

**Grange Park Infant and Nursery School
Statutory Proposal to close Special Resource Provision**

This is a Statutory Proposal pursuant to The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007

The School

Grange Park Infant and Nursery School is a foundation school. Its address is:

Grange Park Infant and Nursery School,
Hayes,
Middlesex,
UB4 8SF

The school's current capacity is 458

Alteration Description

The school proposes to close the Special Resource Provision.

Current Special Resource Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Grange Park Infant and Nursery School has a Special Resource Provision (SRP) for eight children with complex learning difficulties. This is known as Rainbow class. Admission to the SRP based on School Action Plus would normally be full time for a minimum of one term and a maximum of three terms.

The children gain admission into the Special Resource Provision through the Local Authority and the children come from a wide catchment area.

Pupils considered for the SRP must:

- Be the subject of an Educational Psychologist's written Action Plus advice.
- Be undergoing a statutory assessment
- Have a statement of special educational need naming the Special Opportunities Class as placement.
- Have complex difficulties in learning or development, which may include Autistic Spectrum Disorder, and which require a high degree of adult support.

We currently have five full time members of staff working in the classroom and two members of staff who work part time hours to cover lunch times.

One of the main functions of the class is the assessment and diagnosis of the children during their placement. The children's progress is closely monitored and the advice of specialists is always sought with the parent's permission.

The benefit of being in an SRP is that the children can access and experience learning in a mainstream classroom as well as a highly individualised educational programme similar to the environment of a Special School.

Children in SRP are allocated a place in the classroom because they are experiencing significant difficulties accessing the curriculum in a mainstream classroom, have

difficulties with learning, communication, control of emotions and behaviour, interaction and relationship skills, sensory and physical disabilities.

Placement in the special provision occurs through an agreement between the local Education Authority, the parents, the Governing Body of Grange Park Infant School and the requesting school where the child attends already. Sometimes the child is new to the authority.

Agreement is reached on the suitability of the placement and that a period of assessment should take place within the special provision. There is an expectation of involvement by the requesting school.

Pupils admitted at School Action Plus on the Special Educational Needs list (SEN), or on a statutory assessment placement remain on roll of the requesting school, with the expectation that a representative from that school remains part of the planning process for that pupil.

How the Proposal is likely to lead to an improvement in the standard, quality and range of the educational provision

We are of the view that the standard and quality of educational opportunities for the children will be improved on so many levels if the children were to be given a place in a Special School from the outset if it is appropriate. They will have improved access to services, including the curriculum, wider school activities and facilities and equipment and no further funding will have to be allocated to make health and safety improvements.

The specific educational benefits of improved access to specialist staff and accommodation are:-

The children will have a wider range of equipment to support their educational needs; for example access to new technologies which can often increase communication and access to the National Curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (EYFS).

The children will have access to specialist rooms such as sensory rooms, soft play rooms.

They will have immediate access to the outdoors, as an essential requirement for children functioning within the EYFS facilities; which at present they do not have.

The children's communication will be greatly improved as staff will have expertise in signing and Picture Exchange Communication (PECs) and be readily available.

The children require access to a range of therapies such as speech and language and occupational therapy which then require implementation of specific programmes, and for children on the Autistic Spectrum the programmes can be quite complicated and have to be delivered accurately to bring about a successful outcome for the children. A special school will have teaching assistants who are appropriately trained to deliver these programmes to a higher standard.

As well as the traditional therapies more forward thinking therapies that have shown to aid communication and calm children on the Autistic Spectrum such as music, art, massage and water therapy can be more easily accessible for the children. Normally parents would have to arrange these themselves.

The range of other children with similar needs will be wider and support the children's communication and social interaction; at present there are eight children with very diverse needs who are not always able to communicate with each other.

Children and parents will also have access to greater support from each other as a wider school community, for example attend assemblies, school celebrations, outings and after school clubs for children with Special Needs, and holiday clubs and wider range of experiences such as Activity Holidays which the SRP is unable to provide within Grange Park Infant and Nursery.

The children will be able to thrive in an environment that is fit for purpose on a long term basis as opposed to the children experiencing unnecessary change which they find difficult.

Reasons for the Proposed Permanent Closure of the Special Resource Provision

The classroom has evolved over a long period and over time the needs of the children have changed and have become more demanding beyond the capacity of the provision in terms of accommodation, specialist equipment required, the capacity to accommodate the range of equipment the children need to give them the appropriate range of experiences they require, for example specialist sensory rooms and purpose built soft play room.

Most of the children in the SRP are functioning at the same level as children in the Foundation Stage and below and they require the essential facility of continuous access to the outdoors, an essential recommended by the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (EYFS). The present classroom does not have access to the outdoors, and is indeed one of the furthest rooms from the small playground dedicated for the SRP children.

As the children have become more complex, the range of expertise needed to meet the children's needs has also increased. To recruit staff with appropriate training, experience and qualifications to meet the high level of expertise required to run the very individualised education plans that the children require has proven to be very difficult. We feel that without recruiting and retention of staff would have to come with some form of enhanced salary payments which we are unable to meet within the budget given to the SRP. We will continue to experience a high level of turnover in the SRP, which is not good for the children who require continuity.

Throughout the day the children have visits from a range of therapists to implement their Individual Educational Plans. Whilst the school has been flexible in accommodating these visits beyond the confines of the classroom, in recent years the increased complexity of the children's needs has made this difficult.

Present access for the children is difficult and limited from the very busy staff car park for the various transport vehicles for the children. This causes congestion, inconvenience. Children need a high level of supervision as they are helped in and out of the vehicles.

Emergency evacuation for the children is presently very difficult as they have to exit onto the staff car park. We have erected temporary Harris Fencing to manage this. There is pending building work linked to the school expansion in this area and that is why a permanent solution has not been carried out.

The toilets are not purpose built disabled toilets for children. In the past some children would have been able to use the toilet facilities independently, now all the children are in nappies, including children who are aged seven. There is not enough room to accommodate this in the present space without compromising the already limited classroom space. This would need a capital funding to ensure that the toilet facilities were adequate.

The primary purpose for having the SRP is to enable children with complex learning difficulties to have a period of assessment and experience integration with mainstream children; this is to aid their communication, interaction and academic achievement. The children are meant to stay for a minimum period of one term and a maximum period of three terms; however no child has ever left (except 1) before the end of Key Stage 1, often having stayed for three years and on other occasions staying beyond Key Stage 1.

The percentage of children able to experience integration in any area of the curriculum or for social integration has been virtually none for the past eight years.

The percentage of children going onto Special Schools has been 99%. The children have gone onto Grangewood (SLD), Hedgewood (MLD), Hillingdon Manor (ASD) and some have gone onto schools out of borough. None of the children have returned to mainstream settings.

We know that the SRP has been very successful for the many years it has been open. Since 2001 it has been judged to be 'Good' to 'Outstanding' by successive OfSTED Inspections. We have adapted to the changing needs of the children over the years and have been largely dependent on the expertise of the lead professional in the classroom. It now requires a very large capital investment and relocation to enable the school to fully meet the needs of the children. We are aware of the difficulties with budgets for all local authorities and are therefore also giving a practical solution to the current situation. If children continue to be allocated places into the SRP based on the trend that has been developing over recent years we feel that the children's educational opportunities will be limited given what we have described above.

What Provision has been made for the children currently in the SRP?

There are nine children in the Special Resource Provision. Three children are going off roll and have been allocated their Special School places; all the other children are at various stages of the statementing process and the local authority is working with the school and families to ensure that the children's future placement meets their needs. Based on their current assessments all the children will go to Special Schools

Parents of children in the class were informed individually on Tuesday 20th March regarding the proposed closure of the Special Resource Provision.

The number of pupils for whom provision will be made outside the Local Authority is:-

1 (the child was placed outside the Local Authority in Spring 2012, through an appeals process well before the consultation documentation for the closure of the SRP was considered)

Details of the number of pupils for whom provision was made in the SRP during each of the 4 school years preceding the current school year:

2008 – 6 children

2009 – 8 children

2010 – 7 children

2011 – 7 children

Implementation

It is intended that the closure will be implemented by 30 July 2012. It would be implemented by both the school and the Local Authority. In the case of the Local

Authority this would only be to the extent that it would no longer deal with the process for admissions to the Special Resource Provision and would no longer provide funding for it.

Project Costs and how they will be met

There are no costs involved in the closure of the SRP

Consultation

Before publishing this proposal, the Governing Body of the school carried out a consultation process which complied with the requirements of the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007

A copy of the consultation document is attached. A copy was sent to those on the consultation list and made available to others at the school.

The following persons were consulted:

- **the governing body of all schools**
- **the LA that maintains the school**
- **families of pupils, teachers and other staff at the school;**
- **any LA likely to be affected by the proposals, in particular neighbouring authorities where there may be significant cross-border movement of pupils;**
- **neighbouring authorities, the London Boroughs of Ealing, Harrow and Hounslow**
- **the governing bodies, teachers and other staff of any other school that may be affected**
- **families of Grange Park Junior School**
- **trade unions who represent staff at the school, including teaching and non teaching unions**
- **MPs whose constituencies include the schools that are the subject of the proposals or whose constituents are likely to be affected by the proposals**
- **Head of Education Psychology, Occupational Health, Behaviour Support Team, Special Needs Team, Speech and Language, Child Development Centre (CDC), Education Welfare Service, Children’s Medical Clinics to consult the School Nurse, the school Library Service, Schools Travel Service, and General Practitioners**
- **all officers on the School Improvement Service in the London Borough of Hillingdon**

Only 2 consultation responses were received.

Views Expressed with the schools response

1. That part of the reason for the proposed closure was the school's expansion program.

It would be true to say that the difficulties associated with the expansion have added to the difficulties with the SRP. The consultation started by setting out the expansion because we are aware that not all those reading the consultation would know we are expanding. Additionally, the need to demolish some accommodation during the expansion has further exacerbated the problems within the SRP.

Eight children in the SRP are on the autistic spectrum, we are very conscious that any unusual noise or disruption to the children's routine is particularly difficult for those children to manage.

2. That because the SRP has been rated as outstanding by Ofsted the difficulties set out by the school in the consultation could not have been overwhelming.

Although it is true that Ofsted have rated the SRP as Outstanding, it has been at a huge price to staff and at the expense of provision for children in the main stream. The SRP has been outstanding despite the accommodation and resources provided by the local authority being totally inadequate to meet the needs of these children. The school's budget for this year was £123337 to staff, resource and manage this SRP, which should indicate the amount of subsidy we are shouldering from our main school budget.

The school is shouldering huge pressure to meet the very challenging needs of the children in inadequate facilities. The pressure on staff within the school is already considerable and the SRP is an additional burden which we are no longer willing to bear without significant capital investment and increased revenue funding.

3. That the special schools are full and that children need to travel outside the Borough

In fact, children from the SRP have succeeded in obtaining places in special schools. No parent of a child in the SRP has objected to its closure.

Objections and Comments

Objections and Comments may be made to the Local Authority. Objections and Comments may be made by any person.

You have until 5pm on **11th July 2012** to make any comments or objections. These should be made to:

Anna Crispin
Chief Education Officer
Planning, Environment, Education & Community Services
London Borough of Hillingdon
4E/01 Civic Centre
Uxbridge
Middx UB8 1UW

It is the London Borough of Hillingdon which will make the decision on whether the proposal will be allowed.