

Consultation

Proposal to expand Bramley Oak Academy

Introduction

1. The Surrey Inclusion and Additional Needs Partnership Strategy (2023 to 2026) includes the intention of increasing the specialist provision places including for those pupils with SEMH needs. There has been significant investment in special school places in Surrey to enable children and young people to remain local to their families, with an additional 1,600 places created locally (by 2024) in specialist provision.
2. On 24 September 2019, Cabinet approved a 10 year Strategy for Specialist Placements, including a four year plan to provide an additional 883 specialist school places in Surrey. Subsequent capital investment approved by Cabinet in 2020 and 2021 totals a combined SEND capital investment of £79.6m which will create over 1,500 additional specialist school places in Surrey towards the total projected demand.
3. As part of this capital investment project, Bramley Oak Academy are working closely with Surrey County Council on developing a capital investment to increase the number of places at Bramley Oak Academy through the renovation and expansion of the school building.

Background and proposal

4. Bramley Oak Academy is a specialist school for boys aged 5-11 years. The school provides highly specialist teaching and support primarily for pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs and associated learning difficulties. Many of the pupils who attended Bramley Oak have co-occurring needs including, ASD and ADHD. The school has a 'Good' Ofsted rating from the most recent inspection on 4th October 2023.
5. The school is a part of the London South East Academies Trust (LSEAT). Our family of schools currently includes ten mainstream, special and alternative provision academies, together with an outreach service and a music hub across Bromley, Bexley, Surrey and Lambeth. All schools within the Trust are currently rated good or better by Ofsted. LSEAT is steadfastly committed to transforming local communities by providing a personalised approach to education and fostering opportunities for every young learner. The Trust's diverse portfolio includes mainstream, special, and alternative provision schools, collaborating to support children and young people with varying needs. Aligned with the DfE's vision for an enhanced system in Special Educational Needs and Alternative Provision, LSEAT addresses the increasing demand for EHCPs and specialist places, recognizing the profound impact of the pandemic on children's mental health and development. Proactively promoting equality, diversity, and a culture of mutual respect, LSEAT's schools aim to create an environment where

honesty and fairness are paramount, with a primary focus on guiding each child towards fulfilling their unique potential through exceptional progression pathways.

LSEAT actively seeks like-minded partners who can bring valuable strengths, expertise, and innovation to the expanding Trust. Emphasizing collaboration and mutual learning, LSEAT aims to enhance and broaden its provision, thereby supporting more children and young people to reach their full potential. The commitment to collaborating with schools and Trusts that share LSEAT's passion for education is deeply rooted in its proven success in improving pupil outcomes within special and alternative provision. The unique college-sponsored multi-academy trust model of LSEAT ensures the preservation of diversity and individuality for each school, granting leaders the autonomy to maximize their expertise. This approach facilitates seamless transitions for children, backed by high-quality central services, exceptional financial control, and a shared vision that encourages staff learning and development. The collaborative nature of LSEAT benefits pupils by providing expanded experiences, shared resources, and facilities. LSEAT welcomes discussions with like-minded schools to explore opportunities for collaboration and the sharing of specialist expertise, all aimed at guiding every child and young person toward a successful future.

6. The school currently has a roll of 61 pupils following a successful expansion application in September 2021. This increased the school number by six pupils. The school currently only admits boys with an appropriate EHCP.
7. In collaboration with Surrey County Council, the School and Trust is proposing that Bramley Oak Academy is expanded to accommodate a total of 104 pupils by providing an additional 43 for pupils aged 5 to 11. The expansion will utilise space on the school's current site.
8. LSEAT have a Single Equality Scheme which sets out how it promotes, monitors and manages areas of Equality, Inclusion and Diversity. The Group strategy embodies this ambition; by positioning itself as a social enterprise, rather than simply delivering education; the Group will ensure that what they bring to communities goes beyond qualifications.
9. The Trust values are designed to not only bring out the very best in staff but also to set an example to pupils on being exemplary citizens who believe in equality and celebrate diversity in all aspects of life. Equality Impact Assessment for this proposal finds no specific risk to increased impact upon any specific groups. Increased capacity and resources will continue to support the development of all areas. A further Equality Impact Assessment will be completed for any future significant change in relation to the gender of pupils.

Rationale

10. This expansion is proposed to meet the increased demand for specialist placements for pupils with a primary need of SEMH. Surrey is aiming to deliver at least 2,440 permanent additional specialist school places in Surrey between 2019-2026 to create capacity for 5,760 state maintained specialist places to meet projected demand for up to 6,000 specialist places in total by 2030/31.
11. Developing and maintaining high quality specialist provision in Surrey is vital to ensure appropriate placements for the county's most vulnerable children and young people who have complex SEND and require specialist educational provision.

12. Since 2015, the number of children with an EHCP who live in Surrey and require a specialist school place has increased by 73%. This is in comparison to a growth of just 5% in the five years from 2010 and can potentially be attributed, in part, to the increase in the birth rate, the changes brought about by the Children and Families Act and the SEND Regulations in 2014, the 0-25 SEND Code of Practice in 2015, and the improvements to earlier identification and diagnosis of need.
13. In the academic year 2021/22, more than 2,021 of Surrey’s EHCP pupils aged 4-11 years attended specialist school provision in SEN Units in mainstream schools and in Special Schools. 18% of this cohort were placed in non-maintained settings due to a lack of placement availability in Surrey. Latest sufficiency modelling projects growth of 4% by 2024/25, along with 36% forecast shortage of places within this timescale.
14. The table below demonstrates some of the issues facing pupils with SEMH in the Southwest of the county.

Borough / District	Educated in Borough / District	Educated in Quadrant	Educated Out of County	Educated in Independent provision	Travel 6 Miles or More for Education (YR to Y6)	Travel 7 Miles or More for Education (Y7 to Y14)
Guildford	20%	50%	11%	35%	43%	90%
Waverley	42%	56%	11%	41%	87%	72%
South West Total	33%	53%	11%	39%	70%	80%

15. As part of the Strategy for Specialist Placements, LSEAT working alongside Surrey County Council is proposing to expand Bramley Oak Academy because the Trust has a strong and established special school offer, experience of supporting pupils with complex SEMH needs and associated learning difficulties and a desire to meet growing demand from local parents for specialist provision. The expansion will enable Surrey County Council to offer more pupils and their families local, high-quality SEMH provision.
16. This rationale is supported through the attached Surrey County Council Educational Justification Statement for Bramley Oak Academy.

Pupil placement

17. It is proposed that:
 - The expansion will provide 43 additional permanent places for pupils aged 5 to 11.
 - New accommodation will be provided for 43 additional permanent places.
 - The main intake point will likely continue at Key Stage transfer, or where there are spaces and demand. New children will be accepted in the school in year groups, where appropriate and in their best interest.
 - Class sizes will typically be 8 in a class across all age ranges with pupils will be grouped according to individual needs, age and learning needs.
18. School places are allocated in accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014, which requires the Local Authority to take into account the pupil’s special educational needs, parental request for schools, and the

formal view of the schools requested before making a decision. Places will be allocated based on parental requests wherever possible, unless:

- the school is unsuitable for the child's age, ability, aptitude or SEN
- the placement would be incompatible with the efficient education of the other children with whom your child would be educated, and
- the placement would be incompatible with the efficient use of resources.

19. Further details on the admissions process for SEND specialist provision in Surrey can be found here: [Applying for a school place for children pre-16 with SEND](#)
20. Numbers at the expanded school will grow incrementally. It is expected that the expanded school will reach its new full capacity of 104 by September 2028. The school will work collaboratively with the local authority to ensure the expansion model is achievable and limits the impact upon the existing and new student population.

Building work

21. Renovation of the current school building and subsequent building works have been planned in conjunction with the Trust and DfE to provide appropriate accommodation to support increased numbers of pupils. The substantial renovation has completed the majority of pupil areas and has moved into the final phase of the project. Subject to the outcome of this consultation, new permanent accommodation would be provided on the existing school site. This would be subject to the requirements for planning permission and building control, which can be commented on separately to this education consultation.

Finance and resourcing

22. Bramley Oak Academy and LSEAT will receive additional revenue funding to cover the costs of the future expansion and the increased number of pupils in the expanded provision. Over time, this will be in line with Surrey County Council banding agreement.
23. Bramley Oak Academy will recruit additional staff for the expanded school. A funding and staffing model has been planned by the school and LSEAT and discussed with Surrey County Council.
24. The proposal is that Bramley Oak Academy School starts to bring online additional places from September 2025. This will likely be 16 additional pupils equivalent of two class groups.

Consultation and feedback

25. The proposed changes require a period of consultation and the agreement of the Department for Education's Regional Director if the proposal is to proceed.
26. The first stage of consultation will be informal and opens on Monday 8th January 2024. During this period, Bramley Oak Academy and LSEAT will share its proposals with schools including head teachers and chairs of governors, with unions, parent representatives, partner agencies, local residents and with the staff, parents and pupils of Bramley Oak Academy.

27. Following the informal consultation period, the feedback will be summarised and reported to the Regional Director for a decision.

Have your say

28. Bramley Oak Academy and LSEAT would like to know what people think about the proposal. The consultation opens on Monday 8th January 2024. You can respond by:

a) Using the online survey. You can access the consultation online by clicking the link on this document or that can be found on the school website.

<https://forms.office.com/e/e4xQPXpNrs>

b) Completing the consultation response form that is available alongside this document and emailing it to office@bramleyoak.lseat.org.uk with the subject "FAO Bramley Oak Academy Expansion"

c) Printing and completing the consultation response form that is available alongside this document and sending it back to the address below: Bramley Oak Academy expansion FAO Peter Forrest Bramley Oak Academy, Horsham Road, Bramley, Guildford, Surrey, GU5 0BJ

All responses must be received by 26th February 2023.

What happens next?

We will be holding an in person public event at the school on 15th January 2024 for parents and any other interested parties to discuss the proposals and to hear the views that people have. As a public meeting, it is open to all. If you would like to attend, please email office@bramleyoak.lseat.org.uk to register your interest.

The in person event will be held on 15th January 2024 at 3pm. There will be a short presentation followed by questions and answers. Please attend to share your views and ask questions. You do not have to have a child at the school to join the meeting.

We will also be holding an online public meeting on 8th February 2023 for parents and any other interested parties to discuss the proposals and to hear the views that people have. As a public meeting, it is open to all. If you would like to attend, please email office@bramleyoak.lseat.org.uk to register your interest and you will be sent a link to the online event.

At the end of the consultation period, Bramley Oak Academy will collate and review all of the responses received and share these with relevant stakeholders as well as publishing them on the school's website.