

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Proposal to Change the Designation of the Resourced Provision at Newlands Primary Academy from SEMH to Autism (AS)

What is being proposed?

Newlands Primary Academy is proposing to change the primary designation of the Resourced Provision from Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs to Autism (AS). The proposal relates only to the designation of the provision and does not affect the school's overall operation or age range.

Why is this change being proposed?

The proposal has been developed following discussions between the school, Hampshire County Council's SEN Service and other key stakeholders. It was agreed that an autism designation would more accurately reflect the needs of pupils expected to access the provision.

There is also significant demand for autism specialist placements within the local area, and the change would help ensure sufficient specialist provision is available for children and young people with autism.

Why was the provision originally designated as SEMH?

As Newlands Primary Academy is a new school, the Resourced Provision formed part of the original proposal for the school. At that stage, the provision was designated for pupils with SEMH needs and a separate consultation was not required.

As planning for the provision has progressed and local need has been reviewed, it has become clear that an autism designation would better meet current demand.

Will the provision still support pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs?

Yes. Many children and young people with autism may also experience social, emotional and mental health needs. The provision will continue to support pupils' emotional wellbeing and mental health needs where these are associated with their autism and identified within their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Have any pupils already been placed in the provision?

No. The provision has not yet opened and no pupils have been admitted under the current SEMH designation.

This creates an opportunity to change the designation ensuring that the provision is aligned to identified need from the outset.

How would the proposed change benefit children and families?

Changing the designation to autism would:

- Better reflect local demand for specialist placements.
- Enable appropriate placements to be made for children whose primary need is autism.
- Increase local specialist capacity for pupils with autism.
- Help ensure children can access suitable provision closer to home.
- Avoid disruption that could arise if the designation needed to be changed after pupils had already been placed.

Do children need to have an autism diagnosis to be placed in the provision?

Children and young people do not necessarily need a formal autism diagnosis to be considered for a placement.

Placement decisions are based on the needs identified within a child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) rather than solely on whether a medical diagnosis has been received. In some cases, a child's EHCP may identify autism as their primary area of need, while others may be on the pathway to receiving an autism diagnosis, with evidence indicating that their needs are consistent with autism.

Any placement would be considered through Hampshire County Council's established SEN placement processes

Will the number of places change?

No. The proposal relates only to the designation of the provision. The number of specialist places available would remain the same.

Will this effect pupils attending the school?

No. The proposal relates solely to the designation of the Resourced Provision. The mainstream school will continue to operate as planned.

The Resourced Provision will continue to support the school's inclusive ethos and enable pupils with additional needs to access mainstream opportunities where appropriate.

What support will be available for pupils within the autism provision?

Pupils placed in the provision would benefit from:

- Specialist staff with expertise in autism.
- Tailored interventions and support programmes.
- Structured learning environments.
- Support for communication, interaction and sensory needs.
- Opportunities to access mainstream classes and activities where appropriate.
- Individualised support identified through their EHCP.

When would the change take effect?

Subject to the outcome of the consultation and the necessary approvals, the revised designation would be in place from the 2026/27 academic year.

How can I share my views?

We welcome feedback from parents, carers, staff, local schools, community members and other stakeholders.

You can submit your comments during the consultation period. Details of how to respond are provided within the consultation document.