

Consultation on the proposed establishment of a Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) unit at The Crescent Primary School for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Introduction

The London Borough of Croydon's vision is for children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities to achieve independence and employment, whenever possible, in or near their local community so that they can live fulfilled lives and be active contributors to Croydon's future. Croydon has high aspirations for children and young people with SEND. This will be achieved through improved joint working between education, health and social care services to include our children, young people and their parents and carers.

London Borough of Croydon have a number of mainstream schools with SEN Units for primary pupils, however this is insufficient for the number of pupils requiring this support leading to pupils either being sent to out of borough provision which is problematic for families and costly for the authority, or being sent to mainstream schools which are unsuitable to meet the needs of these children.

Rationale for the The Crescent Primary School SEND Unit

There is insufficient specialist provision for pupils in Croydon, and additional units are needed to ensure that children with ASD can access the support they need to achieve their academic potential.

The proposal

The Pioneer Academy is proposing to increase the specialist provision at The Crescent Primary School for 20 pupils with ASD to 40, to be implemented by September 2026, if approved.

The Pioneer Academy is a well-established Multi-Academy Trust with a proven track record of supporting a similar SEND provision at nine of its other sites. The Crescent Primary School is considered by the Local Authority as the most appropriate location for a SEND unit to be increased.

The SEND unit at The Crescent Primary School already meets the needs of pupils with an EHCP with an ASD diagnosis which are not severe enough to require a place at a special school but who will require spending significant proportions of their time in the SEND unit. Increasing the capacity of the SEND unit will enable more pupils to have their additional needs met while accessing education at a primary school through a flexible approach tailored and adapted to their needs.

The SEND unit at The Crescent Primary School builds on the broad and balanced education already being delivered at this school and further enhances the education offer the school provides to the community. They have good working relationships with the Local Authority's SEND team and this relationship supports a wider range of children with ASD.

The facility will enable more children with ASD to have their needs met through a flexible approach, tailored and adapted to the needs of each individual child. It will continue to be for children who will require specialist support to enable them to access a mainstream primary curriculum. The children split their time between the mainstream school and having bespoke support within the Unit. The SEND Unit is staffed by a team of teachers and support staff with

knowledge and experience of working with young people with ASD, led by a qualified SENDCo. The purpose of the unit is to support these children to achieve their academic potential and also to explore ways to develop skills to enable them to access the next stage of their education.

What will be the impact of the new facility on other pupils in the school?

It is not envisaged that the increase in capacity in the unit will impact negatively on other pupils in the school. The unit already has a positive effect in that having pupils with ASD in the school provide opportunities for other pupils to see these pupils as valuable members of the school community and society as a whole. Opportunities are provided for pupils to understand, learn and contribute to the support for pupils who have ASD.

Admission and Pupil Numbers

Admissions to the SEND unit will continue to follow a different procedure from that operating for the rest of the school. Admissions into the SEND unit will be through the Croydon SEND EHC panel process. This will not impact on pupils who are in the mainstream setting at the school. Pupils attending the SEND unit would be in addition to the mainstream Planned Admission Number (PAN) of 60. There would be 40 planned places in the SEND unit.

Funding

SEND units in Croydon will be normally funded in accordance with a Place Led Funding approach that complies with the Government's SEND Funding Reforms which came into effect in April 2018. For each place in the SEND unit, The Crescent Primary School will receive £16,000. This is made up of £10,000 'place funding' and £6,000 'top-up funding'.

What happens next?

The consultation is an opportunity for interested parties and stakeholders to express views and ask questions on the principle of increasing the capacity of the SEND Unit for ASD needs at The Crescent Primary School during the consultation period.

The consultation period starts on **Monday 9th March** and will close on **Monday 13th April**.

The Crescent Primary School is part of The Pioneer Academy, so will have to follow the process for making significant changes to an academy; as the local authority is not the decision maker for academy organisational changes. The final decision as to whether this proposal is approved for implementation will be made by the Department for Education.

The process for making significant changes to academies can be viewed in more detail here: [Making significant changes to an open academy \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/622222/making-significant-changes-to-an-open-academy.pdf)

Have your say...

You can state whether you support this proposal or not by emailing consultation@thepioneeracademy.co.uk

This consultation document is being sent electronically to all parents/carers, governors, school teachers and support staff who work at The Crescent Primary School and the trustees of The Pioneer Academy.

Electronic copies are also being sent to all Croydon primary, secondary and special schools, Croydon Council, ward members, MPs, Church Dioceses, all Early Years and Childcare providers, community groups, unions and other stakeholders.

The document will also be available on The Pioneer Academy website throughout the consultation period.