



Consultation Pack

Secondary Education on the Isle of Sheppey

This includes the listening exercise for school closure and the consultation on the proposed two new schools. Please note, in parallel, Leigh Academies Trust will also consult on a satellite of Snowfields Academy, based at Minster, to specialise in autism.

Autumn 2023



Introduction

This consultation pack gives details about the proposed closure of Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey (OAIoS) and its replacement by two new academies: Leigh Academy Minster (LAM) and EKC Sheppey Secondary (EKCSS) on 1st September 2024.

Should the proposals go ahead, all parents of existing pupils at OAIoS will need to apply for a place at either of the new schools (or other schools of their choice), and places will be allocated in accordance with the schools' admission and oversubscription criteria. If the proposals go ahead, then parents of year 6 pupils that wish their child to be considered for either of these schools should select OAIoS as a preference when submitting their application. A second preference exercise will take place to identify which of the new schools children will be offered, alongside those already on roll at OAIoS. It is proposed that the results of this process are shared with parents on 9th May 2024. Parents will be given more details about how this process will operate, including how to select which new school is their preference, in their offer letter on 1st March 2024.

We invite feedback on these proposals as part of this consultation which comes in two parts. The first part (Section A) asks for your views about the closure of OAIoS in line with the DfE's [guidance for closure of an academy by mutual agreement](#). The second part (Section B) asks for your views about the opening of two new academies (Leigh Academy Minster and EKC Sheppey Secondary). You can respond to both parts of the consultation or just one part if you would prefer. You can do this by using the contact details provided.

The consultation will start on 6th November and run for four weeks. It will close on 4th December at 5.00pm.

SECTION A

Listening period on the arrangements for Closure of Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey

You can take part in the listening exercise on the arrangements for closure of Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey by emailing us at OAISConsultation@Oasisuk.org. Alternatively, you can send a letter to the following address: Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey Consultation, Oasis Community Learning, Interchurch House, 35-41 Lower Marsh, London, SE1 7RL. The deadline for responses is 4th December 2023 at 5.00pm.

The vision for the future of secondary education on the Isle of Sheppey involves the establishment of two separate secondary schools to replace the single split site provision offered by Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey. The proposal to achieve this vision necessitates the closure of Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey (OAIoS). This would take place on the 31st August 2024, with a view to establishing two new secondary schools on

the same sites, to replace the single split site provision offered by OAIoS – Leigh Academy Minster (LAM) and EKC Sheppey Secondary (EKCSS), opening on the 1st September 2024.

Oasis Community Learning (The Oasis Centre, 75 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7HS) and the Secretary of State have mutually agreed to close Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey (Minster, Minster Rd, Minster on Sea, ME12 3JQ and Sheerness, Marine Parade, Sheerness ME12 2BE) on the 31st August 2024. This is subject to the opening of replacement secondary schools (see Section B of this document).

The academy currently serves 1,526 pupils. The breakdown of student numbers is given in table 1 below:

Table 1: OAIoS student number breakdown

	Total	Gender				SEN					
		Female		Male		Has SEN				No SEN	
		No.	%	No.	%	EHCP	SEN support	Total SEN	%	No.	%
Compulsory	1387	683	49%	704	51%	56	299	355	26%	1032	74%
Non-compulsory	139	57	41%	82	59%	3	41	44	32%	95	68%
Total	1526	740	48%	786	52%	59	340	399	26%	1127	74%

If the proposal were to be approved, all existing pupils at OAIoS will be offered a place at one of the two new schools therefore no pupils should be displaced. Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey has a total capacity of 390 pupils per year group (7-11 capacity 1950). However, none of the current year groups are at capacity with the largest year group currently being 319 pupils. The two new secondary schools would offer a total of 330 student places per year group.

Future projections of place planning numbers suggest that the provision of 330 places across the two new schools will provide sufficient places for the foreseeable future. Place planning numbers are provided in the table below.

Table 2: Pupil Place Planning Numbers (Ref School Capacity (SCAP) Survey as of 1st May 2022)

Academic Year	Place Planning Numbers (published 21-22)
24-25	324
25-26	291
26-27	283
27-28	289
28-29	287

Should the proposal to open LAM and EKCSS go ahead, all existing pupils at OAloS along with those new pupils allocated a place at OAloS for September 2024 will be offered a place at one of the two new schools therefore no pupils should be displaced. Pupils offered a place at the school for September 2024 would be included in an exercise to split the school, alongside those pupils who are already on roll. This proposal would ensure that families with multiple children are able to secure an answer for all siblings at the same time.

Parents will be required to identify which of the two new schools is their preference, but they will also be considered for the lower preference site. This will help ensure that an offer can be made to all pupils. It will be made clear to parents that they are not obliged to accept this offer. Equally, parents will be advised that they are free to approach other schools if that is their preference. Parents of children in the current year 10 and year 12 will be offered a place at LAM to ensure continuity of education.

Kent County Council (KCC) will run this preference exercise utilising each new site's oversubscription criteria and identify a school site for every child. Offer information will be provided to each trust so that they can contact successful families, allowing them to combine offer, acceptance/refusal and other onboarding tasks. It is proposed that the results of this process are shared with parents on Thursday 9th May 2024. Late applicants on the Island that require KCC to co-ordinate their application will be directed to the relevant existing standard process and will be given an opportunity to name alternative preferences via KCC's normal post reallocation procedures. KCC will write to all parents who have a child with an Education, Health and Care Plan to ensure they have an annual

review prior to the end of term 5 and are prepared for transition to the new provision.

OAloS has played an active part in the community on the Isle of Sheppey, both by ensuring that a community offer supports the outcomes for students at the academy, as well as developing initiatives outside of the academy in the wider community. Within the academy this has included providing wider pastoral and practical support to the families of students at the academy, including food parcel deliveries.

Further, Oasis has employed a team of youth and family support workers that provide a range of interventions for students and their parents including attendance and behaviour support through small groups and one-to-one work, NVR parenting programme, mentoring, extracurricular activities and holiday programmes. As part of this commitment to the wider community, Oasis set up the Isle of Sheppey Community Forum in 2018 bringing together partners and individuals to work together towards shared objectives and developed partnerships and secured funding to start the Sheppey support bus, a mobile social supermarket and advice centre that serves the Island community.

To mitigate against the impact to the community of the closure of the academy, and because Oasis' commitment to the young people, families and wider community of the Isle of Sheppey is so strong, through the broader Oasis charities beyond OCL, Oasis is committed to continue to fundraise and support the wider community work on the Island, even if OAloS closes. Oasis would also work with the two new providers to ensure that support offered directly to students and their families as part of the education offer is effectively transferred over.

There will be no negative impact in regard to age as, if the proposal is approved, LAM will continue the current offer of education to pupils aged 11-18 years. EKCSS will offer education to 11-16 year olds and its pupils will have opportunities to progress to sixth form courses at EKC Sheppey College and the wider EKC Group. Other protected characteristics will not be negatively impacted as the two new schools will continue within the same facilities and provide the National Curriculum to all pupils. There is no current resourced provision reserved for pupils with special educational needs. Responses from this consultation will be considered to inform the Equality Impact Assessment.

OAloS offers a traditional core academic curriculum and varied vocational offer for sixth-form i.e. A Level courses such as, English literature, biology and history to the social sciences of psychology and sociology. The academy has the capacity to support up to 250 students per sixth form year group with a current cohort of 139 students.

LAM will offer post-16 education for 250 students. In the sixth form, pupils will follow the International Baccalaureate Careers-related Programme (IBCP) already offered in five other Leigh Academies Trust academies, plus a number of non-selective sixth forms throughout Kent. In addition, LAM intends to offer T Levels and other work-based qualifications drawing upon the specialist facilities and teaching expertise available at the Minster Campus. Until such time that this new post-16 curriculum is embedded, LAM will continue to offer a version of the current A Level and vocational mixed course programme.

At EKCSS pupils at every key stage will study a rich, challenging and exciting curriculum that will support pupils to achieve. In key stage 4 pupils will have a wide range of GCSE options to choose from that will enable them to move onto the most appropriate pathways at post-16, including their excellent A Level provision at EKC Canterbury as well as more local provision at the recently rated outstanding Sheppey College. The EKC Group places a leading role in contributing to the economic and social prosperity to the communities they serve. The EKC Schools Trust and the EKC Group have a sector leading partnership, especially in supporting young people to realise their full potential.

The extensive choice of post-16 opportunities across the EKC family ensure that there is a pathway for everyone.

OAloS is currently operating across the two campuses. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 (currently 577 pupils) are primarily based on the Sheerness Campus with other year groups being based at the Minster site (809 years 9-11 and 148 sixth form). The two campuses are approximately 2.3 miles apart. This arrangement necessitates travel across the Island. The new provision will offer a capacity of 750 pupils on the Sheerness campus (EKCSS) and a capacity of 900 pupils plus 250 sixth form places on the Minster Campus (LAM) therefore the total number of pupils travelling to each site will remain largely unchanged.

All of the current pupils at OAloS will be offered places at one of the two new schools. There should not be any increase in total travel required across the Island and depending on the preferences of parents, there is the potential for a significant reduction in the amount of travel between the different areas of the Island if parents select schools which are geographically closest to their homes. With all current pupils being offered places at the two new schools, there would be no need for an increase in the amount of travel off the Island for education and there is the objective that off-Island travel to schools in Sittingbourne will be reduced. KCC's travel policy will apply.

Responses received during this listening period will be collated and analysed. This analysis will include organisations or groups responding to the listening period. Therefore, please provide details of your organisation and / or relationship to the academy (including year group if your child either attends or is a prospective attendee at the academy) with any submission provided.

We are inviting responses to the following questions:

1. Do you agree with the proposed approach to closing OAloS and replacing OAloS with two new schools on 1st September 2024?
2. Do you have any further comment on the proposed arrangements for closure?

SECTION B

Opening of two new academies for the Isle of Sheppey

This consultation includes a concurrent consultation on admissions policies for both new schools.

You can take part in the consultation to open two new academies by completing the following [Google Form](#). Alternatively, you can send a letter to the following address: LAT and EKC new secondary schools consultation, Leigh Academies Trust, Carnation Road, Rochester, Kent, ME2 2SX. The deadline for responses is 4th December 2023 at 5.00pm.

As set out in Section A, it is proposed that OAloS will close at the end of August 2024 and will be replaced immediately by two new schools, each opening on 1st September 2024. One of the two new schools will be called Leigh Academy Minster (LAM) for students aged 11-18 operated by Leigh Academies Trust (LAT) on the Minster site. It will provide for 900 pupils aged 11-16 with a sixth form for 250 students. It will have an admission number of 180 in year 7.

The other new school will be called EKC Sheppey Secondary for students aged between 11-16 years old. It will be operated by EKC Schools Trust (EKCST) at the Sheerness campus. It will have a shared sixth-form offer operating in partnership with EKC Sheppey College and the wider EKC Group. The school will have capacity for 750 pupils, aged 11-16, with a published admissions number of 150 for year 7. It will offer opportunities for its young people to progress to a range of further education and sixth form provision for their next steps.

By operating two schools with distinct yet complementary curricula the community will have access to greater choice in secondary education. Both schools will provide a high-quality education covering academic and vocational programmes. In this way, we hope that more local pupils will decide to stay on Sheppey for their secondary education.

All existing students of OAloS will be able to attend one of the two new schools, if their parents want a place. If the plans go ahead, parents and carers will be asked to specify which school they would like their child to attend. Places will be allocated according to the admissions policies of the schools. These are included as part of this consultation. The exception will be students currently in years 10 and 12 who will all be able to transfer to LAM in order to complete their current studies uninterrupted, providing their parents apply for a place.

Parents and carers of students starting in year 7 in September 2024 who have indicated their preference for OAloS in the normal way can contact Kent County Council up to 8th December 2023 to change their preferences at the following address: kentonlineadmissions@kent.gov.uk. If the proposals go ahead then, alongside those already on roll at OAloS, a preference exercise will take place for those applicants who have been offered (and accepted) an OAloS place. This will identify which of the new schools their children will be offered. It is proposed that the results of this process are shared with parents on 9th May 2024. Parents will be given more details about how this process will operate, including how to select which new school is their preference, in their offer letter on 1st March 2024.

LAT and EKCST will seek funding from the Department for Education to ensure that all parents and carers of existing year 7-10 OAloS students will be supported to purchase any new bespoke uniform items required by each of the new schools which are different to those required now. Parents and carers of any new pupils starting in September 2024 will be given details of the uniform items that are required in due course and will be expected to fund these themselves as they would have done if OAloS had remained open.

More information about Leigh Academies Trust (LAT):

LAT is a large, local and successful multi academy trust which started with its first school in Dartford in 2008. It is responsible for 31 academies (primary, secondary and special) in Kent, Medway, Bexley and Greenwich. All LAT academies inspected so far by Ofsted are at least “good” with nearly 40% judged “outstanding” overall compared to 15% nationally. LAT provides high-quality education for over 20,000 pupils aged 2-19, employs over 3,500 staff and receives an annual income of circa £170m. Its mission is “Education for a better world” which it carries out through its well-established best practice approaches and highly talented team of staff.

More information about Leigh Academy Minster (LAM):

LAM will adopt the highly-successful small school model of education available in other LAT secondary schools. This is designed to ensure excellent pastoral care so that young people can succeed in school. It ensures that pupils always know where to go and have trusted adults to speak to if they are facing challenges or difficulties. The small school model also ensures excellent communication and relationships with families so that we can work together for the benefit of our young people.

LAM will have four small schools in total, three for years 7-11 and one for post-16, all based in separate accommodation. Sixty pupils in each of years 7-11 will be based in the three 11-16 colleges which will be their pastoral base within the wider academy. Pupils will be taught in their college groups at key stage 3 with appropriate ability setting for core subject areas. One of the 11-16 colleges will be for higher ability pupils offering a “grammar stream” model. Within their college, pupils will belong to a single-year tutor group, but embedded within the vertical structure of their wider college where older pupils provide mentoring opportunities to younger pupils.

Post-16 students will be based in the fourth college. Each of the four colleges will have its own Head of College (Vice Principal), reporting to the Principal. In

turn, they will manage a team of assistant principals, subject leaders, teachers and student services managers whose role is to provide excellent pastoral care and curriculum opportunities for pupils.

At key stage 3 (years 7-9) pupils will study the full National Curriculum within the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Programme (MYP). This is a highly-ambitious and well-established curriculum offered in many grammar schools, fee-paying schools and international schools. All LAT secondaries offer the MYP and this has been highly praised by Ofsted. The programme is broad and balanced and seeks to develop holistic learners ready to participate successfully in the world once they leave school. The IB encourages all schools to ensure that curriculum content is embedded in the local context whilst developing pupils’ international mindedness. The particular curriculum content chosen will be driven by local academy leaders with support from the Trust in order to recognise and celebrate the academy’s unique island characteristics. All pupils, regardless of year group, will enjoy one lesson per week of Personal, Social, Health and Relationships Education to ensure excellent personal development.

At key stage 4, pupils will study a wide range of GCSEs and BTECs. All pupils will study English literature, English language, maths, core PE and double science (some pupils will have the chance to study triple science). In addition, pupils will opt for history or geography, plus two further options of their choice from a range of curriculum areas. The study of a modern foreign language will not be compulsory at key stage 4.

In the sixth form, students will follow the International Baccalaureate Careers-related Programme (IBCP) already offered in five other LAT academies, plus a number of non-selective sixth forms throughout Kent. In addition, LAM intends to offer T Levels and other work-based qualifications drawing upon the specialist facilities and teaching expertise available at the Minster Campus. LAT and the East Kent Colleges Group will work together to ensure a joined-up curriculum offer for sixth formers on Sheppey to maximise choice and support the local economy.

All pupils at LAM will be issued with their own Chromebook to access the online LAT curriculum platform and to ensure that the transition between learning at home and school is seamless. Chromebooks will be provided to pupils at no cost to their families. The approach to behaviour management will align with LAT's disruption-free learning model. The academy will run a one-week timetable of 24 lessons and will close early to pupils on a Wednesday to provide high-quality professional development opportunities for staff starting at 2pm. The timetable will comply with government expectations of a 32.5 hour week for pupils.

The proposed admissions policy for Leigh Academy Minster can be found [here](#).

More information about EKC Schools Trust (EKCSST):

EKC Schools Trust supports 8 schools, and proudly serves communities across East Kent. As part of a family of schools, colleges and business units, EKC Schools Trust and its sister organisation, the East Kent Colleges Group have a strong and successful relationship with young people and their families on the Isle of Sheppey. EKCSST operates the Island's only Ofsted "Outstanding" primary school at Queenborough and the East Kent Colleges Group, which includes EKC Sheppey College, was also recently judged "Outstanding" in all areas. A unique and sector-leading partnership, the two organisations work hand in hand to enable learners of all ages to have access to the highest-quality education, inspirational learning environments and enrichment experiences that support all children and young people to achieve their learning goals and career ambitions.

More information about EKC Sheppey Secondary (EKCSS):

As a small school, EKCSS will have a unique approach to support the pupils we serve.

Our provision will be based around building personal relationships with each child, understanding their strengths and recognising their potential. By working solely within their year groups, our staff will know your children as individuals, so we are able to provide the teaching, the help and guidance they will need to achieve their best.

Through our long-standing, successful relationship with the Isle of Sheppey, we will design our curriculum to meet the individual needs of the young people. This will include an ambitious curriculum, designed to ensure that all pupils start their secondary experience knowing that we are focused on their next steps into employment or further education at Level 3 (A Levels, apprenticeships or Level 3 qualifications).

EKCSS will provide a full range of academic subjects in the National Curriculum, offering pupils the opportunity to experience a wide and rich curriculum throughout key stage 3, exploring where their individual talents and interests lie, as well as a very strong focus on core subjects, particularly reading, personal development, life skills and professional studies.

At the end of key stage 3, our students will have the opportunity to choose between a range of pathways that suit their own ambitions and are appropriate for them as individuals. This will include the full range of academic GCSEs, preparing pupils for A Levels or other academic post-16 routes. In addition, there will also be a range of other pathways for young people who are interested in technical and vocational learning and would like to balance their core curriculum; English, maths, science with creative subjects such as, dance, drama or technology and engineering. Students will have the opportunity to combine the academic with vocational courses and depending on their individual ambitions and abilities, or they can choose to study one of our two specialisms: Creative courses or Engineering. These programmes are designed in alignment with Sheppey College and will provide a direct route to the outstanding provision and facilities for our learners to progress to Level 3 and into employment.

EKCSS will operate in the same way as all the EKC provisions, completely focused on having high expectations and high aspirations for all the young people and working closely with families to ensure we help every one of our learners to achieve their full potential.

The proposed admissions policy for EKC Sheppey Secondary can be found [here](#).