

Commissioning Plan for Special Educational Needs Provision

Planning for growth



2021 - 2023

Table of Contents

Foreword	2
Councillor John Fuller	2
Section 1; SEN Executive Summary	3
Section 2; The Bexley Context	10
Section 3; Demand for Places	12
Section 4 Analyses; Special Educational Needs Provision in Bexley	15
Special Educational Needs Provision	15
8.1 National Special Educational Needs Trends	17
8.2 Local SEN Trends	19
8.3 Types of SEN Educational Establishment	23
8.4 Developments in 2019/20.....	24
8.5 Completed and Proposed Developments from 2020-22	25
Section 5; Capital Funding.....	26

Foreword

In line with other local authorities the demand for Special Educational Needs (SEN) places is continuing to increase and shows no sign of easing off over the foreseeable future. This Plan sets out how we will reach decisions on the number of specialist school places, we will need to provide over the next few years ensuring that we meet our statutory requirement that every Bexley resident where appropriate is educated in a Local Education Setting both now and in the future.

Our strategic plan and the shared vision we have with children, parents and other stakeholders is that Bexley children should be educated locally, wherever practical. This ambition is against a backdrop where local authorities across the country face increased financial demands and whilst this ambition to educate children locally helps reduce the rising costs both through transport and out of borough placements it is not singularly driven by economics but by an ambition that children should be educated in the communities they live.

Predicting the number of new places, we will need is an on-going challenge as Bexley, along with many other boroughs, experiences a period of demographic change. I am proud that we continue to increase and improve our SEN offer to parents and an example of this is the delivery of the new SEN Cleeve Meadow Free School & we are currently in the process of designing and will be delivering our second Free School, Cornerstone, in 2021. These schools will help with the demand we experience with SEN but will not eradicate it completely. Therefore, we need to have a strategy in place to ensure that we improve our existing provisions & increase places where necessary.

Looking to the next two to three years, I believe the programme identified in this Plan provides a clear vision of what we can achieve based on the evidence available to us whilst also being realistic as SEN capital funding for school building continues to be limited and uncertain. We are not yet sure if there is any further SEN funding available and must proceed with caution. We must continue to deliver good value for money via cost-effective procurement and construction options, including through innovative, good quality buildings and making use where we can of Bexley's collective school estate.

As always, as champions of children, we will continue to work with our wider school community to ensure that every child has a school place of which we can all be proud.

This plan has been developed in consultation with the Strategic Education Partnerships, Places and Planning Sub-Group



Councillor John Fuller

Cabinet Member for Education, 15 March 2021

Section 1; SEN Executive Summary

As the local strategic commissioner of education, The London Borough of Bexley has the statutory duty responsibility to provide suitable SEN provision for as many pupils in the borough as possible minimising the number of pupils having to travel out of borough for their specialist education.

We have a shared vision with children, parents and other stakeholders that Bexley children should be educated locally wherever practicable in order to keep children in the community. It was previously shared that following the SEND local area inspection in Oct 2016, the borough planned to implement a phased, systematic approach through our SEND Strategy and improvement plan, Provision Review, Preparing for Adulthood Strategy and review of high needs funding.

Provision for children with SEND is currently organised within 6 special schools and 21 specialist provisions (12 secondary) within mainstream settings for children who are able to access the national curriculum. The 12 secondary provisions cover the following areas of primary need: autism (ASD), speech language and communication (SLCN), visual impairment (VI) and physical disability (PD) with two of the provisions being academically selective. There is a constant demand for places as 183 were the total pupils in the independent special schools in Summer term 2020 are currently educated out of borough are an Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) and/or ASD need and our aim is to reduce this. We are still experiencing pressures for SEN provision and there is likely to be a continued pressure for additional places for the foreseeable but changes in diagnosis and the statutory framework add further layers of complexity.

The last two years have seen an increase in need for SEN provision within the borough; we have completed various projects that were funded through the SEN Capital grant with the majority completed by the end of 2020. We have taken and are taking the required steps to provide sufficient SEN places in the borough.

Previous works that have been completed to meet the need include a former primary school being refurbished and extended to become a state-of-the-art facility for children on the autistic spectrum from Key Stage two up to and including 6th form. A MLD Unit was built in 2017 for 40 pupils on the Parkway Primary school site. Additionally, many new and re-provided SEN places across the borough from Reception right through to 6th form have been created since 2013 with further places planned to be provided by 2023/24. Within this, some projects are included to improve the current provision with an increase in places alongside this, such as works at Royal Park. We are also looking at options to increase the provision at Marlborough School, but the actual numbers are currently being determined. The places already provided included converting unused areas and extending existing SEN units at 8 of our schools, the last of these was completed in 2018.

Since then, over the past two years we have expanded places at Woodside Colyers, Shenstone Early Years, Endeavour Academy & Aspire Academy, and the completion of a new SEN free school, Cleeve Meadow. The new Cleeve Meadow Free School built on the Cleeve Park Academy site has been delivered and has provided an additional 120 specialist places, contributing to the demand for SEN places. Since the last commissioning plan we are pleased to report that Bexley has also successfully had another Free School bid approved by the DfE for the original Woodside Halt Robin Road Site. This new site will be smaller than the original and undergo an intense refurbishment and extension for pupils aged between 11-19 who

have a profile of SEMH and ASD with the aim of meeting their educational needs in Bexley. This is due to complete by 2021/22, due to Covid-19 restrictions there has been some impact on current and future projects but we are optimistic in providing these places and contributing to ease the demand.

Special Educational Needs

Support for children and young adults with special and complex educational needs remains a key and urgent priority. The pressure on places within our special schools and provisions mirrors that of the wider school population. Our plans are predicated on the clear aim that children should be educated in Bexley whenever possible and to prevent children having to travel out of borough. We have reviewed, and continue to review, the current provisions within our schools in the light of emerging data on future need and are making changes to reflect this.

In the last 2 years we have provided 20 extra places at Shenstone Early Years Centre based on the Royal Park Site, as well as 40 places at Woodside, Colyers. Recently completed projects include the expansion at Endeavour Academy which was delivered in August 2020 and Aspire Academy which was delivered in October 2020. Together they provided 48 additional places to help meet the current demand.

Two new classrooms were provided at Marlborough school in September 2017 to provide an additional 16 places with a feasibility study which is planned to be undertaken in 2019/20 to determine how the capacity of the school can be increased to provide more SEN places over the coming years to meet demand with the possibility of an additional temporary satellite site to meet this initial demand. It is likely that we will need to increase the places at Marlborough again due to the pressure for the specific type of need and this remains one of our main priorities. Support within the borough for young adults up to 25 with complex educational needs is a further priority. We are developing solutions with a range of partners including Bexley College and the Learning Centre and this includes a new build bespoke block in Brampton Road that opened in 2015.

Our SEN Free School, Cleeve Meadow Free School is now open and educates pupils with moderate learning difficulties on the Cleeve Park Academy site. The pupils who attend are from Colyers and Marlborough and contribute to the main aim of keeping our children in borough by providing them with a school place.

The five main aims for Bexley's 2/3-year SEN Place Planning Commissioning Plan are:

1. Ensuring existing resources are fit for purpose
2. Ensuring current and future specialist schools meet our needs and demands
3. Reduce the amount spent on sending our children to out of borough schools by ensuring sufficient provision is available in the borough where appropriate.
4. Successful self-delivery of Cornerstone Free School
5. Preparing plans for additional children that require places at Marlborough School & how we deal with places coming through at Secondary levels with PD.

In order to meet these aims we will:

1. Undertake an audit of each of our specialist schools which will look at its admissions criteria, current capacity, future demand and recommendations to address any items identified as part of the audit
 2. Identify future funding opportunities to bring back and prevent pupils from being educated outside of the Borough.
 3. Ensuring that we continue to improve our current specialist provision
- Below is a table of the total Commissioned Places currently in Bexley.

Primary school commissioned places for 2021/2022:

Primary School	Needs	Commissioned Places (2021/22)
Barrington Primary School	SLCN	10
Belmont Primary School	PD, VI- two Resource Provisions	12
Crook Log Primary School	ASD	6
HACA-South (Crayford)	ASD	8
Hillsgrove Primary School	ASD, GLD	8
Hook Lane School	ASD	14
Mayplace Primary School	ASD,	15
Old Bexley CE Primary School	ASD,	10
Parkway Primary School	MLD and associated needs	40
Pelham Primary School	HI	18
Royal Park Primary School	ASD, PD- two Resource Provisions	16
Sherwood Park Primary School	ASD	8
St Paul's (Slade Green) Primary School	SLCN & associated difficulties	8
Upton Primary School	ASD	8

The total for Primary schools is 181 commissioned places for 2021/2022.

Secondary school commissioned places for 2021/2022:

Primary School	Needs	Commissioned Places (2021/22)
Beth's Grammar School	ASD & associated difficulties	0
Bexley Grammar School	A variety of different needs	0
Blackfen School for Girls	SLCN & associated difficulties/needs	12
Cleeve Park Academy School	PD	8
HACA-South (Crayford)	ASD	0
St Columba's Catholic Boys' School	SLCN, Complex Needs	30
Trinity School	ASD	10
Welling School	ASD	8

The total for Secondary schools is 68 commissioned places for 2021/2022.

Post-16 commissioned places for 2021/2022:

Beths Grammar School	ASD	0
Bexley Grammar School	A variety of SEN	0
Blackfen School	A variety of SEN	2
Cleeve Park Academy School	PD	2
Trinity School	ASD,	3

The total for Post-16 is 7 commissioned places for 2021/2022.

Total for Primary School, Secondary School and Post-16 commissioned places:

The grand total for Primary School, Secondary School and Post-16 commissioned places for 2021/2022 is 256.

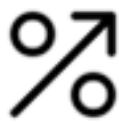
Special school commissioned places for 2021/2022:

Primary School	Needs	Commissioned Places (2021/22)
Marlborough Pre-16 & Post-16	PMLD and SLD with associated needs	85
Shenstone	PMLD and SLD with associated difficulties	150
Endeavour	SEMH	80
Woodside Pre-16 & Post-16	ASD with MLD presentation	208
Aspire	SEMH	64
Cleeve Meadow	MLD and complex associated needs	80
Cornerstone	SEMH in the context of ASD	45*
TOTAL SPECIAL SCHOOL	712 (45 not yet built)	

The total for Special schools is 712 commissioned places for 2021/2022. 45 places are not yet built.

Out of the 45 places for Special schools, 30 are for KS3 (Year 7 to 9) and 15 are for KS4 (Year 10 to 11).

At a glance...



Pupils are now being identified as requiring an Educational Health Care Plan continues to rise. The average increase in new EHCP plans being issued per annum 10%. This is in line with the National picture.



We have been fortunate to have received over £3m in external funding to improve and create SEN Places and are enquiring for future funding opportunities.



Cleeve Meadow has been successfully delivered and works are currently underway for a brand new 90 place Cornerstone School based on Halt Robin Road.



Bexley has a statutory requirement to educate where possible as many pupils in the borough where possible. Upcoming projects will contribute to meeting this demand.



We have successfully provided many various construction projects to meet demand, with the new free school being our main focus moving forward.



At Bexley we aim to abide by our Corporate Plan, in particular to focus on the 'Growth that benefits all' EHC Plans are increasing and we need to ensure we plan, prepare and meet this growth to a high-quality standard.

This Commissioning Plan has been developed in consultation with the Strategic Education Partnerships, Places and Planning Sub-Group. This group will monitor the delivery of the plan.

Purpose of the SEN Commissioning Plan

- With more and more children presenting with a high level of SEN requiring the provision of an EHC Plan to have their needs met, we have begun to implement a strategic approach in providing as many SEN places to our residents as possible and where achievable, bring back students who have to currently travel out of borough.
- This Strategic document demonstrates the existing pressures and expected pressures Bexley will experience with regards to SEN pupils in education and how we can ensure we keep up our statutory duty of ensuring all of our children receive a good SEN education in the most suitable provision.

Demand for SEN Places

- The demand for SEN places has increased significantly in recent years with no signs of slowing down. Pupils are now being identified as requiring an Educational Health Care Plan having risen 63.2% since 2015. This is in line with the National picture.
- We currently have 5 Special schools available in Bexley with some being oversubscribed. Cleeve Meadow is fully open now building work is completed and planned admissions are taking place for pupils with EHC plans following formal consultation in line with the SEN code of practice. The school as new special free school is now building up to full capacity.
- An additional new free special school is aiming to admit the first 45 learners with SEMH & ASD in the academic year 2021/2022.

Funding

- Local Authorities do not receive sufficient SEN funding from the Government to provide every child with a SEN place within Bexley. However, more and more funding is becoming available which is allocated to improve and create pupil places in Bexley. We have received £3.5m since the original announcement in 2018 and are currently enquiring as to whether there will be possible updates for additional funding.

Recently Completed & Current Projects

Project	Progress	Completion Date	Academy Trust (if appropriate)
Cleeve Meadow Free School	Works begun in January 2019 with the and it was completed in June 2020, however pupils attended from September 2019 via a temporary solution.	June 2020	TKAT
Woodside Colyers	Existing school was extended to create additional classrooms.	End of defects complete in 2019	LSEAT
Endeavour Feasibility	2 new double modular buildings provided to create an additional 32 places for SEMH and medical needs.	August 2020	LSEAT
Cornerstone School	Work is progressing well and we are currently in the first part of the design stage. A trust has been appointed to in agreement with the DFE.	First Phase ready for September 2021.	Trinitas
Aspire	Hall extension, refurbishment of existing modular and implementation of new double modular to provide 16 new places and accommodate their current oversubscription of 8 places.	November 2020	LSEAT
Marlborough School	Options to increase the permanent capacity of Marlborough School.	tbc	N/A



Image of Cornerstone Free School, Initial Sketches

Section 2; The Bexley Context

Bexley is situated in the South East of London and covers an area of 23 square miles (6,400 hectares). Bexley borders the Thames to the north, the boroughs of Royal Greenwich to the west and Bromley to the south and the County of Kent to the east. The borough has one Strategic Town Centre Bexleyheath, and has four major district centres – Crayford, Erith, Sidcup and Welling.

Our Council's Corporate Plan –2017-2025 sets out five main priorities:

1. Growth that benefits all
2. Clean and green local places
3. Strong and resilient communities and families
4. Living Well
5. Innovation and self sufficiency

Providing good quality SEN school places is a key performance indicator under the Growth that benefits all priority. The provision of high-quality additional SEN school places will support the development of a successful local economy and enhance Bexley as a place to live and work as well as keeping up with estimations that Bexley can deliver 31,500 new homes and 17,500 net new jobs across the borough by 2050 and the impact on SEN school places this will bring.

Point 4 of our plan, Living Well, includes 'a strong strategic role in education and learning' and details what our schools offer in terms of high-quality provision inclusive of special educational needs and disabilities, and those from all disadvantaged groups. Health, social

care and education professionals in Bexley are improving the outcomes for children who have SEN with 8 outcomes highlighted within this plan. ¹

Just under 44,000 pupils are educated in Bexley schools including nursery classes and special School census schools. There are 491 private and voluntary early years' providers and accredited child-minders.

There are 5 primary and secondary special schools providing for children with a range of special educational needs. As well as this our new Free school is now open for pupils with SEN needs with another Free School due to be delivered in 2021-2022. There is a primary and secondary pupil referral unit, also comprising secondary alternative provision and the medical needs service.



Image of Endeavour Academy, Medical Needs Unit

¹ [https://www.bexley.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-plans-and-policies/brilliant-bexley/shaping-our-future-together-2017-2025#:~:text=%23BrilliantBexley%20Shaping%20our%20future%20together%202017%20\(Corporate%20Plan\)%20\(for%20current%20and%20future%20generations.](https://www.bexley.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-plans-and-policies/brilliant-bexley/shaping-our-future-together-2017-2025#:~:text=%23BrilliantBexley%20Shaping%20our%20future%20together%202017%20(Corporate%20Plan)%20(for%20current%20and%20future%20generations.)

Section 3; Demand for Places

The role of the Local Authority:

The LA has statutory duties including that children and young people with identified special educational needs (SEN) are assessed via the statutory assessment framework and if deemed necessary, issued with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan to meet assessed needs and to ensure appropriate special educational provision is secured.

Special schools and specialist provision/ SEN provision

The demand for special school places and specialist provision has risen over the last few years. We have also seen an increase in parental requests for a place in a mainstream setting for their young person with SEN and EHCP and are complying with this parental preference wherever possible and appropriate. In the 2017-2019 Commissioning plan our data indicated an increase in need from September 2018 onwards and a higher number of new EHCP's being issued. We have met and continue to meet identified needs locally, especially via adjusting the commissioned number of SEN places in borough as well as the successful bids for two SEN special schools (Cleeve Meadow and Cornerstone) and more SEN places for particular primary needs will need to be created over the period 2021-2024 in order to be able to provide local specialist provision to local children & young people who require this level of provision.

New provision since 2017

In the past 8 years Bexley has completed 21 projects which have both improved our SEN offer and created additional specialist school places, some of which have been temporary. These have been published in the previous commissioning plan, which can be found for reference on the Bexley website. Completed projects during the last 3 years include:

- Completion of a new special free school for children & young people with learning disabilities and other associated needs, Cleeve Meadow, catering for up to 120 C&YP from Y7 including 6th form.
- 150 ASD places for Woodside School at Colyers including a new 6th form. Work completed in 2019 to provide additional places on site.
- A new modular building providing 20 additional places at Shenstone at Royal Park in September 2018.
- 2 additional classroom expansion at Marlborough school provided in 2017
- Expansion of existing SEN resource at St Columba's in 2018
- 32 new places at Endeavour Academy for pupils with SEMH & Medical Needs provided in 2020
- 16 new places at Aspire Academy for pupils with SEMH provided in 2020

Current projects in progress

Subject to the necessary statutory approvals it is anticipated that the following SEN projects will be delivered during 2021-2023:

- A Free School bid for a new Special Free School on the Halt Robin Road (previously Woodside) site to provide places for secondary aged pupils with ASD & SEMH presentation has been approved.

We need to ensure Bexley can offer adequate, appropriate and high quality SEN places in our Bexley schools to ensure we can cater for the children & young people with significant needs who require to have their needs met in/via specialist provision.

It is further important to acknowledge that more and more children present with complex needs, often highlighted by dual diagnosis that may require a more specialised learning environment.

Statutory duties upon Local Authorities

Local authorities continue to retain responsibility for a number of statutory duties around ensuring the availability of an education and training offer that meets the needs of our learners with different levels of SEN, particularly related to children and young people with EHCP's maintained by Bexley:

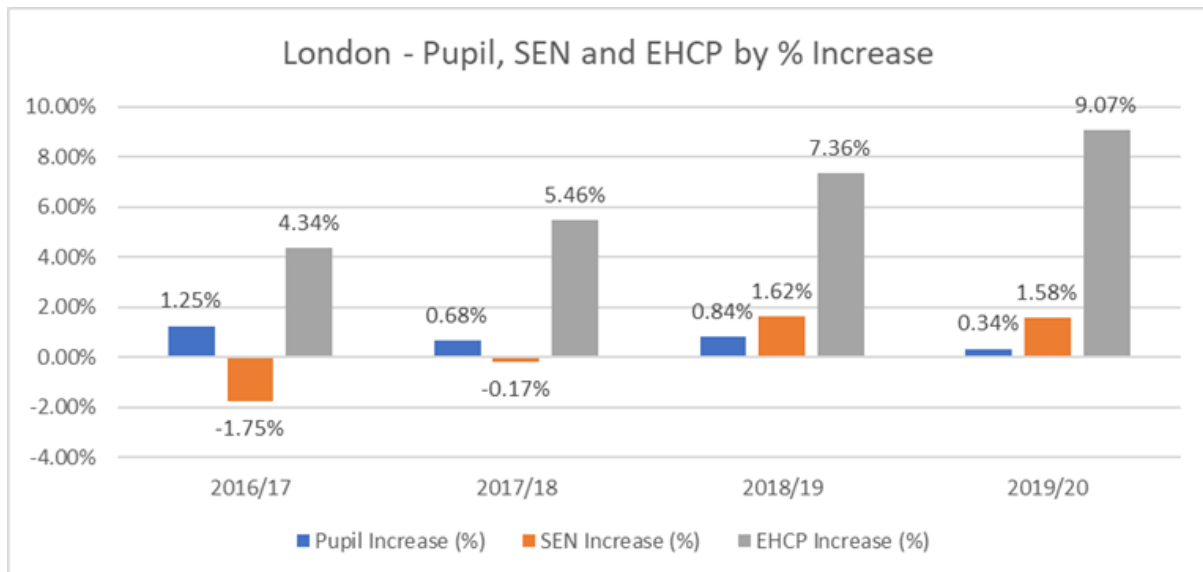
- Secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for those up to age 25 with Education, Health, Care (EHC) plan in their area². To fulfil this, local authorities need to have a strategic overview of the provision available in their area and to identify and address/resolve gaps in provision
- Make available to all young people aged 13-19 and those up to age 25 with an EHC plan, support that will encourage, enable and assist them to participate in education and training³.

Bexley is committed to providing high quality school places for children with EHC plans as shown in the table below. This graph shows the annual increase by percentage for all London pupil, London Pupils with SEN Support and London Pupils with an EHC Plan.

London Pupils with an EHC Plan continue to increase year on year, unlike the total number of pupils and pupils with SEN Support.

² Section 15ZA and 18A of the Education Act 1996 (as inserted by the Apprenticeships, Skills and Children and Learning Act 2009)

³ Section 68 Education and Skills Act 2008



Data Source: January School Census 2020

⁴Increase in numbers of EHC Plans issued for Bexley Children & Young People with SEND since 2014

Local Authorities are expecting demand for SEND places to continue to increase, especially as the rise of newly issued EHC Plans for children with SEND keeps increasing by around 10% annually across London and the country. Bexley's data for 2019 (census Jan 2020) shows an increase in newly issued EHC plans of 9.4%. In 2018 the percentage was significantly higher. The type of specialist provision/SEN provision that is needed to meet local demand differs from borough to borough. The provision that most boroughs identified as being short of/lacking includes provision for children and young people with SEMH needs in the context of their ASD, particularly for secondary school aged pupils. SEMH is the second fastest growing need within Bexley after ASD. The Local Authority has also observed an increase in demand for SLD/PMLD places for very young children as well as older age groups, e.g. YP with very complex multiple and profound learning needs.

⁴ Published DfE data (SEN2 Jan 18) plus MPD Bexley for Oct 18- please check SEN2 data from Jan 2020

Section 4 Analyses; Special Educational Needs Provision in Bexley

Special Educational Needs Provision

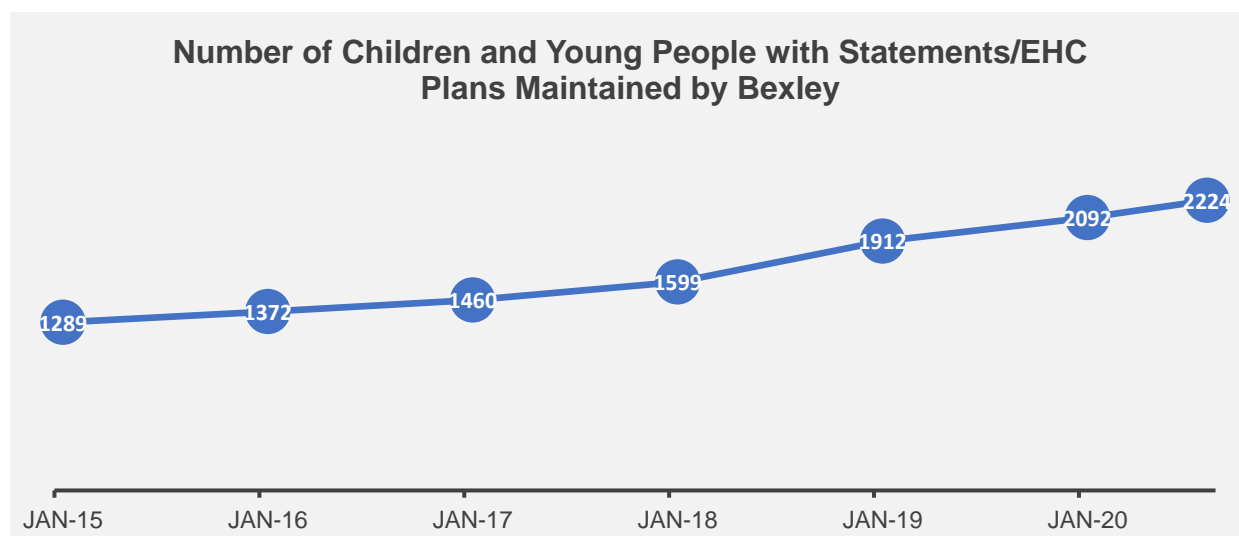
Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Reforms

Significant reforms to the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) system were introduced in September 2014, this included the Children and Families Act 2014 being issued following on from this a new and updated SEN Code of Practice was issued in January 2015. These reforms have been described as the largest reforms and the most significant to the 'world of SEN' and impact significantly on how the Local Area works with C&YP 0-25 to ensure they have appropriate support and provision in place via their EHC plan and can enjoy and achieve in their local borough, having their needs met, working with their aspirations to achieve life outcomes rather than focusing only on educational targets.

The legislation and guidance in the SEN-CoP demands a particular focus on person centred planning, aspirational and outcomes focused thinking and co-production with families. The still relatively new legislation is as much about changing processes as it is about changing mind-sets and culture. Bexley has responded to this and developed an SEND Strategy and a strategic SEND Improvement Board, consisting of key partners and key stakeholders across the local area including our education settings, Health, Social Care and the Voluntary Sector, parent & carer representatives being detrimental to informing and improving practice. Bexley has also set up a Bexley Pupil Forum which ensures children and young people's voices are heard and informing service delivery and commissioning. Further work is undertaken on Young People's participation and co-production via the Local Offer.

In January 2020, there were 2,092 children and young people with EHC Plans that are maintained by Bexley (Figure 1). As this figure changes daily, at the end of August 2020, there were 2,224 EHC Plans, ASD remains the largest primary need type for pupils with an EHC Plan and attending a Bexley school. In addition, there has been a 9.4% increase in new EHC Plans being issues and maintained by Bexley between January 2019 and January 2020, in line with the growth seen nationally.

Figure 1



Data Source: SEN2 Return 2020

We continue to see increases in EHC Needs Assessment requests for under 5's (Table 1), often for young children with more complex and profound needs, often requiring specialist provision at an earlier stage of their journey through school. The table below is the total number of EHCPs not the newly issued EHCP plans.

Table 1

EHC Plans	January 2019	January 2020	Change
Under 5	74	94	27.0%
5 to 10	669	723	8.1%
11 to 15	641	694	8.3%
16 to 19	422	456	8.1%
20 to 25	106	125	17.9%
Total	1,912	2,092	9.4%

Data Source: SEN2 Return 2020

The current figure is going to change after publication, for the purpose of the report the current figure as at February 2021 is 2339 EHC plans maintained by Bexley.

8.1 National Special Educational Needs Trends

National Trends are echoed and visible here in Bexley:

1. The number of children and young people with SLCN and ASD continues to rise significantly
2. The number of EHC Needs Assessment requests for children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) continues to rise, especially for under 5's with significant levels of need. It is important to notice the difference between complex and profound needs.
3. Young People have their EHC Plans in place for longer as many young people stay in education or training for longer in line with current legislation and with the extension to the age group (0-25) and whilst they still have educational outcomes to achieve.
4. Bexley has seen a growth in the children and young people's population 75,884 (0 – 24 yr) data from the ONS mid-year projections. Whereas the average and comparable statistical neighbours (collectively) were 88,132.

Gender

In schools, there are proportionately more males than females identified as having SEN Support and EHC plans. In Bexley schools, 3% (1,339) of all pupils have an EHC Plan; 4.4% (993) of boys and 1.6% (346) girls. This is in line with the proportions seen nationally with 4.8% of males and 1.8% of females with EHC Plans (Table 2).

Table 2

National

Pupil type	EHC Plans	Percentage	Total
All pupils	275,604	3.3%	8,312,552
Male	201,544	4.8%	4,239,466
Female	74,060	1.8%	4,073,085

This includes all state funded mainstream and special schools

Bexley

Pupil type	EHC Plans	Percentage	Total
All pupils	1,339	3.0%	43,962
Male	993	4.4%	22,486
Female	346	1.6%	21,476

This includes all state funded mainstream and special schools

Data Source: School Census Pupil Characteristics January 2020

Primary Need

Nationally there is:

- an increased incidences of autism diagnosis given to young people, including dual diagnosis such as ADHD
- a changing profile of those with more severe and complex needs particularly in terms of more behaviours that can be perceived as challenging, e.g. SEMH presentations sometimes in line with the YP's diagnosis of ASD.
- an increase in the number of children surviving premature birth earlier, acquired brain injuries such as after an accident, with some of these children and young people presenting with multiple and complex needs, accessing local schools and provisions
- the nationally picture currently highlights a higher risk of experiencing fixed term exclusions for C&YP who are supported at SEN Support level
- a higher number of teenage girls is diagnosed with ASD during year 10 and 11, this may be related to girls being able to mask their needs differently

8.2 Local SEN Trends

The national trends discussed above are generally reflected in London Borough of Bexley, but it is important, when forecasting requirements for commissioning SEN School places (resource based places as well as special school places), to have an accurate picture of these trends locally (Table 3):

- 13.7% (6,059) of pupils in Bexley schools have identified special educational needs as from January 2020 School Census. This is lower than the 15.3% reported nationally.
- 10.7% (4,720) of Bexley pupils have identified as being supported at SEN Support level in January 2020.
- 3.1% (1,339) of Bexley pupils (in Bexley Schools) have an EHC Plan in January 2020, 0.2% lower than the national average.
- 2,224 children and young people have EHC Plans maintained by Bexley as at the end of August 2020.
- ASD remains the largest primary need type (39.1%) for Bexley pupils with an EHC Plan at January 2020 (Table 4).
- SLCN remains the largest primary need type (35.3%) for Bexley pupils identified as having SEN Support Plan (Table 4).
- The primary need of SLCN may translate into a diagnosis of ASD at a later stage when a child has undergone the formal assessment process.
- We have seen an increase of Children with SEMH requiring specialist provision
- More very young children require specialist provision that caters for significant learning difficulties earlier.

Table 3

Type	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Children and Young People (learners in Bexley Schools)	43,735	44,165	43,808	43,949	43,962
SEN support	5,028	4,910	4,826	4,926	4,720
Percentage SEN support	11.5%	11.1%	11.0%	11.2%	10.7%
EHC plans	1,113	1,111	1,157	1,292	1,339
Percentage EHC plans	2.5%	2.5%	2.6%	2.9%	3.0%

This includes all state funded mainstream and special schools.

Data Source: School Census Pupil Characteristics January 2020

Table 4

Primary Need Type: SEN Support	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
SLCN	1,667	1,718	1,552	1,469	1,442
SLCN Percentage	33.2%	35.0%	32.2%	29.8%	30.6%
SEMH	894	1003	973	919	946
SEMH Percentage	17.8%	20.4%	20.2%	18.7%	20.0%
Primary Need Type: EHC Plan	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
ASD	523	490	442	437	441
ASD Percentage	47.0%	44.1%	38.2%	33.8%	32.9%

This includes all state funded mainstream and special schools

Data Source: School Census Pupil Characteristics January 2020

Table 5 - Primary need by type for pupils in Bexley Schools who have an EHC Plan or have SEN Support

Type	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Cohort	1157	1292	1339	4826	4926	4720
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	38%	38%	39%	8%	8%	9%
Speech, Language and Communications needs	15%	18%	18%	32%	35%	35%
Social, Emotional and Mental Health	8%	10%	12%	20%	20%	19%
Moderate Learning Difficulty	11%	9%	9%	7%	6%	5%
Severe Learning Difficulty	12%	10%	9%	0%	0%	0%
Specific Learning Difficulty	2%	2%	2%	16%	14%	13%
Physical Disability	5%	5%	4%	2%	3%	3%
Hearing Impairment	2%	2%	3%	1%	2%	2%
Other Difficulty/Disability	3%	3%	2%	5%	5%	5%
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty	2%	2%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Visual Impairment	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Multi- Sensory Impairment	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
SEN support but no specialist assessment of type of need	N/A	N/A	N/A	7%	8%	9%

Data Source: School Census January 2020 – excludes independent and non-maintained schools

The primary need type is based on the information recorded and may change when this is reviewed by SEN Practitioners.

Table 6 - Increase in newly issued EHCP plans

Date range	Jan-15	Jan-16	Jan-17	Jan-18	Jan-19	Jan-20
EHC Plans	1,289	1,372	1,460	1,599	1,912	2,092
% Yearly Change	N/A	6.4%	6.4%	9.5%	19.6%	9.4%

Data Source: SEN2 Return 2020

There has been a continuous increase in newly issued EHC plans for children and young people with SEND, this is related to the change in legislation and expanding the age group as well as growth.

The Local Picture:

Our data also shows that: -

- Generally, the SEN data in Bexley Borough follows the trends in national data
- There is a continued increase in the number of children in Bexley who are being diagnosed with ASD which seems to be in line with the national picture. These children have a wide range of needs and abilities requiring a range of provisions across mainstream and special schools.
- The primary need of SLCN for children supported at SEN Support level often becomes a diagnosis of ASD at a later stage when the child has progressed through relevant assessment pathways
- It is anticipated that we will continue to see a rise in the number of EHC needs assessment requests for pre-school children, particularly for young children presenting with high and significant level of needs earlier on.
- It is further anticipated that very young children with complex needs may require specialist provision earlier.
- Young people with Special Educational Needs may stay in education and training longer as the current legislation caters for this up until they are 25 as long as the individual young person has ongoing educational outcomes to be achieved.
- We continue to experience a rise in the number of young people with SEN requesting statutory support beyond statutory school age whilst they access post 16 as well as post 19 provision. This is in order to receive statutory support as they prepare for and move into adulthood.
- We have seen a rise in EHC Needs Assessment requests for young people with significant mental health difficulties.
- We anticipate a continued decrease in the numbers of children who have a primary need of Physical or Medical Disability and requiring resource provisions. Most of these young people access and are well supported in their local mainstream setting.

It should be understood that children will be categorised under their primary need at the point of their Education, Health and Care Plan being finalised. The primary need will be reviewed at every annual review of the YP's EHC Plan to ensure the YP is accessing suitable and appropriate education provision and has the right support in place. This will also help inform the local area in making informed predictions on trends, update needs analysis and plan ahead for future needs, avoiding children having to be placed out of borough. More and more children present with complex profiles of need and comorbidities, this means it is not always possible to clearly identify their primary need when presenting with a number of special educational needs.

Age of SEN Pupils in Bexley

The following table (Table 7) shows the ages of the pupils in Bexley who have an EHC Plan and shows how this has changed over the last 5 years.

Table 7

EHC Plans	Jan-15	Jan-16	Jan-17	Jan-18	Jan-19	Jan-20	2015 to 2020 Change	2019 to 2020 Change
Under 5	55	77	68	76	74	94		27.0%
5 to 10	461	492	553	602	669	723	56.8%	8.1%
11 to 15	601	577	552	569	641	694	15.5%	8.3%
16 to 19	172	220	258	304	422	456	165.1%	8.1%
20 to 25	0	6	29	48	106	125	N/A	17.9%
Total	1,289	1,372	1,460	1,599	1,912	2,092	62.3%	9.4%

Data Source: SEN2 Return 2020

- Bexley is supporting increasing numbers of young pre-school children who have EHC Plans or who have support in their early years setting funded through the inclusion or High Needs funding. The number of young children supported this way has increased since the introduction of the free early education entitlement (2 year funding, 3&4 year funding for up to 30 hours per week).
- These children are offered inclusion funding/high needs funding for a limited amount of time with the hope that longer term high needs provision may not be required as the young child's needs were identified and met early.
- Bexley is also supporting an increasing number of students to attend Post 16 and post 19 educational placements and remain in education or training.
- More young people chose local colleges and continue to have their special educational needs met locally.

8.3 Types of SEN Educational Establishment

The pupils who have special educational needs have these needs met in a large variety of settings. They may attend a mainstream school, a resourced provision in a mainstream school or a special school. These schools can be based within Bexley Borough or in neighbouring boroughs. Some pupils attend independent schools out of borough, some as residential placements.

Examples of education settings / establishments accessed by our learners. As at October 2020:

Type of SEN Educational Establishment	Number
Independent Mainstream Schools (with SEN specialism)	27
Independent Special Schools	157
Non-Maintained Special School	14
Out Borough Mainstream Schools	19
Out Borough Mainstream Resourced/Classes	9
Out Borough Special Schools	48
Out Borough Academies	137
Out Borough Academies Resource Provision	6
Out Borough SEN Unit	2
Out Borough Special Academies	51
Out Borough 6th Form College	0
Bexley Mainstream Primary*	62
Bexley Mainstream Secondary**	0
Bexley Academies***	569
Bexley Academies Resource Provision****	143
Bexley Academies UNIT	29
Bexley Mainstream Resourced Provision/Classes*****	14
Bexley SEN Unit	46
Bexley Special Schools & Special Academies	495
Bexley Alternative Provision	0
EHE	17
Registered early years settings	19
Further Education Colleges including specialist provision	261

Table notes for above 'Examples of education settings / establishments accessed by our learners. As at October 2020':

- *Local Authority maintained primary school
- **Local Authority maintained school
- ***Primary and Secondary school age
- ****Primary and Secondary school age
- *****Local Authority maintained

Numbers of Pupils with EHCP's by School Type

It was important to establish the demand for places required by educational establishment type. This allows us to see, if no changes were made to the specialist provision currently in place, when each current special school or resourced provision would reach capacity and also how many pupils we could predict may need to be placed out of borough.

It has been acknowledged for some time that there is growing pressure for special school places in Bexley, particularly the schools catering for the most complex and profound needs such as Marlborough School and Shenstone School, both being our PMLD/SLD providers.

The local authority in line with trends and demands has increased the places at our local SEMHs provisions (primary and secondary) and has successfully bid for a new special free school catering for SEMH & ASD so that needs can be met locally.

Bexley in line with other local authorities experiences an increase in requests for PMLD/SLD placements.

There are also increasing numbers of children with ASD who require resourced provision places.

The previously identified gap in provision for YP with 'high functioning ASD and SEMH presentation' at secondary school level has been resolved by a new special free school coming online in 2021 / 2022.

We have also seen a rise in YP presenting with significant mental health difficulties and this presentation sometimes meaning they are not able to access suitable education. These young people often require a highly therapeutic and specialised environment to have their needs met.

8.4 Developments in 2019/20

Cleeve Meadow Free School

We are pleased to announce that we have delivered a brand new 120 place SEN Free School, Cleeve Meadow. This was the first SEN Free school bid that we were given & were approved to self-deliver. It comprises of 12 classrooms, a performing arts centre & 3G pitch creating a fantastic place for pupils with SEN to learn and thrive.

The building was handed over on 8th June 2020 and occupied from September 2020. There was a handing over ceremony which was attended by senior officers from London Borough of Bexley (including Cllr Fuller), the academy trust (TKAT) and the contractors (Galliford Try).

Pictures of the completed project are available throughout the report.

Endeavour Academy

We have provided Endeavour Academy with two new double modular buildings, one on the existing school site and one on the adjoining 35 Woodside Road. The buildings comprise of 2 classrooms, a learning resource area, kitchenette, toilets & office space to enable a large education environment. This increased Endeavour's overall places by 32, 16 places per new modular building, one of the modular buildings has been allocated to pupils with Medical needs. The building was handed over in September 2020 and has been occupied since then.

Aspire Academy

We have provided 16 new places at Aspire Academy & allowed more space for pupils to learn on a restricted site. The works consisted of a new double modular building connected to the existing modular building on site that has had a thorough refurbishment to extend its life. This work also comprised of a hall extension & refurbishment of the existing hall to lay new sports flooring & lines to allow pupils to play activities indoors.

This project also enable a previously overgrown/inaccessible area at the rear of the Modulares to be cleared & utilised by the school, creating yet another safe space for the pupils.

The building was handed over in November 2020 and has been filling up throughout the year.

8.5 Completed and Proposed Developments from 2020-22

Cornerstone Free School

Following on from the success of Cleeve Meadow Free School, we will be self-delivering our second SEN Free school, Cornerstone. This is located on the original Woodside School site. The building is to be intensely refurbished and extended to provide 90 additional places for pupils with SEN. This will make the most of our current assets and ensure that we are utilising existing space within Bexley to ensure we educate as many SEN pupils in borough as possible and avoid expensive out of borough placements & travel costs.

The project will be funded by an external grant from the DfE.

Shenstone School

A feasibility is currently being undertaken to further increase the SEN places at Shenstone by 8-10. We are currently looking into options to extend the existing modular currently on the Early Years site in Sidcup that was built in 2018. The need for places for this particular need is continuing to increase year on year, in order to meet the demand for 2020-2021 we have created a new satellite provision at Parkway Primary School in Thamesmead. However, this is not a longer term solution so further investigation to whether we can expand on the Shenstone site is required.

Marlborough School – additional places

To meet the current and future demand within Shenstone we are looking a range of options to increase the capacity at Marlborough School. As the number of young people with SLD is rising we need to ensure that the children placed in the feeder school (Shenstone) have an appropriate Secondary school place to progress into.

Section 5; Capital Funding

As previously reported Bexley, like other boroughs, received a letter from Edward Timpson MP, Minister of State for Vulnerable Children and Families, regarding “Capital Allocations and Planning for Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disabilities. A capital allocation of £2.052m split evenly over three years from 2018/19 to 2020/21 was confirmed for Bexley, since then we have had two top-up announcements bringing our overall allocation to £3.5m. Bexley published a concise plan to describe how we intended to use the funding which can be found on the Local Offer, which was approved internally and by the DfE. The funding requirements were for investment in new places and improvements to facilities for pupils with Education Health and Care Plan (EHC) in mainstream and special schools. From the initial allocation we have completed the following projects:

- St Columba’s Specialist Provision – Previously we were placing more than the agreed number within the provision and they take on some of our most challenging students. Therefore, part of the SEN funding received was allocated to the school to expand the provision to provide much needed places and present out of borough placements.
- Shenstone Special School - The site projections indicated that a minimum of 8 additional places were to be required by September 2017, we allocated part of this SEN funding to place a double modular to provide 20 additional places spread through 2 classrooms, toilets and an office space based on the Early Years site in Sidcup which was completed in September 2018.
- Woodside Colyers Site – Our long-term priority of relocating pupils from Woodside Halt Robin Road was achieved, as a result of this we provided Woodside Colyers with an additional 4-6 classrooms, 2 intervention rooms and toilets which provided 40 additional specialist ASD places.

In Spring 2018 we received £477k top up funding which we allocated to two projects which are now complete:

- £439k on Endeavour Academy to provide two double modular classrooms, one on a derelict caretakers site and one on the existing school site. This provided 16 additional places for the school who cater for pupils with SEMH needs & 16 places for pupils with Medical Needs.
- £38k on the good quality provision of HI/VI equipment for Bexley children

In December 2018 we received a further top up announcement of £954k which we allocated to 3 projects detailed below:

- £554k on Aspire Academy for a new double modular building, refurbishment of existing modular building and a hall extension to make the best use of space for the school. This allowed the school to cater for their 8 oversubscribed pupils and accommodate 16 additional pupils. This is a primary school for pupils with SEMH needs.
- £40k on Sherwood Park Primary School to improve the current SEN provision so the school can cater better for their needs. This included internal and external refurbishment.
- £360k on identifying a permanent satellite for Marlborough School – this is still on-going and will be one of our main projects over the next 3 years.

In addition to all of these projects and outside of this allocation Bexley has recently delivered a new £13m 120 place Free School on the site of Cleeve park jointly funded with the DFE. This new school will promote inclusion with the aim that pupils will be able to use some of the existing facilities. Additionally, Bexley has secured a second £9m Free school bid at Woodside Halt Robin Road to carry out a thorough refurbishment and extension, optimising the best use of the site.

Future funding models could include working with Free Schools and Academies to secure joint or full funding to meet the cost of expansion for pupils with SEN needs.

Bexley will continue to pursue appropriate bidding opportunities for government grant and has already requested updates on future funding allocation for SEN needs.

Existing Premises and Sites: Where possible utilising or re-purposing existing space is investigated and has provided some cost-effective extra places. In drawing up options and proposals around reshaping provision and/or providing additional places feasibility studies are commissioned to consider the condition and suitability of existing premises, the ability to expand or alter the premises, the works required and the associated costs, the size and topography of the site and road access to the site including road safety. Any expansion will be future proofed to ensure that any work is sustainable and fit for purpose over a reasonable period of time.

Value for Money: Any decision to build new school provision will be based on the long-term sustainability of school rolls. Modular buildings and modern methods of construction will be used to meet the pressures on school places and to ensure complete value for money. Full consideration will be given to which route provides the best value for money which can be achieved within the timeframe available. This will include relocating any existing modular buildings once they become available and identifying schools where expansion can be achieved through refurbishing and utilising existing areas within the school.

The planning window for additional primary places is short and can often be affected by external factors. This will frequently mean that schools suitable for expansion will need a temporary solution followed by a permanent expansion once statutory consultation has been completed.



Image of Aspire SEMH Expansion completed in November 2020.



If you would like the information in this document in a different format, please call 020 8303 7777 and ask for Communications/Graphics. The reference to quote is: 607827SEN/3.21