GAYNES SCHOOL

Consultation on the proposed establishment of a Specialist Base for young people with Communication & Interaction needs

LOXFORD School Trust

Consultation on the proposed establishment of a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) specialist base at Gaynes School for young people with Communication and Interaction (C&I) needs.

Introduction

Havering's SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy 2024 – 2028 highlights Havering is committed to its partnership with families to improve outcomes for all children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). Havering will maintain strong outcomes for Havering children and young people with SEND and will continue to grow the number of specialist bases attached to mainstream schools in line with the growing demand for SEND places**.**

Whilst there are a number of schools operating a Communication and Interaction specialist base, additional secondary Communication and Interaction specialist bases are required to meet the growing number of secondary aged pupils with these needs.

A new Communication and Interaction specialist base at Gaynes School will align with the new requirements for the SEND reform, as set out in the government's schools white paper.

Background

Havering's Children and Young People Education Place Planning Plan 2023-2027 states, that a key planning guideline for SEND and Alternative Provision is for Havering to deliver additional SEND places in mainstream settings, to create more places for pupils who can be best supported in mainstream provision or a specialist base within a mainstream provision where appropriate.

Havering's SEND projections show that the number of children and young people with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan is projected to increase.
The number of children and young people with Communication and Interaction needs is projected to increase from 1954 in 2025/26 to 4278 in 2030/31.

Rationale for Gaynes School Specialist base

The Local Authority's SEND projections show that they expect the number of children and young people with and Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan in the borough to increase over the next five years as shown in the table below:

Academic year	Cognition and Learning	Communication and Interaction	SEMH	Physical and/or Sensory	Total
2025/26	643	1954	695	272	**3564**
2026/27	725	2618	891	333	**4568**
2027/28	782	3021	1054	378	**5236**
2028/29	840	3433	1245	422	**5939**
2029/30	907	3848	1481	467	**6703**
2030/31	944	4278	1745	511	**7479**

There are currently 6 secondary schools with specialist bases totalling 100 places, of which 88 places cater for pupils with Communication and Interaction / Autism Spectrum Disorder needs (Autism Spectrum Disorder comes under Communication and Interaction needs).

Given the increasing numbers of children and young people with Communication & Interaction needs, there is a need for additional secondary specialist bases to support these children within a mainstream school setting.

The creation of this local specialist provision should reduce the need to place secondary pupils outside of Havering, therefore reducing the cost of out borough placements to the Local Authority.

The proposal

Gaynes School is proposing to establish a specialist base for 24 pupils with Communication and Interaction needs to be implemented in September 2027, if approved.

Gaynes School is a Good secondary school with a capacity of 845 year 7 to year 11. The school caters for pupils with an age range of 11-16 and is considered by the Local Authority as the most appropriate location for a specialist base to be sited.

The partnership arrangement between school and Local Authority will only further benefit current and future children attending Gaynes School. The range of additional shared therapies and additional specialist SEND practitioners on site will be shared between school and specialist base in an integrated way to ensure that all students benefit from the provision on site. The current support and offering for SEND attending Gaynes school is strong, this additional on-site provision will add to the range of expertise on site and support and interventions pupils have access to.

What will be the impact of the new facility on other pupils in the school?
It is not envisaged that the new specialist base will impact negatively on other pupils in the school. The additional specialist places if established, would further enhance the educational offer the academy is able to provide in the most inclusive environment possible, while meeting needs of its community. It will create a further opportunity to continue with the progress the school is making with SEND pupils, strengthening the existing approach

used in identifying pupils' needs, whilst also providing more training for staff working with pupils with learning needs.

Admissions and Pupil numbers
Admissions to the specialist base will follow a different procedure from that operating for the rest of the school. Admissions into the specialist base will be through the Havering SEND EHC panel process. This will not impact pupils who are in the mainstream setting at the school.

Pupils attending the specialist base would be in addition to the mainstream Planned Admission Number. There would be 24 planned places in the specialist base.

Funding
Specialist bases in Havering will be normally funded in accordance with a Place Led Funding approach that complies with the Government's SEND Funding Reforms which came into effect in April 2018.

Each place in the specialist base at Gaynes School will receive £30,800 (funding rate for financial year 2026/27). This is made up of £10,000 place funding and £20,800 top-up funding.

Building works
At Gaynes School, the existing two-storey 'D Block', previously leased to a community group, is now vacant and has been identified for conversion into a SEND inclusion base for 24 children with communication and interaction needs.

The proposed works include internal reconfiguration to provide specialist classrooms, breakout and therapy spaces, and appropriate hygiene and welfare facilities across both floors. A separate school-run support base will also be accommodated on the first floor, providing additional teaching and flexible learning spaces. A new lift is proposed to improve accessibility throughout the building.

External improvements will include entrance and play canopies, landscaping of outdoor play areas and potential façade repairs, subject to further surveys.

What happens next?
The consultation is an opportunity for interested parties and stakeholders to express views and ask questions on the principle of establishing the specialist base for young people with Communication and Interaction needs at Gaynes School during the consultation period.

The consultation period starts on **Wednesday 18th November 2026** and will close on **Wednesday 16th December 2026.**

Gaynes School is part of Loxford School Trust Limited so will have to follow the process for making significant changes to an academy; as the Local Authority is not the decision maker for an academy organisational changes. The final decision as to whether this proposal is approved for implementation will be made by the Department for Education.

The process for making significant changes to academies can be viewed in detail here: Making significant changes to an academy

Key Milestones	Date
Consultation Period	**18/11/2026 – 16/12/2026**
Submission of significant changes to an academy: Tier 1 application form to the DfE	**January 2027**
Decision	**Spring 2027**
Implementation	**September 2027**

Have your say…
You can state whether you support this proposal or not by completing the consultation questionnaire via the following link:

https://consultation.havering.gov.uk/education/gaynes-school-specialist-base

If you have any other questions regarding the proposal, please email: trefor@loxford.net

This consultation document is being sent electronically to all parents/carers, governors, school teachers and support staff who work at Gaynes School and the governing body & trustees of Loxford School Trust Limited.

Electronic copies are also being sent to all Havering primary, secondary and special schools, Havering Councillors, MPs, Church Dioceses, all Early Years and Childcare providers, community groups, unions and other stakeholders.

The document will also be available on Havering and Gaynes School websites throughout the consultation period.