



# Larwood Academy Trust

**Chair of Trustees: Daniel Login | BA (Hons) |**

LARWOOD DRIVE, STEVENAGE, HERTFORDSHIRE, SG1 5BZ  
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## Larwood School

**Executive Headteacher:** Mr Pierre van der Merwe | BA, NPQH |

## Brandles School

**Headteacher:** Mr Paul Smith | BA (Hons), AVCM |

16<sup>th</sup> May 2024

**Re: Proposed update of funding agreement to reflect incremental increase of permanent capacity at Larwood School, part of Larwood Academy Trust for September 2024.**

Dear Colleague

Over recent years, the number of pupils on roll at Larwood School has gradually increased, from 80 to 86 (2021), from 86 to 90 (2022), from 90 to 101 (September 2023), and most recently from 101 to 105 (March 2024). These increments have happened with the full support of Hertfordshire County Council, who have funded an additional building to enable more pupils to be on site.

On Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May, we have started the consultation process to enable Larwood School to make an application to have this capacity of 105 places to be made permanent, and to have it written into its funding agreement with the Department of Education, which is currently for 80 places. Therefore, this application is to formalise the existing pupil places in terms of funded capacity; this will support the Local Authority's approach to reducing the number of SEMH pupils without placement in Hertfordshire. It is not an application to increase pupil places beyond the current 105.

### Timings:

- Small increases (80 to 86 and 86 to 90) in 2021/2022
- Early 2023 LA visited site and agreed to fund 101 places. A new block with two classrooms completed on site in June 2023, funded directly by the LA to accommodate this increase.
- LA agreement to increase to 105 in January 2024
- Formal consultation begins Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> May
- DFE significant change document produced and shared in May/ June
- Formal consultation closes Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> June - but any reply greatly received in advance of this date. This equates to a four-week consultation period.

### Context/background:

Over 1.5 million pupils (2023) in England have special educational needs (SEN), which is an increase of 87,000 from 2022. Both the number of pupils with an education, health and care (EHC plan) and the number of pupils with SEN support have increased:

- The percentage of pupils with an EHC plan has increased to 4.3% in 2023, from 4.0% in 2022.

- The percentage of pupils with SEN but no EHC plan (SEN support) has increased to 13.0% in 2023, from 12.6% in 2022.

Both continue a trend of increases since 2016.

Therefore, colleagues will be aware of the growing need for additional Special School places in Hertfordshire. The vast majority of Special Schools have expanded places to help cope with demand; Larwood's recent increases in pupils on roll is part of this pattern. Mainstream colleagues may also be aware of such issues via possible application experiences, links with existing Special Schools, waiting lists that many Special Schools have had to create due to demand and lack of places, alongside the Hertfordshire Special School Place Planning strategy 2020-2023 document.

The expansion at Larwood School correlates directly with Hertfordshire's approach to greater numbers of places for children with Special Educational Needs. HCC states the following:

'As part of our special school place planning strategy, we're aiming to deliver around 1,000 additional specialist provision places by 2026, through new special school places and the development of a countywide pattern of specialist resource provisions for children with communication needs in mainstream schools'.

#### **What to do next and by when?**

Please respond to this consultation by Wednesday 5th June -12.00pm. You can do this by:

Writing/posting comments to Executive Headteacher, Larwood School, Larwood Drive, Stevenage, Hertfordshire. SG1 5BZ

Emailing comments to [admin@larwood.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@larwood.herts.sch.uk)

Phone call 01438 236333 and you can leave comments with Kelly Keeler or arrange further discussion with the Executive Headteacher of Larwood Academy Trust if you wish.

All comments/information gathered will be collected, summarised, and provided as part of the application made to the Department of Education.

Yours sincerely,



**P van der Merwe**  
**Executive Headteacher**  
**Larwood Academy Trust**



**D Login**  
**Chair of Trustees**  
**Larwood Academy Trust**

Registered office:

Larwood School, Larwood Drive, Stevenage, Hertfordshire. SG1 5BZ, UK. Company Number: 10359418