

Brantridge School Consultation Summary – 29.11.2021

1. Purpose of the Consultation

The purpose of the consultation was to seek views from all interested stakeholders on a proposal to introduce a co-ed secondary provision at Brantridge School.

The proposal is for Brantridge School to expand to accommodate a new co-ed secondary provision (Year 7 to Year 11) of 80 pupils on the current school site over a five-year period. The overall increase would provide a further 80 places above the school's current Funding Agreement of 54 places, which is current for its primary provision for boys, bringing the total school capacity for primary and a secondary co-ed provision to 134 places by September 2026.

West Sussex County Council will provide the funding and undertake the required works for a new build ready for September 2023. However, the school will be offering a Year 7 provision from September 2022 by modifying existing surplus accommodation for up to 14 current year 6 pupils.

2. Consultation Process

The consultation period was for just over four weeks. It opened on Monday 1 November and closed on Monday 29 November 2021.

The consultation materials consisted of a letter from the Principal outlining what was being proposed and why as well and an opportunity to respond to the consultation.

Three public meetings were publicised and took place on Tuesday 16 November from 10am -1pm and 3.30pm – 5.30pm at the school.

A virtual meeting took place on Tuesday 16 November from 6pm-7pm. There were nine attendees to the public meetings total including staff.

The Q&A from these meetings and consultation is enclosed in this summary and is also published on the school website.

The consultation letter and response form was accessible via printed copy and online on the school website via survey monkey. An email was set up for any specific comments or questions regarding the consultation. Stakeholders could also respond via the school address

All parents of pupils at Brantridge School received a copy of the consultation document. Parents also gave comments at the Annual Review meetings.

Students were informed of the proposal at student assemblies.

Staff were informed of the proposal via staff briefings.

West Sussex County Council and neighbouring authorities were sent a copy of the consultation materials.

Parents in the area were advised of the consultation on the proposal via West Sussex parent/carer forum.

Local neighbours to the school were sent a copy of the consultation materials.

Other primary, secondary, special schools, sixth form and FE Colleges in the area were communicated to via West Sussex County Council’s Education and Skills Weekly Correspondence.

3. Summary of Responses

There were 47 responses to the consultation. 28 responses were received online and 19 were received on printed copy. A full breakdown of the responses to the consultation questions can be found in section 4.

There was overwhelming support for the proposal with 100% of respondents stating that they strongly agree/agree with the secondary expansion.

Alongside these responses, there was an overwhelming number of comments in support of the proposal and particularly from parents.

There were a few queries and constructive comments concerning the build, parking and resources, including IT which have been shared with West Sussex and have been added to the Questions and Answers section in this report and on the school website.

4. Analysis of Responses to the Consultation Questions

Question	Answer Choices	Responses	Percentage
1. More special school places are needed for children and young people within West Sussex	Strongly agree	43	92%
	Agree	3	6%
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	1	2%
	Disagree	0	0
	Strongly Disagree	0	0
2. More local provision reduces the need for longer journeys and helps children and young people to play a more active role in their home community	Strongly agree	40	87%
	Agree	5	11%
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	1	2%
	Disagree	0	0
	Strongly Disagree	0	0

3. Brantridge School has the capacity to offer more places to pupils with special educational needs without it having a negative impact on their existing pupils	Strongly Agree	31	67%
	Agree	11	24%
	Neither Agree nor disagree	3	7%
	Disagree	1	2%
	Strongly Disagree	0	0
4. I am in agreement with the proposal to expand the school to accommodate a co-ed secondary provision	Strongly Agree	38	83%
	Agree	7	15%
	Neither Agree nor disagree	0	0
	Disagree	1	2%
	Strongly Disagree	0	0
5. I am in agreement with the proposal to amend the overall number of places to 134 within Brantridge School's Funding Agreement	Strongly Agree	35	76%
	Agree	9	20%
	Neither Agree nor disagree	0	0
	Disagree	2	4%
	Strongly Disagree	0	0

Respondents were asked to indicate which of the following category applied to them:

Category	Responses	Percentage
Parent of a pupil at Brantridge School	25	54%
Parent of a child with SEN attending another school	3	7%
Staff member at Brantridge School	2	4%
Pupil at Brantridge School	0	0
Professional working in schools	13	28%
Other	3	7%

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Headteacher of another school - Governor - Grandparent 		
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5. Comments on the Proposal

Respondents commented as follows **in support** of the proposal

1. This is long overdue in the county. The lack of provision for Y7-11 is dire and anything that can be done to alleviate the current pressure on special schools can only be positive. This needs to be the first of many.
2. More specialist provision places are vital for children in West Sussex. It is not fair that so many children with high level of need are in mainstream school and especially for secondary education to have this provision available would be amazing!
3. Brantridge School liaises really well with other local schools and professionals, as well as parents. From my experience working with the school I have found them to have always been child focused and willing to adapt their provision to meet a child's specific needs.
4. The proposed school expansion will allow for much needed local secondary SEN school places. My son is settled and thriving at Brantridge so for him to move onto secondary next year would be the best option for him. Finding another school that can meet his needs is going to be difficult.
5. Our son has only just started at Brantridge and is in Y3 but we are very supportive of this proposal and think it will be of huge benefit to the boys.
6. We really hope that our son's needs are suited to the school when he gets to year 7, as staying at the same provision will enable him to progress without the anxiety that a change of placement causes our children. The approach that Brantridge use to teach and engage with the boys there works very well for our son, and we would like to see this continue.
7. It would be good to know if the planned curriculum for years 7-11 is purely GCSE based, or includes vocational learning (such as BTECs / NVQs) which some of the other specialist schools in the area offer, as many of our children are more suited to vocational training than purely academic.
8. As the local primary school in the same village, we are very much in support of these plans.
9. As a neighbour of the school I am delighted that there is a plan to make more use of the site.

10. As a SENCO in a local school, I would be really pleased to see more SEMH places locally especially for girls as West Sussex has just one SEMH specialist setting and that is for boys. I am also pleased that the proposal will make Brantridge an all through school as I know of parents who have discounted the school due to the need to change at age 14| I believe this will make it more appealing to parents of children who need stability and consistency.
11. My son would be over the moon to stay on for secondary education at Brantridge. I couldn't agree more to the proposal.
12. I think it's a great idea!
13. This proposal is urgently needed due to the shortage of secondary options for our children with special needs. Our children are being forced into homeschooling due to a lack of schools.
14. This school is amazing, and I cannot tell you how much of a difference this will make to our son's future if he is able to stay on at Brantridge School for his final school years.
15. This will be a great proposal. It will reduce the need to change schools again, which will not be an easy process to take on Brantridge is fantastic!
16. More in this education setting means more will succeed rather than fail like elsewhere. Such a great idea to expand. My son never wants to leave
17. My son currently attends Brantridge School and is in your Year 5. He has progressed massively since starting here 2 1/2 years ago. He is very happy at school and the prospect of him being able to stay at Brantridge for his secondary education is something we would be very happy about
18. My son has excelled at Brantridge School. He is coping with everyday life so much better. I can now have a good chat with him and discuss various issues with him. Looking back to a year ago, he had poor social skills and was very quiet. This has improved 75%. Well done Brantridge School.
19. It would be a great idea to have the school extended so these children who find it hard to meet and understand the need to be moved from school to school will purpose from staying in one place
20. Very happy regarding the development

21. I am very excited at the proposal. The School is fantastic, with wonderful staff and facilities. Therefore, I am over the moon that my son can continue right through
22. The proposed expansion will significantly help families of previous Year 6 leavers who have gone through a lot of anxiety trying to find new placements. All of our current year 6 parents/carers want their children to stay at Brantridge.
23. From an admissions perspective, the expansion will also open up further opportunity for parents of children Year 3 and above, who have concerns about their children potentially having to move again
24. Special needs schools are desperately needed in West Sussex. It took us two years to find a SEN school for our son. After lots of failings of other schools our son has been going to Brantridge school since February and he has come on leaps and bounds,. He is due to leave in September and we are sick with worry over having to find another school. We desperately want him to stay at Brantridge where he is safe and happy. For this proposal not to go ahead would be a catastrophe for children with SEN. Our children deserve this.
25. Children with educational needs such as ADHD or autism don't like change. I feel Brantridge School expanding is a fabulous idea so the current children that already have a place have the opportunity to stay with the school they know plus there is a cry for more spaces for secondary age children as they are not very many out there. I know for a fact by having other children with additional needs and are at different schools.
26. My son started in September 2021 and he is very settled and understood by Brantridge School. The challenge of another school will be detrimental. Secondary provision is needed.
27. Having a co-ed secondary will be beneficial for the boys
28. It would be good to visit other all through schools in the Trust to see how they do it
29. I believe this is an exciting opportunity to expand the offer within West Sussex.
30. Hopefully there will be secondary placements available there when my son needs it

Respondents commented as follows **with queries and constructive comments on** the proposal

31. Only concerns are impact of building work on current pupils, but hope these can be managed without negatively impacting them

32. Additional facilities and equipment will be needed for the secondary school
33. Provided they are afforded the support and resources, this capacity is badly needed!
34. The Taxis in and out of the school will need to be managed.
35. Also, staff parking would need to be looked at. There could be a staff pick up or park and ride scheme.
36. It would be great if staff could be part of the design group for the new school. An IT overhaul for the existing site would be helpful

6. Public Meetings

There were three public meetings on the consultation. Two were held at Brantridge School on Tuesday 16 November at 10am-12pm and 3.30pm-5.30pm. A virtual meeting was held at 6pm-7pm on Tuesday 16 November 2021

Nine participants including parents of existing students and school staff attended the meetings which were hosted by the Principal of Brantridge School and an ESLT representative of Orchard Hill College Academy Trust

Attendees were welcomed to the meeting and were advised that the purpose of the meeting was to raise any questions on the proposal that was in the letter sent to school staff, parents and the local school community. The proposal was outlined and attendees were advised of how they could respond to the consultation and that the website would be updated with Questions and Answers from the meetings.

7. Questions and Answers

- Q. What experience of such a proposal do you have from other schools and how will such a big change in year difference and co-ed in the new provision will be managed?
- A. There are 15 schools in the Trust. There is a lot of learning we can draw on where we have expanded other schools as well as development of new Free Schools. Some of the other schools In the Trust have children from nursery age to post 16. While they are 'through' schools the provision is delineated so that the age groups are appropriately separate and yet there is still a sense of being a part of one school. Feedback so far has been welcoming of a co-ed mix for the proposed secondary at Brantridge.

- Q. Where on the premises will the new building be sited and how will the impact and disruption of a building project be managed?
- A. The proposed site is a very large area of unused land behind Home Lodge. As the area is at a bit of a distance from the main building disruption can be kept at a minimum which is important for children with sensory needs.
- Q. How will the drop off and pick be managed with more people and cars on site?
- A. There are 2 options being considered. Firstly, a slightly staggered school day for primary and secondary. Secondly, a separate entrance to the new building which is located conveniently near to the road.
- Q. What will the curriculum offer be like, will it include NVQs as well as GCSE subjects?
- A. Yes there will be both academic and vocational pathways and a blended pathway according to the needs of the individual child.
- Q. Do you know how likely it is that the Department for Education (DfE) will approve the proposal?
- A. Based on our experience we know that it's important to show the DfE that we have the approval of the local authority, which we do. They have provided a letter of endorsement as their projections show that there is demand to justify future places including for girls. We also need to have the funding for the building, which the local authority has. We need the land, which we have. We need to show that we have parental support, which so far we have.
- Q. When will the DfE make their decision?
- A. We understand it's really important to get that as soon as possible. Parents of current year 6 children are looking at transition to secondary now. The consultation closes on 29th November and we expect a decision sometime in mid December.
- Q. Will parents of existing children need to 'apply' for a place in the secondary provision?
- A. No, it will be a through school so there will be no need for existing pupils to apply for a place. Parents do of course have the option to consider other secondary provision if they wish.
- Q. Are you confident that planning permission for the new building will be granted given the local authority is endorsing the proposal?
- A. The new building will need to meet all the usual requirements of planning. The capital team at West Sussex will complete the design once we have approval from DfE and then proceed with the planning application. The freeholder of the land which is leased to the school, has been consulted on the proposal. There are benefits to the local authority in keeping provision within the County, but we don't at this point know if there will be any barriers to obtaining planning permission.
- Q. Are you anticipating any problems in growing staffing in line with the growth of provision?

- A. Unlike some schools in the area we always have applicants for the teaching roles. It is always challenging, but we are confident we will overcome them. There does seem to be a national issue with recruiting therapist.
- Q. How many new staff will you need for year 7?
- A. We will operate with the same ratios that we have now so for a class of 8 pupils there is one teacher, one teaching assistant. There may be others where we have a pupil with 1:1 support. As provision grows, we will need more admin and other kinds of staff necessary to support a larger infrastructure.
- Q. Will there be subject specialist teachers for GCSE subjects?
- A. For year 7, 8 and possibly year 9 we will run on the same model we have in primary, which is a class teacher that delivers a range of subjects. For Year 9, 10 & 11 when GCSEs are being taught we will have more subject specialist teachers. We will continue to be pupil lead in our approach and deliver what is best for them.
- Q. Are there designs for the new building yet?
- A. No a design will be drawn up once we have DfE approval.
- Q. Will it be a phased opening to secondary, as in the current Year 6 will always be the oldest in the school and the other years follow up or will you take in a new lot of children to fill the years 8-11
- A. The school, will grow incrementally so the current Year 6 will always be the oldest in the school
- Q. Will we be able to put Brantridge down on our parental choice for transition to secondary schools
- A. Yes
- Q. Are children currently attending Brantridge guaranteed a place in secondary or do we need to apply?
- A. No, it will be a through school so there will be no need for existing pupils to apply for a place. Parents do of course have the option to consider other secondary provision if they wish.