfordshire



Council, who are working with our schools to develop a short-term plan which will be shared publicly in conjunction with the feedback from this survey.

Mainstream schools

Central Bedfordshire's 132 mainstream schools all support children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The number of pupils receiving SEND support in mainstream schools has risen from 4,700 in 2017 to 5,000 in 2020. As of January 2020, this was just below 12% of all pupils in Central Bedfordshire, which is in line with the national rate of 12.1%.

Additional Resource Provisions

Additional Resource Provisions are dedicated facilities on mainstream school sites that provide support to children and young people with additional needs, so pupils get a balance between the mainstream curriculum and additional support.

There are approximately 100 Additional Resource Provision places in Central Bedfordshire across 14 mainstream schools, which equates to approximately 5% of students with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). These Additional Resource Provision are at the following schools:

- Ardley Hill Academy *
- Arnold Academy
- Biggleswade Academy
- Harlington Upper School
- Heathwood Lower School
- Lancot Challenger Academy
- Manshead Church of England Academy
- Parkfields Middle School
- Ramsey Manor Lower School
- Samuel Whitbread Academy
- Silsoe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Lower School
- St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Lower School
- St Swithun's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
- Toddington St George Church of England School

**The Additional Resource Provision at Ardley Hill Academy is no longer open for new admissions*

Special schools

Special schools offer provision for pupils with complex needs that is different from, or in addition to, that provided in mainstream schools. The need for a special school is determined through the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) process.

There are currently four special schools in Central Bedfordshire, these are:

- The Chiltern School
- Ivel Valley School
- Oak Bank School



- Weatherfield Academy

As of January 2020, there were 680 pupils across the four Special schools.

Currently, 37% of pupils with EHCPs are in special school (plus 1% in independent special school). This varies significantly by need:

- 75% for Severe Learning Disabilities / Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties.
- 50% of those with Moderate Learning Difficulties
- 35% for SEMH and Autism Spectrum Disorder
- 25% for Speech Language Communication Need.

The following table outlines the age ranges of each of the four Special schools, plus the need each currently caters for, and the current places at each school.

| School name/age range | Location | Need catered for currently | Current school places |
|--|------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Chiltern (3-19 years of age) | Dunstable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) • Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) • Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) • Profound Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) | 225 |
| Ivel Valley (3-19 years of age) | Biggleswade | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) • Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) • Profound Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) | 200 |
| Oak Bank (7-19 years of age) | Leighton Buzzard | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) | 115 |
| Weatherfield (7-19 years of age) | Dunstable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) | 150 |

In June 2020, of the pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan, Autism Spectrum Disorder was the primary need for more than 200 pupils at these four special schools. This accounted for approximately 35% of the total pupils.

Social Emotional Mental Health was the second highest need, with 135 pupils at the four special schools. This accounted for 20% of the total pupils.

Pupils educated outside of Central Bedfordshire

There are approximately 150 pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans, managed by Central Bedfordshire Council, who attend a school outside of the area. This breaks down as approximately:



- 65 in mainstream schools or further education/sixth form colleges
- 60 in special schools
- 25 in independent special schools

Forecasts for additional provision

It is important to note that the proposals in this consultation are forecasts of need and not yet definitive requirements for the exact number of additional places. They have been the result of discussions with the special school headteachers and the headteachers of the mainstream schools with Additional Resource Provision.

Protocols would need to be agreed to ensure that pupils are placed at the school that is most effectively able to meet their needs. Any new Additional Resource Provisions would need to meet agreed standards in order to be set up.

If the percentage of children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCPs) remains at the current level (4.4% of the mainstream pupil population), then compared to the current academic year the number of plans will increase in line with projected population growth as follows:

- An increase of between 400-450 EHCPs by 2024/25
- An increase of between 700-750 EHCPs by 2029/30

Based on the current division of primary need, that would mean approximately the following additional places based on primary need:

| Primary need | Current number of places (2019/2020) | Places required by 2025 | Places required by 2029/2030 | No. of additional places by 2030 |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Autism Spectrum Disorder | 650 | 800 | 900 | 250 |
| Social Emotional Mental Health | 400 | 500 | 550 | 150 |
| Speech Language Communication Need | 350 | 425 | 500 | 150 |



Proposed changes

Mainstream schools

With a commitment to supporting children and young people to remain in their mainstream schools, wherever possible, it is proposed that multi-use spaces are included in mainstream schools, where there is space to do so. This will allow for regular teaching and learning alongside therapies for SEND, such as speech and language, emotional health and wellbeing and mental health services; plus, Central Bedfordshire Council’s early help offer.

We are also committed to making pathways clearer for children and young people to move in and out of additional provision depending on their needs. We will work closely with our special schools to find ways to support mainstream schools to better meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.

Additional Resource Provision places in mainstream schools

For Additional Resource Provision at mainstream schools, it is proposed that there would be 92 new and additional places, operational from 2023 and an increase in the geographic spread of Additional Resource Provision across Central Bedfordshire.

There would be an increase in:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder provision across all areas (clusters) in Central Bedfordshire
- Social Emotional Mental Health provision in Leighton Buzzard
- Speech Language Communication Need provision in Dunstable

There would also be a greater geographical distribution across Central Bedfordshire with the future need per area, as follows:

| Area (cluster) | Need | School type | No. of ARP places |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Dunstable and Houghton Regis | Autism Spectrum Disorder | Primary | 8 |
| | | Secondary | 12 |
| Harlington | Autism Spectrum Disorder | Primary | 6 |
| | | Secondary | 6 |
| | Hearing impairment | Primary | 16 |
| Sandy | Autism Spectrum Disorder | Primary | 8 |
| | | Secondary* | 8 |
| Shefford & Stotfold | Autism Spectrum Disorder | Primary* | 8 |



| | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------|------|
| | | Secondary | 12** |
| | Speech Language Communication Need | Primary* | 8 |
| | | Secondary* | 8 |
| Biggleswade | Autism Spectrum Disorder | Primary | 8 |
| | Moderate Learning Difficulties | Primary* | 8 |
| | | Secondary* | 8 |
| | Speech Language Communication Need | Primary | 8 |
| | | Secondary* | 8 |
| Leighton and Linslade | Speech Language Communication Need | Primary | 8 |
| | | Secondary* | 8 |
| | Autism Spectrum Disorder | Primary* | 8 |
| | | Secondary* | 8 |

* indicates where this is a new need/places in that area

**assumed to need expansion from existing capacity

We are considering an Additional Resource Provision in Shefford and Stotfold, potentially with a focus on children with high-performing autism, also known as high-functioning autism.

A short-term plan is expected to be co-constructed with school leaders by the end of the 2021 summer term to address current shortfall in Additional Resource Provision places across Central Bedfordshire

Importantly, the potential model improves pupil progression pathways, enabling more pupils who require the support offered in Additional Resource Provisions to be able to move through the school system with their peers.

Regular conversations will take place with Additional Resource Provisions about the size of provision and the resources they require to help maximise pupil progress. This will include an annual review of forecasts to ensure the need for places is understood as more information becomes available in the future. There will also be discussions with schools who express an interest in establishing an Additional Resource Provision, should more be needed in the future.

Special Schools

It is proposed that places at across the four Central Bedfordshire special schools are increased by 250 places, from around 700 to around 950; and that the schools relocate or expand between 2023-2026.

The proposed approximate forecast for the number of special school places needed from 2023, plus the additional need is as follows:

| School name | Need catered for currently | Additional need to be provided | New number of school places |
|-------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
|-------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|



| | | | |
|---------------------|--|---|-----|
| Chiltern | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) Profound Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) | Unchanged | 300 |
| Ivel Valley | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) Profound Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) | Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) | 300 |
| Oak Bank * | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) | Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) | 160 |
| Weatherfield | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) | Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Speech Language Communication Need (SLCN) | 200 |

* Oak Bank will expand on two sites, as detailed below

Relocation/expansion of special schools:

In addition to the number of new places required, it is also proposed that there will be either physical changes to the current special school buildings, or relocation to a different site. These are:

- Chiltern – to be relocated to a new site in the Dunstable/Houghton Regis area, by 2026.
- Ivel Valley – to relocate to a new site in the Biggleswade area, by 2023.
- Oak Bank – to create a new school in the Shefford and Stotfold area, run by Oak Bank in addition to the existing school in Leighton Linlslade. This will increase the total places across both sites to 160. Both sites would cater for Autism Spectrum Disorder and Social Emotional Mental Health, but the proposed expansion into a second site in the Shefford and Stotfold area will cater for children between 7-19 years. This is proposed for 2025.
- Weatherfield – A proposed relocation to a new site in the Dunstable/Houghton Regis area, by 2026.



How to have your say

Everyone who has an interest in the future of our special schools and Additional Resource Provision in mainstream schools, is invited to give their views on the proposals for change.

You can read more information and have your say by answering a questionnaire online at www.schoolsforthefuture.co.uk/SEND.

The consultation is open from February 3, 2021 until May 5, 2021.

What happens after the consultation?

The council and the schools will need to consider the feedback and use it to formulate a final plan. The aim is for this decision to be made in Autumn 2021.

Assuming a decision is made, the council is required to publish statutory notices for Chiltern and Ivel Valley special schools, plus the council-maintained and Church of England schools which have Additional Resource Provision. You will be able to comment on these for a minimum of four weeks. The aim is to publish these for comment in autumn 2021.

For academy schools, (these are schools run by a trust and not the council) the trust is required to apply to the Regional Schools Commissioner, on behalf of the Secretary of State, for permission to make changes. This process would apply to Oak Bank and Weatherfield special schools and to academies in relation to Additional Resource Provisions.

The council and academies will consider the feedback and make a final decision on the plans. This is likely to be later in 2021.

Related work

In addition to this consultation, further work and potentially additional consultation will be required for:

- The development of a comprehensive special school outreach programme to support mainstream schools that educate children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This will be created in collaboration with the four special schools in Central Bedfordshire and Central Bedfordshire Council.
- The development of how schools can access SEND support and Central Bedfordshire Council's early help services.

Maythorn's Children's Home will be consulted on later in the year as part of the Schools for the Future Programme in the Biggleswade area.

The Academy of Central Bedfordshire will have a forecast completed to ascertain if any additional capital investment is required.



As stated earlier in the document, there are also projects being undertaken within Central Bedfordshire Council to address the recognised shortfall in places that exists currently. Schools for the Future is a longer-term solution to growth in Central Bedfordshire and will work closely with these other projects to ensure they support each other and the education of children and young people in the area.