

# Education Consultation Broomhill Bank School

20 June to 18 July 2025



## Proposal to expand Broomhill Bank School

20 June 2025

To Parents/Carers, Staff and other interested parties

**Kent County Council (KCC), together with the Governing Body of Broomhill Bank School, is consulting to formally expand its designated number from 318 students to 490**

This letter explains reasons for the proposal, and how the decision-making process works. Please let us have your views and comments on the proposal by completing the Consultation Response Form attached.

### Why are we proposing additional provision?

Broomhill Bank School is a Foundation Special School and a member of KsENT, catering for students aged 11-19 years who have communication and interaction needs associated with autism and speech, language and communication needs.

KCC, together with the Governing Body of Broomhill Bank School, is seeking the views of parents, staff and other stakeholders on a proposal to permanently increase the formal designated number of the school from 318 students to 490 students. In reality the school is already admitting students over and above the designated number, and this proposal includes the creation of a further 105 places facilitated by the provision of new facilities on the Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable) site.

KCC as the Local Authority, has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are available. The County Council's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2025-2029 is a five-year rolling plan which is updated annually. It sets out KCC's future plans as Strategic Commissioner of Education Provision across all types and phases of education in Kent [www.kent.gov.uk/educationprovision](http://www.kent.gov.uk/educationprovision).

The Kent Commissioning Plan 2025-2029 indicated that there will be a shortfall in Special School provision primarily in North Kent. Even though KCC's direction of travel is to increase Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision in mainstream schools and associated Specialist Resource Provisions, due to already identified shortfalls and anticipated population growth particularly in certain areas of North Kent, more specialist provision is required for children and young people with more complex needs.

The Executive Headteacher of Broomhill Bank School continues to admit students with a wider dimension of need, a practice that began 3 years ago and commits to continue this practice, whilst ensuring the quality of education for all students is maintained. These additional day places will help

alleviate current pressures and help mitigate future population growth across the wider North and West Kent areas.

### **Why is additional provision required?**

A significant proportion of the proposed increase relates to the North (Hextable) site of Broomhill Bank School. North Kent is still encountering significant growth in certain areas (primarily Dartford) and the other two districts of Gravesham and Sevenoaks are fast approaching completion of their new Local Plans, which will see significant housebuilding required for the period up to 2040 and beyond.

Even though a new Profound, Severe, and Complex Needs Special School for 250 students is expected in Swanley in future years, due to the numbers of students in North Kent still requiring specialist provision at this time, and the fact that all special schools in the locality are already over capacity, there is a need for further expansion of specialist provision where appropriate.

There will be a smaller increase in students on the West Kent site to facilitate the Executive Headteacher's commitment to continue to admit children and young people with a wider dimension of need.

### **How will the additional provision be delivered?**

This proposal seeks to facilitate the expansion by introducing a further 105 places (15 per year group) on the Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable) site, by:

- the demolition of Lindsay House (one of the original buildings now unusable due to the condition being beyond economical repair)
- building 2 new blocks totalling 12 modular classrooms and ancillary space
- upgrades to outdoor areas
- internal modifications to the main school building, remodelling work to the car park and any necessary highways mitigations

Broomhill Bank School West (Tunbridge Wells site) also requires some minor adaptations and enhancements to existing buildings to facilitate the increase in pupil numbers across the school.

Broomhill Bank School West (Tunbridge Wells site) requires the creation of two lodges, one for social enterprise and one for skills for employment, along with improvements and enhancements to the existing perimeter fence line. Further site space needs development for increased outdoor learning opportunities along with repurposing of accommodation currently used by the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS).

All of these developments will enable Broomhill Bank School to create a curriculum offer to support children and young people with a wider dimension of need.

## The consultation process – indicative timeline

| Date              | Activity                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 20 June 2025      | Start of Public Consultation period lasting 4 weeks                                                                                                                      |
| 24 June 2025      | Drop-in session at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable), 4.30 pm to 6.30 pm                                                                                            |
| 18 July 2025      | Public Consultation closes. The results of the consultation will be referred to the Governing Body for consideration. A formal decision will be made and adverted to KCC |
| Autumn 2025       | Report presented to CYPE Cabinet Committee to agree the funding and issuing of a statutory Public Notice                                                                 |
| Autumn 2025       | Cabinet Member issues decision                                                                                                                                           |
| Autumn 2025       | Public Notice period                                                                                                                                                     |
| Winter 2025       | Decision enacted subject to responses received to the Public Notice                                                                                                      |
| 01 September 2026 | Change to new designated number                                                                                                                                          |

## How can I give my views?

There are three ways to let us have your views on this proposal:

- Come to the consultation drop-in session for parents/carers, members of staff, governors and other interested parties at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable) on Tuesday 24 June 2025 4.30 to 6.30 pm where there will be the opportunity to ask questions, give your views and complete a response form.
- Completing the on-line form at [School consultations and public notices | Let's talk Kent](#).
- Complete and return (via post) the attached response form to Mr Steven Ackerley, Executive Headteacher, Broomhill Bank School.
- You may hand your response form in at the school, on either the North (Hextable) or West (Tunbridge Wells) site. All written responses need to be received by midday on 18 July 2025.
- Email your comments to: [info@broomhill-bank.kent.sch.uk](mailto:info@broomhill-bank.kent.sch.uk).

## What happens next?

A report summarising the responses received during the consultation period will be submitted to the full Governing Body for consideration and forwarded to Assistant Director of Education-North Kent.

On the basis that KCC and the Governing Body are minded to continue to progress the proposal, a report will be presented to the Children's Young People and Education Cabinet Committee for agreement to fund the proposal and issue a statutory Public Notice. The Public Notice will be published in a local newspaper and for a period of four weeks following the publication date, any person can comment on the proposals.

Once the Public Notice period has expired, the KCC Cabinet Member for Education and Skills will then take a decision as to whether to proceed with the proposal.

Whether the proposal to expand provision on the Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable) site goes ahead, or not, will also be dependent on the planning process. The proposed new buildings and facilities will be subject to separate planning requirements which will include further public consultation.

Yours faithfully,

**Mr Steven Ackerley**

**Executive Headteacher**

**On behalf of the Governing Body**

**Mr Ian Watts**

**Assistant Director Education-North Kent**

**Kent County Council**

# Response Form

Please complete a response form **no later than midday 18 July 2025** by either:

- Completing the on-line form at [School consultations and public notices | Let's talk Kent](#)
- Handing your completed form in at either the North or West site school office
- Emailing: [info@broomhill-bank.kent.sch.uk](mailto:info@broomhill-bank.kent.sch.uk)
- Posting: Mr Steven Ackerley, Executive Headteacher, Broomhill Bank School, Broomhill Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Tunbridge Wells, TN3 0TB

**Do you agree with the proposal to increase the designated number from 318 students to 490 students at Broomhill Bank School?**

☐

Yes

☐

No

☐

Undecided

**Which of the following best describes you?**

|                          |
|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |

A parent of children currently attending Broomhill Bank School

A governor at Broomhill Bank School

A parent of children at a different local school

A governor at a different local school

|                          |
|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |

A member of staff at Broomhill Bank School

A student attending Broomhill Bank School

A member of staff at a different local school

A parent of pre-school aged children

☐

Other (please state) .....

Name

Broomhill Bank School is a data controller under the Data Protection Act 1998 and will comply with the requirements of the Act at all times. We will ensure that your personal information is processed fairly and lawfully and in this instance, used only for the purpose of validation, which will enable a fair and just consultation.

We have completed an Equality Impact Assessment to see if the proposal could affect anyone unfairly. We welcome your views on the assumptions we have made and the conclusions we have drawn. To view the document, please go to [School consultations and public notices | Let's talk Kent](#) or the school website.

**Do you have any comments?**

Please continue your comment overleaf if necessary