MEAD
PRIMARY

Consultation on the proposed expansion of an existing Specialist Base for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

LEARNING FEDERATION

Creating London's Super Suburb

Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

Consultation on the proposed expansion of an existing Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) specialist base at Mead Primary School for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

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.

Autism Spectrum Disorder comes under Communication and Interaction needs. Whilst there are a number of schools operating a Communication and Interaction specialist base, additional primary Communication and Interaction specialist base places are required to meet the growing number of primary aged pupils with these needs.

The expanded Autism Spectrum Disorder specialist base at Mead Primary School will align with the new SEND reform requirements as published 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 is projected to increase from 1954 in 2025/26 to 4278 in 2030/31.

Rationale for the expansion of Mead Primary School specialist base

The Local Authority's SEND projections show the number of children and young people with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan in the borough is expected 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 8 primary schools with specialist bases totalling 115 places, of which 89 places cater for pupils with Communication and Interaction/Autism Spectrum Disorder needs.

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

The expansion of this local specialist provision should reduce the need to place primary pupils outside of Havering, therefore reducing the cost of out borough placements.

The proposal

The London Borough of Havering is proposing to increase the number of places at the Mead Primary School specialist base for pupils with ASD from 12 to 20 places from September 2027, subject to approval.

Mead Primary School is a Good school with a capacity of 840 in years Reception to year 6. The school caters for pupils with an age range of 3 to 11 and is considered by the Local Authority as the most appropriate location for an expansion to an existing specialist base.

Expanding the specialist base will allow more pupils with additional needs to access specialist support within the school, providing a flexible approach that can be tailored to each child. The increased capacity will strengthen the school's provision for children with ASD, building on the current expertise and broadening support for a wider range of pupils.

What will be the impact of the new facility on other pupils in the school?
It is not envisaged that the expanded specialist base will impact negatively on other pupils in the school. The additional specialist places if established, would further enhance the educational offer the school 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, strengthen the existing approach used in identifying pupils' needs and provide 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 on 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 (PAN) of 90. This proposal is to expand the specialist base to 20 places, increasing the specialist provision capacity while maintaining the school's standard PAN for mainstream pupils.

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 Mead Primary 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 Mead Primary School, existing areas will be adapted to expand the SEND specialist base. The specialist base currently accommodates 12 pupils, with the proposal increasing specialist provision to up to 20 pupils.

Subject to design development and feasibility, the proposed works will involve remodelling the existing accommodation.

What happens next?
The consultation is an opportunity for interested parties and stakeholders to express views and ask questions on the principle of expanding the specialist base for children with ASD at Mead Primary School during the consultation period.

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

Mead Primary School is part of The Learning Federation which operates as a maintained school federation.

Whilst there is no statutory duty to carry out a consultation, the Local Authority will ensure that each of the responses to the consultation is conscientiously considered before a final decision regarding the specialist base expansion is taken. The Local Authority could decide not to support the proposed specialist base expansion based on any objections received or any other reasons. However, the final decision remains with the Local Authority.

Key Milestones	Date
Consultation Period	18/11/2026 – 16/12/2026
Decision	Spring 2027
Implementation of the expansion to the specialist base	September 2027

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

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

If you have any other questions regarding this proposal, please email: schoolsorganisation@havering.gov.uk

This consultation document is being sent electronically to all parents/carers, governors, school teachers and support staff who work at Mead Primary School.

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

The document will also be available on the London Borough of Havering and Mead Primary School websites throughout the consultation period.