

**SECTION 19 (1) OF THE EDUCATION AND INSPECTIONS ACT 2006
and the SCHOOL ORGANISATION (PRESCRIBED ALTERATIONS TO
MAINTAINED SCHOOLS) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2013**

**PROPOSED REORGANISATION AND ENLARGEMENT OF GROVE PARK
SCHOOL**

1. Contact details

Name and address of the local authority making the proposal:

East Sussex County Council
County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, BN7 1UE

Name of school: Grove Park School

Address of school: Church Road, Crowborough TN6 1BN

Category of school: Maintained special school

2. Description of alteration

The proposal is to:

1. lower the school's age range from 4-19 to 2-19 to establish nursery provision for eight full-time equivalent (fte) two- and three-year-olds, and
2. enlarge the premises at the school's Church Road site to accommodate 60 secondary age pupils. The secondary phase is currently co-located at Beacon Academy in North Beeches Rd, Crowborough TN6 2AS.

This is a slight change to the proposal which East Sussex County Council consulted on in 2023. It was originally proposed to enlarge the premises at Church Road to also accommodate an enlarged sixth form. The sixth form is co-located at Beacon Academy's Green Lane site. However, due to budgetary constraints and challenging site conditions at the Church Road site it has been necessary for the local authority to reduce the scope of the proposed project. As a result, under the amended proposals Grove Park School sixth form pupils would continue to be co-located at Beacon Academy.

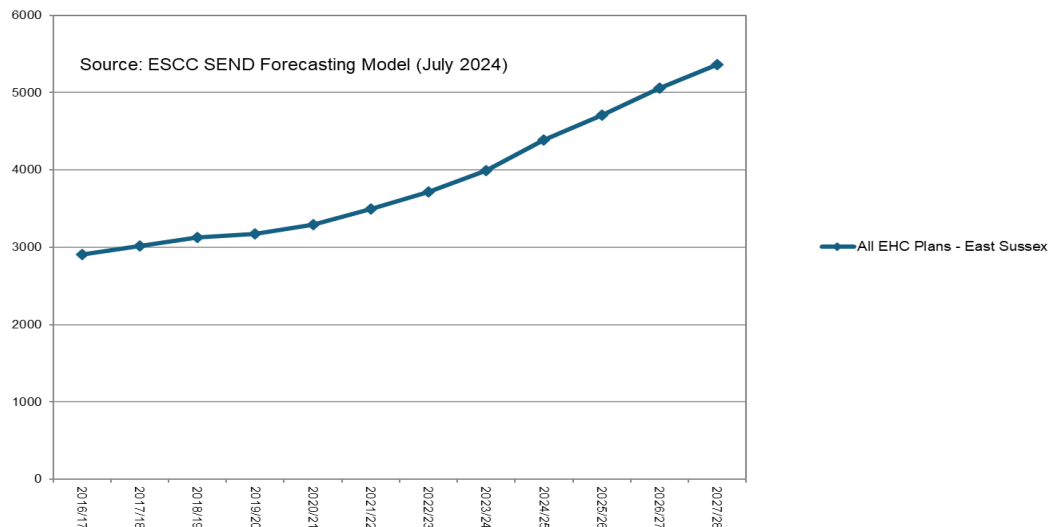
3. Evidence of demand

The overall numbers of children and young people aged 4 to 25 with an EHCP has been rising steeply. In 2023/24, the number of school aged children (aged 4-18) in East Sussex with an EHCP stood at 3,989. There were also 482 young people aged 19-25 who need continued support to transition to adulthood. Over the next four years, the local authority forecasts that overall numbers of school aged children with EHCPs will grow, by around 34%, to stand at approximately 5,400.

Overall numbers of school aged children with EHCPs

Academic year	EHCPs
2016/17	2909
2017/18	3022
2018/19	3126
2019/20	3170
2020/21	3297
2021/22	3494
2022/23	3713
2023/24	3989
2024/25	4385
2025/26	4713
2026/27	5059
2027/28	5360

Source: ESCC SEND Forecasting Model (July 2024)



The number of children and young people identified as autistic is growing year on year and is translating into rapidly increasing numbers of EHCPs issued with a primary need classification of 'Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)'. There are no signs of this trend reducing, and autism diagnoses look like being the biggest driver of rising EHCP numbers in the coming years.

Linked to the rise in pupils with EHCPs, pupil numbers have increased significantly at Grove Park School. At the request of the local authority, the school has taken pupils with a broader range of need than Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD), including pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

As the only special school in the north of the county, there will continue to be significant pressure on places at Grove Park School.

4. Objectives

East Sussex County Council believes bringing Grove Park School's primary and secondary phases together on one site, and adding nursery provision, would have several benefits for the pupils attending the school:

- The increasing pupil numbers at Grove Park School and Beacon Academy has meant that the intended integration of both sets of pupils is no longer practical.

- Pupils attending the secondary provision have limited access to shared spaces, such as the sports facilities and specialist rooms. A single site for primary and secondary pupils at Grove Park School would afford ownership of those facilities and the flexibility to timetable spaces with the needs of the pupils at the centre of the decision making.
- The school's budget can be used more effectively as some services could be centralised, for example, one reception area at Church Road for primary and secondary. Teaching, administration, and site staff would work across two sites rather than three, leading to better utilisation and deployment of staff.
- Currently, the ability to share learning resources is limited, for example, the school has three PE storage areas with similar resources, which on two sites, could more easily be shared, leading to better utilisation of learning resources.
- For regular visitors, for example therapists, being able to visit two sites would reduce travel time and increase the access to therapy for those pupils that need it.
- Bringing the primary and secondary phases together on one site would give pupils and their families a sense of community, belonging and identity.

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

The proposal is about reorganising and enlarging provision at Grove Park School to meet an identified need for more places. It is not intended to have an impact on other schools, academies, and educational institutions.

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

The final build solution is subject to planning permission. A project budget of approximately £17m has been identified in East Sussex County Council's approved Capital Programme.

The new build would be constructed to current design standards to ensure long term value for money.

7. Implementation and any proposed stages for implementation

The proposal is planned to be implemented by 1 September 2027. The build project would be delivered in a single phase.

8. Objections and comments

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: Carolyn Fair, Director of Children's Services (FAO: Gary Langford, Senior Manager, School Organisation and Admissions), East Sussex County Council, County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes BN7 1UE, or by emailing: school.consultations@eastsussex.gov.uk