



Department  
for Education

# **Enfield Special Free School**

**Contextual information for applicant  
groups applying to open a new  
Special Free School**

**London Borough of Enfield Council**

**May 2023**

## OVERVIEW

The Department for Education is inviting applications from proposer groups to open a new special free school in Enfield.

Applicant groups can access the key school specification information, along with the full 'How to Apply' guidance, on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). You should read these documents carefully before completing mandatory pre-registration.

The school specification document sets out the key factual details about the proposed school, including the proposed size, SEND designation, age range, suggested top-up funding, and proposed site.

**This document** provides applicant groups with additional contextual information provided by London Borough of Enfield Council, which includes:

- The rationale, context and need for the school;
- Details on the commissioning of places, including the involvement of any other LAs commissioning places;
- A brief description of the existing provision in the area;
- Future expected growth in pupil numbers; and
- How the LA expects places within the school to be filled.

## **RATIONALE, CONTEXT AND NEED FOR THE SCHOOL, INCLUDING PROPOSED COMMISSIONING ARRANGEMENTS**

Enfield is one of the most deprived London Boroughs with higher incidences of Free School Meals (FSM). In 2022, around 10.6% or 5,896 pupils were receiving SEN support at Enfield mainstream schools. In 2021/22, almost 37% of pupils who received SEN support were entitled to Free School Meals. This has increased by 4% since 2020/21. In 2021/22, 43% of pupils with an Educational Health & Care Plan (EHCP) were entitled to FSM. This has increased by 2.5% since 2020/21.

This deprivation has an impact on the number of requests for statutory EHC Needs Assessments. The 3-year growth in EHCPs currently stands at 14% which is 4% higher than national average. As of 1st Oct 2022, the total caseload stands at 4,241. This is in line with the projected growth rate and by 2025 Enfield LA could have 5,827 cases. This will have a continued impact on maintained schools and on Enfield special schools where the SEN service is currently trying to secure provision for 94 pupils. Our current figures inform us that 30% of our EHCP pupils attend a type of special school. If the status quo remains, by 2025 there will be 1,747 pupils requiring specialist provision. Enfield currently has 1,060 places available. By 2025 Enfield will be in a deficit of 688 special school places in borough. Given the out of borough costs set out below this would increase the HNB to £29,765,178 (688 pupils x avg cost of independent specialist placement at £43,263.34). This does not include cost of living rises nor travel assistance costs or inflation.

A range of interventions have been introduced to meet needs earlier by offering whole school, parent and child led support for speech and language and Autism need. Enfield have expanded Additional Resourced Bases & Designated Units (50 place in Units) and (180 places in ARPS) to make certain that children and young people's needs can be met in a mainstream school. Alongside this the education department has developed an Inclusion Charter, Trauma Informed Practice, SENCO handbook and reviewed its Ordinary Available Provision guidance. We would expect the new SEND school provider to align to these approaches and work with the Council and existing SEND providers so there is a consistency in Enfield SEND delivery.

A new SEMH school has opened and an independent Autism provider, Silverways, has expanded into Enfield.

Enfield has developed a new SEN strategy in consultation with our parents, schools, young people's group and SEND partnership. It has been reviewed through scrutiny and full council. It is a 4-year strategy with a clear action plan linked to our self-evaluation framework. It is governed by our SEND Board and Independent Care Board and sets out our commitment to meeting pupil need locally.

The Council seek to ensure that a special school will meet the needs of C&YP in our borough so that they may benefit from inclusion and community cohesion. The SEN service currently holds a multi-agency statutory SEN panel to make decisions on statutory needs assessment and the issuing or not of EHCPs. This panel will also name the school in Section I of the Education, Health, and Care Plan. This model supports our SEND Strategy and Inclusion ethos.

Enfield recognises that the costs of sending our Children and Young People (C&YP) to out of borough provision, Early Years, Maintained, Maintained Special, Independent and Residential and Post 16 is increasing annually. This is exacerbated by travel assistance costs.

Children and their families are further impacted by long journey times and missing out on local community activities and establishing friendship groups due to not attending a local school.

The development of a special school will provide an additional 96 places for children with complex needs so that existing provision will support children who can access aspects of the mainstream curriculum.

## **EXISTING PROVISION, EXPECTED FUTURE GROWTH IN PUPIL NUMBERS, AND HOW PLACES IN THE NEW SCHOOL WILL BE FILLED**

In Enfield, there are 7 dedicated special schools. This includes a Waverley School - PMLD (162 pupils – 3-19 yrs), Durants School – ASD (198 pupils – 11-19yrs), Russet House – ASD (135 pupils – 3-11yrs), Oaktree School – MLD & SLD (132 pupils – 7-9yrs), Fern House -SEMH (70 pupils – 4-16yrs), Salmons Brook -SEMH (70 pupils -11-19yrs).

There are also 180 places in Special Resourced Provision (ARPs) and 50 places in Designated Units.

In addition, there are two independent schools Silverways - ASD (50 pupils – 7-17yrs) and Fresh Steps – SEMH (80 pupils 5-19yrs).

Details of each school are included with the attached Admissions Guidance.

Since 2017 the Council has extended its SEN provision by over 400 places at SEN School and through extending ARPs and introducing Designated Units. However, almost all SEN schools are now at capacity whilst demand continues to rise. Many pupils who are currently placed in mainstream schools and Units should be in a SEN School.

Enfield LA currently has 16.5% (626) of its pupils attending out of borough provision. 30% are in mainstream special schools and there are a further 94 (2%) pupils who are awaiting a special school placement, whose needs are currently being met on a temporary basis in a mainstream setting at the detriment of other pupils, or in ARPS/Units where these pupils are impacting on the progress of other children with SEN who can manage some of their time in a mainstream setting. (34 which is 36% of the 94 have ASD as their primary area of need). These children are non-verbal.

Enfield does not believe that opening a special school will impact on neighbouring boroughs as all local special schools in the 6 main boroughs; Haringey, Hertfordshire, Camden, Islington, Barnet, and Waltham Forest who Enfield consult with have no available places hence the 94 children awaiting specialist placement.

Our overall strategic aim is to ensure that children and young people can be educated in an appropriate setting. As reported above, there are 94 children awaiting a special school place and currently on average Enfield issues 40 plans a month.

Part of our DSG management plan has been to increase local SEN provision by providing education in a mainstream setting to promote inclusion as well as reduce spend on out of borough placements. SEN are developing an inclusion strategy to support through earlier intervention, additional funding, and a nurture plus approach to deliver specialist provision in classrooms.

Enfield LA has a special school outreach commissioning service where our special schools support mainstream schools to enhance and develop their skills and increase workforce knowledge, identify, and support children and young people as early as possible. See attached flier of commissioned service.

Enfield is determined that a special school will only be for children with more complex autism. Currently SEN has a provision and placement panel which is a multi-agency panel with a special school head that identifies appropriate school placements that can be named in Section I of the EHCP. Only children who meet a threshold of complex needs that could not thrive in a mainstream setting, ARP or Unit can be offered special school. Our inclusion charter and ARPS and Units are to enable children to access mainstream education as a priority so that inclusion and difference is accepted, and community cohesion strengthened.