



Department
for Education

Hillingdon Special Free School

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

**London Borough of Hillingdon
Council**

May 2023

OVERVIEW

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

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 Hillingdon 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

The London Borough of Hillingdon is experiencing a growing demand for the ASC as primary need with MLD/SLD. We aim to provide local provision that will meet needs of pupils with ASC (MLD/SLD) and have their needs met at an appropriately designated provision in borough within PAN. The total number of pupils with a primary need of ASC within our EHCP cohort as of September 2022 is 1257, with 498 pupils within primary school, 522 within secondary and 237 in FE educational settings. Currently there are 833 pupils within our 5 specialist settings across the Local Authority that meet the need of pupils with ASC. The projected increase in EHCPs with ASC as a primary need until 2025 is 44% and as a LA we do not have the capacity to meet this demand with currently available provision.

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

The new all-through school will provide an appropriate local learning environment to meet the needs of children with ASC/ SLD.

Currently, the provision for children with SEND in Hillingdon is organised within special schools and 13 specialist resource provisions (9 in primary schools and 4 in secondary schools) within mainstream settings. The 13 specialist resource provisions cover the following areas of primary need: autism, speech, language and communication, hearing impairment, physical disability and complex needs.

The Local Authority's provision of specialist places has increased in recent years, reflecting the growing need. Hillingdon's strategy for SEND places, as set out in our SEND Sufficiency Strategy, has a clear aim that children should be educated in Hillingdon and their local community whenever possible to prevent children travelling out of borough.

As of May 2022 7.4% of resident children with an EHCP had MLD as their primary need, and 41.1% of resident children with an EHCP had ASC as their primary need with a rise of 2.3 percentage points since Jan 2021.

The places will be commissioned through the statutory assessment process and will support our SEND priority to ensure timely assessment and provision to support need. Children with EHCPs, whose needs would be met in this provision, would be referred via Hillingdon's existing SEND Panel.