

Statutory notice

LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON

Cranmer Primary School – new specialist provision for children with Communication Needs

Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 19 (1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 that the London Borough of Merton is proposing to add a provision that is reserved for pupils with special educational needs to Cranmer Primary School, Cranmer Road, Mitcham CR4 4XU with effect from 1 September 2022.

The proposed special educational provision will provide 24 places for pupils with Communication Needs including children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Admission to the provision will be decided by the Council's SEN Panel and pupils admitted to the provision will be additional to the school's published admission number.

The London Borough of Merton will implement the proposals.

This notice is an extract of the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be viewed at <http://www.merton.gov.uk/consultations.htm>

Alternatively you can request a printed copy of the complete proposal from the address below or telephone 020 8545 3289.

Within four weeks from the date of publication of these proposals, any person may object to, or make comment upon the proposals, by sending their representations to: Director of Children, Schools and Families (FAO: Tom Procter, Head of Contracts and School Organisation), London Borough of Merton, Civic Centre, London Road, Morden, SM4 5DX or by emailing: SchConsult@merton.gov.uk

Jane McSherry
Director of Children, Schools and Families
London Borough of Merton
Civic Centre
London Road
Morden SM4 5DX

Date: 12 May 2022

Explanatory Notes

Cranmer Primary School is a maintained mainstream school. The council confirmed a revised admission number for Cranmer Primary School of 60 reduced from its previous 90 in publishing its latest determined admission arrangements. The capacity of the main school at Cranmer will therefore reduce from 630 to 420, providing space for the SEND provision through adaptations.

The London Borough of Merton aims to decide whether to approve this SEN provision proposal by the end of June 2022. If the Council fails to determine the proposals within two months of the end of the representation period it will pass all relevant material to the Schools Adjudicator who will determine the proposals.

Supplementary information

Description of alteration

The proposal is to implement prescribed alterations to Cranmer Primary School, Cranmer Road, Mitcham CR4 4XU with effect from 1 September 2022 to make provision reserved for pupils with special educational needs.

Merton Council proposes that the special educational provision will provide 24 places across the school year groups for pupils with Communication Needs including children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Admission to the provision will be decided by the Council's SEN Panel and pupils admitted to the provision will be additional to the school's published admission number.

The council confirmed a revised admission number for Cranmer Primary School of 60, a reduction from its previous 90 in publishing its latest determined admission arrangements. The total capacity of the main school at Cranmer will therefore become 420 (a reduction from 630). This will provide space for the SEND provision through adaptations.

Evidence of demand

The Merton Council area has experienced a significant increase in the number of EHCPs (Education and Health Care Plans) issued over the past five years and benchmarking across other Local Authority areas has shown that despite a series of expansion projects in recent years Merton has less state funded specialist provision than equivalent local areas.

Merton Council is not currently balancing its High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget and has agreed a 'Safety Valve programme' with government to reduce its deficit with a key action being to provide more state funded specialist provision within its area. There is therefore an urgent requirement to address this need as part of the council's strategy to provide good quality state-funded specialist provision school placements.

Objectives (including how the proposal would increase educational standards and parental choice)

The overall objective is to provide sufficient good quality local school places for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN).

At its last short Ofsted inspection on 10 July 2018, Ofsted reported that Cranmer Primary School continues to be good with strong leadership. The view of the Head of School Improvement in Merton is that this continues to be the case and the school has the capability and capacity to provide good quality SEND provision.

State funded schools provide value for money as it is considerably less expensive to provide places in state funded schools compared to providing education in independent or non-maintained provision. There are also savings in transport costs if provision is made in local schools. Increasing the number of places in local special schools therefore meets the objective to provide suitable, high quality places to meet the growing number of children requiring specialist placement within available funding.

The proposed solution will increase standards and parental choice for children in Merton for the following reasons:

- There will be an additional 24 places for local children who require access to a specialist SEN provision

- Cranmer Primary School is a “Good” school with the capability and capacity to provide a good quality SEND provision
- Provision in this location will provide more parental choice, complementing the existing SEND provision in primary mainstream schools to the east of Mitcham town centre, in Morden and in Raynes Park

We have consulted the school leadership and governing body that includes parental representatives on this proposal, who are all highly supportive with a strong motivation to make this new provision a success.

The effect on other schools, academies and educational institutions within the area

The expanded SEND provision will not reduce the intake of neighbouring specialist state funded schools. There is a high demand compared to supply of SEN places.

Project costs and indication of how these will be met, including how long term value for money will be achieved

The scheme is being undertaken in two phases, with the first phase providing for up to 16 places in the 2022/23 school year through minimal works undertaken to the school and more extensive adaptation works undertaken in summer 2023. The capital cost is estimated to be below £500,000.

The scheme will be funded by Merton Council through a combination of Department for Education formulaic High Needs government capital grant support and specific DfE safety valve capital grant.

In the long term, value for money is being achieved as the alternative of funding specialist independent/non-maintained provisions is more expensive. There are additional savings when reduction of transport costs is taken into account, and consultations with parents in recent years demonstrate that families value being able to attend good quality local provision within their local community.

The additional places will therefore meet the objective of ensuring sufficient suitable, high quality local specialist places are provided to meet the growing number of SEN children.

Implementation and any proposed stages for implementation

It is proposed that, subject to approval, minor works can commence in July 2022 to enable opening on 1 September 2022 with more extensive works the following year.

A statement explaining the procedure for responses: support; objections and comments

Responses should be provided within four weeks of the publication date of this proposal so by 9 June 2022 by email to SchConsult@merton.gov.uk or by post to Director of Children, Schools and Families (FAO: Tom Procter, Head of Contracts and School Organisation), London Borough of Merton, Civic Centre, London Road, Morden, SM4 5DX
