

Statutory Consultation on a
Proposed Change to
Hindhayes Infant School
in the Academic Year 2026/27

This document outlines Somerset Council's proposed change to Hindhayes Infant School at Leigh Road in Street, and sets out how members of the public can provide their views.

Hindhayes Infants
Hooked on Thinking
Working with and for Local Families



This is a statutory consultation by Somerset Council in accordance with the DFE's 'Making Significant Changes ('Prescribed Alterations') To Maintained Schools' guidance issued in August 2025

Background

Hindhayes School is a community infant school located at Leigh Road in Street.

In partnership with the governing body of the school, Somerset Council is proposing a significant change to the school that could come into effect from September 2026.

The Proposal

It is proposed to create an onsite Special Educational Needs (SEN) Unit for 6 to 8 local children that have an Education, Health and Care Plan, and whose special educational needs cannot adequately be met within a mainstream classroom.

Somerset Council and the governors of Hindhayes Infant School believe that the proposed change will better respond to the needs of children and young people who live in the school's locality.

This paper is designed to set out the proposal, and explain how members of the public can provide their feedback.

The proposed SEN Unit

What is an SEN unit?

An SEN unit comprises of a separate classroom and facilities within a school setting for children that have special educational needs that cannot be adequately met within mainstream classes.

By educating these children within a small specialist environment that has been designed to meet their needs, it is much more likely that their educational potential will be realised.

Why is an SEN unit needed?

There is currently a shortfall of specialist education places in the county. Most of the existing special schools, autism bases and SEN units are already full to capacity.

As a result of this, Somerset Council is currently having to purchase high-cost placements from schools in the independent and non-maintained sector. These schools often require children to travel long distances from home.

Somerset Council's ambition is to open a number of new SEN units around the county on mainstream school sites, enabling children with SEN to attend their local school.

The Council will be refurbishing and equipping existing rooms within school sites that are not required for the delivery of mainstream provision.

Who will the new school places cater for?

The SEN unit will cater for children that have Education, Health and Care Plans for their social communication and emotional regulation needs who may otherwise struggle within a mainstream school setting.

How many children will attend the SEN unit, and how will places be allocated?

There are likely to be six to eight children educated in the SEN unit at any one time.

Places will be allocated by Somerset Council's Statutory SEND service in consultation with staff at the school. Children placed at the SEN unit will be local children from the Street area.

Will school transport be provided to children attending the new SEN unit?

Yes, if they qualify under Somerset Council's published school transport policy, a copy of which is available to read or download at:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/children-families-and-education/home-to-school-transport/>

Who will run the new SEN unit?

Specialist teachers will be employed by the school who, along with necessary support staff, will run the new unit.

How will the new SEN unit be funded?

The Council received capital funding from government to increase the number of 'high needs' places. Further details are available from this website -

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/children-families-and-education/the-local-offer/education-and-learning-support/somerset-plan-for-high-needs-provision-capital-allocation/>

Somerset Council will provide the school with the necessary capital funding to refurbish and equip unused rooms to create the SEN unit.

When the new unit is open, the school will also receive high needs revenue funding for each of the new places which will cover the unit's ongoing operating costs.

Will the arrangement affect other schools in the area?

It is unlikely that other state-funded schools will be affected as there are so few vacancies at special schools in the county.

When will the SEN unit open?

The SEN unit would open in the 2026/27 academic year. Pupils are likely to be admitted to the unit from September 2026.

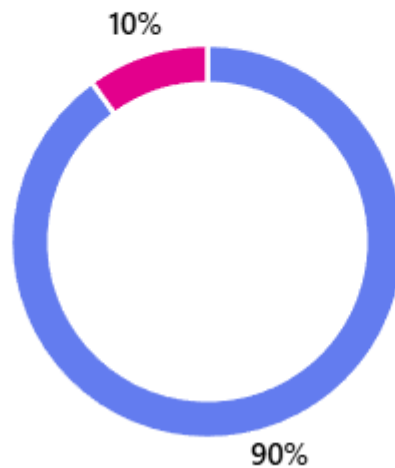
Informal Consultation (April – May 2026)

An informal consultation was undertaken in April and May where immediate stakeholders (parents and carers of children on the school roll, and members of staff employed at the school) were asked whether or not they would support the proposal.

There were ten responses - five were from parents, and five from staff members. Somerset Council is very grateful to all who completed the questionnaire.

There was strong support for the SEN unit:

● Yes, I would support this proposal	9
● No, I would not support this proposal	1
● I am undecided	0



Formal Consultation (June – July 2026)

With this document, we are now launching our formal consultation where any members of the public can have their say. Parents, carers and members of staff remain very welcome to contribute to this consultation as well.

What feedback is being requested in the consultation?

Somerset Council wants to know whether members of the public would support the proposal, and whether they have any feedback they would wish to be considered.

Can I object to the proposal?

Yes, you can object or comment on the proposal.

What if I require additional information before providing my feedback?

Please contact Somerset Council if you require any additional information before submitting your feedback. Our e-mail is educationplaces@somerset.gov.uk

An officer will endeavour to respond promptly to any questions received.

How long does the consultation run?

The consultation period is from Monday 08 June 2026 to Friday 10 July 2026.

When is the deadline for submitting views?

The deadline is 5.00pm on Friday 10 July 2026.

Please note that any views received after this time may not be able to be taken into account although there will be a public consultation later in the year. Parents, carers and members of staff will be welcome to contribute to the next consultation as well as this one.

How can I provide my views?

Please submit your views at the following website:

<https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/proposed-change-to-hindhayes-infant-school-2026-27>

Will you respond to my feedback?

Individual queries received during the consultation period will receive an acknowledgment although will not normally receive a response.

What will happen to my feedback?

Somerset Council will consider all feedback received, and share it with the school.

The feedback will be used to help inform a decision that will be taken in late July.

If the decision is taken to proceed, the SEN Unit will open in the next academic year.

Thank you for considering our proposal, and we look forward to hearing your views.