

# Foxlydiate First School

## Consultation Document

8 January 2024



Have your say:

Provide feedback on this consultation by **11:30pm on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2024.**

Visit <https://online1.snapsurveys.com/NFS> for Redditch Specification Survey 2024.

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# Current Context

The Foxlydiate area straddles the boundary between Bromsgrove and Redditch District Councils in the north of Worcestershire, within a locality that has attracted several housing developments in recent years. Housing growth generates an increase in population, including additional children and young people, and the provision of childcare, school and further education places at local facilities needs to increase accordingly.

A major housing development on land to the west of Foxlydiate Lane and Pumphouse Lane is expected to deliver c. 2,560 new houses by 2037. Typically, a new first or primary school may be required where a housing development contributes 300 or more dwellings or in areas where no potential school expansions can be identified. The scale of this development, alongside other developments in the area, means that there is forecast to be an increase in pupil numbers which existing local first and primary schools cannot accommodate.

The developer of Foxlydiate is providing a site within the development, which will enable these pupils to access a first school within their local community, and they are contributing the majority of the construction cost.



Figure 1 Map demonstrating the location of the proposed First School

# Why we need a new school

Ensuring a sufficiency of school places is one of the key statutory duties of the Local Authority. The new major housing development off Foxlydiate Lane, Redditch is planned to deliver c. 2,560 new houses by 2037. This is forecast to increase demand for first school places by an additional 30 places per year group by 2027, 51 places per year group by 2029, and over 100 pupils per year group by the time the development is completed and fully occupied.<sup>1</sup> Other developments in the area (e.g., Brockhill) will also generate additional pupils and will increase the pressure on school places. The combined demand from Brockhill and Foxlydiate developments equates to an additional 62 first school places per year group by 2028 and 91 first school places per year group by 2030. Therefore, a new first school is required to ensure Worcestershire County Council meets its statutory duty.

Evidence from previous large housing developments shows that fewer secondary age children move into new housing developments. The lower numbers of older pupils do not justify the addition of another middle or high school in Redditch currently, and they can be accommodated in existing schools. We are monitoring numbers closely to plan if, where and when additional middle and high school places need to be created.

The provision of a new first school to meet this need was approved by Cabinet on 23 November 2023<sup>2</sup> and we plan to open the school to admit its first intake of nursery and Reception Year pupils only in September 2027.

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<sup>1</sup> Demand has been calculated using the Educations Planning Obligations Policy: <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/planning/school-planning-obligations>

<sup>2</sup>[The New Foxlydiate First School Cabinet Report \(Agenda item 6\)](#) PDF 150 KB

## The proposals

In a survey undertaken from 4<sup>th</sup> July until 4<sup>th</sup> August 2023, all stakeholders and interested parties were asked to provide their thoughts on some of the key elements required in a successful new first school. The key findings and results of that survey and how they relate to this proposal can be found in appendix 4 of the November Cabinet Report.<sup>3</sup>

This initial engagement has been highly influential for Worcestershire Children First and Worcestershire County Council in the creation of a specification for the new first school for Redditch. The key aspects of the specification and proposals for the new school are outlined below.

As per Government Guidelines, the new first school must be opened as a free (Academy) school and its delivery will be undertaken through the free school presumption route. The presumption process is the main route by which local authorities establish new schools to meet the need for additional school places. Local authorities are responsible for determining the specification for the new school and will deliver the site and buildings and work with the approved Academy Sponsor to establish the school.

Any new school must be operated by an Academy Trust<sup>4</sup>, to be determined via the free school presumption process. To select the new school's Academy Sponsor, Academies will be invited to submit an application to the Local Authority and a competition will be run to review applicants in relation to specific requirements as set out in the Academy Sponsor specification.

This consultation is being carried out to gain stakeholders' feedback on the proposals for the new school and draft specification, to ensure that their views are represented, and that selection of the appropriate Academy Sponsor and delivery of the school is in line with stakeholder expectations.

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- <sup>3</sup> [6 Appendix 4 Engagement Results v2 , item 2187](#)  PDF 2 MB

<sup>4</sup> An Academy Trust is a set of schools operated under a not-for-profit company responsible for the performance and running of schools.

## Pupil age range

The new school is proposed to be First school with an age range of ages 2-9 years (i.e., nursery to Year 4). The major housing developments will also yield additional middle and high school pupils, and if additional school places are required to mitigate this increase, these will be created by expanding existing local schools.

## Size of the school

The school will be built to provide 90 places per year group (three forms of entry) plus a 52-place nursery, which will ensure sufficient places in the locality and an element of surplus.

The school will open initially with nursery and Reception only, admitting up to 90 pupils, and then grow year on year as pupils move through the school, allowing the number on roll to grow organically each year until capacity is reached in 2031, with 450 pupils plus 52-place nursery.

## Values

Feedback from parents, residents and stakeholders identified several important values that the school should represent. These have been summarised below and are proposed to be the criteria for appointing the Academy Sponsor for the school. It is proposed that an Academy Sponsor must exemplify these values to be considered for the new school.

### ***A focus on the wellbeing and mental health of pupils and staff***

The engagement with stakeholders in the summer revealed that 'ensuring pupils feel their mental health and wellbeing is well supported' is critical in the delivery of a good school for Redditch. Academy Sponsor candidates will be required to show their approach to wellbeing and mental health as part of their application including how they collaborate with community and NHS partners. It is also proposed that small teaching spaces and quiet zones are integrated within the school where possible and that clear and established processes are in place to provide early help and social care for pupils and staff in need.

The school will also be required to offer ongoing development opportunities for all staff and ensure the wellbeing and mental health of staff, as well as pupils, is a key priority. The integration of green spaces within and around a school will help to improve the health and wellbeing of staff and students.

### ***An environment where pupils feel safe***

One of the most important aspects of a new school according to respondents, is that the school creates an environment where pupils feel safe. The Academy Sponsor specification has a focus on keeping children safe, and a strong behaviour policy and requires applicants to provide evidence of such. The school will be built with safeguarding best practice.

Consideration will be given to the design of the whole Foxlydiate site by the developers to ensure the creation of a high-quality space that enables safe trips to be made to key facilities via all modes of transport. The provision of safe walking routes for children and parent carers between home and the new school is a key requirement.

### ***An ethos and practice of inclusivity***

The importance of inclusive practice was highlighted in engagement findings. The following principles are put in place to ensure a high level of inclusivity and ensure all pupils can fully access school life:

- The chosen Sponsor must have a strong ethos and evidenced practice ensuring inclusivity of all pupils, ensure all pupils are able to access the curriculum and quality first teaching (QFT) and high-quality teaching, in particular making appropriate adjustments for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), vulnerable learners and Looked after Children.
- The chosen Academy Sponsor will be expected to build an ongoing, holistic understanding of their pupils and their needs, and facilities will reflect an ethos of inclusivity.
- The school will have a strong IT and Digital Policy that seeks to utilise technology to support inclusivity and accessibility for all pupils, including children with SEND.

- The management of other facilities such as bathrooms and staff facilities must link to the inclusivity policy of the school, regarding gender and self-identity.
- The school must work closely with the Local Authority and other organisations to ensure all pupils receive the correct support to ensure full access to the curriculum and school life.
- The school should commit to staff continuing professional development (CPD) and training to upskill senior leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and other school staff in understanding the requirements to meet the individual needs of pupils.

### ***A broad and balanced curriculum***

Selection of an academy sponsor will prioritise those that show how their educational offer/ curriculum ensures excellent outcomes and high quality of teaching and learning to ensure all pupils can succeed. Applicants will be required to provide evidence and details of their approach to meeting the needs of all children and ensure accessibility for all pupils to the curriculum and school life, including Looked After Children, Young Carers, and those with Special Educational Needs.

### ***Strong behaviour policy***

Respondents felt that the most important key outcome of the school is that 'pupils feel safe at school'. The Academy Sponsor specification has a focus on a strong behaviour policy and requires applicants to provide evidence of such. The school will be built with safeguarding and relationship best practice.

### **Strong leadership from Head and senior staff**

Ensuring the school has strong leadership from the Head Teacher and Senior Staff is crucial to ensuring other values of the school are upheld. As part of the Academy Sponsor application, applicants will be required to provide evidence of strong leadership. The specification will also outline a requirement for the school to have a dedicated head of school and offer ongoing development opportunities for all staff.



## Build principles

A minimum build specification will be created in line with the Worcestershire County Council aims towards sustainability and Net Zero Carbon by 2050.<sup>5</sup> In line with engagement findings, local materials and construction companies will be prioritised where possible throughout the procurement process.

# The possible impact of the proposal

## Delivery of additional school places

A new first school in Foxlydiate would provide more school places for nursery to year 4 pupils in the Redditch education planning area and will support the longer-term growth of new housing within the area. As a result, these children will have a reasonable opportunity to acquire a place at their preferred school, children moving into the area during the school year will be able to join a local school, and children will be more easily able to move first schools if needed. In providing a more appropriate surplus (excess) of places in the area, other first schools may experience less pupils per year group into reception, dependent on parental preference.

## Travel

One of the key outcomes of this proposal is for families in the new housing development to have a first school within their local community, resulting in reduced car use and enabling more pupils to travel to school by active travel methods, i.e., walking and cycling. A Traffic Impact Assessment will be carried out as part of the planning process for the school build and the appointed Academy Sponsor will be required to develop a School Travel Plan encouraging safe travel to school which promotes walking and cycling. The provision of safe walking routes for children and parent carers between home and the new school is a key requirement.

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<sup>5</sup> [Worcestershire County Council Net Zero Carbon Plan](#)

## Specification

The school specification will be released alongside the application form for the Academy Sponsor competition and will be used as assessment criteria when selecting an appropriate Sponsor. Ensuring that the specification outlines the important criteria for an Academy Sponsor is imperative to selecting the correct Sponsor.

## Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The provision of a new school allows us to design the provision in line with current best practice to enable accessibility. During engagement with parents and the community, ensuring that the school is responsive to children with SEND and has ingrained values of inclusivity was highlighted as being of key importance. The appointed Academy Sponsor will have a strong ethos and evidence of effective practice to ensure inclusivity of all pupils and staff, and ensure all pupils are able to access the curriculum, quality first teaching (QFT) and high-quality teaching, which must include making appropriate reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND.

# Have Your Say

We would like to gain feedback on the proposals for the new school and the draft specification, particularly regarding what stakeholders would expect from a new school and what they feel is important for the chosen Academy Sponsor to be able to demonstrate. The draft specification outlines requirements in relation to admission arrangements, transport, facilities, accessibility and inclusivity, health and wellbeing, and approach to education. Please consider any characteristics you would expect to see from an Academy Sponsor of a new first school when providing your comments.

Please note you will have opportunity to have your say about the design of the school during the planning application process. The Academy Sponsor will also go through a pre-opening consultation to consult on admissions arrangements and the specifics of school opening.

We welcome your comments on this proposal via our online survey: [https://online1.snapsurveys.com/NFS for Redditch Specification Survey 2024](https://online1.snapsurveys.com/NFS_for_Redditch_Specification_Survey_2024).

The closing date for this survey is 11.30pm on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

More information about this consultation can be found on the [New First School for Redditch | Worcestershire County Council](#). If you require an alternative format of this document, the survey or translation into community languages, please contact [NewFoxlydiateFirstSchool@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:NewFoxlydiateFirstSchool@worcestershire.gov.uk).

## What happens next

Based on feedback received during this consultation, the school specification will be amended and finalised before being released as part of the Academy Sponsor competition, which will begin in March 2024. The feedback received will help to ensure the chosen Sponsor meets stakeholder expectations regarding the new school, as selection of the Sponsor will be in accordance with the requirements outlined in the school specification.

Your responses will also support us to progress planning and design for this site, with further opportunities to comment during the planning process.

## Contact details for this consultation

Please direct any enquiries to our dedicated mailbox via

[NewFoxlydiateFirstSchool@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:NewFoxlydiateFirstSchool@worcestershire.gov.uk)