

Foxlydiate First School

Engagement 2024

Key results and findings

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Introduction

In February 2024 Worcestershire Children First (WCF) and Worcestershire County Council (WCC) published an engagement survey to obtain the views of parents, residents, and young people of Redditch and Bromsgrove districts and surrounding areas. The aim was to gauge opinion regarding the school specification of a new first school in the Foxlydiate area.

The school specification outlines the important criteria for an Academy Trust which is imperative in selecting the correct Trust. The school specification will be used as the basis for assessment criteria when selecting an appropriate Trust. The specification outlines requirements in relation to admission arrangements, transport, facilities, accessibility and inclusivity, health and wellbeing, and approach to education.

This engagement exercise was designed so that stakeholders' views could be considered as to what they felt was important for the chosen Academy Trust to be able to demonstrate.

Thank You

We want to thank all 175 respondents who took the time to respond to the survey, whose contribution is invaluable. We want everyone to know that colleagues across WCF and WCC involved in this project are using the results to guide the creation of the proposal for a new school and inform decisions about the appropriate Academy Trust.



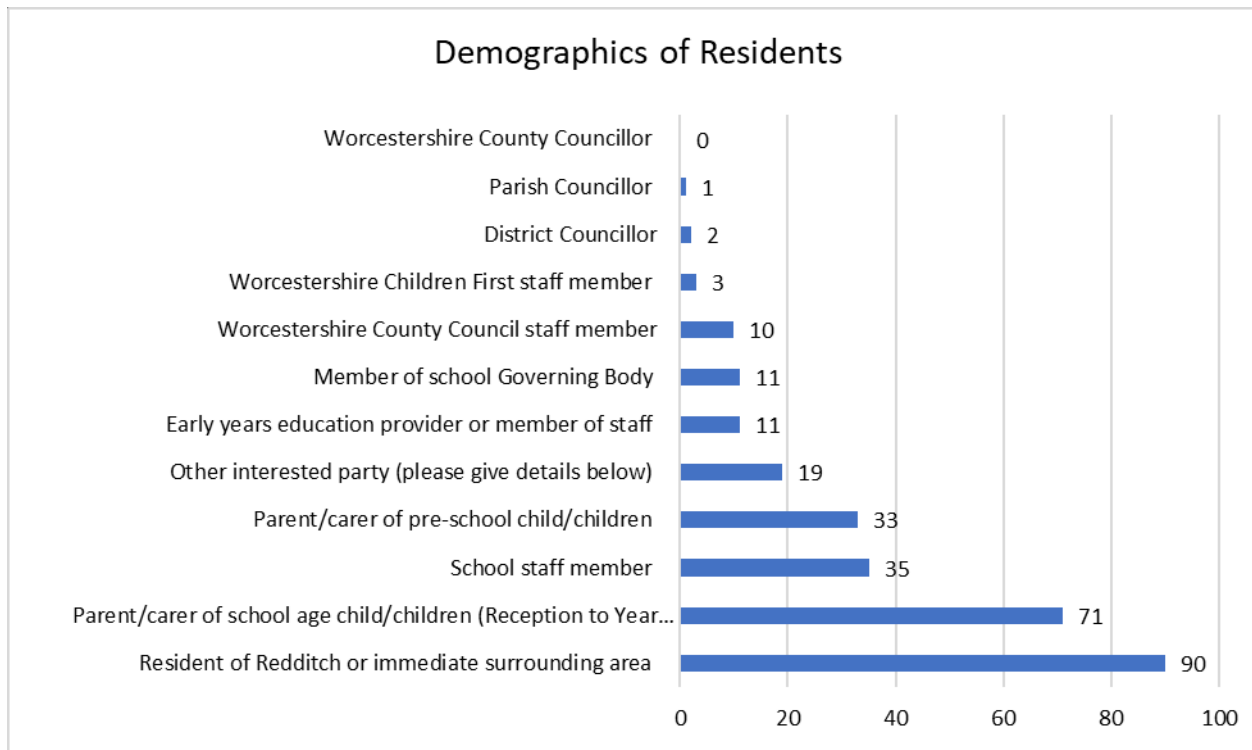
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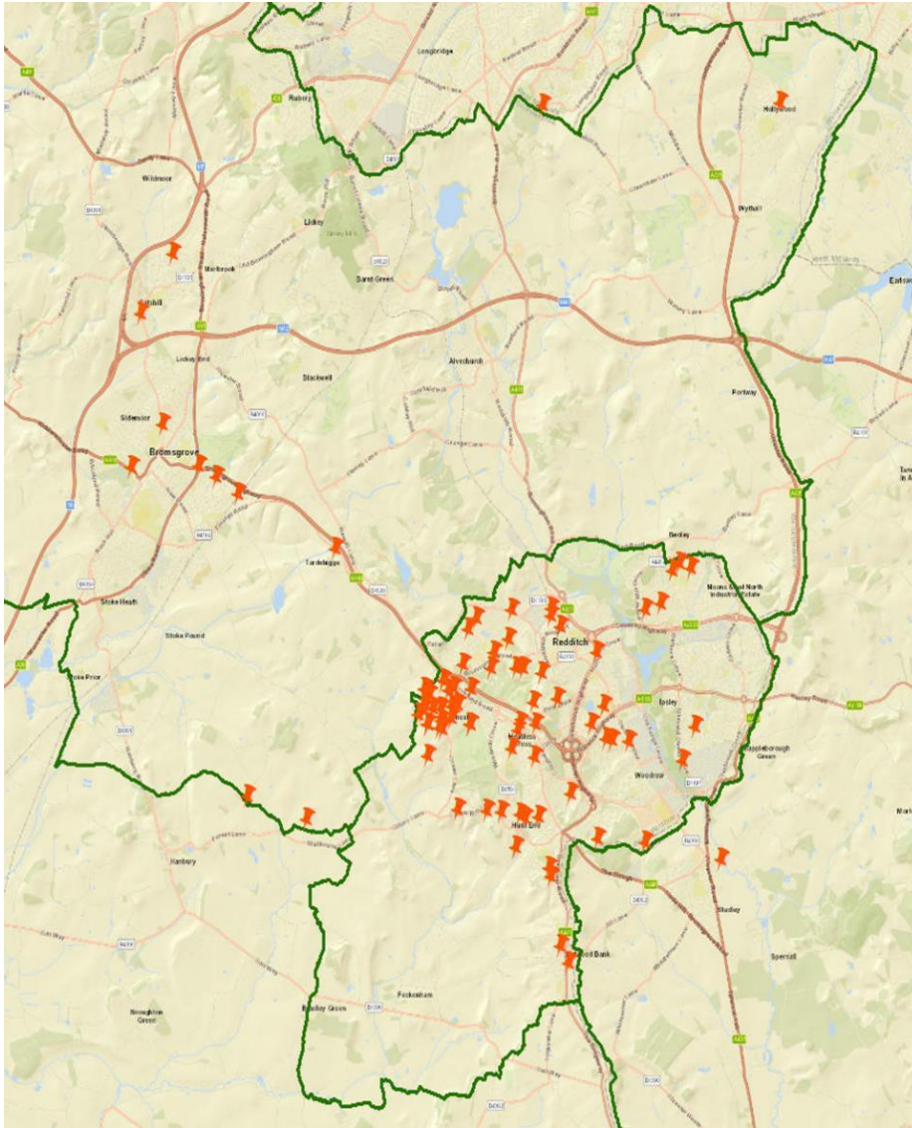
Overview

Demographics

The survey was shared across social media; emailed to local schools; organisations and representative bodies; and published on the Worcestershire County Council website. In total 175 responses were received; 42% of respondents were parent carers, 35% were current school or early years staff members or members of Governing Bodies. 53% Of respondents were a resident of Redditch or the immediate surrounding area.

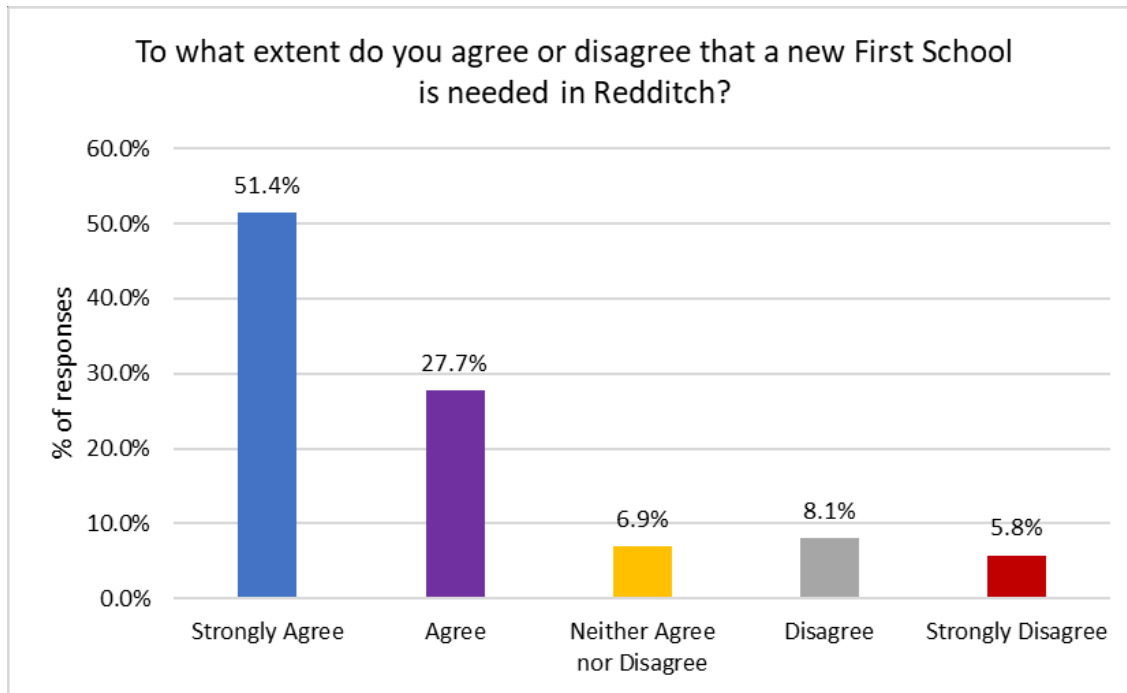


Of the 93 usable postcodes provided, 86% were in Redditch, 12% in Bromsgrove and 2% non-Worcestershire residents. The non-Worcestershire postcodes were from Birmingham and Stratford on Avon districts. The following map shows the locations of respondent postcodes that were provided:



Support for a New School

Most respondents agreed that a new first school is needed for the Foxlydiate area. 79% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed, just 14% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, 7% neither agreed nor disagreed. This is a slight increase from the June 2023 engagement, whereby 75% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the need or a new first school.



Age Range

67% of respondents agreed with the proposed age range of 2 to 9 years, while 25% disagreed and 8% were unsure. Of those that disagreed with the proposed age range, the main reason provided was the age range should instead be up to 11 years old as a Primary School. Other reasons for disagreeing with the proposed age range included the need for additional SEND/Specialist provision places and the confusion between 2 and 3 tier system in Redditch.

The school would also include a 52-place nursery provision for 2-4-year-olds and wrap around care provision. 85% of respondents agreed that nursery and wrap-around provision is necessary, 6% disagreed and 9% were unsure. The overwhelming feedback on wrap-around care is that it is essential, particularly to accommodate parents' working hours.

School Capacity

The school will cater for local demand and have a published admission of 90 places per year with an eventual capacity of 450. The school is planned to open in the first year with Reception and nursery cohort only and fill up year on year within each new intake at Reception to reach capacity in 2031L.

64% agreed with this proposal, 26% disagreed and 10% were unsure. 90 comments were left in response to this question, of those who disagreed, the main concerns highlighted were focused on a 3-form entry being too large, a lack of provision for children older than Nursery or Reception, other Redditch schools not being currently full or the desire for the school to open fully to all year groups at once. Similarly, concerns were raised about how the school capacity could increase traffic in the area or put pressure on existing schools while the new school comes up to full capacity.

Core Values

We asked respondents to review the core values proposed for the new school: Accessibility and Inclusivity, Health and Wellbeing. These values are what the Academy Trust should be demonstrating within their approach to education.

Accessibility and Inclusivity core values

These include:

- to use carefully selected and evidence based small group and one-to-one targeted intervention when needed.
- to deploy teaching assistants and support staff where needed
- actively engaging with the All-Age Disability Service in Worcestershire Children First (WCF) and other professionals to support all areas of SEND and Inclusion
- engaging with the Virtual School to meet the needs of Looked After Children

88% of respondents agreed with the proposed Accessibility and Inclusivity core values, while 4% disagreed and 8% were unsure.

“Increased support for SEND in mainstream schools is vital: for the students, for families and to relieve pressure on specialist provision.”

“It is important for schools to be inclusive and accessible to all children who are able to attend mainstream schools.”

“Make the school accessible for children with mobility needs. Outdoor space and facilities need to reflect needs to the children.”

Health and Wellbeing core values

These include:

- An ethos of pupil and staff wellbeing throughout policy and practice, with evidence of engagement and commitment to National and Local schemes, initiatives and opportunities to promote wellbeing and prevent mental ill health.
- A designated pastoral and mental health lead.
- A clear Policy which documents the approach to ensuring and improving pupil and staff health and wellbeing.
- Safe spaces and quiet areas accessible to pupils for counselling sessions or to support with emotional regulation or sensory needs.

“These policies are essential. I think wellbeing outcomes are more important than a focus on achieving the best possible academic outcomes. Values should include friendship, kindness, mindfulness and self-enquiry, creativity and equanimity.”

“Well-being and mental health of our children is essential. This should be a top priority in the values, and the impact of technology and social media on children should be considered within this.”

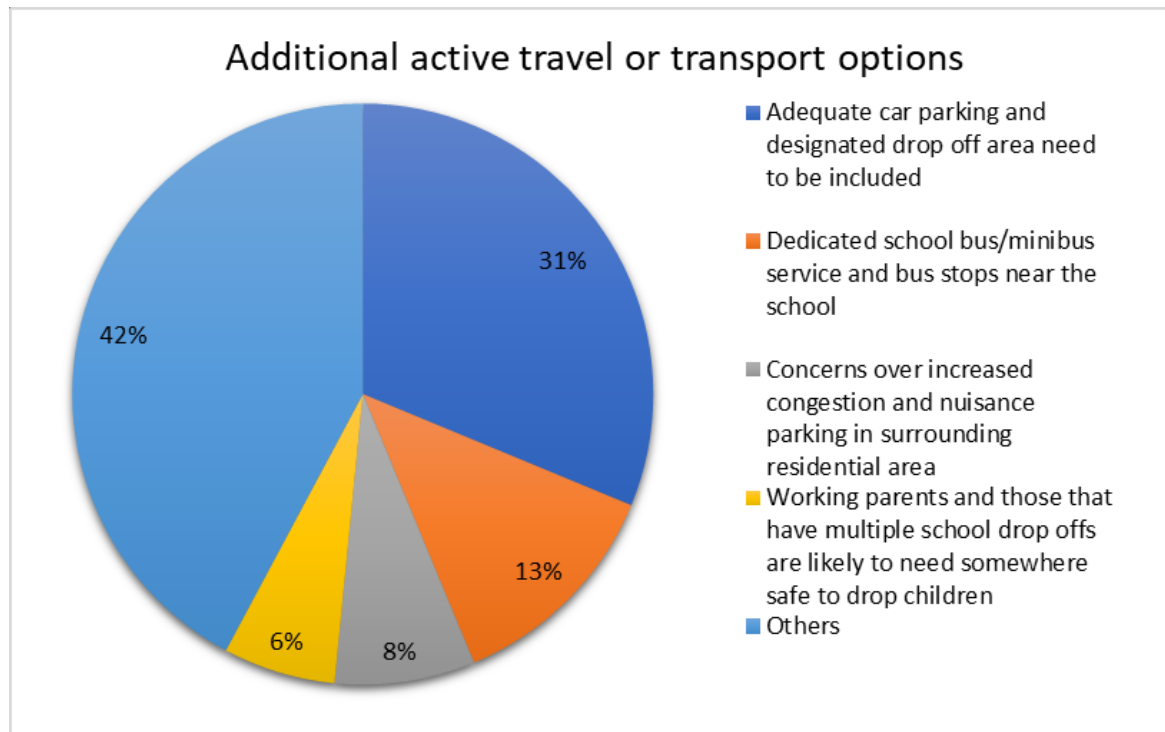
“Outdoor wellbeing areas would be good to consider.”

93% of respondents agreed with the proposed Health and Wellbeing core values, while 3% disagreed and 4% were unsure.

Travel Arrangements

81% of respondents agreed with the proposed transport arrangements for the new school. Considering a safe drive-through adequately managed drop-off area for parents was extremely important for respondents. A significant number of respondents raised concerns over traffic congestion and nuisance parking on adjoining residential roads.

A total of 64 comments were received in response to additional active travel routes that respondents would like to be considered. Among the “others” included comments regarding pedestrian crossings, sheltered pathways, staff parking and electric charging points.



Facilities

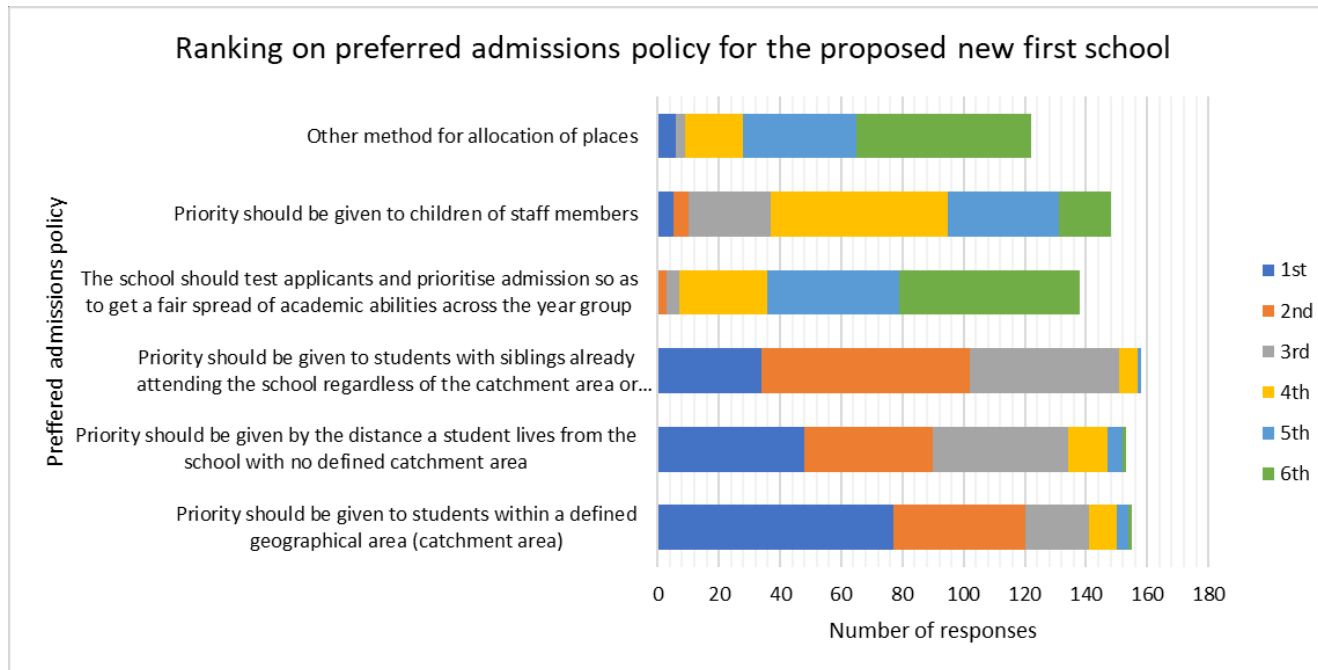
The survey asked respondents for their views on proposed IT and Digital within the new first school.

93% of respondents agreed with the proposal for IT and Digital facilities, with many responses highlighting the importance of iPads/tablets and/or laptops for each student, along with smart whiteboards, a dedicated IT suite and specialist programs to support children with SEND.

It is expected that the Academy Trust will establish a Community Use Agreement to ensure school facilities are available and accessible for community use. **93% of respondents agreed** with this approach, 3% disagreed and 4% were unsure.

Admissions

Respondents were asked to rank how priority should be given to admissions for a new first school. 77 respondent 1st preference (50%) said that first priority should be given to pupils within a defined geographical area (catchment area), 48 respondents (31%) said first priority should be given by the distance a student lives from the school with no defined catchment area, 34 respondents (22%) said priority should firstly be given to pupils with siblings already attending the school regardless of catchment area. The chosen Academy Trust would be required to abide by the Codes of Practice on admissions



Recurring Themes

Respondents were provided with free text boxes within the consultation survey to allow them to further expand on their views on each of the proposals. Among these responses there were clear recurring themes.

SEND Provision

A common theme throughout many of the responses were in relation to providing SEND provision within the new First School and Redditch as a whole. Comments included:

- The need for a specialist SEND school in Redditch rather than a new First School
- Currently a lack of SEND spaces available in Redditch
- Increased support for children with SEND attending a mainstream school
- Priority given to children with SEND / EHCPs within the school admissions policy
- A large year group not being able to provide adequate SEND provision

There is a requirement of the chosen Academy Trust to make appropriate reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND. WCC and WCF will work with the Academy Trust to ensure the environment of the school meets the needs of children and young people with SEND. WCC and WCF will also continue to keep under review the demand for provision to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and develop new or additional provision where required.

Age Range

25% of respondents disagreed with the proposed age range of 2–9-year-olds. 81 comments were received as a direct response to this, and included:

- Increasing the age range to 11 years old
- Creating a Primary or a Middle school rather than a First school
- Creating a new SEND school rather than a First school
- Already a high number of first and primary schools in Redditch
- A preference for a 2-tier system

WCF are currently monitoring numbers closely to plan where and when additional middle and high school places need to be created. Expanding the age range to 11 years would not be in line with schools in the surrounding area, which are 3-tier. Therefore, from a locality point of view it is important to provide consistency across education provision in the area.

Active Travel Routes

54 comments were received in response to active travel routes and the proposed travel arrangements:

- A safe drive through area to be considered
- Concerns about traffic congestion and nuisance parking on adjoining residential roads
- The existing roads and lanes are too narrow to safely accommodate active travel
- Currently there are unsafe walking routes to the new First school
- There would need to be a dedicated school bus / bus route to encourage group travel and active travel

The Foxlydiate housing development design guide includes promotion of inclusive access from foot and cycle ways and streets, and includes cycle stands as part of the street furniture. The school and community building parking, and pupil handover off point is planned to be located within the northern part of the school site, minimising conflict with the local centre square.

'You said, We Will'

The 175 responses provided as part of this engagement exercise have provided guidance to further shape the specification and proposals for a new first school. The below outlines the key themes presented and how these will be integrated into the design, build, and specification for the new first school.

Theme	Comments	What we will do
School size	Might 3FE be too large to begin with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WCF will continue to monitor the demand for the new school particularly from the new housing development and work with the Academy Trust to open the school appropriately
Admissions	Geographical area is important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WCF will share the consultation feedback with the Academy Trust who are responsible for the Admissions Policy for the new school and nursery
Values	Increased support for SEND in mainstream schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A requirement for the Academy Trust to make appropriate reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND. Ensure teaching assistants and support staff are deployed, and ensuring staff have specific SEND training. The Academy Trust must also engage with WCF to support pupils with SEND and EHCPs, supporting the needs of vulnerable pupils
Values	Outdoor wellbeing areas, exercise spaces and quiet areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A requirement for the Academy Trust is to have safe spaces and quiet areas for counselling sessions or to support with sensory needs.
Values	Need a focus on mental health, as well as wellbeing for staff and pupils	<p>The chosen Academy Trust must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an ethos of pupil and staff wellbeing throughout policy and practice. a clear Policy which documents the approach to ensuring and improving pupil and staff health and wellbeing.
Education	Solidarity, cooperation, multiculturalism should all be encouraged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The view of different groups within the community and respecting other cultures will be part of the Academy Trust's approach to education
Transport	Promoting active travel for mental and physical wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The chosen Academy Trust will be required to develop a School Travel Plan which will include the promotion of walking and cycling and safe travel to school
Facilities	School facilities and community use of facilities should be utilised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is expected that the Academy Trust develops a Community Use Agreement to ensure facilities are available and accessible for the community.
Facilities	Access to technology and specialised programs to support children with SEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It will be expected that the Academy Trust will have a strong IT and Digital Policy that seeks to utilise technology to support inclusivity and accessibility for all pupils

