



**Proposal for Prescribed
Alterations (Maintained School)**

**Statutory Consultation on Proposals to
increase the number of places at**

**The Polygon
Special School**



SEND
Education and Learning
Children and Families

September 2020

Proposals for Prescribed Alterations (Maintained School)

The following proposals are published under Section 31(1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 as amended by Section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013.

This proposal takes account of the Education Act 1996; the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013; the School Organisation Maintained Schools Statutory Guidance for Proposers and Decision Makers (April 2016); the Education and Inspections Act 2006; the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Children and Families Act 2014 including the SEND Code of Practice 2015.

1. Local Authority details

Southampton City Council, Civic Centre, Southampton SO14 7LY

2. School details

| | |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|
| Name | The Polygon Special School |
| Type | Foundation Special School |
| Address | Handel Terrace, Southampton SO15 2FH |
| Age Range | 11 – 16 years |
| Capacity | 60 pupils |
| Ofsted | Full inspection December 2016 – Good |

The Polygon Special School is a special school which caters for children with social, emotional and mental health needs. Many of the pupils have additional or attributed learning difficulties including speech, language and communication and autism. Many have experienced significant trauma and loss and present with challenging behaviours that make mainstream schooling extremely difficult.

The Polygon Special School provides a calm, nurturing and safe environment provided by a dedicated team of staff. With an in-depth understanding of each pupil's needs staff are able to respond appropriately, setting clear behaviour boundaries within a supportive and understanding environment.

3. What changes are proposed?

Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 places a general duty on Local Authorities to secure sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary school education and requires them to have particular regard to the need to secure special educational provision for pupils with special educational needs.

In order to ensure fair access to educational opportunity and promote the fulfilment of every child's educational potential it is proposed to increase the number of places at The Polygon Special School from 60 places to 70 places from 1 January 2021.

4. Why do we want to do this? (evidence of demand)

The numbers and complexity of children with special educational needs has been increasing year on year for the last 10 years and is predicted to continue to rise for the foreseeable future.

Education, Health and Care Plans maintained by Southampton City Council 2010-2020

| 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 567 | 593 | 634 | 655 | 701 | 803 | 1021 | 1181 | 1387 | 1522 | 1736 |

Source: DfE SEN 2 Return

This increase is putting pressure on Special School places with all schools reaching capacity in the next 2 years.

Within this overall increase the numbers of children and young people with social, emotional and mental health needs are of particular concern.

The Polygon Special School is already at capacity in terms of its published admission number (PAN) of 60.

At a recent Placement Panel meeting the number of children identified as needing a place exceeded the number leaving. With the likelihood of additional requests being made to the school throughout the year it is predicted that the number of pupils needing a place will increase in 2020/21. It is therefore proposed to formally increase the PAN to 70.

5. Objectives, including how the proposal would increase educational standards and parental choice.

The Local Authority must ensure that good quality school places can be provided quickly where they are needed and that additional new places will only be provided at schools that have an overall Ofsted rating of 'good' or 'outstanding'.¹

The Education Act 1996 requires that Local Authorities secure diversity in the provision of schools and increases opportunities for parental choice.

The increase in places at The Polygon Special School will ensure that children in Southampton with social, emotional and mental health needs continue to have access to a high quality education and provide parents with a choice of schools within the City. The Polygon Special School was judged to be 'Good' at its last Ofsted inspection.

The proposal is to increase the published admissions number (PAN) at The Polygon Special School from 60 to 70 with effect from 1 January 2021.

It is believed that this will not cause any detrimental effect to any of the pupils or staff within the school.

¹ Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools. Statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers. October 2018.

Increasing the PAN will ensure that children with significant social, emotional and mental health needs:-

- Are admitted to their parents preferred school
- Have access to a suitable educational environment
- Have access to specialist staff
- Are treated equitably in relation to children with similar needs
- Can have their needs met locally avoiding the need for children to spend unnecessary time travelling to an alternative school further away

This proposal is aligned to a wider strategy of expansion and reconfiguration of specialist provision across the city and is supported by the school senior leadership and governors.

6. Consultation undertaken

The proposal has been discussed with The Polygon Special School staff and parents, the Southampton Parent Carer Forum and relevant unions. It has received the consent of The Polygon Special School leadership team and Governing Body.

7. Will there be any effect on other schools, academies and educational institutions within the area?

We cannot foresee any impact on any other schools. The demand for specialist places is affecting all Special Schools in the city and neighbouring Local Authorities.

8. Admissions

Admissions to The Polygon Special School will follow the Local Authority's protocols for admitting children with Education, Health and Care Plans.

9. Transport

Home to school transport will be provided in accordance with the Home to School Transport Policy, May 2020.

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

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of school places in its area for children of school age. In addition all children and young people are entitled to an appropriate education, one that is appropriate to their needs, promotes high standards and the fulfilment of potential (Code of Practice 2015).

Children placed in a special school attract base funding of £10,000 per pupil plus top up costs according to need.

Due to the complexity of their needs, if no places are available at The Polygon Special School, it is likely that the children identified as needing a place will have to be educated in an alternative Special School out of city, either Local Authority maintained or independent. The former school will attract the same level of funding as The Polygon Special School and will

require pupils to spend avoidable time and discomfort in travelling. Independent Special Schools cost significantly more, in the region of £70,000 per place (including transport costs), and again will have the negative impact of daily travel on the child and additional transport costs.

Long term value for money will be achieved through the greater capacity to meet the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities locally.

11. Implementation plan

The proposal requires minimal implementation and can be easily accommodated within the schools routine admission processes.

If the proposal is agreed by Southampton City Council Cabinet members, it is intended that the change will be implemented from 1 January 2021.

12. Related proposals

There is no other proposal linked to this proposal.

13. How can I make my views known?

Any person may object to, express support for, or make comments on the proposal, within 4 weeks of the publication of the statutory public notice by:

- Sending an email to: 0-25service@southampton.gov.uk
- Writing to: 0-25service – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities,
1st Floor, North Block, Civic Centre,
Southampton SO14 7LY.
You don't need a stamp.

14. What happens next?

The following table sets out the key dates for the consultation and decision making. At any point the proposal may be withdrawn. The dates set out below meet the Department for Education requirements for consultation on school organisation proposals.

| School organisation process | Date |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Public Notice published | 7 September 2020 |
| Statutory consultation (representation stage) | 7 September 2020 – 4 October 2020 |
| Decision required, no later than | 1 December 2020 |
| If approved, change of PAN starts | 1 January 2021 |

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The Polygon Special School
 Appendices

Appendix 1

The SEN Improvement Test

Section 39 of the School Organisation Maintained Schools, Annex B: Guidance for Decision Makers (January 2014) states:

In planning and commissioning SEN provision or considering a proposal for change, LAs should aim for a flexible range of provision and support that can respond to the needs of individual pupils and parental preferences. This is favourable to establishing broad categories of provision according to special educational need or disability.

Decision-makers should ensure that proposals:-

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>i)take account of parental preferences for particular styles of provision or education settings;</p> | <p>The proposals are to expand provision for children with special educational needs in line with current parental preference in Southampton.</p> <p>The Polygon Special School is highly regarded by parents.</p> <p>The increase in availability of provision would increase choice for parents and pupils.</p> |
| <p>ii)take account of any relevant local offer for children and young people with SEN and disabilities and the views expressed on it;</p> | <p>Southampton is committed to promoting integration between special educational provision, health and social care provision to promote well-being and improve the quality of provision, in line with the SEND Code of Practice 2015.</p> <p>The consultation process will involve all interested parties and will take account of the Local Offer and all views expressed on</p> |
| <p>iii)offer a range of provision to respond to the needs of individual children and young people, taking account of: collaborative arrangements (including between special and mainstream); extended school and Children’s Centre provision; regional centres (of expertise) and regional and sub-regional provision; out of LA day and residential special provision</p> | <p>The Polygon Special School offers bespoke packages of provision to meet the specific needs of each child.</p> <p>The school works as part of the network of Special Schools within the City and with mainstream schools in offering a continuum of provision from mainstream to specialist education.</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>iv) take full account of educational considerations, in particular the need to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum, within a learning environment where children can be healthy and stay safe;</p> | <p>The Polygon Special School was judged to be Good at its last Ofsted inspection.</p> <p>The school works in partnership with other services and the mainstream sector to ensure that children are afforded opportunities (e.g. access to GCSE courses) to enable them to achieve their full potential.</p> |
| <p>v) support the LA's strategy for making schools and settings more accessible to disabled children and young people and their scheme for promoting equality of opportunity for disabled people;</p> | <p>The proposal has due regard to the Southampton City Council policy statement on Disability Equality and to the Children and Families Directorate accessibility strategy.</p> <p>This proposal sits within a comprehensive strategy for managing the ever increasing range and breadth of SEND. Increasing accessibility and promoting equality of opportunity is a central theme within that strategy.</p> |
| <p>vi) provide access to appropriately trained staff and access to specialist support and advice, so that individual pupils can have the fullest possible opportunities to make progress in their learning and participate in their school and community;</p> | <p>The addition of places at The Polygon Special School will provide access to specialist support to more pupils in Southampton.</p> |
| <p>vii) ensure appropriate provision for 14-19 year-olds; and</p> | <p>The Polygon Special School provides secondary education to children aged 11 – 16 years. The school works closely with a range of Post 16 providers to ensure that the needs of this cohort continue to be met within appropriate provision.</p> <p>Transition Planning for all pupils from Year 9 onwards is developed with pupils and parents and involves colleagues from other agencies as required.</p> |
| <p>viii) ensure that appropriate full-time education will be available to all displaced pupils. Their statements of special educational needs must be amended and all parental rights must be ensured.</p> | <p>This proposal does not displace any pupils currently on-roll at the school.</p> |
| <p>Other interested partners, such as the Health Authority should be involved.</p> | <p>Southampton is committed to promoting integration between special educational provision, health and social care provision to promote well-being and improve the quality of provision, in line with the SEND Code of Practice 2015.</p> <p>The consultation process involved all interested parties and took account of all views expressed on it.</p> |

When considering any reorganisation of provision that the LA considers to be reserved for pupils with special educational needs, including that which might lead to children being displaced, proposers will need to demonstrate how the proposed alternative arrangements are likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for those children. Decision-makers should make clear how they are satisfied that this SEN improvement test has been met, including how they have taken account of parental or independent representations which question the proposer's assessment.