

WORCESTERSHIRE
CHILDREN FIRST

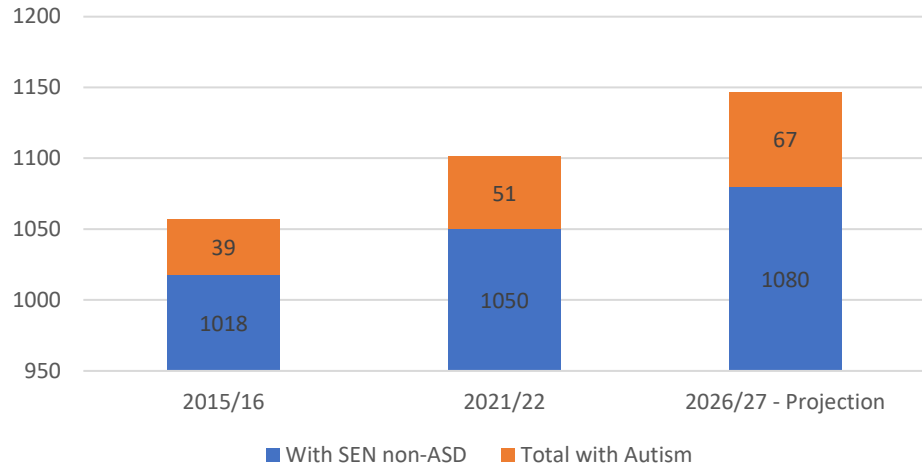


New Special Free School for pupils with Autism in Malvern Academy Sponsor Engagement

- **Current and projected need**
- **Existing provision**
- **The rationale for a new school**
- **Future provision - the new school**
 - **Location**
 - **Funding**
 - **Context and vision**
- **Indicative timescales and next steps**
- **Create: Schools support offer**
- **Q & A**

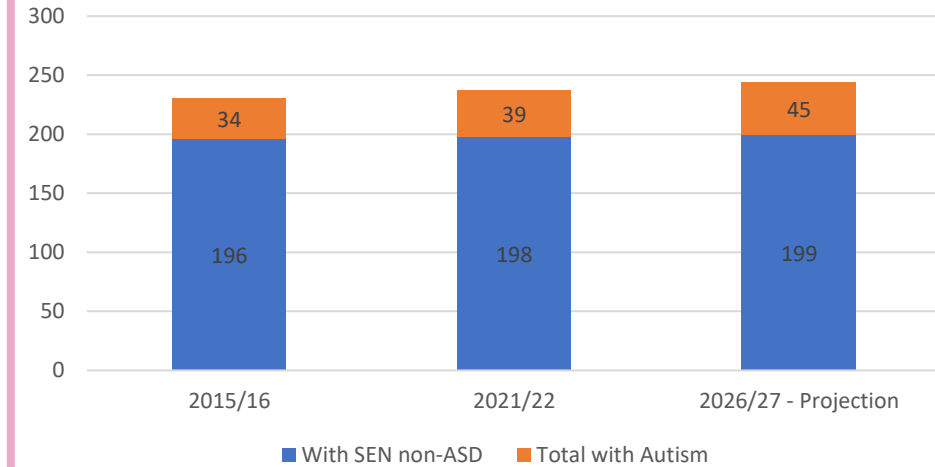
Children and young people with Autism in Worcestershire

Pre-School age children



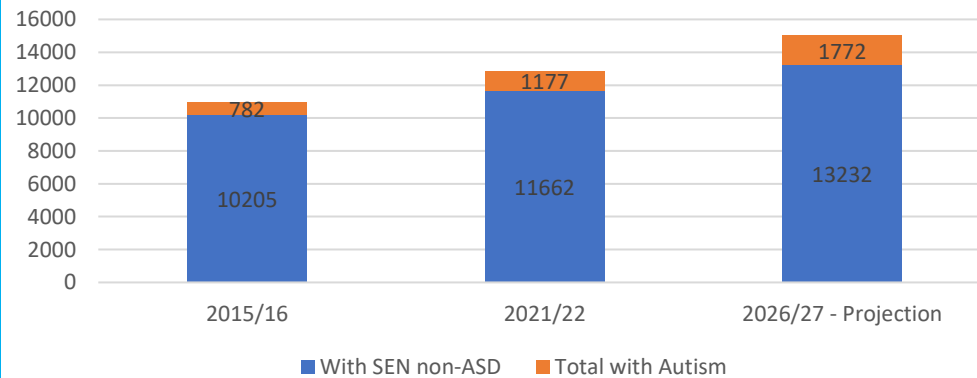
In 2015/16 7% of the total 5 - 16 year olds with SEN had a primary need of Autism
 In 2021/22 this increased to 9%
 By 2026/27 this is projected to be at least 12%

Young people 17 years +



In 2015/16 4% of the total pre-school age children with SEN had a primary need of Autism
 In 2021/22 this increased to 5%
 By 2026/27 this is projected to be at least 6%

Children age 5 - 16 years



In 2015/16 15% of the total 17+ year olds with SEN had a primary need of Autism
 In 2021/22 this increased to 16%
 By 2026/27 this is projected to be at least 18%

Current local offer – existing provision

- Worcestershire has no specific special school that caters for the needs of pupils with Autism.
- Our current state-funded provision includes 9 special schools and 14 mainstream schools with resource bases designated as mainstream autism bases (MABs).
- The new Special Free school for pupils with Autism would fill a gap in provision. All special schools within Worcestershire have a cohort of pupils with Autism and associated difficulties, however they also have limited capacity to provide support for the increased number of children with Autism and moderate learning difficulties.
- In January 2022, there were 472 children and young people in our special schools with a diagnosis of Autism.
- In addition, there were 83 Worcestershire resident children and young people with EHCPs and a primary need of Autism who currently receive their education at high cost independent or non-maintained special schools in or out of county.
- There were a further 149 pupils placed in Mainstream Autism Bases. There is very little capacity within our current specialist provisions to provide the additional places required to meet the needs of pupils with Autism and moderate learning difficulties.

Worcestershire's rationale for the new school - 1

- The school will support the local authority in meeting its **statutory responsibilities** with regard to the provision of special school places across Worcestershire.
- In Worcestershire we want all children and young people with special educational needs and / or disabilities to be truly seen and respected as individuals and to be the best they can be. The new school will positively impact on children and young people up to the age of 19 years with an EHCP with Autism, by providing **choice of provision within the local area**.
- The new **National Autism Strategy 2021-2026**, published in July 2022 incorporates both children and adults into the National Strategy ambitions. The following priorities are of relevance to this application:
 - Improving autistic children and young people's access into education and support positive transitions into adulthood.
 - Building the right support in the community.
- Worcestershire's **Local Area Partnership SEND Strategy (2023 – 26)** priorities include:
 - There is sufficient and effective SEND provision; and
 - Children and Young People with autism achieve positive outcomes & the support required to enable this to be in place.

Worcestershire's rationale for the new school - 2

- Worcestershire is part of the **Delivering Better Value in SEND** which will support the transformation on how services are delivered. The focus being on improving outcomes for children, and young people, ensuring value for money, and a sustainable clear trajectory showing how a more sustainable financial position can be achieved. This school will support the planned transformation within Worcestershire.
- The **Worcestershire All-Age Autism Strategy** will align with national and local priorities. The **Worcestershire multi-agency Autism Partnership Board** provides critical oversight and challenge to our Autism work and reports jointly to the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Integrated Care System Learning Disability and Autism Programme Board.
 - The Director of All Age Disability in Worcestershire is leading on the priority 'improving autistic children and young people's access into education and support positive transitions into adulthood'.
- The **Worcestershire Education and Skills Strategy**: Ensuring a good education for every child in Worcestershire refers to ensuring that there is 'a curriculum and approach which inspires and helps children and young people develop the skills, knowledge and attributes to become successful citizens'.

Additional provision

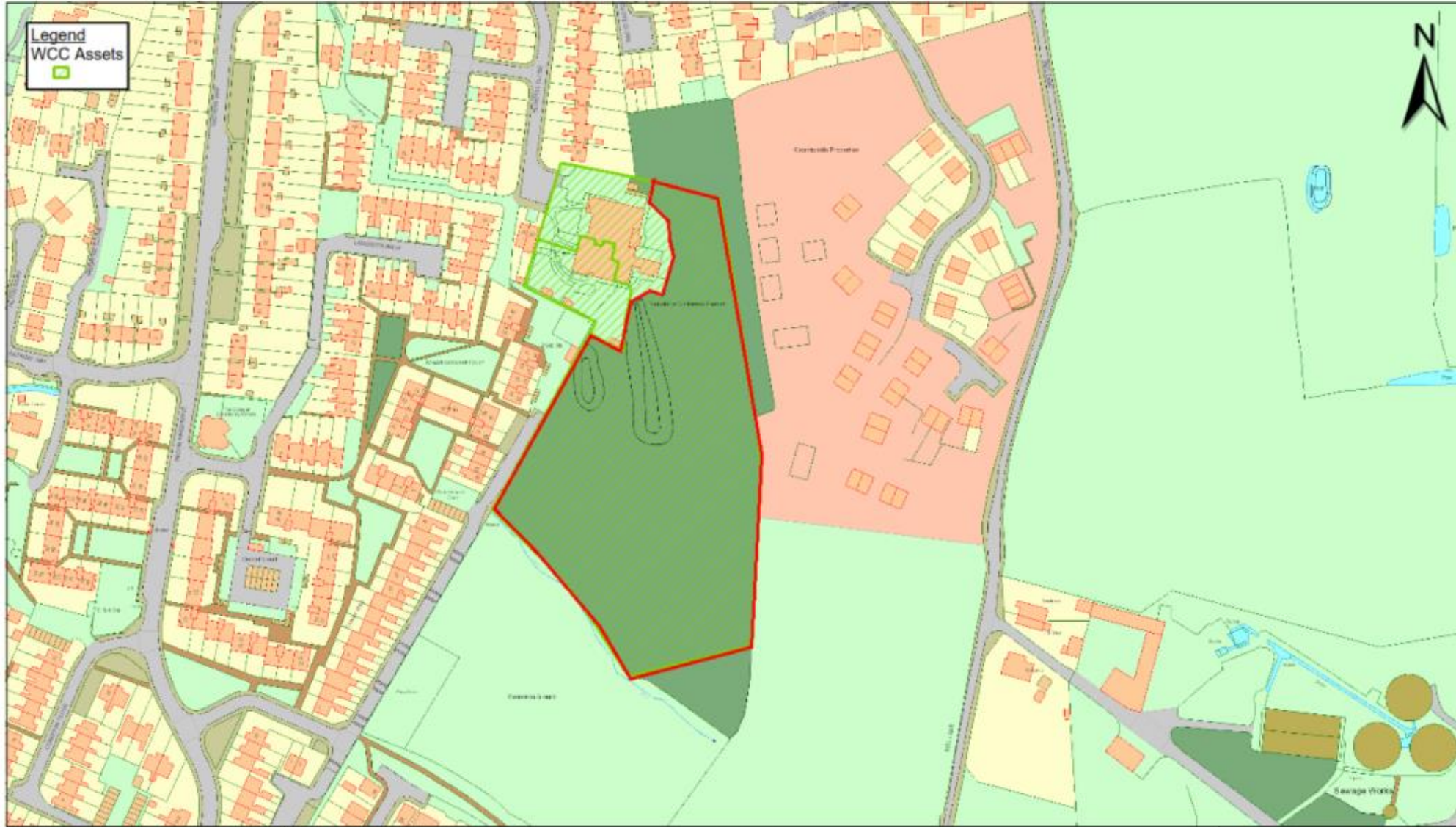
- We know, and there is evidence, that a growing number of children and young people are being diagnosed with autism. We also experience that a growing number of children and young people find school environments overwhelming. Worcestershire continues to take steps to ensure and adapt inclusivity in our mainstream schools but also recognises the importance of the right school provision being available and for some this will require a provision specifically for children with autism.
- Places will be filled from the population that include children who would currently be placed in out-of-county specialist schools, which would enable the Local Authority to reduce the use of out-of-county placements over time, our special schools and Mainstream Autism Bases (MABs). This will relieve current pressures on special schools as places will become available for children with other complex needs. It will also relieve pressures on schools with MABs as the more complex students with Autism and moderate learning difficulties can be accommodated in special schools.

The new Special Free School will provide an education for children and young people that:

- may experience high anxiety and / or demand avoidance as a result of Autistic presentation;
- are unable to access mainstream education provision with support;
- have the cognitive ability to access a mainstream curriculum;
- need smaller class sizes (e.g. 6 - 8 group sizes); and
- need a whole school and staff dedicated to a holistic Autistic approach.

About the new school

- The new Free School will be located in Malvern, on the site of the current Poolbrook Centre (a former school building owned by Worcestershire County Council)
- It will be a Special Free all-through school and will create 120 places for 5 – 19-year-olds (Reception to Year 14) with Autism.
- The school will offer full-time placements:
 - 6 places per year group for Reception – Key Stage 2 (year groups R to 6, ages 5 to 11)
 - 12 places per year group for Key Stage 3 – Key Stage 4 (year groups 7 to 11, ages 11 to 16)
 - 18 places for Post 16 (year groups 12 to 14, ages 16 to 19)
- The site has space to expand the school to c. 162 places if additional provision is required
- The plan is to open in a phased approach to fill places over a period of 5 years



Site of former primary school

- Green hatched = currently occupied site
- Red outline = former playing field

Phased approach to opening

- The plan is to open in a phased approach to fill places over a period of 5 years

	Year of opening	+1	+2	+3	+4
Reception	6	6	6	6	6
Key stage 1 (Y1-2)	12	12	12	12	12
Key stage 2 (Y3-6)	24	24	24	24	24
Key stage 3 (Y7-9)	24	30	36	36	36
Key stage 4 (Y10-11)	12	12	12	18	24
16-19: commissioner referred	18	18	18	18	18
Totals	96	102	108	114	120

Opportunities for engagement/co-production - Stakeholder involvement in the Academy MB

Sponsor selection process and development to opening of the new school

- How the views of parent carers and young people will be heard and reflected in the evaluation process and development of the new school
 - Our SEND strategy is committed to a person-centred approach, including co-production in the design of services that impact on children and families
- Role of Worcestershire Children First
 - Will feed in any intelligence on applications being assessed in their areas and views on applications being put forward for interviews
 - Representative will sit on the panel for all Trust interviews
 - Will facilitate the stakeholder engagement of education settings and other partners with the new Trust to ensure that local partnerships are formed as the school prepares for opening

About Create: Schools



- Wholly-owned division of PAG
- Established in April 2022
- DfE sole supplier of advice to Free School Proposers
- Access to a range of partners with expertise in key areas such as project management, capital, finance and legal

Application Process



Pre-registration window 9th May – 16th June 2023

Application forms will be sent to you once you have completed the pre-registration.

1

Application window opens 9th May 2023

You must have registered your interest to be sent the application form.

2

Application window closes

31st August 2023

Submit your completed application via email to fs.applications@education.gov.uk by 12pm.

3

4

Autumn 2023

Applications will be assessed and interviews will begin

5

January 2024

Successful applicants will be announced, and the school will enter its preopening phase.



In-depth bid review and feedback at all stages of the application process

Webinars and masterclasses

Access to expert partners

Support we offer

Expert advice & guidance for DfE interviews

Mock interviews and preparation for pre-opening

Resources to support you in all aspects of planning your school and completing your application

Sections A and B



Section A – Tell us who you are

All applicant groups must complete this section in full. There are no assessment criteria for this section. In this section, you must provide basic information about your applicant group and your academy trust.

Section B – Outline of the school

When defining details about the school in this section, you should refer to the specification of the local authority you are applying to, available online at [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). It is important to be aware that the DfE will not accept applications which are a 'hybrid' of AP and special, all students attending the new school will be children or young people with an EHCP

Special free schools may have a religious ethos; however, they **cannot** be designated as having a religious character.

The responsibility for identifying a site lies with the local authority, however if you have a suitable site, you should outline this in section B.

Section C: Vision



Applicants must demonstrate a compelling vision for the school that will attract parents and pupils, raise standards and support pupils to prepare for adulthood, independent living and employment. Your vision should be evidence-based and consistent with the rest of your application, such as the curriculum approach.

This should include:

- How your vision for the school will meet the key features of the specification
- How the school will contribute to the delivery of the local authority's SEND strategy
- How your proposed school will collaborate with other SEND provision
- Your trust growth strategy

Section D: Education Plan



Applications must set out the plan to deliver your educational vision. We are looking for an ambitious and deliverable education plan that is consistent with your vision and pupil intake. It must be affordable, sustainable and consistent with financial planning.

Section D will consist of 4 parts:

- D1 – Curriculum plan
- D2 – Measuring pupil performance and setting challenging expectations
- D3 – Staffing
- D4 – Integration and community cohesion

Section E: Capacity and Capability



Applications must demonstrate the capacity and capability to deliver a financially viable school that provides a high-quality and inclusive education.

Part E1: This section is to be completed by those who currently run schools. All groups who currently run or lead schools will need to have a strong educational track record to be approved to open a free school.

Part E2: Applicants must display they have necessary experience and credentials to deliver the school. This includes providing information on the pre-opening group, a skills gap analysis and timelines for recruiting a headteacher designate.

Part E3: Applicants should demonstrate an effective governance structure here.

Section F: Financial Viability



You must demonstrate that your school will be financially viable and sustainable. You must have robust and credible plans to attract good pupil numbers that take account of our minimum expected sizes for new free schools.

Your trust should implement effective resource planning to ensure every pound is used efficiently to improve children's education standards and have maximum impact on the pupils and the school.

The Pre-Opening Process



In this phase, the academy trust will need to develop detailed plans and turn them into a school ready for opening. The pre-opening process includes:

- Trusts will regularly engage with the department
- Agree on your provisional opening date for the school.
- A project development grant to cover essential non-capital costs up to the point at which the school opens
- For some projects, progressing to the pre-opening phase is subject to precise and stringent conditions, which are set out in the approval letter
- Where a project fails to make sufficient progress in pre-opening, the opening of the school may be delayed or even cancelled

Next Steps



- Submit your application by midday on 31st August 2023 via email to fs.applications@education.gov.uk
- Access support through Create: Schools by emailing hello@createschools.co.uk

**Thank you and any
questions?**

spp@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk