



Department
for Education

Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames Special Free School

**Seeking proposals to establish a
Special Free School**

**Royal Borough of Kingston upon
Thames**

March 2019

SECTION ONE: OVERVIEW

1.1 Summary

The Department for Education (DfE) is working collaboratively with selected Local Authorities to establish new schools that fit within the local authorities' strategies for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and those requiring alternative provision. This opportunity is intended to identify and meet untapped demand for special and alternative provision free schools as a supplement to LAs' existing resources. If a strong proposal is received by a trust that both the Local Authority and the Secretary of State wish to take forward, DfE will provide capital funding and start-up grants subject to value for money assessments.

This document sets out the key information regarding the school that the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames (Kingston) will be establishing alongside DfE. Trusts should use the information within this document, alongside the engagement events, to determine whether they would like to apply to open the school, and to base their application on.

1.2 Key dates

24 July 2018	Special and AP free schools wave is launched – the guidance and criteria for local authorities seeking to establish new special or alternative provision free schools is published.
11 March 2019	Announcement of successful LA bids. Competitions in successful areas subsequently open.
30 September 2019 (midday)	Deadline for providers to submit applications.
Autumn 2019	Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames and DfE to evaluate submitted applications and interview trusts.
Winter 2019/2020	Approved application announced

1.3 Contact details and further information

If you would like any further information or would like to discuss your application or the site, please contact:

Name: Matthew Paul

Job title: Associate Director, School Place Planning

Email: matthew.paul@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Tel: 020 8547 6246

Please find below the contact details of the Regional Schools Commissioner:

RSC: Dominic Herrington

RSC's office: South East and South London

Email: rsc.sesl@education.gov.uk

1.4 Royal Borough Kingston upon Thames Context and Planning

Please include here details of why the local authority is running this competition and requires this school. Should this be a joint bid, please explain how the local authorities will work together and how other local authorities are involved in commissioning places.

Kingston's overarching approach to understanding and meeting the needs of residents with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is set out in the Special Educational Needs Strategy 2016-2019 as approved by the Council's Adult's and Children's Committee in February 2016. The key concept from this strategy is now embedded in the Council's wider vision for 2020, set out in the Kingston Plan's second of three themes "A prosperous and inclusive borough where ... everyone has the opportunity to achieve their potential and a good quality of life". The Strategy was extensively consulted upon, including with our local parent-carer forum, schools, colleges and other local organisations.

Since then, and following the borough's SEND Local Area inspection in September 2018, the borough's [SEND Transformation Plan](#) is now the key SEND policy document and driver of positive change for local children and young people with SEND.

Kingston Borough is the second smallest of the 32 London boroughs in terms of population and the seventh smallest in size. It is a largely affluent area, with pockets of significant deprivation: one Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) is in the most deprived 20% of all areas in England, and six LSOAs are in the most deprived 40%. There are also very affluent areas: 38 of its 98 LSOAs are in the least deprived 20% nationally.

The GLA has projected Kingston's population to reach 194,030 by 2027; an

increase of nearly 9% from 2017. The biggest growth is expected in teenagers.

The number of children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in Kingston continues to increase each year. As at January 2018, 1,042 children and young people (CYP) in Kingston had EHCPs. This represents an 8.8% increase on the previous year, compared to 11.3% increase nationally, and a 63% increase since 2010. In September 2018, Kingston was responsible for 1,123 EHCPs – this is an increase of 7% in the eight months since January 2018. 2.7% of Kingston's overall state-funded school population have an EHCP, including 1.7% of pupils attending a primary and 1.7% of pupils attending a secondary.

Of the 1,123 Kingston-resident CYP with EHCPs, numbers by types of schools/colleges are as follows: state-funded mainstream, 369; state-funded special, 286 ; specialist resource provisions in mainstream schools, 101; FE colleges, 145; independent and non-maintained schools, 168; independent post-16 colleges, 16; other (mostly awaiting placements), 38.

The number of EHCPs across Kingston and Richmond is forecast to increase to 2,600 by 2021. Assuming a constant proportion (43%) require a special school to meet their needs, this implies a demand for special school places in 2021 of 1,121, up from the current 860. Assuming a constant number of placements in the independent and non-maintained sector (370), and taking into account the growth in maintained special schools already agreed and in the construction phase, the shortage of places across the two boroughs by 2021, without additional provision, is 182.

Kingston has three special schools – Bedelsford, Dysart and St Philip's, respectively designated for CYP with: Physical Disabilities; Severe and Complex Learning Disabilities; and Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) – and 11 specialist resource provisions (SRPs) in mainstream schools.

Neighbouring Richmond has two special schools – Clarendon and Strathmore, respectively designated for CYP with: MLD and Additional Complex Needs; and Complex Learning Difficulties – and 14 SRPs. Capella House, a new special school designated primarily for CYP with Speech, Language and Communication Needs, will open in September 2019.

As the children's services for both boroughs are provided by Achieving for Children, there are reciprocal priority commissioning arrangements for Kingston and Richmond across the five existing special schools, so the children which the schools educate largely live within the two boroughs. Ofsted rate all five schools as 'outstanding' or 'good'.

The number (180) and proportion (16%) of CYP at schools and colleges in the independent sector are high – and much higher than the national average. As a result the expenditure from the DSG High Needs block has increased to an unsustainable point that has necessitated DfE intervention. The 2018/2019 forecast overspend is £3.2m, making a cumulative overspend of £13.7m.

Please include here details of why the local authority is running this competition and requires this school. Should this be a joint bid, please explain how the local authorities will work together and how other local authorities are involved in commissioning places.

Please note that this is a joint bid: Kingston is working with the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, and with Achieving for Children (a community interest company which provides children's services for both councils). The aim of the school is therefore to provide places for children and young people with SEND in both boroughs.

The SEND Review within Kingston and Richmond in spring 2017 identified a need to create more specialist school places, so that children and young people (CYP) with SEND will be able to access a school place at a reasonable distance from where they live and ideally within their local community. Creating more local places will also help to improve academic outcomes, and to reduce Kingston Council's, and neighbouring Richmond's, DSG expenditure, both in terms of top-up rates and home-to-school transport.

CYP with Autism in Kingston and Richmond achieve significantly better than their national counterparts at the end of KS2, but in Kingston are below national averages at the end of KS4. In addition, there is a significant gap between those cohorts and the CYP in the two boroughs who do not have SEND. This school will help to close those gaps by enabling pupils to make measurable progress, towards individual academic targets.

Attending a school within, or much closer to, their home community is beneficial for CYP because they can: play a fuller part in their family life; and socialise and develop relationships within the community in which they will probably live as adults.

There are plans to use the Special Provision Capital Fund allocations to create 114 specialist resource provision places in Kingston and 44 in Richmond, and to fund additional MLD places at St Philip's Special School, but many more places are needed to reduce and eventually remove the boroughs' reliance on commissioning places outside the local area, particularly in the high-cost independent sector, and to reduce DSG expenditure. All five local special schools have been or are being expanded to their physical capacity. There is no ASD-specific school in Kingston or Richmond and there is a clear need for one. Autism is by far the most prevalent main presenting need in the local area, for 385 (34%) of the 1,123 CYP with EHCPs in Kingston and 371 (28%) of the 1320 in Richmond. The special schools in the two boroughs have some pupils who have ASD as a secondary need, but each of the schools specialises in educating CYP with a different main presenting need.

Many of the CYP who would attend this school would otherwise be placed in the independent sector, including residential schools. There are 163 Kingston and Richmond resident children attending independent day schools within Greater London, with a total cost of £6.6m, an average cost of more than £40,000 per pupil

which are as high as £64,000 per place at three providers.

Whilst the school would not be full until at least 2024, annual savings at that point, compared to using the independent and non-maintained sector, will be very substantial. These savings will reduce anticipated future expenditure (cost avoidance). Demand for special school places already exceeds supply, so it is reasonable to assume that without increased supply of places, prices charged by the independent / non-maintained sector will continue to rise.

SECTION TWO: THE SCHOOL

Type of school	Special.
Area of SEN provided for (please detail designation alongside additional information known about the cohort's needs and abilities)	It will be specifically for children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD).
Which local authorities are committed to commissioning places?	The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames and the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.
How many places have been commissioned and by which local authority?	60 by Kingston and 30 by Richmond.
Per-pupil revenue funding the local authority would expect to pay (if a range of rates, please explain and detail the rates per pupil, including estimates for how many of the cohort will be in each band)	Flat-rate £10,000 per place (base funding), plus £15,000 per pupil (top-up funding).
Age range	4 to 19.
Gender (Boys/Girls/Co-educational)	Co-educational.
Total number of proposed full time equivalent places (once school is at full capacity – this should include 16-19 places but not nursery)	90.
Type of placements offered (e.g. full time, short term, part time)	Full-time.
Number of nursery places, if applicable	N/A.
Number of 16-19 places, if applicable	12. We envisage that the school will develop close links with other local post-16 providers, particularly Kingston College and the other local special schools.
Any planned outreach, training and/or reintegration support (including details of funding that will be made available to support the school with this)	The school will provide outreach support and training, both general and bespoke, to mainstream schools in Kingston and Richmond boroughs, especially to specialist resource provisions within those schools. This will help to spread best practice and expertise and to provide development opportunities for teachers and support staff. Achieving for Children, the children's services provider for the two boroughs, will provide funding for that outreach work.

The table below details the number of places that the local authority proposes for each year group at the point of opening until the school is full.

	Year of opening	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6
Nursery							
Reception	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Key stage 1 (Y1-2)		6	12	12	12	12	12
Key stage 2 (Y3-6)	6	12	18	24	24	24	24
Key stage 3 (Y7-9)	6	12	18	24	24	24	24
Key stage 4 (Y10-11)				6	12	12	12
16-19: commissioner referred						6	12
Totals	18	36	54	72	78	84	90

SECTION THREE: RATIONALE AND CONTEXT FOR THE SCHOOL

This section describes the rationale and the context in which the new school will operate.

3A. Please include a brief description of the existing provision in your area, future expected growth in pupil numbers and how you expect places to be filled.

Education standards in Kingston are amongst the highest in England: 96% of schools in the borough are rated by Ofsted as 'outstanding' or 'good'. Attainment for local children and young people (CYP) with SEND is generally above national averages at KS2 but below national averages at KS4. We want local provision for CYP with SEND to be the best possible, in terms of preparing individuals for independent living (where possible) in adulthood and of educational achievement.

Local partners are actively involved in regional initiatives to inform and shape arrangements for CYP with SEND, including through London Councils, the Local Government Association and the South London Special Educational Needs Commissioning Group. Additionally considerable bi-lateral work with other local boroughs is now underway to deliver peer to peer challenge activities and planning specialist commissioning across the local region.

To support the development of our local special educational needs system, Achieving for Children, which provides children's services for Kingston and Richmond boroughs, made a number of structural changes and appointments, including:

- Line management responsibility for special educational needs and disabilities moving to within the responsibilities of the Director of Educational Services, so that the profile and priority of this area is raised within the wider education agenda in Kingston.
- School place planning for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities moving to within the responsibilities of the Associate Director, School Place Planning, so that the development of local specialist places, including special schools, is integrated and prioritised alongside mainstream place planning.
- The appointment of Pathway Planning Officers to provide improved transition routes at both Key Stage 2 to 3 and Key Stage 4 to 5 for children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans.
- The appointment of Annual Review Officers to raise the proactivity and quality of the Annual Review Process.
- The appointment of a Special Educational Needs Placement Commissioner with Achieving for Children's Placement Commissioning Team to improve the quality and value of placements within the independent and non-maintained sector.

In May 2017, our Review of Education Provision for children and young people (CYP) with SEND identified six strategic priorities, taken forward by six workstreams, to equip our local system to support all CYP to engage in learning and have an educational experience that inspires them, unlocks and nurtures their talents and provides a solid foundation for a happy and fulfilling life.

The workstreams, which began in June 2017, are:

- *Places*: Although we worked hard between 2014 and 2018 to increase places in-borough special schools in order to reduce the reliance on out-borough provision, the review identified a shortfall in the provision of local specialist school places. This workstream is tasked with increasing the number of local specialist places so that all children and young people can access a school place a more reasonable distance from where they live and within their local community. This new school will be a key element in fulfilling that aim.
- *Support*: Identifying and realising opportunities to improve the confidence and competence of adults to support and meet the needs of CYP with SEND. Initiatives implemented include the use of existing skills within specialist resource provisions and special schools more widely across the education system, and the delivery of interventions and training in mainstream settings. Others are the co-production of “Threshold Guidance” specifying evidence based interventions for schools to use with CYP on SEN Support, and improved access for schools to access non-statutory support via a telephone support service open during school hours, and an Early Intervention Panel.
- *Post-16*: Recognising that the SEND reforms required by the Children and Families Act 2014 contained very significant changes for the 16 to 25 years age group, focus was established on Post-16 provision, including beyond 19 years and the enhanced role of other services such as Adult Social Care and Housing.
- *Health*: This workstream is engaged in improving quality local therapy provision and more integrated and joined up working between health and other agencies.
- *Process*: The aim of this workstream is to improve the quality and efficiency of a range of processes within the SEND system.
- *Finance*: Expenditure within the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant has been in excess of the government allocation for several years and this workstream was tasked with taking forward the financial sustainability agenda.

Following the borough’s SEND inspection in September 2018, these workstreams have now been absorbed into the workstreams of the borough’s [SEND Transformation Plan](#), which is now the key SEND policy document and driver of positive change for local children and young people with SEND. The Transformation Plan includes ‘Workstream 3: Local Provision’, which has the aim of “developing specialist education places in Kingston that are the first choice of children, young people and families, including expanding local specialist resource provisions and establishing new special schools to meet identified needs”. This school will therefore be instrumental in helping to meet that aim.

The Achieving for Children Business Plan 2018/2019 has drawn on the Review and work of the workstreams and has aligned organisational priorities to support this work. The 2018/2019 Business Plan priorities and key strategic projects with a specific special educational needs focus are:

- *Resilience*: so that families and communities are better able to help, support and protect children without the need for statutory interventions.
- *Capacity*: to create local provision so that children and young people can stay closer to their families and support networks, and benefit from integrated education,

health and social care services.

- *Inclusion*: to develop more inclusive services and opportunities for children and young people with disabilities, complex needs and challenging behaviours.
- *Independence*: to support children and young people to develop their independence and skills for adulthood.
- *Resources*: to develop the skills and resources needed to deliver efficient, cost-effective, financially sustainable, and high quality services.

As Achieving for Children encompasses the local social care provision for, and educational oversight of, children and young people in Kingston and Richmond boroughs, the relationship that the school builds with Achieving for Children will be crucial, from safeguarding, educational and many other perspectives. That relationship will include agreement of a clear referral pathway for children and young people who would benefit from placements at the school, both at annual admission points and in-year.

The relationship with our local Clinical Commissioning Group, and the provision of therapies, will of course also be key. One of the principal objectives of Workstream 3 of the SEND Transformation Plan is “establishing a high quality local therapy offer that supports children and young people to make good progress towards their goals and maximise their opportunities for inclusion and independence”. The school will be expected to have a first-class therapies offer for its pupils.

3B. Please also include details as to how these proposed new arrangements are likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for children with special educational needs, and the outcomes for pupils, across the local authority and how you expect trusts to support this.

Achievement for children with ASD in schools in Kingston and Richmond is significantly better than the national average, the gap between those children and the averages of all children in those schools is too large and needs to be narrowed:

		Children with ASD	All children
Richmond (2018)	Reading	46	82
	Writing	37	81
	Maths	37	81
Kingston (2018)	Reading	50	88
	Writing	44	88
	Maths	53	89
National (2017)	Reading	41	75
	Writing	37	78
	Maths	39	76

% Achieving Expected Standard or Above in RWM at KS2

	Kingston (2017)	Richmond (2017)	National (2017)
Children with ASD	14	60	19
All children	61	57	43

% Achieving 5+ in English and Maths at KS4

This new school will play a major part in narrowing those gaps, both in the performance outcomes of its own pupils and through its outreach work with other local schools.

Too many local young people with Autism cannot live independently in adulthood. The school will directly address that issue, by meeting the highly individual needs of each pupil, recognising that learning barriers – e.g. sensory processing, communication difficulties, etc. – vary considerably. Although it is probable that its pupils will have secondary needs, the school’s primary focus will be on creating an environment in which CYP with Autism can flourish. CYP with Autism often learn skills in one situation but have great difficulty applying them elsewhere; the school will teach them how to use their abilities in a broader context, thereby enhancing their employability and enabling them to live as independent adults. The school will also help CYP with their physical and emotional health, diet, exercise, hygiene and sleep disorders (which are very common among CYP with Autism).

The school will provide individual, holistic plans and therapies that are flexible and regularly reviewed. Pupils will be well-prepared to move to specialist post-school provision and beyond, including employment. Without support and opportunities, there is a significant risk that these young people will become isolated and much less able to participate in their home community. The location of the school on the same site as the Respite Centre currently being built will create the opportunity to make a highly attractive SEND 'campus' and hub of local expertise for providing outreach to schools, colleges and other settings.

Whilst there are some local specialist resource provisions for CYP with Autism, none of the special schools is Autism-specific. Suitable provision is often a long way from home, meaning pupils must either spend significant amounts of time travelling or live away from home in residential provision, thus reducing the time they spend with their families or in their communities. This school will help to address that.

The school will also provide outreach to schools, as required by Achieving for Children’s Early Intervention Panel, which will take the form of specialist strategies for individual CYP with Autism and as contributions to a continuous professional development programme. We will mitigate the risk of the school becoming too generalist by ensuring through the commissioning and placement processes that places are only allocated to CYP whose needs ‘fit’ with the expertise of the school and its staff. The additional costs to the DSG in terms of place-funding would be more than offset by the savings gained by paying less in top-up funding and transport costs.

Pupils are likely to need intensive support, but our vision is that when they leave the

school they will be able to manage their difficulties, cope better in personal interactions and connect more with the world. They will also have better academic outcomes than the current borough averages for young people with Autism. Accordingly, they will have achieved their very best, markedly developed their social and life skills, learnt to manage their emotions and behaviours and be confident, self-reliant individuals ready for adult life.

SECTION FOUR: THE PROPOSED LOCATION AND SITE

Full address and full postcode	Moor Lane Centre, Moor Lane, Chessington, Surrey, KT9 2AA.
Size of site	25,585sq.m.
Further details on site (for example, current use/your reasons for choosing it/further developments (e.g. housing) planned for area	<p>The site was occupied by Moor Lane Junior School until the school's closure in 2007.</p> <p>In the last few years, the main school building has been used as offices by Achieving for Children (AfC), who provide children's services for Kingston and Richmond local authorities. AfC's Disabled Children's Services Team is based there, as are some locality social work teams. Those staff would need to be relocated within the borough.</p> <p>A respite centre for children with severe needs is being built in the north-west corner of the site and would be red-lined out of the area to be leased, but would, of course, have a synergy with the special school.</p> <p>The main building has been well-maintained and would readily lend itself to adaptation for special school use.</p> <p>The site also has extensive grounds and will make an excellent location for a special school.</p>