



Department
for Education

Local authority commissioned Special free schools

**Seeking proposals to establish a
special free school**

East Sussex County Council

September 2018

Introduction

Under section 6A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the ‘free school presumption’) where a local authority identifies the need to establish a new school it must, in the first instance, seek proposals to establish an academy. East Sussex County Council has identified the need to establish a new special free school providing 80 places for primary and secondary age children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH), and additional needs associated with these such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The school would be located on land off Reef Way, Hailsham, BN27 1FB and would open in September 2020.

SEND Pupil Forecasts

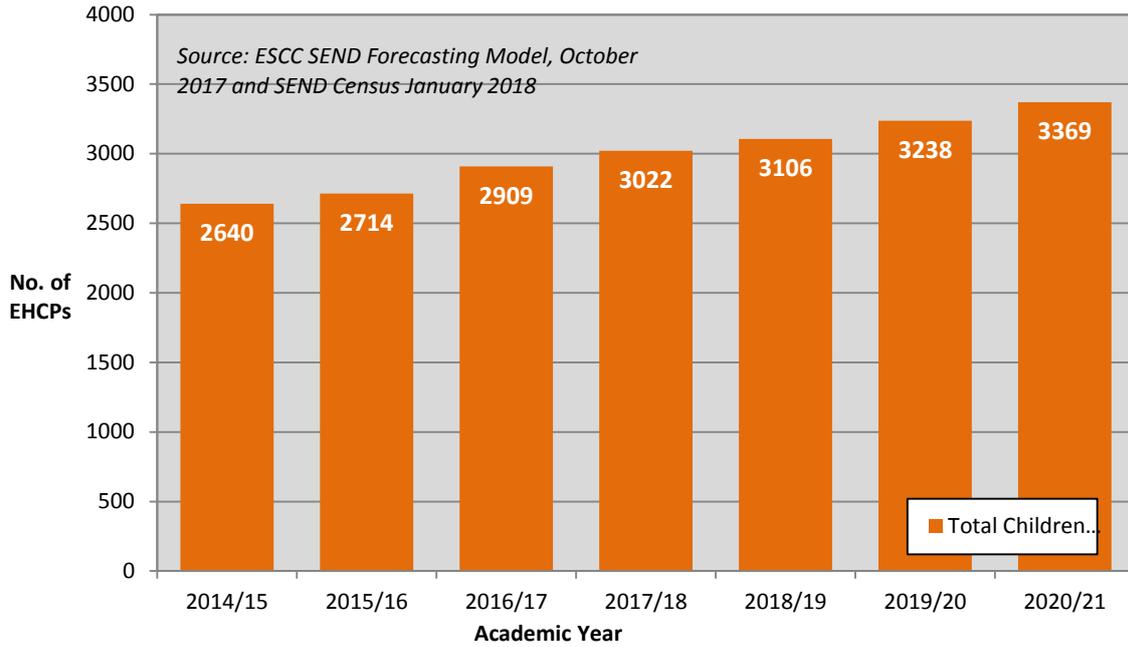
The authority’s SEND forecasting model predicts future numbers of children with Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) and numbers in maintained and independent non-maintained special schools. The forecasts take account of the following factors:

- demographic trends
- the prevalence of different types of SEND (as defined by primary need) in the population
- recent trends in prevalence rates
- professional judgement from ISEND practitioners and staff in partner agencies as to whether these trends are likely to continue into the future
- transfers from Learning Difficulty Assessments (LDAs) to Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

The chart below forecasts that, if recent trends continue more or less as they are, the total number of school aged children and young people (aged 4-18) in East Sussex with EHCPs will rise from the 2017/18 total of 3,022 to 3,369 by 2020/21, an increase of 347 or 11%.

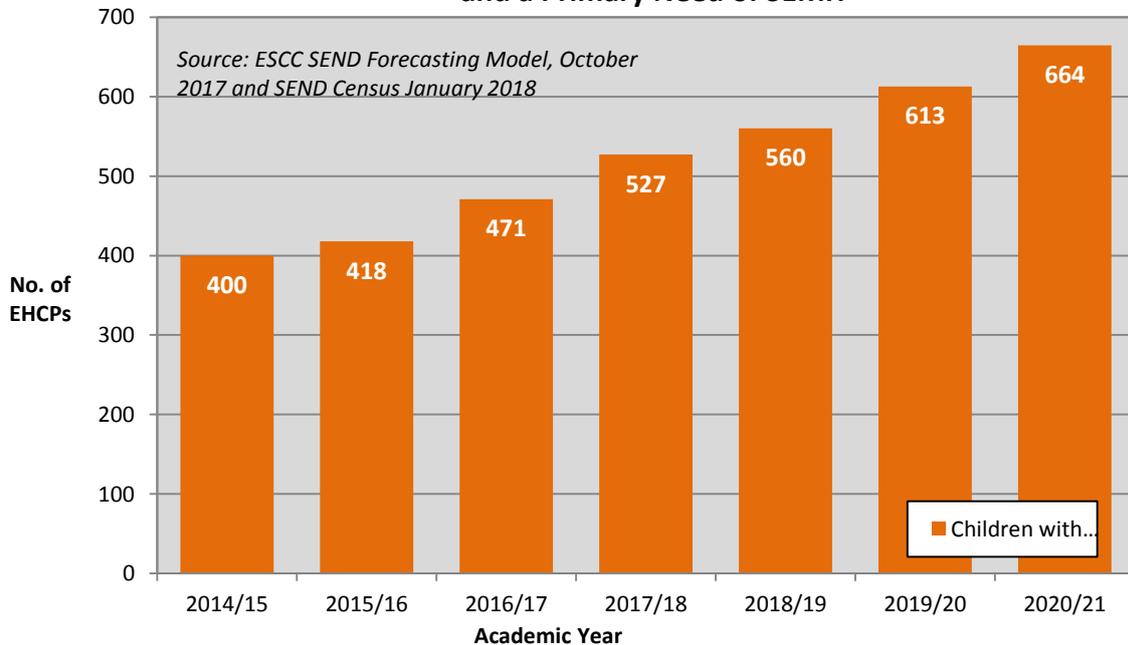
In the last academic year (2017/18), as at the January 2018 census date, around 34% of the 3,022 school-aged children with EHCPs maintained by East Sussex were educated in maintained special schools/special academies with around a further 7% in independent and non-maintained special schools. Linked to wider rising trends in numbers with EHCP’s the numbers of children and young people requiring special school places is also forecast to rise, from 1,253 in 2017/18 to 1,461 in 2020/21, an increase of 198 (16%).

East Sussex Total School-Aged Children with EHCPs



Reflecting recent increases in the number of placements and the presentation of anxiety and mental health issues in requests for support, the numbers of children and young people with EHCPs with a primary need of SEMH is forecast to rise from 527 in 2017/18 to 664 in 2020/21, an increase of 137 or 26%

East Sussex Total School-Aged Children with EHCPs and a Primary Need of SEMH



The SEND forecasts that we have developed show that the increase in pupils will come largely from the wider Eastbourne/Hailsham area. This is where we are experiencing the greatest demographic increases due to rises in birth, significant housing developments and inward migration into these towns. The proposed location of the school is well located with good road links to serve the area.

SEND Place Planning Strategy

The authority is taking action to provide sufficient places for the increases in pupils with SEND and to address the demand for special school places and reduce high cost independent placements. Alongside this the authority has a strategy of inclusion and is working with partners to encourage more children to be supported in mainstream schools.

Our strategy includes the development of new schools and specialist facilities in mainstream schools as detailed below.

- **The Flagship School, Hastings area (new free school approved in wave 12):** 56 places for pupils aged 9-16 with high functioning autism and pupils with social, behavioural and communication difficulties. The school is due to open in the 2021/22 academic year.
- **The Summerdown School, Eastbourne (new free school approved in wave 12):** 84 places for pupils aged 5-16 with autism and speech language and communication needs. The school will also include 51 places for pupils with PMLD including 6 places for nursery age children. The school is due to open in the 2020/21 academic year.
- **The Workplace Alternative Provision, Bexhill (new free school approved in wave 12):** 94 places for pupils aged 11-16 with behavioural issues and excluded children. The AP is due to open in the 2019/20 academic year.
- **New specialist facilities:** the Council's strategy includes developing more specialist facilities at mainstream schools which would cater for a broad range of lower level SEND needs where pupil's requirements could be met in a specialist facility that includes appropriate access to mainstream provision. New primary and secondary provision will be established.

The proposed new school would not impact on the numbers and proportions of SEMH pupils in mainstream schools. The new school would accommodate the increase in pupils with an EHCP that have SEMH as their primary need but also have associated needs, particularly ASD.

The new school would also cater for pupils that would previously have had to be placed at independent non-maintained special schools (INMSS). There are significant cost pressures on our High Needs block funding and the proposed new school would contribute to the range of measures we are putting in place to address this issue and show value for money in our spending in this area by reducing INMSS spending. Even with the new school we will still require some places to be commissioned within INMSS but it would make our spending on these placements more manageable. The costs of INMSS provision in East Sussex are significantly above those within the maintained/ academy sector and do not provide consistent value for money. The creation of new provision, therefore, would allow the authority to effectively commission higher cost placements within the independent sector for children with the greatest need as opposed to using high cost placements for children where no capacity exists in maintained schools or academies, as is currently the case.

The authority already benefits from good and outstanding SEMH provision and this new school would complement the existing provision. Outreach work to improve classroom and leadership practice of effectively supporting children with SEMH in mainstream schools without the need for specialist provision by sharing expertise would be a key strand for the new school. We would expect the new school to work pro-actively with leaders in mainstream schools and other special schools to share good practice and develop inclusive practices. Furthermore, we wish to establish a school which is closely aligned with local mainstream schools and facilitates improved reintegration rates of children, from specialist to mainstream, so as to maximise the reach of the provision. These two activities; disseminating expertise across sectors and increasing the flexibility of the SEND provision continuum were identified as key strategic aims for the authority in the High Needs Block Review. The final report which summarises the findings and recommendations of the year-long review is available at the following link <https://czone.eastsussex.gov.uk/inclusion-and-send/high-needs-review/>

Parental Demand

Demand for specialist provision from parents across the county is high and we are unable to meet the level of demand within the existing complement of maintained placements.

Admissions Criteria and Process

The school would cater for children and young people who have an EHCP which identifies SEMH as their primary need. Many of these children will have associated needs (such as higher functioning ASD) where problematic behaviour is symptomatic of their SEN. In line with all special schools, requests for placements would be made via the authority.

The authority anticipates that pupil numbers in the first academic year (2020/21) would be between 16 and 32 across all year groups. It is expected that a similar number would be admitted in the following year (2021/22), with the school reaching its capacity of 80 in the third year (2022/23).

The authority is seeking proposals from appropriate sponsors to open this new school. The school would be deemed a free school. Proposers should complete the Free School Presumption application form and return it to Gary Langford, Place Planning Manager, using the email address below. school.consultations@eastsussex.gov.uk

Site/location

The school would be located on land off Reef Way, Hailsham, BN27 1FB. The site is 2 hectares in size. A plan of the site can be found at the end of this document.

The site would be transferred on a lease hold basis (125 years) to the successful sponsor.

Capital and start-up costs

The authority would provide the site for the new school and meet the associated capital and start-up costs.

The authority has funding in its approved capital programme to build the new 80 place SEMH school. The authority will manage the design and build process which

is already underway. The successful sponsor would be consulted on the design process for the new school building.

The new school building would be ready for the start of the 2020/21 academic year.

The authority would meet all pre and post opening costs associated with establishing the new school on the following basis.

Pre-opening funding

Pre-opening funding of £110,000 would be provided, broken down as follows.

January to March 2020 £16,100

April to August 2020 £93,900

The DfE would also provide a one-off Project Development Grant (PDG) payment of £25,000 to the successful proposer for the legal costs associated with establishing the new school.

Post-opening costs

Post-opening funding would be provided as the free school grows and would be formed of two elements;

1. Funding for resources: Paid each year that the school builds up to capacity, this would be based on the number of places it is expected to be created for the year in question. The rates would be £250 for each new place created in the primary phase and £500 for each new place created in the secondary phase.
2. Funding for Leadership: A fixed rate amount of £170,000 which would be paid across three years - £85,000 in the first year, £51,000 in year 2 and the final £34,000 in year 3.

Proposed timeline

The process and outline timeframe for establishing the new school is set out below.

Publication of proposals and invitation to interested parties to apply to establish the new school	17 September 2018
Closing date for applications	Noon on 12 November 2018
The authority submits list of proposers to the Secretary of State	15 November 2018
Assessment of applications by the authority	w/c 3 December 2018
Submission of proposals to the Secretary of State with a recommendation for the authority's preferred proposer	w/c 10 December 2018
Decision by the RSC on behalf of the Secretary of State	Early 2019
New school officially opens	1 September 2020

The authority may wish to invite applicants to interview during the assessment process.

The Regional School Commissioner (RSC) for South East England and South London, on behalf of the Secretary of State, will consider the authority's assessments and recommendations before deciding which proposer is in the best

position to take forward the new school. The RSC will inform the authority and the successful proposer of its decision, and the authority will inform any unsuccessful proposers.

If you would like further information or wish to discuss your application, please contact:

Nathan Caine
Head of ISEND
Tel 01273 482401
nathan.caine@eastsussex.gov.uk

Jessica Stubbings
Senior Manager, Partnerships and Governance
Tel 01323 463537
jessica.stubbings@eastsussex.gov.uk

Gary Langford
Place Planning Manager
Tel 01273 481758
gary.langford@eastsussex.gov.uk

Please return your completed form to school.consultations@eastsussex.gov.uk
NB: the authority led free school presumption is a different route to the DfE's free school programme. Further information about how to establish a new school via the DfE's free school programme route can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-schools-in-2014-how-to-apply-mainstream-and-16-to-19-free-schools>.

Guidance for Applicants

Section A – APPLICANT GROUPS

In this section of the application form applicants provide information about their group. Proposers must be DfE approved sponsors. If you are not already an approved sponsor you will need to separately apply via the formal sponsor approval process. You should contact the DfE about becoming a sponsor before submitting a proposal and you can find out more information at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sponsor-an-academy>

Section B – The School

Site / location	<p>The school would be located on land off Reef Way, Hailsham, BN27 1FB. The site is 2 hectares in size. A plan of the site can be found at the end of this document.</p> <p>The site would be transferred on a lease hold basis (125 years) to the successful sponsor.</p> <p>The authority has funding in its approved capital programme to build the new 80 place SEMH school. The authority would manage the design and build process. The successful sponsor would have the opportunity to be involved in the design process for the new school building.</p> <p>The new school building would be ready for the start of the 2020/21 academic year.</p> <p>The authority would meet all pre and post opening costs associated with establishing the new school.</p>
Pupil capacity	<p>The new school would have a capacity of 80 places.</p> <p>The authority anticipates that pupil numbers in the first academic year (2020/21) would be between 16 and 32 across all year groups. It is expected that a similar number would be admitted in the following year (2021/22), with the school reaching its capacity of 80 in the third year (2022/23).</p>
Age range	4-16
Gender	Co-educational
Nursery provision	None

Sixth form provision	None
SEND type	The school would cater for children and young people with an EHCP which has SEMH as a primary need.
Number of residential places	None
Funding per place	The school would receive base funding of £10,000 per available place (£800,000 in total) each year, with a single-value top-up of £9,123 per child paid pro-rata in 12 monthly payments for each month that a child is on roll.

Section C – VISION

Applicants should take account of the relevant criteria in Annex C of the free school presumption guidance.

As a minimum, please ensure you include the following:

- A strong educational vision and a curriculum delivery based on high standards of attainment for each key stage.
- A commitment to excellent outcomes and high quality of teaching and learning.
- A commitment to partnerships and details of how you would work with other agencies/services to provide a comprehensive package of support for pupils.
- Details of the outreach work that you would offer local mainstream schools to develop inclusive practice at a systemic level. This **should not** include direct support for children, but rather how you would help improve ethos and practice from a leadership perspective.
- Details of the proposed model that demonstrates improved outcomes for children with SEMH (and associated needs) including links to national, evidence-based research.
- Plans for appropriate engagement with the local community and parents during the pre-opening period and any on-going engagement.
- Details of your understanding of children with SEMH needs but who also have ASD traits and how you would support these in line with their needs.

Section D – EDUCATION PLAN

Applicants should take account of the relevant criteria in Annex C of the free school presumption guidance.

As a minimum please ensure you include the following:

- An ambitious, broad and balanced, deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and pupil intake.
- A statement around the ethos and values of the proposed school.
- Details of your pedagogical approach to meeting the needs of SEMH pupils and delivering positive outcomes, including those with secondary ASD needs.
- Strategies for measuring pupil performance effectively and setting challenging targets.

- Details of how you would support the reintegration of children back into mainstream provision, both pre and post 16.
- Details of how you would ensure that key aspects of therapeutic provision would be delivered within the curriculum and how you would work with external agencies to ensure children access the full curriculum.
- Details on how you would minimise exclusions and promote self-regulation.
- A staffing structure that would deliver the planned curriculum within the expected income levels; with a focus on outstanding teaching (including strategies for effective performance management).
- Details of how the needs of all children are fully provided for and how the school would be fully inclusive.
- Details of enrichment and extended services, for example, breakfast clubs, sports clubs, homework clubs and music/art clubs.
- The school's approach to: PHSE; the Prevent Duty; safeguarding and welfare (including positive handling); and promoting fundamental British values (democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs).

Section E – CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY

Applicants should take account of the relevant criteria in Annex C of the free school presumption guidance.

As a minimum please ensure you include the following:

- The resources you would draw on and/or deploy to support the development of the new free school by the opening date.
- Clear evidence that you have the range of skills and abilities necessary to set up and then run a school effectively, including: managing school finances; leadership; project management; marketing; human resources; safeguarding; and health and safety.
- How the school would be organised and what the governance arrangements would look like, including a diagram of the proposed structures.

