

## **Proposed Expansion of Smallwood Primary School specialist inclusion base (SLCN) - Prescribed Alteration**

### **Statutory Formal Consultation - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**June 2026**

## **Overview**

The Council is proposing to expand the current SLCN (Speech, Language and Communication Needs) specialist inclusion base at Smallwood Primary School from 45 places to 80 places. This would happen in phases. Two additional specialist classes are planned to open from September 2026.

## **What is a specialist inclusion base?**

A specialist inclusion base is a small, specialist provision for children who need extra support with:

- speech, language and communication needs
- autism or social communication difficulties
- sensory regulation needs
- early developmental delay
- emerging emotional or social needs

Children remain part of the school, but have access to a quieter, more structured space when needed.

Some children may already be going through an assessment pathway or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), while other children may receive targeted additional support without needing an EHCP. In all cases, decisions are informed by the child's current progress and needs, advice from professionals such as speech and language therapists, or educational psychologists and parental views and involvement.

## **Why is the Council proposing to expand the specialist inclusion base?**

The Council is making this proposal because:

- More children (especially of primary age) now have EHCPs for speech, language and communication needs.
- There are not enough local specialist SLCN places, so some children are placed further away or in independent provision.
- Early, specialist language support can improve outcomes and may help needs from becoming more complex later on.

Smallwood already has experience of delivering specialist language provision, which has delivered good outcomes for children.

## Staffing, roles and day-to-day working

### **Will this change staffing and roles at Smallwood specialist inclusion base?**

The specialist inclusion base will require additional specialist staffing over time (recruited in phases as places grow). There will be training and professional development to strengthen whole-school practice in relational approaches, emotional regulation and communication. The model includes access to Educational Psychology (EP), Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) and other targeted therapeutic input to support pupils and staff.

### **How will the specialist inclusion base operate?**

#### **What needs will the specialist inclusion base support?**

The expanded specialist inclusion base will support children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN). This can include:

- Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)
- Understanding language (receptive) and using language (expressive)
- Social communication and processing information

Children will usually need an EHCP that names specialist SLCN provision to be considered for a place.

#### **How is a specialist inclusion base different from a mainstream class or a special school?**

A specialist inclusion base is part of a mainstream school, but with extra specialist support. It usually means children can:

- Learn in a mainstream setting (not a separate special school)
- Get specialist teaching and speech and language therapy input, in a tailored environment
- Join mainstream lessons and activities where this is appropriate for them

This approach supports inclusion and helps children develop communication, confidence and social skills in a familiar school setting.

#### **How will pupils split time between the specialist inclusion base and mainstream classes?**

Pupils will do much of their learning in small specialist classes with a predictable, nurturing routine. Where appropriate, pupils may join mainstream lessons or activities for some parts of the day. Pupils will take part in wider school life (for example assemblies, playtimes, clubs and trips) when this is right for them. Integration will be planned carefully around each pupil's needs, safety and wellbeing, through the EHCP and school planning processes.

### **How can my child get a place at the specialist inclusion base?**

Places are allocated through the EHCP process (not directly by the school). The Local Authority will consider your child's assessed needs and whether the specialist inclusion base can meet those needs. If you have questions about placements, speak to your SEND Case Officer.

## **Impact on the wider school community**

### **What are the benefits of a specialist inclusion base?**

It helps improve communication, learning and emotional regulation, supports inclusive practice across the school, and allows pupils to access a mix of small-group provision and mainstream classes. Local specialist inclusion bases also reduce the need for out-of-borough placements, support smoother transitions and greater placement stability, and keep children and families connected to their local communities, in line with Wandsworth's SEND Strategy and the recently published national SEND reforms.

### **How will this affect children who already attend Smallwood?**

Children who already attend Smallwood will continue as usual. The expansion aims to bring in more specialist staff and expertise, strengthen the school's inclusive approach and add resources that can support the wider school community.

The Council and school will work with staff, governors and families to manage the changes smoothly.

## **Site, spaces and practical arrangements**

### **Will the school building change?**

Yes. Some areas of the school will be adapted to create the right spaces for specialist support, such as specialist classrooms, therapy and small-group rooms, sensory and communication-rich environments. Any work will be planned and phased to reduce disruption to children's learning.

### **When would the expansion start?**

The expansion is planned to start from **September 2026**, subject to consultation and a final decision.

## Consultation, timeline and how can you get involved

### **What happens during the consultation period and how will you ensure it is accessible for all?**

The consultation process must follow the statutory guidance. Over the four weeks' formal consultation period we will be consulting with pupils, parents and carers, staff, the governing board, trade unions and the wider local community. There will be different ways to engage, including online and by post. We will translate all relevant material into languages which are spoken by the school community on request and as required. We will ensure we support those parents and carers with additional needs, so their voices are heard through this engagement phase.

### **What is the timeline and what decisions are still to be made?**

The proposal is subject to a statutory consultation and a final decision. The proposed consultation timeline is as follows:

| Activity  | Deadline                                  |
|---|---|
| Publication of statutory notice   | w/c Monday 01 June 2026                   |
| 4-week statutory consultation period for proposals. Offer meetings with relevant Governing Boards, parents, school staff.           | Monday 01 June 2026 – Sunday 28 June 2026 |
| Report back to Children's Services' SMT on outcome of statutory consultations   | July 2026                                 |
| Officer delegated decision to determine proposals within 2 months of consultation closure date – Director of Business and Resources | July 2026                                 |