

Points Raised in Consultation - Hermitage School

Please note : Google Forms responses were all anonymous, it is therefore not possible to respond to individuals. Responses have been grouped through themed coding.

Theme: School expansion

Strong support for Hermitage School and the work it does.
Can more children be allowed to access

Will there be sufficient space if the school expands

Will expansion impact of quality of teaching

Will class sizes increase

Will we lose playground space

Wont getting bigger disadvantage our children?

New and expanding provision should not be at the expense of existing Hermitage children

Will more children increase coronavirus risk

Theme:SRP-ASC

All children should have the chance to be included and have their needs met within inclusive mainstream school, they shouldn't be isolated.

Great to build on Hermitage Autism Spectrum Condition expertise

Will saving places for children with ASC needs reduce the number of mainstream places available.

Will the provision maintain and develop the outstanding inclusive educational approaches of the school.

Theme - Funding Issues

Will the provision and expansion be sufficiently funded

Will funding be available from September 1st 2021 to ensure a strong start for the provision

That funding and advice and development for the new SRP-ASC provision should not be at the detriment of existing outstanding provision at the school;

Theme - Managing Change

Staff raised concerns that the enrolment of any new pupils would be staggered so that their transition could be well supported, and they could be properly helped to understand the expectations, values and vision at Hermitage School.

That building work should be completed to ensure appropriate spaces are available to meet the needs of the SRP-ASC children, whilst maintaining learning and health and safety throughout the school.

Will too much change affect quality of education

Is it good to be proactive ?

Theme - 2 FE or 1.5

Is 2FE better than 1.5?

Will we get rid of mixed age classes

Is the decision to move to 2 FE transparent and correct

Is there evidence of 2FE need

What might we miss about 1.5 FE if we change

Theme - Consultation

Ensure whole school community involved in plans

Where is the ASC consultation

Has the Local Authority been transparent in its plans.

Will parents' views be taken into account?

Who makes the final decision?

Where is the background information to go with the questionnaire?

If you would like a personal response please let the school know which are the points you raised and provide your contact information for feedback.

Response

The proposals will allow new children arriving in Wapping to access Hermitage. We are full in nearly all year groups now, and might otherwise have to turn new families away. By developing the SRP-ASC provision more Tower Hamlets children with those needs can attend school in Tower Hamlets. By going above our PAN numbers we have been able to support Shapla School (Shapla is .4 of a mile from us, so is our closest neighbour).

Great care being taken to protect space in building development proposals. Aiming to use land spaces not currently accessed by children as far as possible.

We will be recruiting staff to join the great Hermitage Team. We will manage the changes, if they happen, as well as possible so that quality of teaching stays really strong, and new expertise will be introduced to the team.

Class sizes will not go above 30.

Protecting our playground is a priority for governors. We will ensure encroachment on the playground is minimised.

Larger schools have more financial flexibility because their core costs are shared between more children. It should increase opportunity rather than disadvantage, but we will monitor this carefully.

We are excited by the new proposals and hope they will improve opportunities for our current children, as well as new children joining us.

The same safety protections will be in place, risk assessments are reviewed regularly, and will be developed to make sure everyone is as safe as possible from coronavirus

Response

The model developed for the provision completely supports that view. There will be spaces for children to receive individual or small group support, but we want them to be in class with their peers as much as possible.

The Local Authority recognises the skills that have been developed at Hermitage and wants to help more children to access that support.

By expanding the school to 2 forms of entry, at the same time as creating the ASC, there would be space for up to 2 children with ASC needs in each year group as well as up to 13 more places for children without additional needs. This would give enough space for new families moving into our area.

The new specialism rooms will be able to be accessed by all children in the school when appropriate. Hermitage School aims to support all children to access mainstream classrooms and curriculum as much as possible.

Response

The governors and the Local Authority are working closely together to make sure there is sufficient funding for a really excellent provision.

One way the Local Authority are showing their support is by giving us funding before new children with ASC needs start at Hermitage so that we can make sure the provision is excellent from the start.

The Local Authority have asked us to keep a separate budget for the SRP-ASC to make sure funds are used in the right places. We will be sharing resources though so the school and the SRP-ASC will both benefit.

Response

Children from Shapla School are likely to join us in September, but during the Summer Term there will be lots of opportunities for us to get to know them and for them to visit, as long as coronavirus restrictions are lifted. The values at Shapla are very similar to those at Hermitage so we are sure they will enjoy their move and will fit in well. Children joining the SRP-ASC provision will each have a transition plan to help them to move from whichever school they are in now, to our new provision. This will give time and support for them to settle gradually. We are not expected to take all 12 children in straightaway. The numbers will increase gradually over 3 years.

The governors and the Local Authority Building Team are working hard to make sure all the adaptations needed are in place to help us with the changes.

We have managed lots of change over the last year, and are constantly striving to reduce any impact on the quality of education for the children. We will continue to do so.

Yes. Hermitage is always at the forefront of quality inclusive education. We developed our ASC skills over several years and the Local Authorities SEND Strategy and specification gave us a perfect opportunity to bid to lead a new provision. Our bid was stronger because we have been working this way effectively for many years.

Response

Hermitage has always been very good at supporting 1 and a half forms of entry. Some schools find it harder if they have to have mixed ages in a class, that has never been an issue at Hermitage. One benefit would be that there will be sufficient space to include the children with ASC needs, and any children from new families moving into Wapping. Another benefit is that there will be more money and resources in the school which everyone can use. Two form entry schools generally enjoy joint planning across the two classes and regard this as strong support for professional development.

Just as happens now the best way to organise the classes will be decided each year, depending on the numbers of children in each year group.

The Primary Review Advisory Group agreed that the Borough should work to try to reduce the number of schools with 1/2 forms of entry. The Future Ambitions Report records this (P14 Para 3). The consultation itself is , and its publication, which has been shared with all recommended stakeholders is part of creating that transparency. The proposals will be further considered as part of the Annual Admissions Review November - February 2021/2

The expected September 21 numbers for Hermitage School are 11 over PAN in Year 1, and 2 over PAN in Year 4. All other year groups are full except Reception and Year 3. To accommodate the SRP-ASC children and the families that will move into new social housing at Pennington Street, Shell Petrol Station, Clegg Street and Lowder House. St Pauls Wellclose Quare are full in all year groups, and St Peter's only have vacancies in next year's Year 3. more places will be needed. Hermitage and St Peter's Schools have been involved in discussions around how best to accommodate the potential additional families South of the Highway, since 2019. Permanent arrangements will be considered under statutory processes during next school year.

Some teachers may miss teaching mixed age classes, and the flexibility of organising class groups.

Response

There has been a good response on Google platform . Staff and parents will continue to be involved in planning.

Tower Hamlets consulted widely on its SEND Strategy which agreed the need to develop stronger in-Borough provision to meet Autistic Spectrum Condition needs. In Summer 2020 schools were invited to put in expressions of interest to meet a widely circulated expression of interest to provide mainstream specialist provision for ASC. Hermitage School applied and were successful, based on the considerable expertise and experience at the school.

This Stage One consultation and the Statutory Notices that might follow are part of that transparency. The Future Ambitions Report sets out the reduction in half forms of entry (by reducing or increasing PAN) , this is also reflected in the Progress Ambitions Report which has been approved by PRAG and is shortly to be published.and the need to develop mainstream specialist SEND provision (pages 14,15 and 21). Statutory processes are being followed. The consideration of the PAN for Hermitage School, which would normally be part of the Annual Admissions Review, will ensure continued transparency.

Yes this report has summarised responses from staff, parents, governors and other stakeholders. Parents also attended the zoom meetings. Everyone also has the opportunity to make representation if the decision is made to move to Statutory Notices.

The decision to make prescribed alterations to schools is taken by the Council Cabinet, but they will take into consideration the views from the consultation.

Hermitage governors sent out a consultation document about the proposals to go with the questionnaire. It was also available on their website. If the proposals move to statutory notice the consultation report and this feedback summary will also be on the school website alongside the Statutory Notices.