

New 60 Place Primary Special School for Children with Communication and Autism Needs

Field View Road, Potters Bar, EN6 2NA

Consultation in advance of a sponsor competition process

We are consulting you in advance of holding a competition process* to seek applications from interested academy sponsors to deliver a new 60 place special primary school, for children aged 4 – 11 with communication and autism needs.

The purpose of this consultation is to inform interested parties in advance of the competition process and to seek feedback on the proposal to provide this new school. Any feedback gathered will be used to help finalise the competition specification document.

Why is a new school needed?

Analysis of current demand indicates there is a significant need for places for children with autism and/or social communication needs. The demand for new Communication & Autism (C&A) places has been determined by reviewing the number of children who are;

- currently in independent placements and whose Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs) indicate they meet this need profile,
- currently attending one of Hertfordshire's primary Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) schools whose needs stem from their autism and associated sensory needs/difficulties in accessing learning,
- receiving home tuition either through Education Support for Medical Absence (ESMA), as they were unable to attend school due to their autism-related anxiety, or through Elective Home Education (EHE) as parents felt that there was not a suitable school provision available locally,
- awaiting placement in specialist out of county placements,
- currently seeking independent placements,
- not attending school due to autism-related anxiety, but who did not meet the criteria for ESMA tuition (e.g. When Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) support is not in place/ available)

How many places will the school offer when it opens?

Based on current information, the school is planned to open from September 2023. We anticipate that the new school will open at 60% capacity, offering 36 places across year groups 2, 3, 4 and 5. From September 2024, we would expect the school to operate at full capacity, with a total of 60 places (Reception to Year 6). All pupils in attendance will have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

The site and buildings

The proposed site for the school is in county council ownership and is shown within the red boundary below. Hertfordshire County Council will deliver suitable buildings and undertake works consisting

of renovating the existing building, a former school building, as well as providing additional capacity through a newly built block.

The remainder of the site, shown within the blue boundary below, has been promoted through the Hertsmere Local Plan process by Hertfordshire County Council as a potential housing site.



How to send us your feedback

You have until 1 April 2022 to let us have your comments by emailing us at the following address: Education.Planning@hertfordshire.gov.uk quoting 'New Primary C&A School Competition' as your email subject. We will not be able to acknowledge or respond individually to your responses but any feedback received will be used to help finalise the competition specification and related documents.

*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. In advance of this process and publication of the specification, local authorities are also required to consult with interested parties and stakeholders to gather feedback that can be used to finalise the specification for the new schools. Department for Education guidance on the free school presumption can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/establishing-a-new-school-free-school-presumption>