

Secondary Education across the High Weald

Notes on the issues

What do you want ?

- A new, non selective secondary school to give our young people the skills to climb the ladder of achievement, if they do not get into the local Cranbrook Grammar school
- There is no non selective secondary school within 10 miles of Cranbrook, which lies at the heart of the High Weald, which has 21 primary schools within a 7 mile radius.
- These 21 primary schools produce 525 pupils each year in year 6, within 7 miles of Cranbrook.

Primary schools within 7 miles of Cranbrook

URN	Name	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
114524	Ticehurst and Flimwell Church of England Primary School	15	13	18	10	10	17	13	16
114529	Bodiam Church of England Primary School	8	9	12	12	14	11	11	19
118282	Sandhurst Primary School	22	18	16	25	26	26	32	25
118291	Headcorn Primary School	30	30	30	31	32	34	31	30
118313	Staplehurst School	67	57	64	62	55	46	50	65
118597	Benenden Church of England Primary School	22	17	15	16	28	30	27	30
118600	Cranbrook Church of England Primary School	18	21	23	29	14	20	28	30
118601	Goudhurst and Kilndown Church of England Primary School	30	30	30	30	30	29	31	29
118602	Hawkhurst Church of England Primary School	28	27	30	26	29	22	30	30
118604	Lamberhurst St Mary's CofE (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School	20	29	21	30	28	29	29	29
118636	St Margaret's, Collier Street Church of England Voluntary Controlled School	18	15	18	15	16	19	17	17
118701	Frittenden Church of England Primary School	14	11	9	15	14	16	13	17
118716	Colliers Green Church of England Primary School	12	16	17	16	15	15	16	16
118717	Sissinghurst Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School	18	18	20	25	26	20	21	29
142689	Brenchley and Matfield Church of England Primary School	0	30	21	23	18	28	28	31
143788	St Michael's Church of England Primary School	0	22	22	28	26	23	20	19
147280	Horsmonden Primary Academy	0	0	0	0	26	31	21	30
147563	Rolvenden Primary School	0	0	0	0	13	10	16	16
148116	Marden Primary Academy	0	0	0	0	0	39	40	38
148741	Hurst Green Church of England Primary School and Nursery	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	14
149623	John Mayne Church of England Primary School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Cranbrook Primary is earmarked to double in size due to increased housing

School options

- 90 local pupils will go to Cranbrook Grammar School, a school with a very high entry mark, as the catchment area is affluent.
- The rest have to go to Mascalls (Paddock Wood 11.4 miles) Homewood, (Tenterden, 10 miles), Cornwallis, (Maidstone, 10.9 miles) or Uplands (Wadhurst 12 miles) or be 'home schooled'. (drop outs and truancy)
- There are private schools locally, Benenden, St Ronans (Hawkhurst), Dulwich College Prep (Cranbrook) but many parents are having to turn to the public sector due to rising fees.
- Cranbrook primary school has 34% of pupils on Pupil premium (Free school meals) a universal indicator of poverty and deprivation, Average in UK is 20%.
- This shows the reality of the area, superficially wealthy but very deprived pockets. These pupils are rarely motivated to be educated.

Effect of no local school and long journeys

- A school is at the heart of a community
- Parents, teachers, students interact at many levels, and people make friendship groups that last for life.
- Students cannot take part in after school activities
- Road infrastructure means catching a bus at 07:00 to go to Mascalls, and getting home at 4pm, with one very late bus.
- Huge parental inconvenience if bus home is missed.
- Issues over bullying on school buses
- Friendship groups are over extended geographically
- Students who fail the 11+ have few options, particularly those who are not engaged by academia, but want skills for life.

History of High Weald Academy / Snowfields

- Rebuilt by Kent County Council in 2017 for £10m, for 800 students
- Run by Brook Learning Trust, answering to Department of Education
- Recognised as Failing, handed to Leigh Academy Trust on 2021 (LAT)
- They closed it and transformed it into Snowfields, a Special Needs school for 150 pupils, with 2 or 3 from Cranbrook, the rest coming from across the whole of Kent by Taxi.
- Early Ofsted reports good. KCC needed extra SEN capacity.
- Local children have to travel over 10 miles to school

4 constituency MPS potentially involved

- Cranbrook: Currently Helen Grant
 - soon to be in the new Wealden Constituency
- Biddenden: Ashford – MP Damian Green
- Staplehurst: Maidstone and Malling MP Helen Grant
(Will be in Wealden Constituency)
- Capel and Goudhurst : Tunbridge Wells – MP Greg Clark
- We will need a co-ordinated approach for all of them to support our case at the Department of Education, by their current electors

Housing & Population Growth – Cranbrook and Sissinghurst parish. Approved houses

- Going back about ten years sites approved and/or **built or under construction:**

• Bramling Gardens	60
• Cobnut Close	18
• Old School	9
• Carpenters Meadow	18
• St Georges Site	19
• Cranbrook Engineering	28
• Brick Kiln	180
• Turnden 1	40
• Hurstways	7
• Dulwich Prep	9

- Windfalls – usually in ones or twos 71

TOTAL 459

'In the Plan' Housing numbers in Cranbrook and Sissinghurst

- Large sites that have been refused but are likely to be reapplied for:

• Turnden 2	165	
• Longfield	35	
• Whitewell Lane	20	
• Jaegers	60	
• Mill Lane	42	TOTAL 322

- Sites that have been allocated by TWBC but no application received yet:

• Off The Frythe	70	
• Cornhall Oast	90	
• Others	25	TOTAL 185

- If the maximum number were built the total would be 966 – (Currently around 3100 in this parish)

New Housing \Numbers in the catchment area

- We are collecting data.
- Hawkhurst, Staplehurst, Biddenden, Headcorn, Marden
- These are all centres of population that have substantial new housing.

- The developers pay contributions to KCC for education provision to the tune of £7000 per house.
- A new school may cost £10m, so 1430 houses would build a new school. The High Weald has already delivered this many houses.

Kent County Council -Commissioning of New Schools – Nick Abrahams

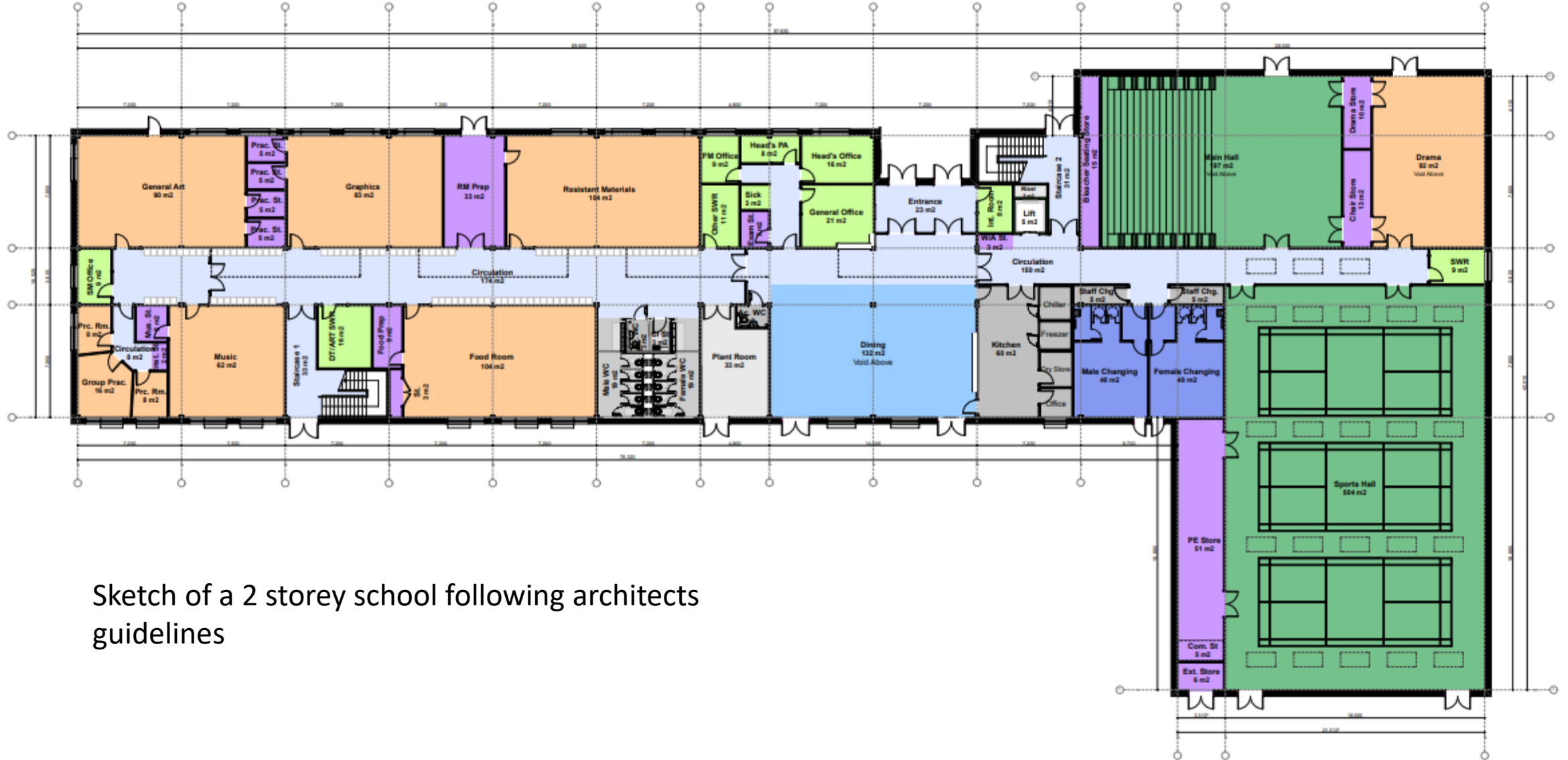
- https://www.kent.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0009/148086/Commissioning-Plan-for-Education-Provision-in-Kent.pdf
- KCC are responsible for allocating a secondary school place to all children.
- They do not control the Academy Trusts, who run the schools, these are controlled by the Department of Education – (Hence the inclusion of our MPs names!)
- A shortage of places has been recognised, but bussing children around has become the only option.
- A new school outside Ashford (Chilmington) is intended to shift pupils from Tenterden eastwards, enabling more Cranbrook pupils to be educated in Tenterden, even though Homewood has cut its intake from 390 per year to 360.

Pupil experience and journey

- Many children are being 'home schooled' across the country
- KCC have a duty to check some education is occurring, but have no powers
- There is an increase in truancy and reluctance to attend. Schools are taking on extra staff to address this
- An intake of 360 pupils in a year group can be very intimidating for children fresh from Primary school
- There is an increase in Pupil anxiety over going to school, along with other issues such as insufficient space on buses, carrying books, anti-social behaviour and bullying

Where would the new school go?

- The obvious answer would be alongside Snowfields on land under the control of LAT
- It does not have to be in Cranbrook, but KCC own a field adjacent to the primary school, that is large enough to take a 650 pupil school
- accommodating an 11-16 school attached is a very basic sketch CSPC_SK01-Revision P1 which shows how a school of the types shown in the other drawings from the DfE from their “Baseline Designs For Schools <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/baseline-designs-for-schools>



Sketch of a 2 storey school following architects guidelines

Leigh Academy Trust – Education for a Better World

- <https://leighacademiustrust.org.uk>
- The Department of Education transferred all 3 large freeholds of land to LAT in 2021.
- LAT converted one plot to the SEN school, Snowfields, and are demolishing many old buildings for parking.
- The remaining plots have been left unused, so the Parish council have tried to engage with LAT to understand the future use of these lands which used to belong to Kent County Council (ie the people of Kent)
- The Parish Council tried to repurpose the disused 6th form centre as a medical centre and pre-school, but LAT have tried to block this becoming an Asset of Community Value.
- LAT have been in discussion with Tunbridge Wells Council and Kent County Council about selling some of their estate for housing, to enable them to develop Mascalls in Paddock wood into a 12 form entry, 360 children per year, the largest in West Kent
- The Parish council have become insistent on having a dialogue with LAT to no avail.

Leigh Academy Trust unused 6th Form Centre at Snowfields

