

Appendix 4 Equality Impact Assessment of Cherry Garden school expansion

A note on approach

Issues related to equality and diversity have to a large extent been addressed as they have been identified. This assessment is an opportunity to carry out a formal check on the proposal to expand Cherry Garden special school

To scope this EqIA the following has been examined.

- The six areas of potential inequality and identified issues which need to be considered

Stage One: Scoping

1. What policy, strategy or plan is this assessment addressing?

This assessment is addressing the proposed expansion of Cherry Garden special school from September 1 2015.

This is a proposal to expand this school. The proposal was published for initial consultation in spring 2012. It is proposed a statutory notice will be issued.

2. Is this a new or an existing policy/strategy?

This is an existing policy designed to provide additional special school places in the borough.

3. If existing, has the policy/strategy already been reviewed under the previous EqIA programme? If so, what were the findings to come out of this and has the agreed action plan been implemented? What has changed since the last assessment was undertaken (in terms of context, nature of the policy/strategy or the type of people affected by the policy/ strategy)?

This strategy has not been reviewed.

4. What do you think are the main issues for your policy or strategy in relation to equality, diversity and social cohesion?

The Southwark context

The Council's strategic education priority is to provide sufficient school places for pupils who require them. It therefore reviews the projected pressure for places to ensure that there are sufficient school places available each year. In the case of special needs children the borough's aim is to ensure that all Southwark pupils with a special need can be offered a place in a borough special school.

Equality area analysis

An initial assessment of the proposal has been undertaken in relation to the six equality areas and a summary of findings is provided below.

Age

Cherry Garden expansion scheme is for a special primary school that takes children aged 2 to 11. This is the statutory starting age at which local authorities are obliged to provide school places for children. The children who are able to access the enlarged school would be of statutory school age so there would be no change. However, this will allow severely disabled children to access specialist services at a younger age and provide more places for older, statutory school aged children, with complex needs who are currently having to travel out of Southwark to have their needs met. The current school has increasingly not been able to support the youngest children with these special needs because of a lack of space, which will be remedied by the school's expansion.

Disability

The school only caters for pupils with profound and multiple special needs. The enlarged school would support additional pupils with these special needs. A hydro-pool on site will ensure all pupils with physical disabilities have a minimum of one hydrotherapy session per week. Wider corridors will give pupils more physical independence in walking throughout the school when using mobility aides and electric wheelchairs. Pupils with visual impairment will be able to orientate themselves around the school through highly contrasting landmarks throughout the building.

Larger classroom spaces will ensure there is space to fully meet the needs of all pupils i.e pupils who require physiotherapy or additional learning areas. Adequate space for equipment storage will ensure greater accessibility for pupils who have physical disabilities.

An increased space in learning areas (part separated from main class) will ensure pupils who have short attention spans, for example ADHD or on the autistic spectrum, will have access to distraction free environments in order to maximize learning.

Ensuring all pupils have access to stairs and a lift when needed will provide physical and social challenge for all pupils in preparation for functional living as adults.

Adequate space to accommodate the health team of nurse, school doctor and a range of therapists will ensure multi- agency collaboration is strengthened to further develop a holistic approach in meeting all pupils' needs.

The new build will allow for responsive changes to heating and lighting to ensure optimal learning from the pupils. This is particularly important for pupils with visual impairment where natural light is vital.

In summary the new build will allow all pupils to progress very well and importantly this new build will allow staff to facilitate that progression much more effectively than is currently possible in the current building.

Faith & Belief

Cherry Garden special school provides for children and parents of all faiths.

Gender

The enlarged school will take into account gender in the planning of services and activities for its young people.

Race & ethnicity

The school has pupils from many ethnic groups. The enlarged school would therefore continue to include pupils from many ethnic groups.

The enlarged school will take full consideration of the impact of race and ethnicity.

Sexual Orientation

Not applicable

Stage Two: Assessment of Impacts

Part A: Feedback from the Equalities and Diversity Panel

1. What feedback did the Equalities and Diversity Panel give you at Stage One?

As this is a minor proposal it has not been put to the Panel.

Part B: Purpose and aims of policy/strategy

2. What is the overall purpose of the policy/strategy?

To safeguard and promote the support for children and young people with profound and multiple special needs in the enlarged Cherry Garden special school.

3. What are its aims?

The aim is to ensure that the enlarged Cherry Garden special school is able to fully support all their children. This is to be done through common purpose, investment in outcomes and clarity of governance and accountability.

4. Could these aims be in conflict with the Council's responsibility to:

- **Eliminate discrimination**
- **Promote equality of opportunity**
- **Promote community cohesion and good relations between different groups**

We do not consider that these aims are in conflict with the Council's responsibilities. In fact they act to support them. The new school will be able to take more children with complex needs and allow them to be educated locally. In addition, the new school will be collocated with a mainstream primary school, allowing for disabled and non disabled children to share some facilities, curriculum areas and services. The scheme will give access to an outstanding school to all children with profound and multiple needs, rather than only some of Southwark's children with such high levels of need. The new school will be part of a campus of schools including mainstream and special hence promoting community cohesion between the disabled and able bodied children and families of Southwark. Monitoring of the implementation of the enlargement will be necessary to enable the early identification of any areas of potential discrimination or adverse outcome that emerge.

5. Does the documentation relating to this policy/strategy include specific reference to the Council's responsibility (as set out above) and a commitment to work to meet this?

Any potential for inequality that was identified has either been addressed in the proposal itself or will be covered in actions and policies that flow from this. The impact of the proposal on equality will also monitored.

The school's commitment to equality and valuing diversity will be at the heart of all they do.

Part C: Application of this policy/strategy

6. What steps are you taking or will you take to ensure that the policy is or will be implemented consistently and fairly?

The Strategic Director of Children's Services and Cabinet Member for Children's Services at Southwark Council have lead responsibility at officer and member levels respectively, for the arrangements to co-operate and work effectively to promote and safeguard the well-being of all local children and young people.

- 7. Could the way that this policy/strategy is being or will be implemented be discriminating against any particular individuals or groups or be potentially damaging to relations between different groups?**

The enlargement of this school will not cause any particular individuals or groups to be discriminated against or to be potentially damaging to relations between different groups.

- 8. What changes could you make to either the policy/strategy itself or the way it is applied to improve the positive outcomes for all groups and to reduce or eliminate any negative outcomes?**

No changes are proposed.

- 9. What information do you collect or do you plan to collect to monitor the impact of this policy/strategy on different groups?**

Information will be collected by the newly enlarged school.