

# Consultation Summary Report

**Consultation on a proposal to establish a specialist facility with a designation of Autistic Spectrum Disorder at Chailey St Peter’s CE Primary School. The facility would accommodate up to 12 pupils with autism and associated needs.**

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## 1. Consultation

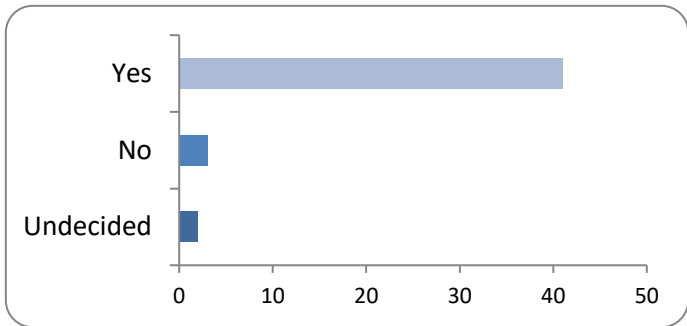
1.1 The consultation ran from 25 April 2025 to 23 May 2025. The consultation was available on the East Sussex County Council’s consultation hub.

## 2. Consultation responses

2.1 A total of 46 responses were received to the consultation.

2.2 In response to question 1 ‘Do you support the proposal to establish a specialist facility with a designation of Autistic Spectrum Disorder at Chailey St Peter’s CE Primary School for up to 12 pupils with autism and associated needs?’

- 41 (89%) supported the proposal
- 3 (7%) did not support the proposal
- 2 (4%) were undecided



2.3 Question 2 provided respondents with the opportunity to comment on the proposal. The following summarises the common themes that emerged in the responses submitted.

### 2.3.1 Respondents who supported the proposal

**Addressing the needs of children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) children**  
Respondents commented that many children with a range of SEND needs currently struggle in mainstream settings or have been denied appropriate Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Respondents felt that the specialist facility would provide a tailored, supportive environment enabling children to thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

**Alleviating pressure on mainstream schools and staff**  
A consensus among respondents was that a dedicated specialist facility would reduce the strain on mainstream school resources and staff, allowing for more focused and effective support for children. It was considered that this would benefit both children with and without additional needs by improving overall teaching quality and staff capacity.

**Local accessibility and reduced travel stress**

Respondents considered that the facility would provide much-needed places closer to home. This would reduce travel times and related stress for children and families. Those in support of the proposal also felt that many existing specialist facilities are oversubscribed or located far from where children live.

**Positive Impact on school and community**

The specialist facility is seen as a valuable addition that will enhance the school and the local community and supporting provide opportunities for integration without isolation for the children at the school."

**Improved transition and early support**

Respondents considered that early intervention and specialist support at primary level are expected to improve transitions into higher education and adulthood. Respondents also noted the benefits of early access to tailored support for better long-term outcomes.

**General endorsement of the proposal**

Parents and professionals expressed confidence in the school's leadership and staff expertise to successfully deliver a high-quality specialist provision.

**2.3.2 Respondents who did not support the proposal:****Staffing and resource strain in existing schools**

Respondents highlighted significant challenges faced by current schools, which are reported to be understaffed and operating with extremely stretched class sizes due to low pupil numbers. There is concern that pupils with additional needs already enrolled receive prioritised support, potentially disadvantaging other pupils. The addition of a specialist facility within a small and struggling school was questioned, with suggestions that such provision would be more beneficial if established within larger, better-resourced schools.

**Need for more specialised SEN schools**

Several respondents expressed the view that the proposal falls short of addressing the broader needs of the SEND community. There is a strong call for more special schools that cater comprehensively to all types of need, not just autism. Criticism was also directed at the prevailing policy of inclusion within mainstream schools for SEND pupils, which some respondents argue causes significant emotional and sensory distress to children whose needs may not be met effectively in such environments.

**Safety and location concerns**

Concerns were raised regarding the suitability and safety of the proposed site. The location, adjacent to a busy road with minimal fencing and in proximity to a nursery, was described as unsafe and potentially overwhelming for children due to sensory overload. Additionally, respondents questioned the rationale for locating the facility in this area, pointing to other parts of the county experiencing significant housing development.

**2.3.3 Respondents who were undecided**

Concern was expressed about lack of information on how the facility would operate and training for staff. It was felt that the facility should cater for more than 12 children due to the level of perceived need. Insufficient support for SEN pupils, lack of trained staff, and inadequate current provision were all quoted as concerns. One respondent shared a negative experience, highlighting a lack of timely support and difficulties accessing EHCPs.

2.4 Question 3 asked 'which of the following best describes you?'

Option	Total	Percent
<b>Pupil at Chailey St Peter's CE Primary School</b>	0	0%
<b>Parent / carer of a child at Chailey St Peter's CE Primary School</b>	11	24%
<b>Member of staff at Chailey St Peter's CE Primary School</b>	1	2%
<b>Governor at Chailey St Peter's CE Primary School</b>	1	2%
<b>Member of the local community</b>	21	46%
<b>Other (please specify) *</b>	15	33%
<b>Not Answered</b>	0	0%

\*Three respondents who selected 'other' also selected 'Member of the local community'

Respondents who ticked 'Other' classified themselves as:

- Member of wider community
- SENCO of other local education establishment
- Staff member at nearby local school
- Potential parent of a child that would use this new setting
- Local headteacher
- Parent of past pupils of the school
- Wider community area
- SENCO in a pre-school nursery
- Church Warden at St Peter's Parish Church, Chailey
- Diocese of Chichester
- Parent of autistic child locally who is unable to access in-school education
- Parent of 2 children in East Sussex