



Brighter Futures Educational Trust
Larwood School
Larwood Drive
Stevenage
SG1 5BZ

15th June 2026

Re: Proposed increase of 40 place numbers at Larwood School, part of Brighter Futures Educational Trust, from 173 to 213 places, from April 2027

Dear Parent/Carer,

On Monday 15th June, we have started the consultation process to enable Larwood School to increase its pupil capacity by 40 places, from the current 173 (September 2026) places to 213 from April 2027, which would be achieved by the construction of an additional building on the existing Larwood School (Stevenage) site.

This process is fully supported by the local authority Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), who are providing the funding for, and completing the construction of, the new building, as well as providing funding to fully furnish and equip the new provision.

Timings:

- Pre discussion with HCC started in the Spring term 2026, after HCC approached Larwood School
- Visits to site conducted by HCC took place March 2026
- Larwood agreement in principal April 2026; HCC funding agreed internally in May 2026
- Formal consultation begins Monday 15th June
- DFE significant change application to be produced and shared in July/ August 2026
- Formal consultation closes Monday 12th July- but any reply greatly received in advance of this date. This equates to a four-week consultation period
- DFE significant change application to be submitted once consultation has closed, in September 2026.

Context/background:

Over 1.7 million pupils (2024/25) in England have special educational needs (SEN), which is an increase of 93,700 from 2024. This is 19.5% of all pupils. 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 5.3%, from 4.8% in 2024
- The percentage of pupils with SEN but no EHC plan (SEN support) has increased to 14.2%, from 13.6% in 2024

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.

This expansion aligns directly with Hertfordshire County Council's SEND Place Planning Strategy. The Council's previous strategy aimed to deliver more than 1,000 additional specialist places by 2026 through a combination of special school expansions and specialist provision within mainstream schools. Building on this work, Hertfordshire's SEND Provision Plan 2026-2029 proposes a further £140 million investment to create approximately 1,150 additional specialist places by 2029.

Hertfordshire County Council states the following:

More children and young people in Hertfordshire are requiring additional support at school, many presenting with increasingly more complex needs than in the past. Families have consistently told us they want clearer pathways and better local options. In response, this Special Education, Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Provision Plan outlines how we will strengthen support in local schools, increase specialist provision where it is needed, and ensure every child receives the right help, in the right place, at the right time.

What to do next and by when?

Please respond to this consultation by Thursday 16th July 2026 -12.00pm. You can do this by:

Writing to the CEO, Brighter Futures Educational Trust, Larwood School, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 5BZ or by emailing comments to ccosson@bfetrust.org.uk.

Phone call 01438 347380 and you can leave comments with Charlotte Cosson or arrange further discussion with the CEO of Brighter Futures Educational Trust if you wish.



Brighter Futures
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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

CEO

Brighter Futures Educational Trust

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Chair of Trustees

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