

# Kent County Council Equality Impact Assessment

## Proposed New Paddock Wood Primary School

### What is an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and why does the County Council do them?

[Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010](#) requires all public authorities, when exercising their functions and making decisions, to have due regard to the three limbs of the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (PSED). These are to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under that Act.
- advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
- foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

This includes assessing the impact of policies and practices on individuals and communities with a protected characteristic, as defined in the Act and some other specific groups. The County Council uses EQIAs to ensure it has paid 'due regard' to equalities considerations when there are changes to a service or policy, a new project or certain decisions.



## Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Kent County Council

### Section A

**EQIA Title**

Proposed New Primary School At Paddock Wood

**EQIA Author**

Paul Wilson – Area Schools Organisation Officer

**Approved by**

Nicholas Abrahams – Assistant Director for Education (West)

**Type of Activity****Service Change**

No

**Service Redesign**

No

**Project/Programme**

Project/Programme

**Commissioning/Procurement**

No

**Strategy/Policy**

No

**Details of other Service Activity**

No

**Accountability and Responsibility****Directorate**

Children Young People and Education

**Responsible Service**

Education Planning and Access

**Responsible Head of Service**

Nicholas Abrahams – Assistant Director for Education (West)

**Responsible Director**

David Adams - CY EDSSEN

**Aims and Objectives**

Kent County Council (KCC), as the Local Authority (LA), has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are available. The County Council's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2026-30 (KCP) is a five-year rolling plan which is updated annually. It sets out our future plans as Strategic Commissioner of Education Provision across all types and phases of education in Kent. A copy of the plan can be viewed from:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/education-provision/commissioning-plan-for-education-provision>

KCC, as the LA, has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are available. The County Council's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2026-30 (KCP) is a five-year rolling plan which is updated annually. It sets out our future plans as Strategic Commissioner of Education Provision across all types and phases of education in Kent. A copy of the plan can be viewed from this link: Commissioning Plan for Education Provision - Kent County Council

For provision planning purposes KCC's forecasting methodology produces forecasts according to planning groups. These planning groups are nationally recognised by central Government.

Paddock Wood has seen significant housebuilding in recent years, consequently the forecast for the Paddock Wood planning group shows deficits throughout the KCP Plan period. In the short term, the demand for places can be accommodated in the neighbouring planning groups or within one of the small schools within the planning group offering over PAN. However, from 2028-29 the demand is forecast to be 1 Form of Entry (FE) or greater and there are fewer places available in neighbouring planning groups.

To meet this demand for places within the Paddock Wood planning group KCC will seek to establish a new primary school within the town to open in September 2028. The new school will include classroom space to accommodate 1FE (30 places in each year group) and core facilities sufficient for 2 FE (60 places in each year) to support future expansion when needed. The new school will also include a 26 place nursery and a 14 place Specialist Resource Provision (SRP).

## Section B – Data and Engagement

### Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes

#### Data Breakdown

##### Population

2024

**9,370**

people

**58,607,170** people in England

Source: ONS – Mid-year estimates

Small area: Output area

##### Number of households

2021

**3,416**

households

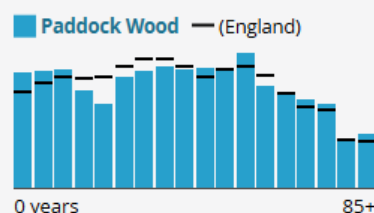
**23,436,085** households in England

Source: ONS – Census 2021

Small area: Output area

##### Age profile

2024



Source: ONS – Mid-year estimates

Small area: Output area

##### Sex

2024

**Paddock Wood** | (England)

Female **52.3%** (51.0%)

Male **47.7%** (49.0%)

% of all people

Source: ONS – Mid-year estimates

Small area: Output area

##### Passports held

2021

**Paddock Wood** | (England)

UK passport **83.7%** (76.6%)

Non-UK passport **3.3%** (10.2%)

No passport held **13.1%** (13.2%)

% of all people

Source: ONS - Census 2021

Small area: Output area

##### Household deprivation

2021

**Paddock Wood** | (England)

Household is not deprived in any dimension **50.8%** (48.4%)

Household is deprived in one dimension **33.5%** (33.5%)

Household is deprived in two dimensions **12.7%** (14.2%)

Household is deprived in three dimensions **2.9%** (3.7%)

Household is deprived in four dimensions **0.1%** (0.2%)

% of all households

Source: ONS - Census 2021

Small area: Output area

The table below shows a breakdown by percentage of the primary aged resident in the Tunbridge Wells wards with Paddock Wood highlighted for convenience. Compared with the other wards within Tunbridge Wells, Paddock Wood has relatively higher levels of persistent absence, suspensions/exclusions, children with EHCPs and those in receipt of free school meals:

| Ward                                 | Persistent absence (<90%) | Severe absence (<50%) | Suspension / exclusion | SEN support  | SEND EHCP   | Free school meals | 20% most deprived LSOA | Early help support | CSWS support | Child in need | Child protection | Child in care |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|
| Cranbrook, Sissinghurst & Frittenden | 13.7%                     |                       | 1.6%                   | 13.5%        | 2.2%        | 24.8%             |                        | 5.9%               | 5.5%         |               |                  |               |
| Culverden                            | 12.9%                     |                       | 0.5%                   | 9.8%         | 2.3%        | 9.8%              |                        | 2.1%               | 2.6%         |               |                  |               |
| Goudhurst, Lambhurst & Horsmonden    | 7.4%                      |                       |                        | 10.5%        | 2.2%        | 13.5%             |                        | 3.4%               | 2.2%         |               |                  |               |
| Hawkhurst, Sandhurst & Benenden      | 13.0%                     | +                     | 0.7%                   | 6.5%         | 3.4%        | 26.5%             |                        | 5.4%               | 5.4%         |               |                  |               |
| High Brooms                          | 10.8%                     | +                     | 0.6%                   | 9.3%         | 4.2%        | 25.2%             |                        | 4.5%               | 3.4%         |               |                  |               |
| <b>Paddock Wood</b>                  | <b>13.9%</b>              | <b>+</b>              | <b>1.4%</b>            | <b>10.1%</b> | <b>5.0%</b> | <b>24.6%</b>      |                        | <b>9.8%</b>        | <b>5.5%</b>  |               |                  |               |
| Pantiles                             | 10.8%                     | +                     | 2.2%                   | 12.4%        | 3.7%        | 23.3%             | 22.9%                  | 3.5%               | 6.1%         |               |                  |               |
| Park                                 | 7.0%                      | +                     | 0.3%                   | 6.3%         | 1.2%        | 8.9%              |                        | 3.7%               | 3.4%         |               |                  |               |
| Pembury & Capel                      | 8.5%                      |                       | 1.0%                   | 7.7%         | 2.3%        | 13.0%             |                        | 3.7%               | 2.3%         |               |                  |               |
| Rusthall & Speldhurst                | 10.6%                     | +                     | 0.7%                   | 12.9%        | 3.2%        | 16.2%             |                        | 4.0%               | 2.0%         |               |                  |               |
| Shenwood                             | 15.8%                     | 0.7%                  | 2.1%                   | 14.6%        | 4.5%        | 31.5%             | 21.4%                  | 8.3%               | 6.5%         |               |                  |               |
| Southborough & Bisborough            | 8.1%                      | +                     | 0.1%                   | 11.6%        | 2.4%        | 14.4%             |                        | 4.7%               | 3.5%         |               |                  |               |
| St James'                            | 9.1%                      | +                     | 0.7%                   | 12.2%        | 3.5%        | 15.0%             |                        | 4.4%               | 3.4%         |               |                  |               |
| St John's                            | 6.5%                      | +                     | 0.9%                   | 8.0%         | 4.6%        | 11.6%             |                        | 4.4%               | 1.3%         |               |                  |               |

\*Child in need, Child Protection and Child in Care date redacted is redacted as it relates to fewer than 5 children

School Census information for all mainstream primary and secondary students in Paddock Wood:

| Ward Name                  | Number on Roll January 2026 | Number of Statutory Age Pupils January 2026 | Number Eligible FSM** | % Eligible FSM** | Number Eligible FSM++ | % Eligible FSM++ |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Paddock Wood East          | 618                         | 560                                         | 131                   | 23.4             | 137                   | 22.2             |
| Paddock Wood West          | 1227                        | 1074                                        | 280                   | 26.1             | 301                   | 24.5             |
| <b>ALL Tunbridge Wells</b> | <b>19656</b>                | <b>16495</b>                                | <b>2737</b>           | <b>16.6</b>      | <b>3007</b>           | <b>15.3</b>      |

| Ward Name                  | EHC Plans  | % EHC Plans | Number with SEN Support | % SEN Support | Total SEN   | % Total SEN | Number Ethnic Minority | % Ethnic Minority | Number EAL  | % EAL       |
|----------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Paddock Wood East          | 11         | 1.8         | 41                      | 6.6           | 52          | 8.4         | 132                    | 21.4              | 64          | 10.4        |
| Paddock Wood West          | 20         | 1.6         | 201                     | 16.4          | 221         | 18.0        | 135                    | 11.0              | 51          | 4.2         |
| <b>ALL Tunbridge Wells</b> | <b>910</b> | <b>4.6</b>  | <b>1894</b>             | <b>9.6</b>    | <b>2804</b> | <b>14.3</b> | <b>5319</b>            | <b>27.1</b>       | <b>2826</b> | <b>14.4</b> |

### Have you consulted with stakeholders?

Yes

### Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

Before publishing the invitation notice, KCC undertook consultation on whether a new school should be established in Paddock Wood.

The consultation ran for six weeks from 11 March to 22 April 2026. The following stakeholders were consulted:

- Schools in Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and Malling and Maidstone Districts
- Elected Members (Kent County Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council)
- Parish and Town Councils
- Local MP
- Dioceses of Canterbury and Rochester and Archdiocese of Southwark
- Residents' groups
- Local community groups

All stakeholders were able to access copies of the key documents on the KCC website.

Additionally, the Assistant Director of Education held a discussion with representatives from the 13 most local schools, their MAT representatives where applicable and the Diocese of Rochester. This provided those attending with as much information and data as possible to inform their responses to the consultation.

## Section C – Impact

### Who may be impacted by the activity?

#### Service Users/clients

Service users/clients

#### Staff

No

#### Residents/Communities/Citizens

No

### Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?

Yes

#### Details of Positive Impacts

Establishing a new school at Paddock Wood will provide a total of 210 additional primary school places (with the capacity to offer a further 210 places if needed latterly) will help to ensure that children from Paddock Wood and the surrounding areas will be able to benefit from a local school. This will avoid the need to travel potentially excessive distances to access a school place.

The new building(s) will comply with the BB103 Department of Education building standards and will offer accessible facilities to accommodate students, staff and visitors with disabilities.

The school will be co-educational, for children aged between 4 and 11 years. It will also include a 26 place nursery and a 14 place Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) need types.

The SRP will provide places for children with SEND whose needs would otherwise not be able to be met within mainstream provision. The goal is to fully integrate children with SEND into education, enabling them to learn alongside their peers, participate in all aspects of school life, and receive the necessary support to succeed.

The design of the new school will fully consider the needs of children with SEND, creating an accessible environment with acoustics, lighting, temperature control and resource spaces appropriate to the needs of children with SEND.

### Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions

#### Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

#### Are there negative impacts for age?

No. The school will provide additional local places for children aged between 4 and 11 years.

#### Details of negative impacts for Age

None

#### Mitigating Actions for Age

N/A

#### Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age

N/A

#### Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability

#### Are there negative impacts for Disability?

No. The new building(s) will comply with the BB103 Department of Education building standards and will offer accessible facilities to accommodate students, staff and visitors with disabilities.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The school will include an SRP that will provide mainstream places for children with SEND and the design of the building will fully consider the needs of children with SEND, creating an accessible environment with acoustics, lighting, temperature control and resource spaces appropriate to the needs of children with SEND.                                                                                  |
| <b>Details of Negative Impacts for Disability</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| None                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Mitigating actions for Disability</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Responsible Officer for Disability</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Are there negative impacts for Sex</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| No The school will be co-educational.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Details of negative impacts for Sex</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| None                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Mitigating actions for Sex</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Responsible Officer for Sex</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| No. The Trust running the new school will be required to establish an inclusive culture that welcomes all pupils regardless of gender identity, race, religious beliefs and sexual orientation. It should provide safe and nurturing environment in keeping with DfE guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education and be compliant with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) that is found in the Equality Act.   |
| <b>Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Are there negative impacts for Race</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| No. The Trust running the new school will be required to establish an inclusive culture that welcomes all pupils regardless of gender identity, race, religious beliefs and sexual orientation. It should provide a safe and nurturing environment in keeping with DfE guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education and be compliant with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) that is found in the Equality Act. |
| <b>Negative impacts for Race</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| None                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Mitigating actions for Race</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| No. It will be a non-faith school but will provide that will provide religious education as part of its wider curriculum offer.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The Trust running the new school will be required to establish an inclusive culture that welcomes all pupils regardless of gender identity, race, religious beliefs and sexual orientation. It should provide a safe and nurturing environment in keeping with DfE guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education and be compliant with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) that is found in the Equality Act. |
| <b>Negative impacts for Religion and belief</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| None                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Mitigating actions for Religion and belief</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| The Trust running the new school will be required to establish an inclusive culture that welcomes all pupils regardless of gender identity, race, religious beliefs and sexual orientation. It should provide a safe and nurturing environment in keeping with DfE guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education and be compliant with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) that is found in the Equality Act. |
| <b>Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| None                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| None                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| None                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| None                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

