

3 June 2026

Dear parents/carers, students, staff and other interested parties

1. Introduction

We would like to hear your views on a proposal to open a Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and/or Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) at Knole Academy from September 2027. This would ultimately provide 30 places for students in Years 7 to 11 with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) for ASD and/or SLCN.

This letter explains the reasons for the proposal, and how the decision-making process works. Please let us have your views and comments on the proposal by completing the Consultation Response Form attached.

2. What is a Specialist Resource Provision?

SRP's support students with an EHCP who need specialist support over and above that which is provided by their mainstream school utilising its available funding.

An SRP is an integral part of a mainstream school. These are led by school staff that have the appropriate experience and specialist qualifications needed to support the students. It has dedicated teaching spaces and additional resources and staff to provide the support required. The students supported have an EHCP with a primary Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) type aligned to the designation of the SRP.

The students integrate into mainstream classes when they are able to do so, and into other aspects of mainstream school life whenever possible. This enables students supported by the SRP to benefit from mainstream education alongside their peers, in their local community, whilst receiving specialist support and having a designated space when they need it.

The proposed designation of ASD and/or SLCN will focus on students who have communication challenges at the heart of their needs.

3. Reason for the proposal

Kent County Council (KCC) is responsible for maintaining EHCPs for children and young people between the ages of 0-25 years.

According to data from the SEN2 census (January 2025), there were 20,635 children and young people in Kent with an EHCP. This is an increase of 1,229 young people compared to January 2024.

ASD remains the most common type of need in Kent, with 9,535 EHCPs listing it as the primary SEND need. SLCN was the third highest, with 3,583 having it as the primary SEND need type. Forecasts suggest that over the next 5 years, the number of children and young people with an EHCP for ASD will increase by about 500, and SLCN by over 900. Some of these students will need additional support a secondary school-based SRP can offer.

In January 2025, there were 322 secondary aged students in the Sevenoaks District who had an EHCP with ASD and/or SLCN as their primary SEND need type.

Of these,

- 90 were attending a mainstream school,
- 26 an SRP within a mainstream school,
- 150 a maintained special school, and
- 56 an independent school (independent special or otherwise).

Currently there is one secondary SRP in the District. This is at Orchards Academy. It offers 12 places for students with ASD. Due to the demonstrable need for additional secondary SRP places in Sevenoaks, Knole Academy have expressed an interest in operating a similar provision.

In January 2025, secondary aged students with an EHCP with a primary SEND need type of ASD in Sevenoaks, were travelling on average 11 miles to access an appropriate specialist provision, whilst across Kent this was 9.9 miles. Travelling such distances is not always in the best interest of the students. More local SRPs would reduce journeys and enable more students to go to school nearer to where they live.

4. Why Knole Academy?

KCC and Aletheia Academies Trust are fully committed to ensuring that children with SEND can be educated in their local community, alongside their siblings and friends. Both believe that the staff body at Knole Academy have the skills to support a new SRP for students with ASD and/or SLCN.

The school already works proactively to successfully support a number of students with a variety of need types via different curriculum pathways and has the space and capacity on their school site to provide an SRP. KCC and Aletheia Academies Trust feel that the school can do more to help those students with a greater degree of need, so they can remain part of this community.

Knole Academy has been rated as a GOOD school by OFSTED. In their most recent report (September 2022), OFSTED highlighted that:

- *Pupils and pupils enjoy coming to this inclusive school.*
- *Leaders are determined to help pupils achieve their best.*
- *Staff know the pupils well. Relationships are strong between staff and pupils. Pupils feel safe and feel that staff care about their welfare. They enjoy making use of the well-being room or interacting with the well-being dog.*
- *The curriculum is equally ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have effective processes in place to identify the specific*

- *needs of pupils and pupils with SEND. Leaders provide teachers with up-to-date information on the needs of individual pupils.*

The addition of a new SRP will further develop the staff body enabling them to support not just the students within the SRP, but students across the school who may have ASD and/or SLCN characteristics to a lesser extent.

5. Where will the Specialist Resource Provision be accommodated?

New accommodation at the school will be built to provide the SRP. It will be a safe space for the students in a specific area within the school – this area will include an enclosed outdoor learning space for these students, providing them with a consistent ‘home’ to access the support of the SRP staff and a place where they can spend recreation time should they so wish.

6. How will students gain a place in the Specialist Resource Provision?

To access a place within an SRP, students must have an EHCP which identifies that their needs can be met in an SRP within a mainstream school. Admissions to the SRP will be determined by KCC in consultation with Knole Academy. Students presently attending this school who may benefit from being taught in the SRP will be assessed in the same way. This would be in consultation with parents.

7. Funding

The revenue and capital funding required for the SRP will be provided by KCC if the proposal is approved by the Department for Education (DfE).

8. Summary of the consultation

In bringing forward this proposal all parties believe that opening an SRP for ASD and/or SLCN students will:

- Provide a much-needed resource that will support the growing number of secondary aged students with ASD and/or SLCN across the District. It will reduce distances students need to travel to access appropriate support.
- Build on the expertise that the school has in educating children with SEND including ASD and/or SLCN.
- Have a positive impact on the education and social understanding of other students within the school.
- Support students with ASD and/or SLCN in the transition from primary to secondary school and then from secondary school into post-16 provision, apprenticeships or employment.

Admissions to the SRP will count above the school’s Published Admission Number (PAN). Knole Academy’s PAN for September 2026 is 240 – this equates to a total school roll of 1,200 students.

9. Where can I find out more about what KCC are putting in place for SEND students?

KCC has produced a SEND Strategy 2025 to 2028 that sets out its plans for students with SEN and Disabilities (SEND) [SEND Strategy - Kent County Council](#).

10. I have a question – who can I ask?

If you have any questions, please email: enquiries@knoleacademy.org.

11. The consultation process – indicative timeline

Date	Activity
3 June 2026	Start of Public Consultation period lasting 3 weeks.
16 June 2026	Drop-in session via Teams, 3pm to 4.30pm on Tuesday 16 June, link can be found below. https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_MzA3YTkWNzAtZGVjMi00OGNmLWFhMjktZjFmZDlxZmM4YmQx%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22cee1735c-35a0-46bf-915b-c41c76a55b57%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22a641dd67-7288-454c-a2b5-de6a4fcadde8%22%7d
24 June 2026	Public Consultation closes. The results of the consultation will be referred to Aletheia Academies Trust for consideration. A formal decision will be made whether or not to apply to the DfE to add the SRP designation to Knole Academy, and the decision shared with KCC.
29 June 2026	Should the decision be to continue, a report will be presented to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills to agree the funding.
Summer 2026	Application submitted to the DfE.
September 2027	Implementation of the proposal, subject to Secretary of State approval.

12. How can I give my views?

There are three ways to let us have your views on this proposal:

- Come to the consultation drop-in session for parents/carers, members of staff, Governors and other interested parties via Teams on Tuesday 16 June 2026 3pm to 4.30pm where there will

be the opportunity to ask questions, give your views and complete a Response Form.
https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_MzA3YTkwNzAtZGVjMi00OGNmLWFhMjktZjFmZDlxZmM4YmQx%40thead.v2/0?context=%7b%22id%22%3a%22cee1735c-35a0-46bf-915b-c41c76a55b57%22%2c%22oid%22%3a%22a641dd67-7288-454c-a2b5-de6a4fcadde8%22%7d

- Completing the on-line form
Link: [Complete the survey](#)
- Complete and return (via post) any views on the proposal to David Collins, Headteacher, Knole Academy, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 3LE.
- You may hand your Response Form in at the school office addressed to David Collins, Headteacher. All written responses need to be received by midday on 24 June 2026.
- Email your comments to: enquiries@knoleacademy.org.

13. What happens next?

A report summarising the responses received during the consultation period will be submitted to Aletheia Academies Trust and the full Governing Body for consideration.

On the basis that Aletheia Academies Trust, the Governing Body and KCC are all in agreement to progress the proposal, a report will be presented to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills for funding to be agreed. If they agree to fund the proposal, the school will submit a significant change request to the DfE.

Whether the proposal to open a 30 place Specialist Resource Provision for students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and/or speech, language and communication needs at Knole Academy from September 2027 goes ahead, or not, will also be dependent on the planning process. The proposed new building and facilities will be subject to separate planning requirements which will include further public consultation.

Yours faithfully,



Mr D Collins
Headteacher