To Parents and Carers, Staff and other interested parties  

18 June 2015

Proposed changes to Castle Community College

We are very pleased to inform you of our plans for changes at Castle Community College.

Castle Community College currently runs a Specialist Resource Base Provision (SRBP) designated for 16 students with Dyslexia. This is reserved for pupils who have Statements of Special Educational Needs (SSEN) as a result of their dyslexia. The SRBP operates out of two sites (Mill Road for Key Stage 3 and Salisbury Road for Key Stages 4 and 5) and has the benefit of a number of years of good practice, with staff who are well qualified and highly experienced.

Over time, we have seen the needs of our students change, such that the SRBP is now providing support for young people with Speech, Language and Communications Needs (SLCN) and Communication and Interaction needs (C&I) as well as Dyslexia. Therefore, we wish to change the designation of the SRBP from Dyslexia to Speech, Language and Communication Needs and/or Autism.

We have been forging links with River Primary School where a SRBP for 12 children with Speech and Language Needs has recently been established. We believe that this proposal will not only ensure specialist places are available more locally to children’s homes, but also that the College would become the onward destination for pupils attending the SRBP at River PS.

This proposal will be an excellent opportunity for us to use our knowledge and expertise to the full by accommodating children with SLCN in a caring, nurturing environment, both within the SRBP and the school as a whole.

KCC will provide additional funding to enable us to provide additional support.

We hope the following questions and answers will explain, in more detail, what we are intending to do.

What is Castle Community College being asked to do?
The College is being asked to redesignate the current Dyslexia SRBP into a SRBP catering for 16 Key Stage 3 and 4 students and four Key Stage 5 students with Speech, Language and Communication Needs and/or Autism. We are happy to make this change and are confident that our staff have the relevant expertise and skills to meet the needs of these students.

What type of Speech and Language Needs do you mean?
Students attending the SRBP will have a need type of Specific Language Impairment (SLI) (a specific disorder in their language development) and those for whom language and communication may be a barrier to their curriculum access. This may include some pupils who also experience literacy difficulty, reflecting the school's existing expertise in this area.

How will you work out which children will attend the SRBP?
A specialist assessment of a student’s needs will identify that they are suitable for a mainstream school. Castle Community College will be consulted by the Local Authority as to the suitability of the SRBP for individual children, in which case we will be named on the student's Statement of SEN / Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan).
Will this mean fewer places for local children?
No. The current Dyslexia SRBP has its own rooms within the school where students can receive some individual and small group teaching and support and this will continue to be the case following redesignation. The students will not spend all of their time in the SRBP but will be integrated into mainstream classes during each school day.

How much funding will the college receive?
Each place will bring a minimum of £10,000 per year which will enable us to provide the additional support necessary to help these students make good social and academic process.

When will the change to the SRBP take place?
It is intended that the change will take effect from 1 September 2015 allowing sufficient time to strengthen links with River PS and for staff to undertake any further training that might be necessary.

Tell me more about SRBPs.
A small number of students with Statements of SEN/EHC Plans require higher levels of support than can be provided in their local mainstream schools, but their needs are not so complex that special school placements are appropriate. For students like this KCC maintain a range of Specialist Resource Base Provisions (SRBP) which are based in mainstream schools but reserved for students with Statements of SEN/EHC Plans.

Are KCC planning to open more SRBPs across the County?
Yes. They liaise with schools in areas where additional support for specific special need types is lacking. They are also providing primary SRBPs in the seven new academies that are opening in September 2015 and the two new academies proposed for September 2016. They also plan to open SRBPs in all new school proposals coming forward. Their website sets out these places in more detail:  http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/education-skills-and-employment-policies/education-provision

Where can I find out more about what is in place for SEN children?
KCC have produced a Strategy that sets out their plans for children with SEN and Disabilities (SEND). The SEND Strategy shows how they will be creating 209 extra places in special schools and 164 in mainstream schools. It is available on the website at: https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/KELSI/SEND_Strategy.pdf

They are also developing a training programme to support all schools to develop staff and resources to meet the needs of students with SEN. Special schools will play a leading role in this training.

I have a question about the SRBP – who can I ask?
If you have any questions please contact us directly at sdoelugas@castle.kent.sch.uk or email AEN.resources@kent.gov.uk

We would like your views on this proposal
You can have your say by:
- Emailing school.consultations@kent.gov.uk / sdoelugas@castle.kent.sch.uk
- Writing to David Adams, Area Education Officer, South Kent Office, Kroner House, Eurogate Business Park, Ashford, TN24 8XU. / Sue Douglas, Head of Resourced Provision (you can hand the letter into the College).

If you are intending to contact us with your views may we ask that you please do this by July 10th 2015. The Governing Body / Trustees of Castle Community College will consider all responses and make a decision as to whether or not to proceed with the proposed changes. The outcome of the consultation and views of the Governing Body / Trustees will also be passed to KCC’s Cabinet Member.