Ridge View School Education Consultation

In order to meet its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places KCC is consulting on a proposal to make the following prescribed alterations to Ridge View School, Cage Green Road, Tonbridge Kent TN10 4PT to:

- Relocate Ridge View School, Cage Green Road, Tonbridge to a site at Yeoman’s Field, off Lower Haysden Lane, Tonbridge for September 2017
- Establish a Satellite provision of Ridge View School at Wouldham All Saints CEP School for 48 students with moderate to severe learning difficulties from 1 September 2017
- Increase the designated number of places offered at Ridge View School, from 180 to 228 for September 2017

As the strategic commissioner of school provision, the Local Authority has a duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places for the residents of Kent. This duty applies to special school provision, as well as mainstream settings.

Ridge View School is one of a number of special schools in Kent that has been identified for expansion to create additional places and improve the facilities available for pupils. The school provides for pupils with profound, multiple, and severe learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. Approximately a third of pupils have autistic spectrum disorders as a primary need. In addition, many have a range of complex needs including sensory impairment, hearing impairment, physical impairment and delayed cognitive development.

The School is currently located in unsuitable buildings in North Tonbridge in a campus with two mainstream schools, preventing expansion. Despite the inadequate buildings Ridge View School continues to provide outstanding education, as recognised by Ofsted.

The Government has recognised the demand in Tonbridge and has allocated Targeted Basic Need funding for the purposes of expanding Ridge View School, in order to increase the places offered.

The proposed alterations will offer 48 additional special educational needs (SEN) places in the area which reflects KCC’s aspirations to increase the number of SEN school places across the County, as set out in the Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2015-19, a copy of which is available from the website at: www.kent.gov.uk/educationprovision
KCC recognises the significant importance given to parent/carer views in the Children and Families Act reforms of SEN and Disabilities which came into force from September 2014 and has looked to ensure they are involved in shaping and influencing strategic decisions that affect their students and young people. As part of the consultation we are testing various assumptions and are taking on board views gathered to inform our future plans.

- **Proposal to relocate Ridge View School to Yeoman’s Field, off Lower Haysden Lane, Tonbridge**

  **Why does Ridge View School need to expand?**
  The numbers of children with profound, severe and complex needs (PSCN) is increasing which has resulted in pressure on places in Kent. This, combined with the need to offer places that avoid long travelling distances for vulnerable young children, means that KCC requires Ridge View School to increase the number of places it offers from its current position.

  Due to the complexity of needs of its pupils and capacity restriction of the school site, Ridge View School is unable to admit its current designated number (180) and currently has 112 pupils on roll. The need for additional places in the Tonbridge and Malling District was recognised by the Government and £2.3m was allocated from Targeted Basic Need funding to enable the relocation and expansion of the school.

  Ridge View School has established outreach services which support all the mainstream schools within the Tonbridge and Malling District. Ridge View School is a vital part of KCC’s strategy for ensuring special schools are at the heart of their communities so enabling many pupils with SEN to remain within their local mainstream school. To continue to provide this service Ridge View School must remain within the District of Tonbridge and Malling. The proposed relocation and expansion of Ridge View School would facilitate an increase in, and greater utilisation of, training facilities and shared resources to benefit all schools within the District.

  **Initial plans to move to Higham Lane, Tonbridge, Kent**
  A planning application for the relocation of Ridge View School to a site on Higham Lane, Tonbridge was submitted earlier this year but following significant difficulties, including a requirement for excessive drainage work, it was subsequently withdrawn.

  **Site at Yeoman’s Field, off Lower Haysden Lane, Tonbridge, Kent**
  Another site search was undertaken by KCC and their agents as part of the planning application for Higham Lane. Each identified site was evaluated and considered on its merits. From this work we were confident that the Higham Lane site was the best available at that time. Subsequent to that, KCC identified that Yeoman’s Field, off Lower Haysden Lane, Tonbridge is a more suitable alternative.

  Yeoman’s Field is currently used by the Judd School as sports playing fields, although it is on a remote site away from the main Judd campus. KCC has reached an agreement with the Judd School to release Yeoman’s Field for Ridge View School, subject to planning approval.
What would be included in the new building
The relocation of Ridge View School will allow for the provision of a new purpose-built special school. The initial design approach considers the topography and constraints of the site and how this best serves the needs of the school. The amount of external space for the school is paramount to the school’s curriculum for external learning and play. To optimise the external space the building of the site informed the form of the building, allowing direct access from classrooms and the main building to a secure landscaped external area.

A single building solution creates the opportunity to zone the areas of the school in relation to their function, with communal zones providing space for exchange and the opportunity to share resources. Where previously different functions of the school have been fragmented across different buildings, a single building lends itself to creating a ‘village model’ whereby all parts of the school have access to more facilities and have a greater flexibility of space.

Each cluster of classrooms wraps partially around shared quiet communal zones with access to small group rooms, providing multiple space options for teaching and learning. High ceilings will be provided in order for the classrooms to be bright and airy and all classrooms on the ground floor open onto external areas for outside learning. For all higher dependent classrooms on the ground floor there is direct access to toilets from classrooms.

The hall will be large enough for three badminton courts and will be able to be divided with a moveable acoustic wall. This alongside the Hydrotherapy pool will provide excellent opportunities for the needs of pupils at the school.

A life skills house will be provide opportunity for pupils to prepare for everyday life after finishing school. This is designed to have the appearance of a regular 3 bedroom house, two stories with a pitched roof. There will be wheelchair accessible bedroom and bathroom on the ground floor, and fully integrated lower kitchen work tops for independent use by wheelchair users.

Location and travel implications for Ridge View School
The proposed location of Ridge View School to the new site at Yeoman’s Field, off Lower Haysden Lane, Tonbridge, Kent is approximately 2.5 miles away from the current school site at Cage Green Road, Tonbridge. Therefore, under the School Organisation Regulations 2013 it is necessary to consult on these proposals.
As part of the SEND Strategy our aim is to provide local provision and reduce unnecessary travel. The schools’ travel plans are being updated to ensure that travel to and from school will be as sustainable as possible. All efforts are being made to maximise private hire and minibus usage to reduce the number of journeys, where pupils’ needs allow for this.

The proposal to relocate Ridge View School to Yeoman’s Field is not linked to or contingent upon the proposal to relocate and expand Wouldham All Saints CEPS.

- **Proposal to establish a Satellite provision of Ridge View School at Wouldham All Saints CEP School for 48 students with moderate to severe learning difficulties from 1 September 2017**

**Satellite Provision at Wouldham All Saints CEP School**
Further to the successful implementation of Satellite classes of special schools located within mainstream schools KCC is proposing to establish additional classes for Ridge View School within the proposed new location of the Wouldham All Saints CEP School site.

It is intended that the Satellite have its accommodation which will be fully integrated into the new plans for Wouldham All Saints CEP School and will operate on the Ridge View School model. Pupils will remain on the role of Ridge View schools and it will be staffed by Ridge View School staff and pupils attending the satellite will continue to have access to the support they need.

**What is the Wouldham All Saints CEP School offering and how does it relate to the Ridge View School Proposal?**
Wouldham All Saints CEP School is recognised as a good school by Ofsted and is located in Wouldham Village of the Tonbridge and Malling District. The Governing Body, with the support of KCC, is currently consulting on a proposal to relocate and expand the school for September 2017. The proposal to establish a Satellite provision is linked to and contingent upon the relocation and expansion of Wouldham All Saints CEPS.

Wouldham All Saints CEP School is being asked to host a new Satellite provision for up to 48 pupils with moderate to complex learning difficulties. The Headteacher and Governing Body at Wouldham All Saints CEP School are happy to host the satellite and are confident that staff from Ridge View School will bring the relevant expertise and skills to meet the needs of the children, for the benefit of both schools.

**What type of Needs do you mean?**
The children attending the Satellite provision will be those pupils on the roll at Ridge View School who are identified as most likely to benefit from accessing mainstream provision. The identified pupils will have moderate to severe learning difficulties.

**How will you work out which children will attend the Satellite?**
An assessment of the individual needs of the child will identify that they are suitable for Satellite provision at a mainstream school. For example, those children who will benefit from having some opportunities to join in mainstream school activities for either social situations i.e. lunchtime clubs, breaks etc. or for taught subjects such as Maths, English, PE or any area relevant to the individual child. The Headteachers and Governors at both schools will be invited to take part in the discussions about which pupils are most appropriate and should be admitted. All of the children in the Satellite will have met the entry criteria for Ridge View School and will be on the roll of Ridge View School whilst attending the Satellite.
What will the Satellite at Wouldham All Saints CEP School look like?
The Satellite will have dedicated accommodation within Wouldham All Saints CEP School where children can receive some individual and small group teaching and help. The school is highly inclusive and the design of the Satellite will be fully integrated into the mainstream school design. This proposal will provide the opportunity for Ridge View pupils to access mainstream activities, where suitable and progress through the school alongside their primary age peers. We aim to have in place provision which offers a flexible match to the needs of the children.

When will the Satellite open?
It is intended that the Satellite will be in place for September 2017.

Tell me more about Satellite Provision
A small number of children with Education, Health and Care Plans or a Statements of Special Educational Needs (a legal document that describes the help given to pupils who have the greatest difficulty learning) require higher levels of support than can be provided in their local mainstream schools. Satellite provision enables a limited number of special school pupils to access a mainstream offer, where this is suitable for meeting their needs. In this instance, the proposed Satellite will provide children with learning difficulties access to specialist teaching normally only available in special schools, alongside more able children of the same age, with support from additional staff.

Where can I find out more about what you are putting in place for SEN children?
KCC has produced a Strategy that sets out our plans for children with SEN and Disabilities (SEND). The SEND Strategy shows how we will be creating 209 extra places in special schools and 164 in mainstream schools. It is available on the website at: www.kent.gov.uk/sendstrategy

Will expanding the School mean that it will lose its ethos or lose focus on the quality of education?
Ridge View School is judged “outstanding” by Ofsted. It has a strong leadership team that has the capacity to manage an increase in pupil numbers. The school wants to retain its individual ethos and will ensure that this is a priority. As additional staff are appointed, this will create opportunities for the school to recruit a broader level of expertise and specialisms within its staff which can be used to enhance the teaching and learning delivered.

Will the extra places created at Ridge View School for the Satellite at Wouldham All Saints CEP School be for local children?
Ridge View School is the District Special School for Tonbridge and Malling. We have planned to ensure that any extra places created are close to the area where there is identified additional need. Our aim is to ensure there are enough places to allow children to attend a local school. KCC maintains equivalent provision for each District across the County.

Are you just providing classrooms? What about other spaces pupils need?
The Local Authority has worked closely with the senior leadership team at Ridge View School and will work closely with Wouldham All Saints CEP School to ensure that all appropriate accommodation and facilities are provided to enable them to deliver an effective curriculum in a way that suits the needs of the school and its pupils. The schools will be able to provide parents with information about how they will organise the school day and any changes they will be considering. For Ridge View School this includes both during and after the proposed expansion.
Proposal to increase the designated number of places offered at Ridge View School, from 180 to 228 for September 2017

In order to enable our two related proposals we need to increase the total designated number of places offered at Ridge View School. This does not mean that 228 places will be solely based at the new Ridge View School site. These proposals would enable the school to formally operate from two sites in West Kent and increase the offer to its pupils. The Ridge View Satellite provision hosted at Wouldham All Saints CEP School would be filled incrementally starting with up to 24 places from September 2017, increasing over time to 48 as the need requires.

The proposal to increase the designated number of Ridge View is linked to and contingent upon the relocation and expansion of Wouldham All Saints CEPS.

I have a question – who can I ask?
If you have any questions please contact either school or email AEN.resources@kent.gov.uk

You can have your say by:
- Emailing us at school.consultations@kent.gov.uk; or completing a response form which is available on the website: www.kent.gov.uk/schoolconsultations
- Attending the drop-in information session held at Ridge View School on 13 October between 3.00pm and 6.00pm for parents
- Writing to Jared Nehra, Area Education Officer for West Kent, Kent County Council, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone ME14 1XQ. (You can also hand the letter or response form into Ridge View School or Wouldham All Saints CEP School, no later than midday on 11 November 2015).

We have updated our Equality Impact Assessment to see if the proposal could affect anyone unfairly. We welcome your views on the assumptions we have made and the conclusions we have drawn. To view the document, go to: www.kent.gov.uk/schoolconsultations

What Happens Next?
If you are intending to contact us with your views, please do this by midday on 10 November 2015.

The consultation process – indicative timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 October 2015</td>
<td>Education consultation commences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 October 2015</td>
<td>Parents drop-in information session at Ridge View School from 3.00pm to 6.30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 November 2015</td>
<td>Consultation closes</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 December 2015</td>
<td>The outcome of the consultation is considered at the Education and Young People’s Cabinet Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec – Jan 2016</td>
<td>The Cabinet Member for Education, and Health Reform decides whether to continue with the proposal. If so, KCC will publish a public notice for a four week period in a local newspaper and at the school. During this time comments and objections can be made about the proposal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan - Feb 2016</td>
<td>Subject to no objection, the Education Public Notice is issued (4 weeks)</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2016</td>
<td>Decision is confirmed</td>
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The outcome of the consultation will be discussed at the Education and Young People’s Cabinet Committee on 15 December 2015. Following this meeting the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform will make a decision on whether to proceed with these proposals. If he decides to proceed we will then publish a Public Notice in January 2016, which will run for 4 weeks.

Jared Nehra
KCC, Area Education Officer for West Kent

**RIDGE VIEW SCHOOL**

**EDUCATION CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM**

Proposal to:

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**Do you agree with the proposals?**  Yes ☐  No ☐  Undecided ☐

**Which of the following best describes you?** *(please tick)*

☐ Parent of pupil(s) currently attending Ridge View School
☐ Member of staff at Ridge View School
☐ A Governor at Ridge View School
☐ Other (please specify)………………………………………………………………………………………………

Name ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Address ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Your comments ...

Please continue overleaf, if necessary

Please return no later than midday on 11 November 2015
Please return no later than midday on 11 November 2015 to:

- hand it in at Ridge View School office; or
- email school.consultations@kent.gov.uk;
- Jared Nehra, Area Education Officer for West Kent, Kent County Council, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone ME14 1XQ;

Kent County Council is a data controller under the Data Protection Act 1998 and will comply with the requirements of the Act at all times. We will ensure that your personal information is processed fairly and lawfully and in this instance used only for the purpose of validation, which will enable a fair and just consultation.