

Kent Special Education Needs Trust
Meadowfield School
Swanstree Avenue
Sittingbourne
ME10 4NL

5th December 2024

Dear Parents,

As Headteachers and members of the Kent Special Educational Needs Trust (KsENT) we wanted to take the time to write to our families personally.

Many of you will be aware that Kent County Council is making changes across the education system that directly affect children with Special Educational Needs (SEND).

As Headteachers of Kent's special schools we recognise the need for change and would welcome the opportunity for true collaboration to plan these changes ensuring they make the system better for all children with SEND.

We feel the Special School Review has failed to evidence:

- How children's outcomes will be improved
- How the system will be prepared for the changes proposed (changes to buildings and environments, staff training and planning for special schools and mainstreams to work together)
- How the changes proposed are based on expert advice and an evidence base

It is with heavy hearts that we as KsENT Heads took the decision last week to instruct counsel in order to bring a claim in judicial review against the decision of KCC to proceed with the redesignation of special schools.

We have also instructed counsel to review the process by which this was achieved as we feel the process has been lacking in detail, evidence and true collaboration.

As special school Heads every decision we have made has been based on the children and families we serve, and we hoped to reach a middle ground where some of the concerns we have raised could have been addressed through sector wide co-production.

Furthermore, whilst we are supportive of the need for mainstream schools to be inclusive, these proposals come with no additional funding or resources to meet the needs of students with more complex SEND in mainstream schools.

As a group, we are united in our belief that:

- **The Special School Review consultation was not conducted appropriately, and is lacking in detail, evidence base and financial modelling**

- **There has been little, or no work done towards properly preparing both Special Schools and Mainstream Schools for the changes proposed**
- **The resulting provision will be discriminatory to certain groups of children and young people with SEND**

We have therefore written to The Local Authority, Department for Education and Ofsted.

As a group of school leaders with the best interest of our students at heart, we believe that we have no choice but to do this. At every stage of the process, we have articulated our concerns clearly and requested the education system be brought together as a whole; these concerns and requests for collaboration have simply not been listened to.

We therefore view our action as not only necessary, but ultimately caused by the failure of KCC to address the issues raised.

We would like you to know that our priority will always be ensuring the very best education for our children and we hope this action will allow time for true collaboration and planning in the interests of your children.

Yours faithfully,

KsENT Headteachers