



Department
for Education

London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Special Free School

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

**London Borough of Richmond 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 London Borough of Richmond upon Thames (Richmond) will be establishing alongside the 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:

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

RSC: Dominic Herrington

RSC's office: South East and South London

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1.4 Context and Planning

Richmond'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 Cabinet in March 2016. The strategy will be reviewed in 2019. It was extensively consulted upon, including with our local parent-carer forum, schools, colleges and other local organisations.

In anticipation of the SEND Local Area inspection of the borough being likely to take place later in 2019, a SEND Transformation Plan will be consulted upon and published. The Plan will set out the borough's key priorities for positive change for local children and young people with SEND.

Richmond is the fourth smallest London borough in terms of population but eighth largest in size. It is a largely affluent area, with pockets of significant deprivation.

The GLA has projected Richmond's current population of 194,730 to grow to 214,103 by 2030; an increase of almost 10% over ten years from 2017.

The number of children and young people (CYP) with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in Richmond continues to increase each year. As at September 2018, 1,320 CYP in Richmond had EHCPs, up from 1186 in April 2017, a 11% increase. In addition the average severity of need amongst these children and young people is increasing, the funding of related support services is reducing and/or under threat, and price increase proposals from service providers are commonplace. Numbers are similarly high in Kingston.

Of the 1,320 Richmond-resident CYP with EHCPs, numbers by types of schools/colleges are as follows: state-funded mainstream, 595; state-funded

special, 220; specialist resource provisions in mainstream schools, 84; FE colleges, 182; independent and non-maintained schools, 185; independent post-16 colleges, 13; other (mostly awaiting placements), 41.

The number of EHCPs across Richmond and Kingston 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 1121, 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.

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

Neighbouring 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 SRPs in mainstream schools.

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

The number (198) and proportion (15%) of CYP at schools and colleges in the independent sector are high – and much higher than the national average. As a result the DSG expenditure has become unsustainable and has necessitated DfE intervention. The forecast 2018/2019 overspend is £3.8m, making a cumulative overspend of £11.8m.

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: Richmond is working with the Royal Borough of Kingston 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.

Our SEND Review of 2017 identified a need to create more specialist school places, so that all children and young people (CYP) with SEND will be able to access a school place at a reasonable distance from home and ideally within their local community. Enabling CYP to attend schools within, or much closer to, their home allows them to play a fuller part in family life, and to socialise and develop relationships within the community in which they will probably live as adults.

There are two other highly-significant reasons for establishing more places within Kingston: to improve academic outcomes, and to reduce the Council's, and neighbouring Richmond's, DSG expenditure on top-up rates and home-to-school transport.

CYP with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs in Kingston and Richmond achieve significantly better than their national counterparts at the end of KS2, but are below the national average at the end of KS4. There is also a large gap in the two boroughs between CYP with SEMH and other CYP. This school will help to close those gaps by enabling its pupils to make measurable progress, towards individual academic targets.

There are plans to use the Special Provision Capital Fund allocations to create 44 specialist resource provision (SRP) places in Richmond and 114 in Kingston, but many more specialist places are needed in order to reduce, and eventually remove, the reliance on commissioning places outside the local area, particularly within the high-cost independent sector. All five local special schools have been or are being expanded to their physical capacity.

There is no special school for children with SEMH needs in either borough, so an SEMH school would fill an obvious gap in both boroughs' local offer: in July 2018, there were 160 Richmond children and 154 Kingston children with EHCPs whose primary need was SEMH. Some CYP with mild SEMH are accommodated in local mainstream schools but for many, suitable provision is a long way from home, which means they must either spend significant amounts of time travelling or live away in residential provision, reducing the time they spend with their families and communities. Of those 314 CYP, 131 are in placements outside the two boroughs, of whom 47 attend independent and 84 attend state-funded schools or colleges.

When we consulted in March 2018 on plans for more SRP places in the two boroughs, our parent-carer forum and some individual parents identified the creation of a local SEMH special school as being crucial. In a survey for our 2017 SEND Review, headteachers and SENCOs told us that SEMH provision was their top priority, and that better training, more expertise and support in working with CYP with SEMH needs was essential. A new SEMH special school would therefore not only provide vital specialist places for CYP, but also provide outreach expertise needed to build the competence and confidence of local mainstream schools to better meet the needs of children with SEMH, fostering inclusion and further reducing pressure on the DSG.

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)	Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH).
Which local authorities are committed to commissioning places?	The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames and the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames.
How many places have been commissioned and by which local authority?	60 by Richmond and 30 by Kingston.
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 £20,000 per pupil (top-up funding).
Age range	7 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	18. 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 Richmond and Kingston 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
Nursery					
Reception					
Key stage 1 (Y1-2)					
Key stage 2 (Y3-6)	6	12	12	12	12
Key stage 3 (Y7-9)	24	36	36	36	36
Key stage 4 (Y10-11)	0	12	24	24	24
16-19: commissioner referred	0	0	0	9	18
Totals	30	60	72	81	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.

Although plans are in place to use the Council's Special Provision Capital Fund to create 44 new specialist resource provision places, many more places are needed in order to reduce and eventually remove the borough's reliance on commissioning places outside the local area, particularly within the high-cost independent sector.

Education standards in Richmond are amongst the highest in England: 87% of schools in the borough are rated by Ofsted as 'outstanding' or 'good', and it has the fifth highest proportion (54%) of schools which are 'outstanding'. 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 children and young people with special educational needs, 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 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 Richmond.
- 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 school 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.
- *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.

The Achieving for Children Business Plan 2018/19 has drawn on the Review and work of the workstreams and has aligned organisational priorities to support this work. The 2018/19 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.

This school will meet the needs, and improve the academic outcomes, of children and young people (CYP) with a range of Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs and academic abilities, who have difficulties in: developing and sustaining relationships with staff and peers, leading to social isolation; regulating their emotions and behaviour, leading to risk-taking and anti-social behaviour; and taking responsibility for their actions and the impact of their behaviour on others. These difficulties represent significant barriers to their learning and social interaction, so the school will use appropriate, bespoke strategies and interventions, including: the setting of clear, understood boundaries and targets; therapies; anger management; and consistent one-to-one pastoral and psychological support.

Achievement for children with SEMH in schools in Richmond and Kingston is significantly variable and the gaps between those children and the averages of all children in those schools are too large and need to be narrowed:

		Children with SEMH	All children
Richmond (2018)	Reading	65	88
	Writing	57	88
	Maths	67	89
Kingston (2018)	Reading	81	82
	Writing	57	81
	Maths	67	89
National (2017)	Reading	53	75
	Writing	46	78
	Maths	48	76

% Achieving Expected Standard in RWM at KS2

	Richmond (2017)	Kingston (2017)	National (2017)
Children with SEMH	12	11	13
All children	57	61	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.

The school will also place great emphasis on pupils' personal and social development, to enable them to: form lasting, positive relationships with staff and peers, grow in confidence, participate, and develop a firm sense of community and inclusion. All staff in the school will take responsibility for pupils' emotional well-being and for helping them to understand and model positive behaviours.

We expect that the school will play its full part in doing its utmost to minimise the number of fixed-term and permanent exclusions of its pupils. Children and young people with SEMH make up a high percentage of exclusions within Richmond and Kingston (though less than nationally), as the tables below show, and the establishment of the school should help to improve that situation.

	Richmond (2017/2018)	Kingston (2017/2018)	National (2016/2017)
Children with SEMH	174; 23%	116; 25%	86,650; 54%
All children	758; 100%	467; 100%	161,070; 100%

Numbers and percentages of fixed-term exclusions

	Richmond (2017/2018)	Kingston (2017/2018)	National (2016/2017)
Children with SEMH	2; 33.3%	6; 38%	2,030; 61%
All children	6; 100%	16; 100%	3,325; 100%

Numbers and percentages of permanent exclusions

The school will provide holistic, flexible and regularly-reviewed individual education, behaviour and therapy plans, as well as the highest standards of physical and emotional health for all. Without the right support and opportunities, there is a significant risk that CYP with SEMH will join anti-social peer groups and engage in criminal and/or gang activity, so this school will help to mitigate that risk through positive approaches which will guide them positively into young adulthood.

The school and its trust will be expected to provide outreach to schools, as required by Achieving for Children's Early Intervention Panel, which would take the form of specialist behaviour management strategies for individual CYP and as contributions to a programme of continuous professional development for staff.

The school's pupils will be able to choose from a variety of academic, digital and vocational pathways so that they will be well-prepared to move to post-16 provision and employment, and be able to lead fulfilled and happy lives.

SECTION FOUR: THE PROPOSED LOCATION AND SITE

Full address and full postcode	Barnes Hospital, South Worple Way, London, SW14 8SU.
Size of site	The part of the overall hospital site which has been earmarked by the Mental Health Trust's architects for school use is 3,267sq.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 is owned by South West London St George's Mental Health Trust, who have been seeking to dispose of the site.</p> <p>The Council's Planning Brief for the site, as outlined in the Council's adopted Local Plan (July 2018), states: "There is a clear need for a new Special Education Needs school in this area as set out in the Council's updated School Place Planning Strategy. Therefore, the Council expects any redevelopment proposal to prioritise the provision of the educational use."</p> <p>https://www.richmond.gov.uk/media/15935/adopted_local_plan_interim.pdf, page 178, SA28).</p>

	<p>The Mental Health Trust's architects have worked up a scheme which includes space and initial designs for a 90-place 7-19 SEMH special school which meets the requirements of BB104. The overwhelming majority of pupils at the school would be ambulant and therefore occupy less space than a school designated for children and young people with more severe physical needs.</p> <p>The Mental Health Trust's plans for the site as a whole also include a Healthcare Hub and blocks of housing, so there would be an opportunity for the school to become an intrinsic part of a new, discrete community.</p> <p>The Trust has recently submitted an outline planning application for the overall Barnes Hospital site, including the proposed special school: http://www2.richmond.gov.uk/lbrplanning/Planning_CaseNo.aspx?strCASENO=18/3642/OUT.</p>
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