

Expanding SEND Capacity – Dial Park Primary School

Stockport Council Consultation

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Introduction

Stockport is proud of the quality of education provided by its diverse and high-performing system of schools, colleges, and early years 'settings. Stockport is committed to ensuring its residents have access to good local schools which offer a rich and varied learning experience.

Stockport faces significant challenges in the future due to a growing population (caused by increased housing development and inward migration), condition issues within the school estate, and in line with other local authorities nationally, a growing cohort of children with specialised and complex needs.

Funding for capital investment to maintain and grow the school estate remains constrained by the priorities and focus of Government and as such relies on the Council to better seek value and/or economies of scale where possible. Funding pressures means greater focus to maximise the benefits from our investment plans. This includes social value, recognising the importance of social, environmental and economic well-being across our communities by developing our educational establishments.

The Council has an enduring statutory responsibility to commission sufficient high quality school places. This means having the right number and type of school places, in the right place, at the right time to meet demand.

This document sets out how we plan to carry out our responsibility in respect of the creation of new mainstream provision targeted to meet the needs of children with special education needs or disability (SEND), in line with the commitments made in the One Stockport Borough Plan to ensure there are sufficient places in good and improving local inclusive schools at the heart of the community that children and families want to go to.

Context

Stockport must consider the full educational journey of all of its residents and ensure that all learners have the opportunity to access rich, varied and expansive learning experiences to achieve their full potential and prepare for adulthood and independence.

The full scope of delivery spans from early years through to post-16 and up to the age of 25 for those with an Education, Health and Care plan.

Stockport currently has a blend of graduated provision to meet the needs of all its pupils.

- Mainstream – pupils are supported in class having their needs met by a class teacher or teaching assistant
- Mainstream (SEN support) - pupils are supported within mainstream classes and may need additional support with their learning

- Resourced - pupils attend a mainstream setting but spend over 50% of their time in a support rich environment separate from the mainstream class and receive differentiated learning.
- Special School - pupils for whose needs are so significant and complex that they cannot be met in a mainstream or resourced settings.
- Alternative - pupils with specific needs or those who would benefit from differentiated learning. This provision offers appropriate placements for pupils who would not receive suitable learning due to exclusion, illness or other reason. This also applies to pupils who struggle to engage with an academic curriculum and would therefore suit vocational based subjects (currently Stockport has no vocational provision for children requiring a vocational offer).

Currently approx. 12% of the pupil population has a special education need or disability, of which 4% of the pupil population has an Education, Health and Care Plan which has been historically higher than regional and national levels. The number of pupils with SEND is projected to grow (upper limit) by 2.85% (approx.56 pupils) each year for at least the next 5 years.

The profile of types of SEND (primary need) is changing with children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) accounting for a greater proportion of children each year (increase of 2.9% and 1.2% respectively each year) whereas Speech, Communication and language Needs (SCLN) is decreasing in relative proportion (decreasing by 2.2% each year).

The historic and current offer within the specialist, alternative and resourced provision is not sufficient for those with more complex SEMH and ASD needs and has led to the commissioning of external school places.

As well as profiles of size and need changing for pupils with SEND, localities contributing the greatest proportion of pupils have changed.

For some children whose needs are significant or complex, it requires a specialised form of provision that cannot always be provided in mainstream schools. The number of special school and resourced places has grown in recent years in both the primary and secondary sector to keep up with demand.

The current 5-year forecast on the need for specialised school places indicates that there are insufficient special school places to meet anticipated need, a shortfall of 130 places in primary and 120 places in secondary. The current profile and location of special, resourced, and specialised places is not sufficiently robust and diverse leading to a greater reliance on expensive special school places.

A greater emphasis on local provision meeting local need is needed, connecting and rooting a pupil within their community. This can be achieved through mainstream inclusion and the commissioning of further resource bases.

Inclusive education is education that includes everyone, irrespective of SEND, gender or faith, learning together in our schools, and colleges. The work on the inclusion strategy acknowledges that as well as having inclusion in education, we must also create education and community infrastructure to allow the

community a pupil lives in to be inclusive. There is a need to align sufficiency into the wider corporate inclusion agenda.

To achieve true inclusion and assure resilience in Stockport, the offer of SEN support, resourced, alternative and specialised places needs to grow and develop, reflecting the changing dynamic across the Borough but also protecting the use of Special School places for the most complex pupils.

As a minimum, Stockport requires a further 8 resourced bases in the primary phase, attached to existing schools, and a further 3 resource bases in the secondary phase; 128 primary and 96 secondary places.

About this Consultation

This consultation outlines the proposal to create a new SEND provision in the form of a specifically resourced provision (SRP) at Dial Park Primary School.

A resource provision sits within a mainstream school and provides support for those, who without specialist input, are unlikely to make progress in their learning and will struggle to take part in mainstream school life. In time, it is expected they will be able to attend the majority of their mainstream lessons and take part with others.

We think it is important that children and families have the choice of attending their local mainstream school. By creating new provision in these communities it means that the majority of children and their needs can be met locally.

This is a pre-publication consultation which is intended for stakeholders directly impacted by these proposals. It's intended use is to provide feedback to the Council in anticipation of it publishing and consulting on the final statutory proposals to amend the type of provision a school offers.

Who is this for?

This is for anyone with a role or interest in Schools or their local community. It may include:

- Parent/Carers
- School staff
- Governing Bodies
- Early Years and Childcare providers
- Schools, including free schools and academies
- Other interested parties

Key dates

This consultation will be published on 4th May 2023 and will close at 11:59pm on 18th June 2023

How to have your say

Online – visit www.stockport.gov.uk/consultations to submit your response. Please use the online system wherever possible to help us best analyse responses.

If for exceptional reasons, you are unable to use the online system, for example because you use specialist accessibility software that is not compatible with the system, you may download a PDF version of the consultation document and respond either via email or post.

By email – school.organisation@stockport.gov.uk

By post – School Places, Admissions and Transport Team
Stopford House 2nd Floor,
Stockport,
SK1 3XE

Consultation

Dial Park Primary School is a popular 1.5 form of entry primary school situated in Offerton. It has an excellent track record of working with and meeting the needs of children with SEND.

The school and Governing Body have a clear ambition to become a centre of excellence with SEND which would enable it to ensure all children, regardless of need, can reach their full potential and meet or exceed expected standards by the time they transition to secondary school. Dial Park currently holds the Inclusion Quality mark with Ambassador status and were recently inspected by OFSTED who cited their strength with inclusion for all children regardless of need.

The school's ability to further meet the needs of children with SEND is limited by available resources and physical space within the building. There is a number of options available to the Council to create this required space including repurposing existing accommodation or creating new accommodation.

Proposal

To create a resource provision on site which will allow the school to admit up to 24 pupils with specific and complex needs and create specialised facilities that will allow the school to meet the needs of both the above pupils and all other pupils.

Risks and mitigations

- The Council has limited funding to create specialised provision of this type so must seek opportunities to maximise value by using existing space
- Failure to provide greater capacity within resource provision will result in reliance on special school places which cost £8-10k more per child per year

Consultation Questions

1. Do you support the proposal to create a resource provision at Dial Park Primary School?

Yes

No

Don't know

2. How important is it that children have the choice to attend their local school irrespective of their needs?

Very important

Important

Neutral

Unimportant

Very unimportant

Don't know

3. What factors do you think are the most important that the Council should consider when choosing a school to create new SEND provision at?

Size of school

Track record of working with children with SEND

OFSTED rating

Financial health of school

Physical space available within the school

Other

4. Do you wish to make any other comments about how the Council should better provide places for children with SEND?

Comments

Next Steps

This pre-publication consultation will inform the publication of a statutory proposal and a subsequent consultation will launch seeking views specifically on those proposals.

The creation of new SEND provision at a maintained community school is considered a prescribed alteration and is subject to a statutory change process.

The process that must be followed is as follows:

Stage	Description	Timescale	Comments
Stage 1	Publication (statutory proposal/notice)		Published on web
Stage 2	Representation (formal consultation)	Must be 4 weeks	Stockport would consult for minimum of 6 weeks
Stage 3	Decision	Decision made by Cabinet, must be made within 2 months. If no decision the expansion decision would fall to the Office of the School's Adjudicator (OSA)	The OSA can only arbitrate on matters relating to the decision to create a new resource provision and not the implications of that decision.
Stage 4	Implementation	No prescribed timescale	It must be as specified in the published statutory notice, subject to any modifications agreed by the decision-maker