

Specialist SEND Sufficiency Report 2023

Sufficiency of Education Provision for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in Worcestershire

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Statutory Duties – Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities

Worcestershire County Council (WCC) has a statutory duty, under Section 14 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure there is a sufficiency of school places available to meet the needs of all children and young people living within our authority. This includes having regard to the need to secure provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). In addition, S315 of the Education Act 1996 requires that arrangements for children with SEND be kept under review.

‘Special educational needs’ is a legal definition and refers to children with learning problems or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn than most children the same age. An education, health and care plan (EHCP) is for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is ordinarily available through special educational needs (SEN) support, and sets out the additional support required to meet those needs.

Worcestershire’s Children and Young People’s plan¹ outlines a belief in equity and excellence for all, and an aim to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people. This can be met with a focus for special educational needs to be assessed and met in a timely and purposeful manner. Worcestershire’s SEN strategy sets out the vision that ‘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’². Further information regarding Worcestershire’s aims for special educational needs can also be found in the All-Age Autism Strategy³.

In pursuit of this, the SEND local offer is a source of extensive local information to enable families to access help and support at the earliest possible opportunity. Training and support are offered to staff in early-years settings, schools and colleges to enable them to develop an inclusive environment for a child with SEND, enable the child to sustain their place and remain with their local community. In cases where this cannot happen, then appropriate support is assessed and an EHCP issued. This will name the school or setting that can meet the needs of the child.

The scope of this report

In order to achieve these goals, future demand for places for children with SEND must be monitored to ensure the correct provision is in place at the correct time.

This report sets out to review historic demand for children with SEND to enable future demand to be assessed and a forecast for the next 4 years proposed (to 2026/2027).

¹ <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cypp>

² [Our SEND strategy | Our SEND strategy | Worcestershire County Council](#)

³ [All-Age Autism Strategy | Worcestershire County Council](#)

1 Changes made to SEND Provision Sept 2022-Sept 2023

Within the previous sufficiency report, it was highlighted that there was a lack of sufficient provision for children and young people with Autism (ASD), and there was no specialist provision school within the district of Malvern, meaning children with special educational needs were having to travel long distances to attend appropriate provision. Worcestershire Children First submitted a bid application to the Department for Education (DfE) for a new special free school specialising in Autism to be located within Malvern, this application was accepted, and the DfE intend for the new 120 place free school to open from September 2027.

Alongside this planned new school, further provision has been created for children with Autism with a new Enhanced Mainstream Autism Base (EMAB) opening in Worcester, at Christopher Whitehead Language College. This provision opened in September 2023. Tudor Grange Academy Redditch Treetops Enhanced Mainstream Autism Base has also been expanded to allow for an additional 25 pupils to attend from September 2023.

Previous data also showed an increase in need for provision to support children and young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH). Unity Academy in the Wyre Forest district is a new alternative provision free school, providing support and advice for up to 60 children and young people that have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion. This also opened in September 2023.

Demand for special school provision has also continued to increase, this was supported by the sufficiency analysis reported within the 2022 Sufficiency report. Four of the current nine special schools within Worcestershire have had an increase in their pupil numbers which has been in effect since September 2023. The following schools agreed to increase pupil numbers ahead of September 2023: Regency High School (32-48 places), Fort Royal School (56 places), Wyre Forest School (54 places) and Rigby Hall Schools (57 places).

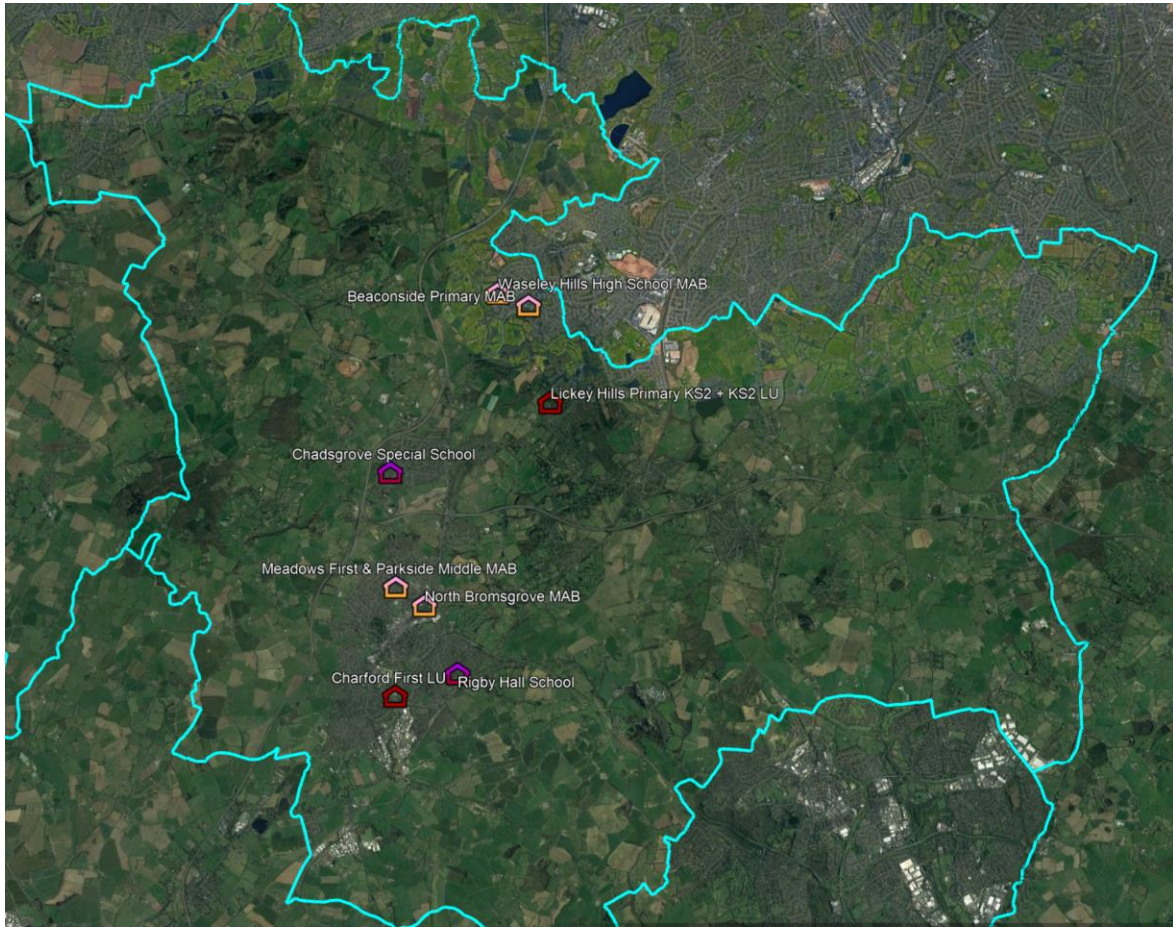
2 Worcestershire Provision for pupils with SEND

Worcestershire has a range of education provision to meet the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and / or disabilities. This ranges from mainstream schools, independent schools, mainstream schools with resourced provision or SEN Units, the Medical Education Team, Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and Alternative Provision (AP), state-funded special schools and specialist independent provision.

There are: 9 State-Funded Special schools, 3 Pupil Referral Units, 7 Alternative Provision bases, 14 Mainstream Autism Bases of which 3 are Enhanced Mainstream Autism Bases, 5 Early Years Language Units, 5 School Age Language Units and 3 Medical Education Team bases. The areas and locations of Worcestershire's specialist provision are outlined below by district.

2.1 Bromsgrove

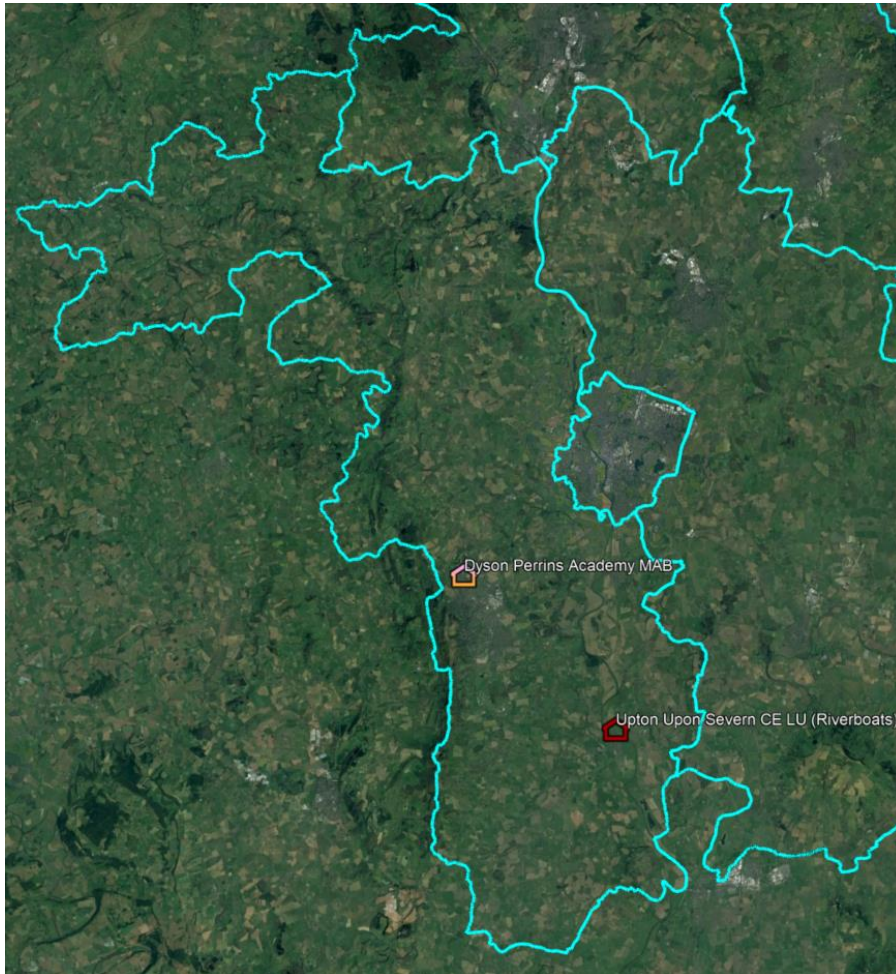
Map 1: Locations of Specialist Provision Within Bromsgrove District



Bromsgrove has 2 special schools, Chadsgrove School and College (ages 2-25) and Rigby Hall School (ages 4-19). Chadsgrove School specialises in caring for children with Physical Disabilities, Rigby Hall is a generic special catering to a variety of needs. There are 2 Language Units (Lickey Hills school age and Charford Early Years) and there are 4 MABs located within Bromsgrove supporting children through years Reception through to 11. In January 2023, there were 1,691 children and young people living in Bromsgrove requiring SEN support, and 689 with an EHCP.

2.2 Malvern

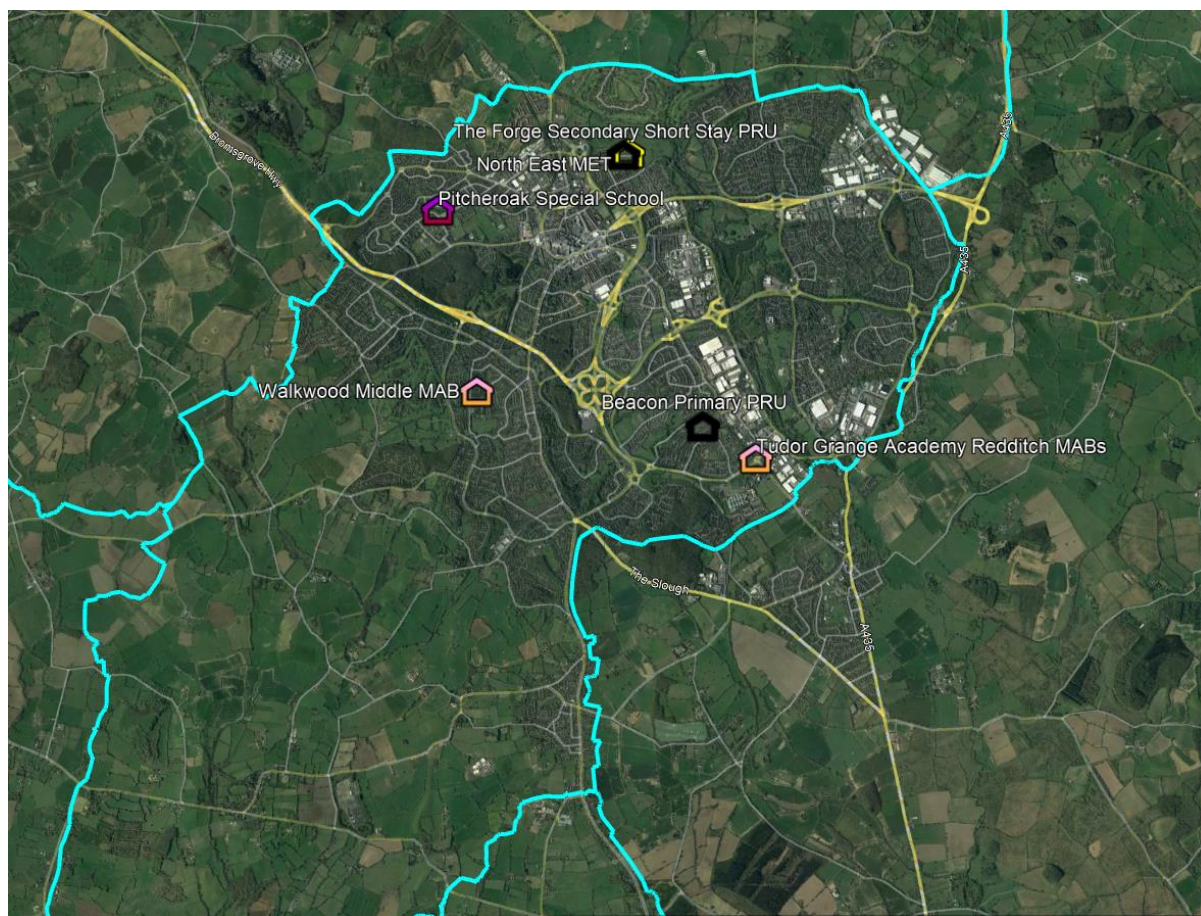
Map 2: Locations of Specialist Provision Within Malvern District



Malvern does not have any Special schools but does have a High school MAB at Dyson Perrins and an Early Years Language Unit at Upton upon Severn CE Primary school (Riverboats). 1,197 children living in Malvern require SEN Support and 623 have an EHCP. Malvern has the least amount of specialist provision across the districts. However, in September 2026, a new ASD free school is anticipated to open within the district.

2.3 Redditch

Map 3: Locations of Specialist Provision in Within Redditch District



Redditch has 2 Special schools, Kingfisher school (ages 7 to 18) and Pitcheroak school (ages 4 to 19). Kingfisher specialises in Social, Emotional and Mental Health, whereas Pitcheroak is a generic Special school. There is 1 Early Years Language Unit at Batchley First School and 1 School age Language Unit at Matchborough First School. Redditch also has 2 MABs, supporting children through years 5 to 11. There are 2 Pupil Referral Units (The Forge and The Beacon) and 1 Medical Education Team Provision. Redditch has 1,976 children and young people living within the district requiring SEN Support and 833 with an EHCP.

2.4 Worcester

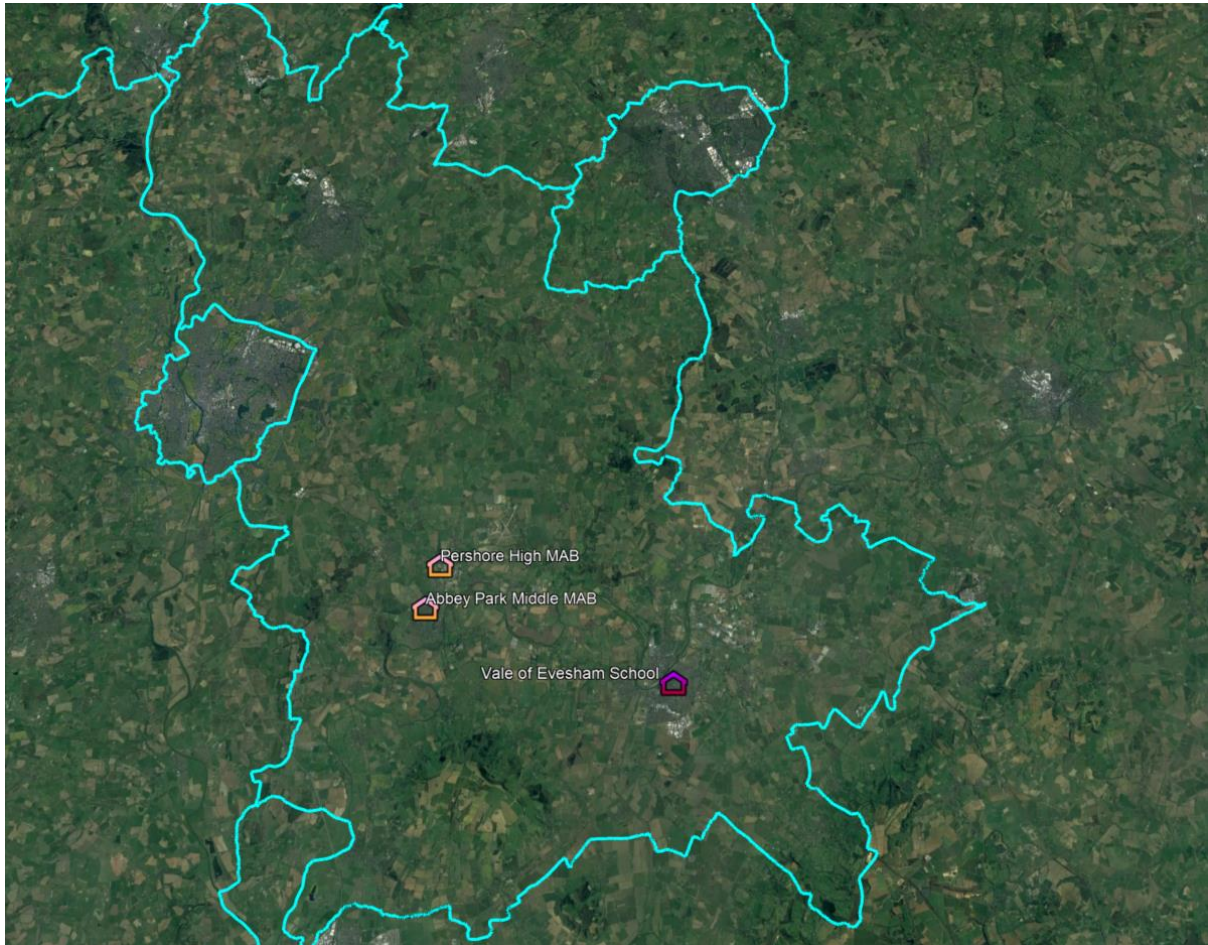
Map 4: Locations of Specialist Provision Within Worcester District



Worcester has the most Special schools within a district, Fort Royal (ages 2 to 11), Riversides (ages 7 to 16) and Regency High (ages 11 to 19). Fort Royal and Regency are both generic Special schools, whereas Riversides specialises in Social, Emotional and Mental Health. There are 2 MABs located in Worcester, supporting children in Reception to Year 11. There are 3 Alternative Provision/Pupil Referral Units, Aspire Academy AP, Perryfields Primary PRU and Newbridge Short Stay Secondary PRU. The South Medical Education Team are also located at Newbridge Short Stay Secondary PRU. There is also 1 Early Years Language Unit based at Cranham Primary school. Worcester has 1,924 children and young people living within the district requiring SEN Support and 907 with EHCPs.

2.5 Wychavon

Map 5: Locations of Specialist Provision Within Wychavon District



Wychavon has 1 generic Special school, Vale of Evesham (ages 2 to 19) and 2 MABs providing for children years 5 to 11. Wychavon has 2,089 children living within the district requiring SEN Support and 1,081 with EHCPs, the most out of all Worcestershire's districts.

2.6 Wyre Forest

Map 6: Locations of Specialist Provision Within Wyre Forest District



Wyre Forest has 1 generic Special school, Wyre Forest School (ages 3 to 19). There are 2 MABs aiding students in Reception to Year 11. There are also 2 Alternative Provision bases. Wyre Forest has the most Language Units, 3 School Age and 1 Early Years. The Medical Education Team (North) are based at Lea Street. There are 2,443 children and young people requiring SEN Support (the largest number across Worcestershire) and 824 with EHCPs.

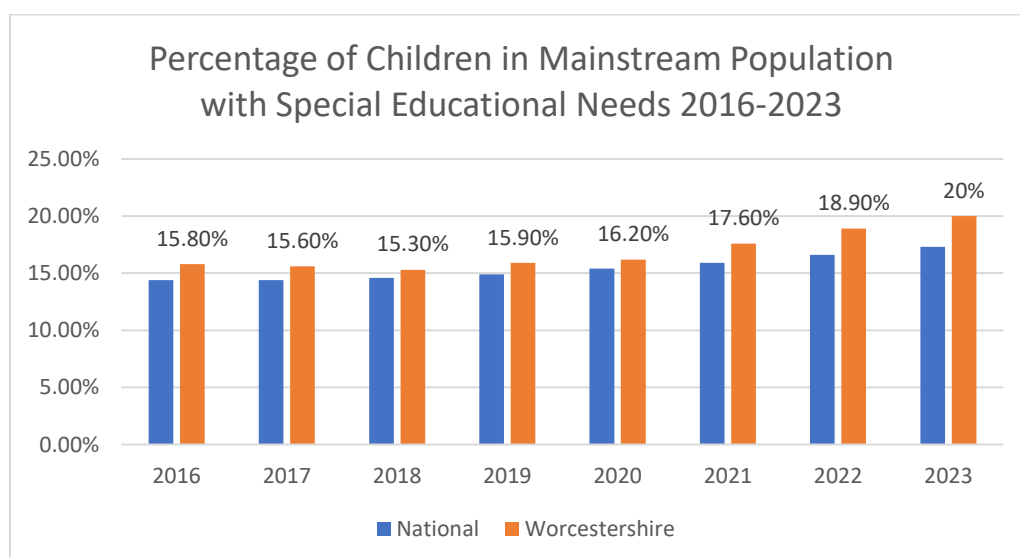
3 National Trends

3.1 Children with Special Educational Needs and EHCPs

The Spring term school census, undertaken annually in January, records the special educational needs of pupils attending state-funded schools. This submission from all state-funded schools enables Worcestershire County Council (WCC) to benchmark the needs of our school-age children against national trends and to assess changes in need. There is also data from the annual SEN2 survey which needs to be considered when assessing need across Worcestershire. The SEN2 information records every child or young person within Worcestershire with an EHCP and the setting they attend. To provide the most accurate figures for Special Educational Needs, the January Census has been combined with the February SEN2 data (duplicates removed) to ensure all Worcestershire children with EHCPs or SEN support are included in the analysis.

The school census records pre-school aged children in school nurseries, and children in Reception to Year 14 (age 4 to 19) in all types of state-funded schools including academies, free schools, alternative provision, special schools, and pupils in sixth forms linked to schools. While this will include some nursery-age children and some children over 16 years old, it will not include all those with EHCPs attending private, voluntary, or independent (PVI) early years settings, colleges, Electively Home Educated, independent schools or not on roll at a school on census day. The SEN2 data includes all children ‘for whom the local authority has a responsibility for the management of the SEN processes, under the 1996 Education Act and the 2014 Children and Families Act’⁴. The children have an EHCP including those attending independent provision or Electively Home Educated.

Figure 1: Percentage of Children in Mainstream Population with Special Educational Needs 2016-2023



A review of the school Census data from January 2023 and the SEN2 Census, shows that 20% of pupils educated in Worcestershire are identified as having special educational needs with 13.9% requiring SEN support and 6.80% have an EHCP. The current levels of pupils with an EHCP in Worcestershire is higher than the latest known national rate, which is 4.3% of the mainstream pupil

⁴ Pg6, [SEN2 2022 Guide \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

population. This includes all state-funded nursery, primary, secondary, and special schools, non-maintained special schools, pupil referral units and independent schools.

Figure 2: National DfE Returns and Worcestershire January 2023 Census and SEN2

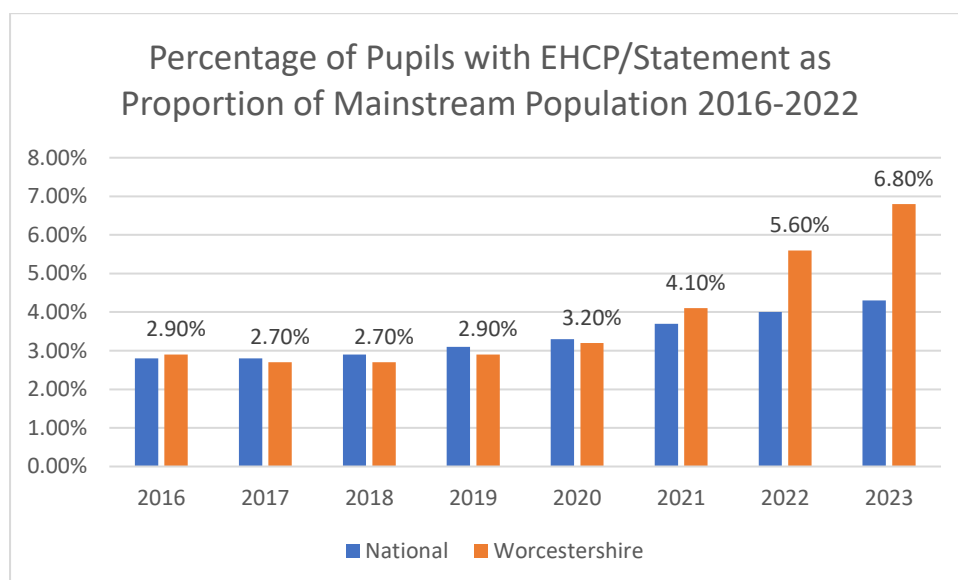


Figure 2 shows that the percentages of children with EHCPs have continued to rise. Between 2021 and 2023, there has been a more rapid rise in Worcestershire. There is a difference of 2.5 percentage points in the percentages of children with EHCP nationally and in Worcestershire.

Figure 3: National DfE Returns and Worcestershire January 2023 Census and SEN2

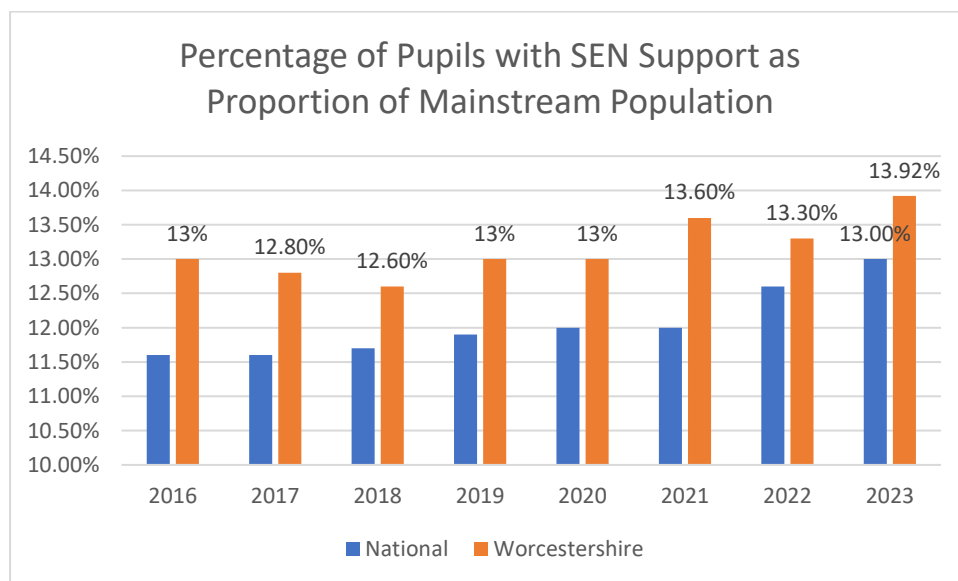


Figure 3 shows there has been an increase of 0.6 percentage points of children and young people requiring SEN Support in Worcestershire since 2022. Between 2022 and 2023, nationally the percentage points of children and young people requiring SEN Support has increased by 0.6% also.

The number of pupils educated in Worcestershire as at the January school census has grown in recent years from 78,350 in January 2016 to 82,897 in January 2023, an increase of 589 from January 2022. With the SEN2 data combined, this brings the total to 84,747. The level of children with

identified SEND is at its highest. It is therefore assumed that over the next several years, the percentages of children with identified SEND in Worcestershire will continue to increase in relation to the school population.

Migration into Worcestershire

Worcestershire has 136 children and young people that have an EHCP attending provision within the county that reside in one of the surrounding neighbouring counties such as West Midlands, Warwickshire and Herefordshire.

Of the children living out of county travelling into Worcestershire who have an EHCP, 64% travel from the county of West Midlands, this is followed by 15% travelling from Herefordshire. 55% of the children from West Midlands are attending specialist provision within Worcestershire.

The most common areas of need for children with an EHCP that live out of county but attend Worcestershire provision are children with Autism and Cognitive needs.

Forecasting methodology

The forecast used for each type of provision takes into account demographic growth in each area, and new housing developments, with the trends of the previous five years. The forecasting data used for the 2023 SEND sufficiency report includes the countywide forecast (including the mainstream forecast and the 5 Year Land Supply reports from each district council within Worcestershire) alongside a 5-year average number of new EHCPs. The forecast number of pupils generated from new housing is not as predictable as demographic growth and therefore the anticipated pupil yield is calculated as a percentage of the number of pupils by age group living in recently built housing, matching school census data to housing developments to determine actual pupil number and characteristics over time.

Forecasting accuracy

Unlike for mainstream school forecasting, the Department for Education (DfE) have not until summer 2023 required local authorities to submit forecasts and capacity data for provision reserved for pupils with SEND. Therefore, there is no comparison between Worcestershire and its statistical neighbours for forecasting accuracy.

When we compare the forecasts produced for September 2022 with the actual demand for places, we can see our forecast had shown a 1.7% difference to the actual total of special school places in January 2023.

Table 1: Special school 2022 forecast totals and actual January Census NOR

	Total	Percentage Difference
Combined Special School Forecast (Sufficiency 2022)	1,676	1.7%
Combined Special School Actual Jan Census (2023)	1,704	

3.2 Types of Needs

The 'SEND Code of Practice 2015: 0 to 25 years old' explains the duties of local authorities, health bodies, schools, and college to provide for those with special educational needs under part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014. It identifies four broad areas of special educational need as:

- Communication and Interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Sensory and/or Physical needs

Although pupils may have a combination of needs, the school census can only record a primary and secondary need.

The SEN Code of Practice⁵ emphasises that the 'purpose of identification is to work out what action the education provision needs to take, not to fit a pupil into a category. In practice, individual children or young people often have needs that cut across several areas and their needs may change over time. A detailed assessment of need should ensure that the full range of an individual's needs is identified, not simply the primary need'⁶.

Although the government wishes to move away from assumptions about pupils' needs based upon their difficulty or disability, it is still necessary to record specific categories of need to allow government and local authorities to predict levels of future resource requirements. The following categories of need are collected through the statutory school census:

Code	Type of Need
ASD	Autistic spectrum disorder
HI	Hearing impairment
MLD	Moderate learning difficulties
MSI	Multi-sensory impairment
NSA	No specialist Assessment ⁷
OTH	Other difficulty or disability ⁸
PD	Physical difficulty
PMLD	Profound and multiple learning difficulty
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
SLCN	Speech, Language & Communication Needs
SLD	Severe learning difficulty
SPLD	Specific learning difficulty
VI	Visual impairment

⁵ [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

⁶ Section 6.27 [SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

⁷ This code was introduced in 2014 and aimed at those who transferred from School Action to SEN Support but are yet to be formally assessed for their type of special educational need.

Pg6. [SEN 2018 Technical document.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

⁸ The 'Other' category is sometimes used to classify complex cases which have aspects of ASD and either PMLD or SLD. Also, the category 'Other' may have been allocated due to delay in an official diagnosis by a healthcare professional.

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The following charts detail the percentage distribution of primary needs for Worcestershire pupils with SEN Support or an EHCP.

Chart 1: Distribution of Primary Needs in Pupils with EHCPs, January Census and SEN2

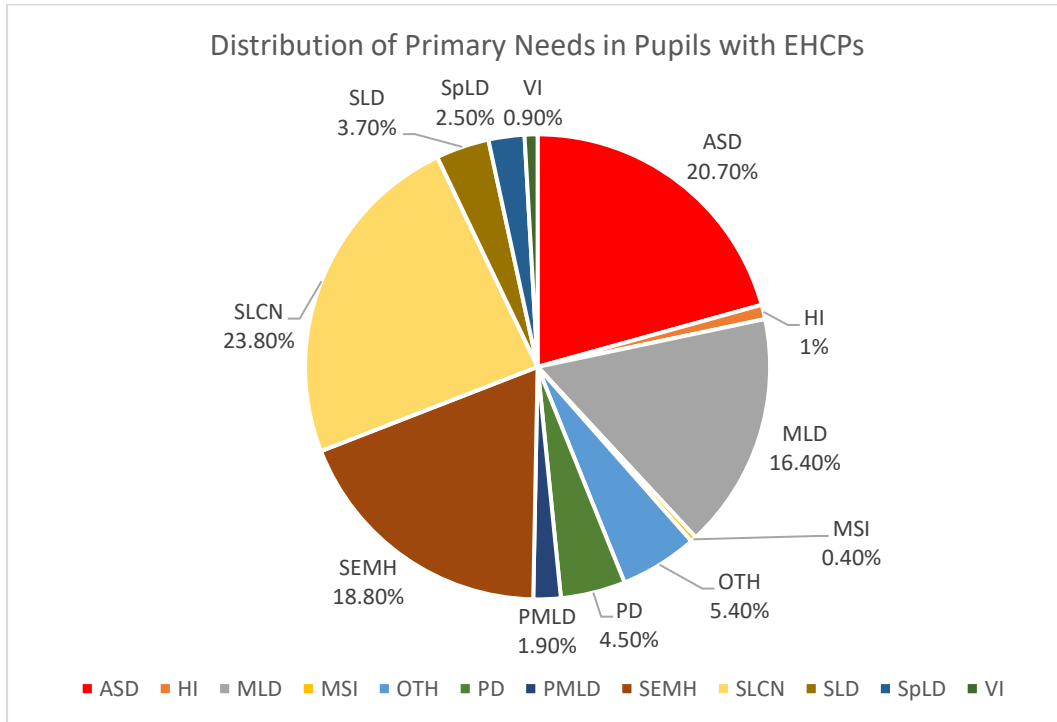
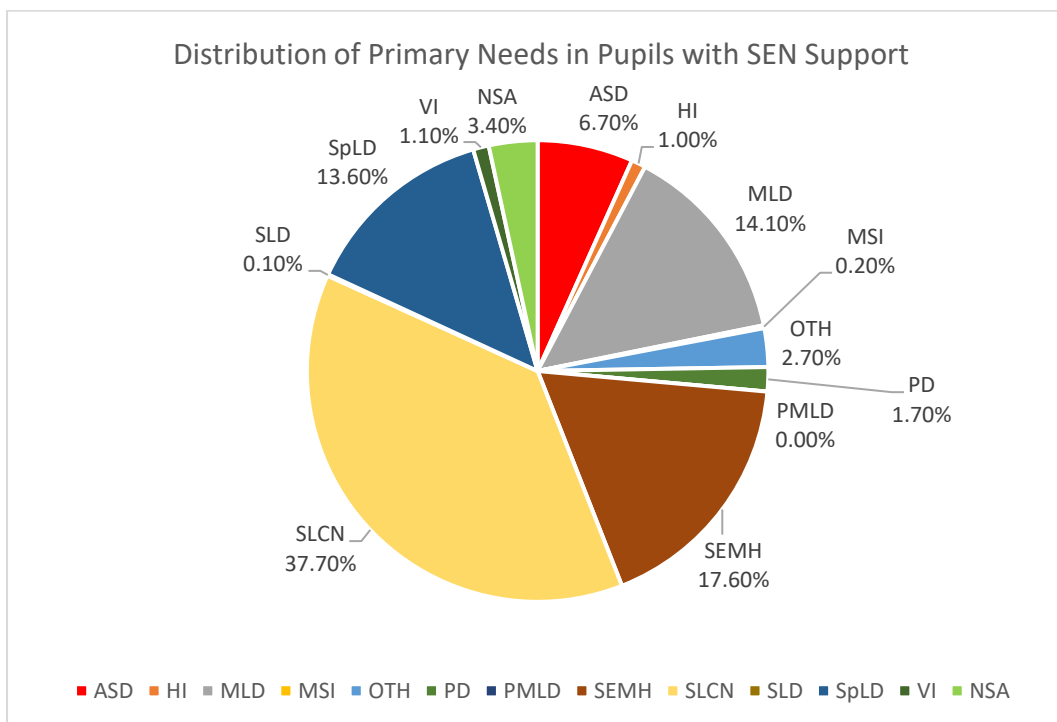


Chart 2: Distribution of Primary Needs in Pupils with SEN Support, January Census and SEN2



This proportion identifies categories of SEND that are more often supported without the need for an EHCP. There are more pupils with SEN Support that have the primary needs of Speech, Language and Communication (SLCN) and Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD). There is a much higher percentage of pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) alongside higher percentage of children with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) who have EHCPs.

National data released by the DfE for 2023 identifies SLCN as the most common area of need for pupils receiving SEN Support at 25.5% and SEMH at 21%. Children with the primary need categorised as ASD is the most common need for pupils with EHCPs at 32.2%.

A child's primary need may not be the only special educational need of the child. There is evidence gathered by the Council for Disabled Children (CDC) whose research has found that the numbers of 'pupils with complex needs have increased dramatically by 50% since 2004'⁹. This report considers children with life limiting conditions that are now better supported by health care advances, improved survival rates of pre-term births as well as the poor recording and tracking of children with multiple needs, as leading to an increase in the understanding of children with complex needs and therefore difficulty with ensuring suitable provision for children's special educational needs. For instances, SLCN can also be a feature of a number of other areas of SEN, and children and young people with ASD may have needs across all areas, including particular sensory requirements.

Other research by the Beacon School Support¹⁰ supports the view that nationally there are higher survival rates in extremely premature babies, 60% of babies born at 24 weeks survive, half of babies born before 26 weeks will have a severe disability. Children may have more complex developmental and sensory needs identified at birth. These children are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment that affects learning, development and health and are likely to require a high level of special educational provision. The Research also suggests that more children are being diagnosed with Autism because the way ASD is diagnosed has changed, the scope of diagnosis has widened, so children who would not have been diagnosed in the past are being diagnosed now. There is also greater awareness of SEND by parent carers, and professionals.

⁹ [Understanding the needs of disabled children with complex needs or life-limiting conditions \(councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk\)](https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk)

¹⁰ <https://beaconschoolsupport.co.uk/newsletters/why-are-there-more-children-with-complex-special-needs-than-ever-before>

Figure 4: Children and Young People with EHCPs by Primary Need Attending Mainstream Provision, January Census and SEN2

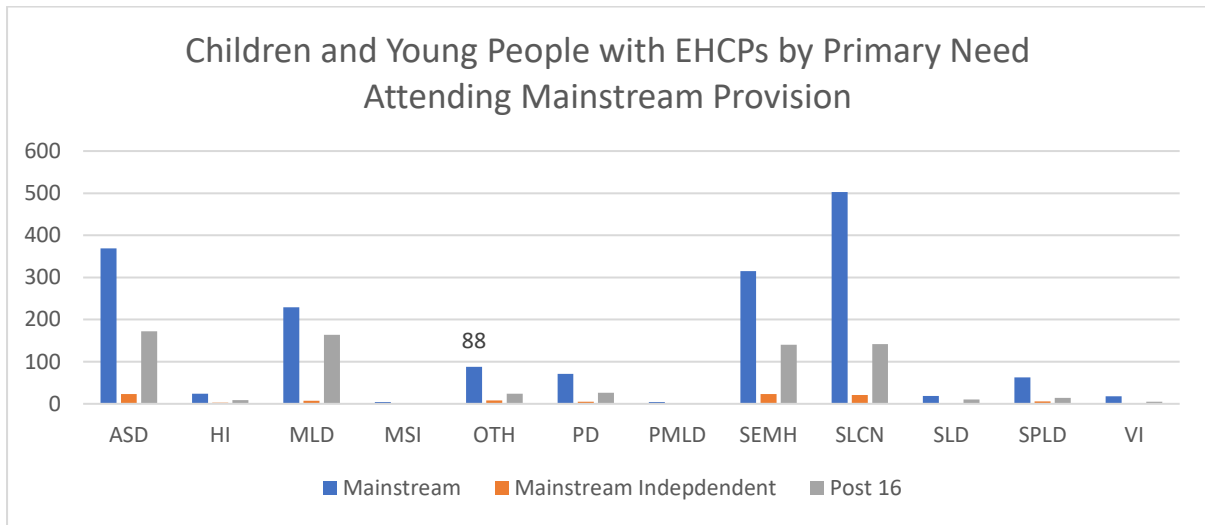


Figure 5: Children and Young People with EHCPs by Primary Need Attending Specialist Provision, January Census and SEN2

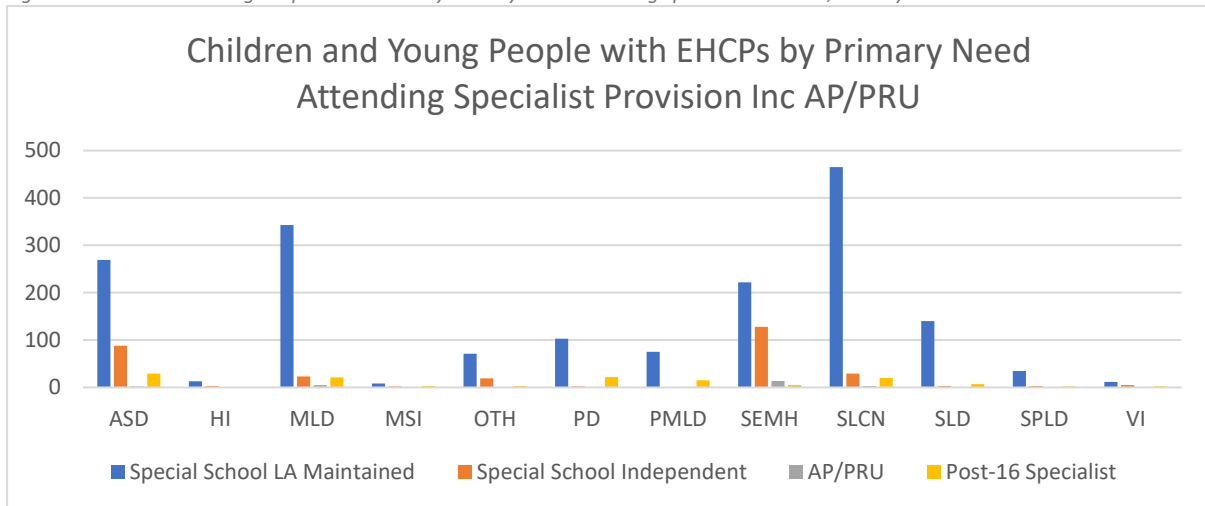
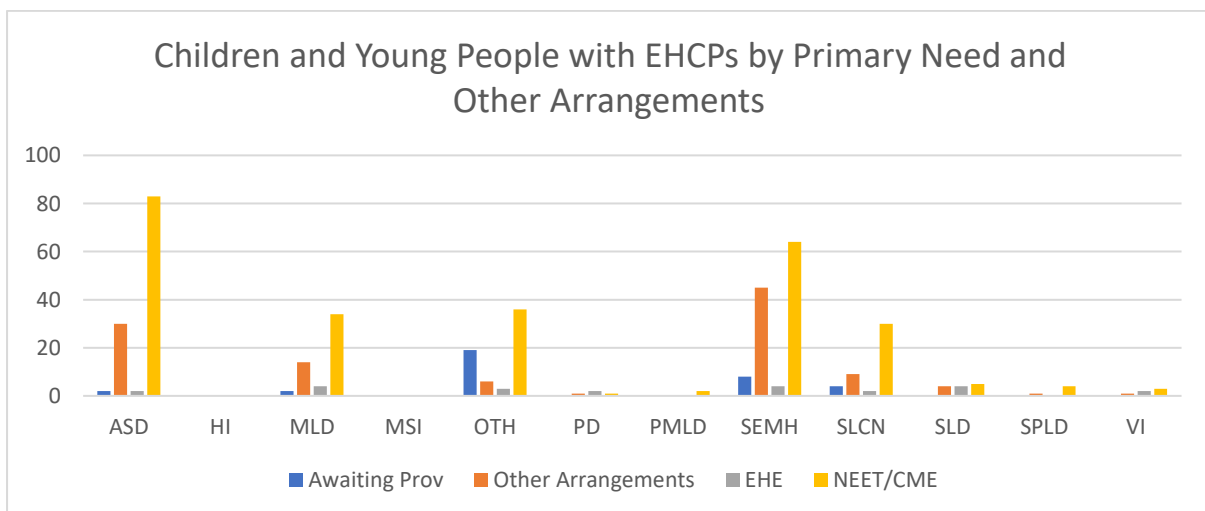


Figure 6: Children and Young People with EHCPs by Primary Need and Other Provision, January Census and SEN2



Figures 4 to 6 show the type of provision children with EHCPs are attending and their primary need. 41% of children with an EHCP and primary need of SLCN (the largest cohort) attend Mainstream schools, while 38% attend an LA maintained special school.

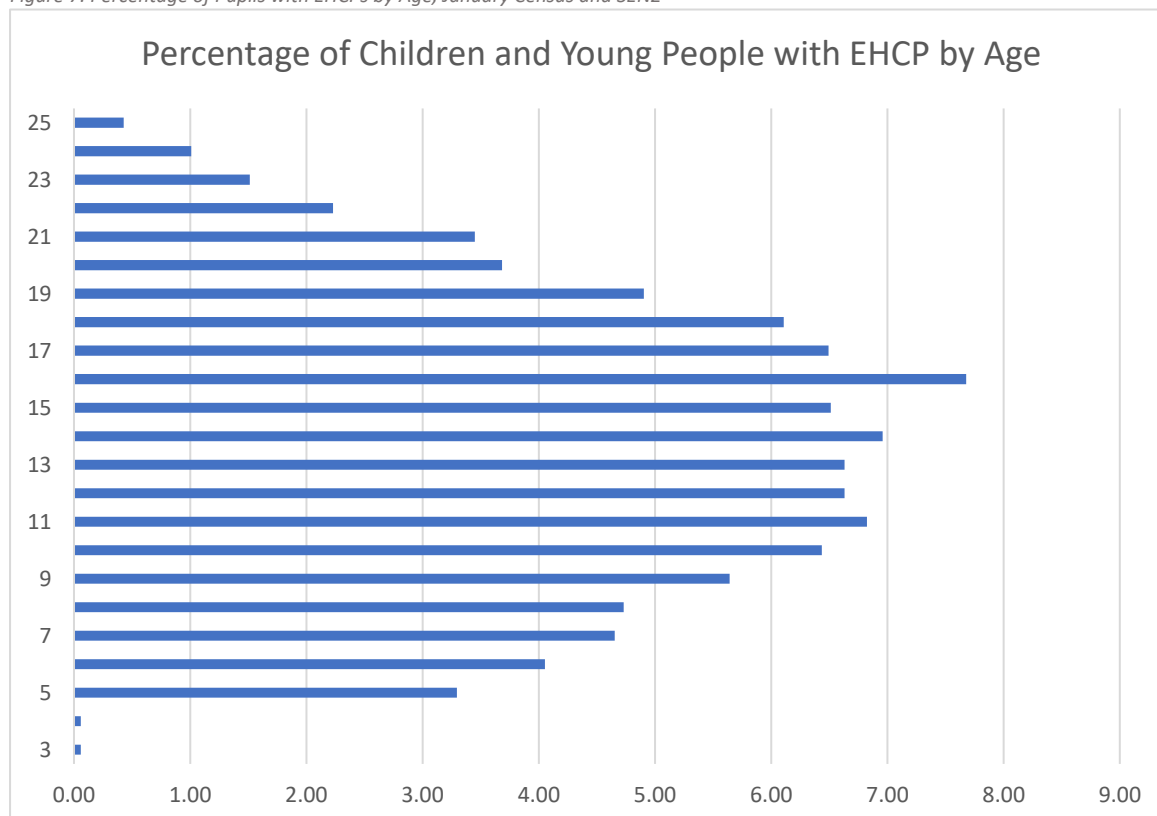
Children with the primary need of Other mostly attend mainstream provision. For children within figure 6, the 15% have the primary need classed as Other, 56% of those are NEET. SEMH is the most common primary need for children awaiting provision/other arrangements/EHE/NEET or CME, at 28%, this is followed by children with Autism at 27%.

3.3 Need by Age Group

The needs of children vary by age and often become more acute for older children due to educational or environmental challenges. There are low numbers of identified SEN needs in earlier years due to difficulty in diagnosis or even being aware there may be a need. In older years, children tend to be able to manage better with many of the needs they may have through ordinarily available support. The different profile for year groups of pupils with EHCPs and those requiring SEN Support allow us to direct resources to the correct age groups to reach the children in need of special educational support.

Further analysis of this year’s data for children in schools in Worcestershire show that those in the secondary phase have the highest percentage of pupils with EHCPs, making up 64.25%.

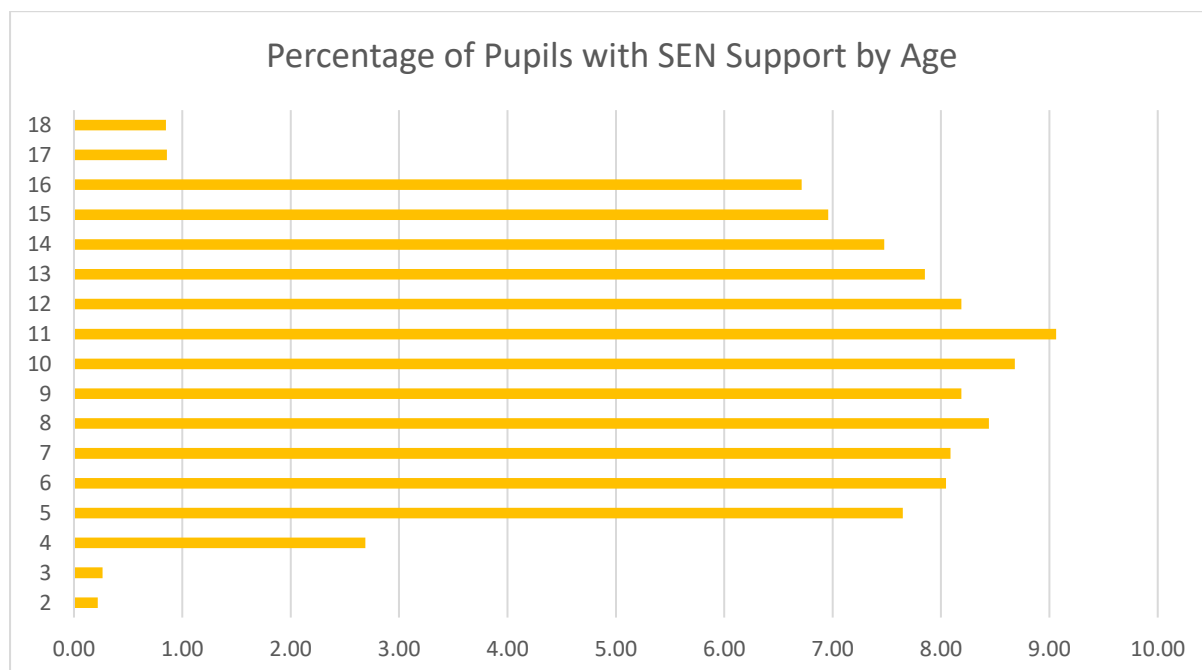
Figure 7: Percentage of Pupils with EHCPs by Age, January Census and SEN2



The percentage of pupils receiving SEN Support by age shows larger numbers in primary phase (children aged 4 to 11) compared to secondary (children aged 11 to 16) and a small percentage

where children would be in the sixth form phase. The largest percentage with EHCPs is with 16-year-olds, falling in the NCY Year 11.

Figure 8: Percentage of Pupils with SEN Support by Age, January Census and SEN2



Note, that this data is from the school census and therefore only includes a particular data set of children. The school census is a snapshot of children on the day the census is recorded. Also, there will be a number of children who are not enrolled with an education provision and therefore not registered on the census.

4 Provision for Children with Education, Health and Care Plans

4.1 Trends in EHC Plans

The 2023 January Census and SEN2 reports that there were 5,158 Worcestershire children and young people (aged 0-25) with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), for whom the Authority has responsibility¹¹. This represents a 9.5% increase from 2022, however, new plans are not written uniformly through the year. The significant increase in the number of EHCPs in Worcestershire since 2016 has in part, been a result of rising population numbers, however this does not explain the trend entirely. Over the last several years, the number of EHCPs as a percentage of the total population (including independent schools and post-16 establishments) has increased from 2.9% in January 2016 to 6.8% in 2023. A significant contribution to this has been the rise in the post-16 population with an EHCP following a change in Government legislation¹² where the educational or training

¹¹ SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25

¹² Children and Families Act 2014

outcomes of the EHCP are not achieved by age 18, the EHCP can remain in place until the young person reaches 25.

When extracting the number of children and young people with an EHCP up to the age of 25 compared to the total pupil population of Worcestershire (84,756), 6.08% of all pupils have an EHCP¹³.

Table 2: EHCPs by Age Range – January Census and SEN2

	Jan-17	Jan-18	Jan-19	Jan-20	Jan-21	Jan-22	Jan-23
Under age 5 (NCY 0, -1 & -2)	55	84	83	110	118	135	109
Aged 5 to 10 (NCY 0 – NCY 5)	842	908	992	1,214	1,293	1,475	1,612
Aged 11 to 15 (NCY 6 – NCY 10)	1,078	1,120	1,220	1,339	1,473	1,612	1,757
Aged 16 to 19 (NCY 11 – NCY 14)	628	807	966	959	939	1,055	1,166
Aged 20 to 25 (NCY 15 – NCY 19)	89	145	241	431	359	413	514
Total	2,692	3,064	3,502	4,053	4,182	4,690	5,158
Annual Increase	7%	13%	14%	15%	4%	12%	10%

The highest number of EHCPs are within the age range of 11 to 15 years old, this has been consistent since 2017. This is followed by children aged 5 to 10 years old, which has also been consistent in its positioning since 2017.

Table 3: EHCPs by type of provision in Worcestershire – January Census and SEN2

	Jan-17	Jan-18	Jan-19	Jan-20	Jan-21	Jan-22	Jan-23
All Pupils for whom the Authority maintains a statement of Special Educational Needs or EHC Plan	2,692	3,064	3,502	4,053	4,182	4,690	5,158
Special Schools – LA-funded	1,228	1,332	1,385	1,517	1,524	1,641	1,756
Special Schools - Independent	89	120	134	152	208	228	305
Mainstream Schools – LA-funded	811	808	910	1,207	1,373	1,472	1,707
Mainstream - Independent	56	54	80	97	81	125	98
General Further Education	394	553	669	702	696	752	708
Specialist Further Education	43	88	88	93	90	111	129
Electively Home Educated	37	40	39	44	48	31	23
CME/NEET	18	31	106	39	25	49	262
Alternative Provision	7	5	11	24	17	30	24
Awaiting Placement	8	9	24	45	55	28	35
Other	1	24	56	133	65	106	111
Total	2,692	3,064	3,502	4,053	4,182	4,690	5,158

¹³ Children and Young People with an EHCP, January Census and SEN2

In January 2023, of the 5,158 children with an EHCP, 34% were attending LA-funded Special Schools and 33% attending LA-funded mainstream schools.

837 young people (16.2%) are attending post-16 colleges. This corresponds to the responsibility to continue education opportunities up to the age of 25 for young people with EHCPs. Those attending specialist further education has continued to increase from 111 in 2022 to 129 in 2023. Some of the colleges will be specialist independent institutions with residential facilities based out of county.

403 children (7.8%) are in independent school, either special or mainstream. This demand is driven by the suitability of placements and parental choice but may be exacerbated by a shortage of spaces in LA-funded specialist provision.

The number of children with EHCPs attending maintained special schools has decreased from 46% in 2017, to 34% in 2023. Nationally, figures have decreased since 2018 from 35% to 28%. There has been a continued increase in the number of children with an EHCP attending independent provision, increasing in Worcestershire by 0.3% since last year. The opposite has happened nationally, decreasing by 0.3% since 2022.

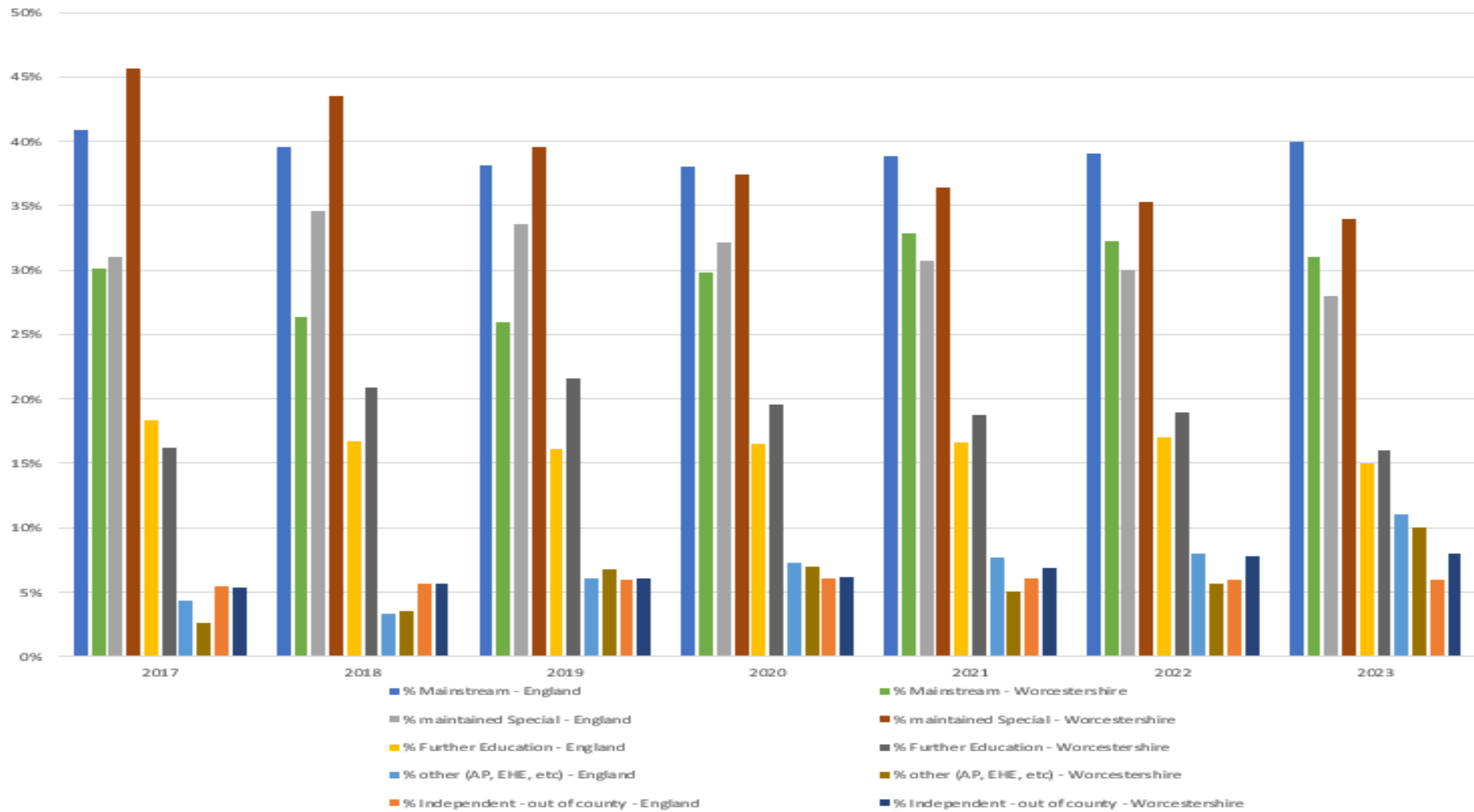
The table below compares the proportion of Worcestershire children with EHCPs attending mainstream, independent, or special schools using DfE statistics.

Table 4: Analysis of Forecast SEN Pupils (SEN2 only)

	Eng.							Worcs.						
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
EHCPs	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
All Schools	175k	279k	354k	390k	430k	468k	517k	2,692	3,064	3,502	4,053	4,182	4,555	4,904
Mainstream Schools	71,594	110.6k	135k	148.2k	167.4	186.4	206.9	811	808	910	1,207	1,373	1,471	1,538
Maintained Special	54,352	96,734	118.9k	125.3k	132.1k	140k	145k	1,228	1,332	1,385	1,517	1,524	1,609	1,676
Independent Schools	9,649	15,873	21,150	23,611	26,301	29,445	32,303	145	174	214	249	289	353	389
Further Education	32,066	46,854	57,191	64,437	71,728	73,870	76,476	437	641	757	795	786	865	805
Other	7,524	9,361	21,544	28,315	32,929	38,866	55,456	71	109	236	285	210	256	491
% Mainstream	41%	40%	38%	38%	39%	40%	40%	30%	26%	26%	30%	33%	32%	31%
% Independent	6%	5.7%	6%	6.1%	6.1%	6.3%	6%	5.4%	5.7%	6.1%	6.1%	6.9%	7.7%	8%
% Maintained Special	31%	35%	34%	32%	31%	30%	28%	46%	43%	40%	37%	36%	35%	34%
% Further Education	18%	17%	16%	17%	17%	16%	15%	16%	21%	22%	20%	19%	19%	16%
% Other (AP, EHE)	4%	3%	6%	7%	8%	8%	11%	3%	4%	7%	7%	5%	6%	10%

In 2022/23, 31% of children with an EHCP attended a mainstream school (this includes SEN units and Resource Provision), this compares with 40% nationally. 34% of children with an EHCP were attending maintained special provision, nationally, this figure is 28%. Both figures for maintained special have continued to decrease since 2018 nationally and 2017 in Worcestershire. The rate in which the percentage of children attending maintained special schools has decreased at a slower rate than nationally in comparison to last year, by 1%, whereas nationally, this was 2%. There was a significant increase (+4%) in children and young people with EHCPs in Worcestershire being Electively Home Educated (EHE) between 2022 and 2023, however, this is in line with the same increase nationally (+5%).

Figure 9: Percentage of Children with EHCP and Type of Provision – SEN2 Returns



The gap between the percentage of children attending maintained special schools and mainstream schools has remained at 3% for the last 3 years in Worcestershire. There is a difference of 9% between national (40%) and Worcestershire (31%) percentage of pupils attending mainstream schools, this has increased from 7% in 2022. There has also been a further increase in the difference of children attending maintained special, Worcestershire (34%) data is 6% higher than the nationally (28%). Again, this gap has also increased since 2022 where the difference had previously been 5%. The national percentage has decreased from 30% in 2022 and the Worcestershire percentage has decreased from 35% in 2022.

We can expect the rise in the percentage of children with EHCPs to continue over the next several years as the trends and changes in the system continue to have a positive impact on the identification of support needed by pupils to achieve their full potential. However, this has an impact on the provision that is needed and available.

Table 5 below shows the forecast number of pupils with EHCPs in county by type of provision if Worcestershire was in line with National percentages:

Table 5: Number of EHCPs in Worcestershire, Current Figures (SEN2) and Figures if in Line with National Percentage, DfE Data 2023

District	Number of pupils with EHCPs attending Maintained Special Actual (Worcs 34%)	Number of pupils with EHCPs in Maintained Special if in line with National (28%)	Difference	Number of pupils with EHCPs attending Mainstream schools Actual (Worcs 31%)	Number of pupils with EHCPs in Mainstream if in line with National (40%)	Difference
Bromsgrove	197	161	-36	242	294	52
Malvern	179	147	-32	215	261	46
Redditch	308	252	-56	234	284	50
Worcester	308	252	-56	311	377	66
Wychavon	353	289	-64	331	402	71
Wyre Forest	326	267	-59	276	335	59
OOC	6	4	-2	8	10	2
Totals	1,677	1,374	-303	1,617	1,962	345

If Worcestershire were in line with national percentages for the number of children with an EHCP in maintained special schools (28%), we would see a decrease of 304 pupils on roll at a Special School. On the other hand, the number of pupils with an EHCP attending Mainstream schools would increase by 423 if Worcestershire were inline with the national statistic of 40%.

4.2 Analysis of Current Pupils with EHCPs

For the purpose of this analysis, we assume (based on recent evidential trends) that the number of EHCPs will continue to rise with age and be more frequent among boys than girls in all areas of need except for physical/sensory. The Education Planning Areas (EPAs) with more pupils, such as Worcester, Redditch and Kidderminster, will also have more children with EHCPs. This analysis compares the actual spread of children with EHCPs against this expectation.

4.2.1 Communication and Interaction

- 1,069 children from the January Census and SEN2 data have an EHCP with a primary need of Autism (ASD).
- Wychavon continues to have the highest number of children with an EHCP for ASD (251).
- Across all the districts, boys significantly outnumber girls with an Autism diagnosis and an EHCP. 77.6% of children with ASD and an EHCP in Worcestershire are male.
- Consistent with last year's data, the highest number of children with an EHCP with the primary need of ASD across all districts are within the age range of 11 to 15 years old.
- Of the 1,069 children with an EHCP and ASD, 38.4% are Post-16, followed by 34.5% of children in KS3 (11 to 15 years old).
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) also falls under the communication and interaction category, there are 1,228 children in Worcestershire with EHCPs and a primary need of SLCN.
- Worcester has the highest number of children who have an EHCP with SLCN primary need. As with ASD, there are greater numbers of boys than girls with this primary need. Across all districts, the highest numbers of children with SLCN and an EHCP is in the age 5 to 10 category.
- The highest percentage of children with SLCN and EHCP is in Worcester at 20.4% of the county total, this is closely followed by Wyre Forest at 19.4%.
- Aside from out-of-county children, Malvern has the lowest percentage of EHCPs with primary needs of SLCN across the county at 9.9%.

4.2.2 Cognition and Learning

- The cognition category includes children with Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD), Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD), Profound Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD) and Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD).
- There are 1,263 children and young people with cognition and learning needs and an EHCP.
- Bromsgrove continues to have the lowest number of EHCPs with primary need covering cognition and learning across the districts.
- Of the 1,263, 67% of these have the primary need of MLD. Across Worcestershire's districts, the age range of 11 to 15 has the most children with MLD needs. Children with Significant Learning Difficulties vary most between 5 to 15 years old.
- This is similar with Specific Learning Difficulties, Bromsgrove, Malvern, Worcester, Wychavon and Wyre Forest all have the largest cohort in the age range of 11 to 15. Whereas, for Redditch, it is the 5 to 10 age range.

- Numbers of children with Profound Multiple Learning Difficulty are the lowest of the cohort. Numbers across the age ranges are more spread out – however, 5 to 15 still show as most prevalent.

4.2.3 Sensory and/or Physical

- Sensory and physical disabilities include children with Visual Impairments (VI), Hearing Impairments (HI) and Physical Disability (PD). There are 334 children and young people with Sensory and/or Physical primary needs and an EHCP in Worcestershire.
- Children with PD make up 69.8% of the cohort, followed by HI at 15.6% and VI at 14.7%.
- Wyre Forest has the most children with hearing impairment needs, Wychavon with physical disability and Worcester has the highest number of children with visual impairments.
- 182 children with sensory and/or physical needs are male, closely followed by 152 females.

4.2.4 Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)

- There are 968 children and young people in Worcestershire with an EHCP and primary need of SEMH, this is an increase from 812 EHCPs in 2022.
- Of the 968, 32.2% are post-16, followed by KS2 (years 3 to 6) at 21.6%.
- Across Worcestershire, 75.7% of the children with an EHCP and SEMH are male with the highest figures in Worcester, Wychavon and Wyre Forest.
- Across the female data, the number of EHCPs with primary need of SEMH peaks in Year 11. Whereas, for males the peak is in Year 13.

4.3 Breakdown of Needs by District

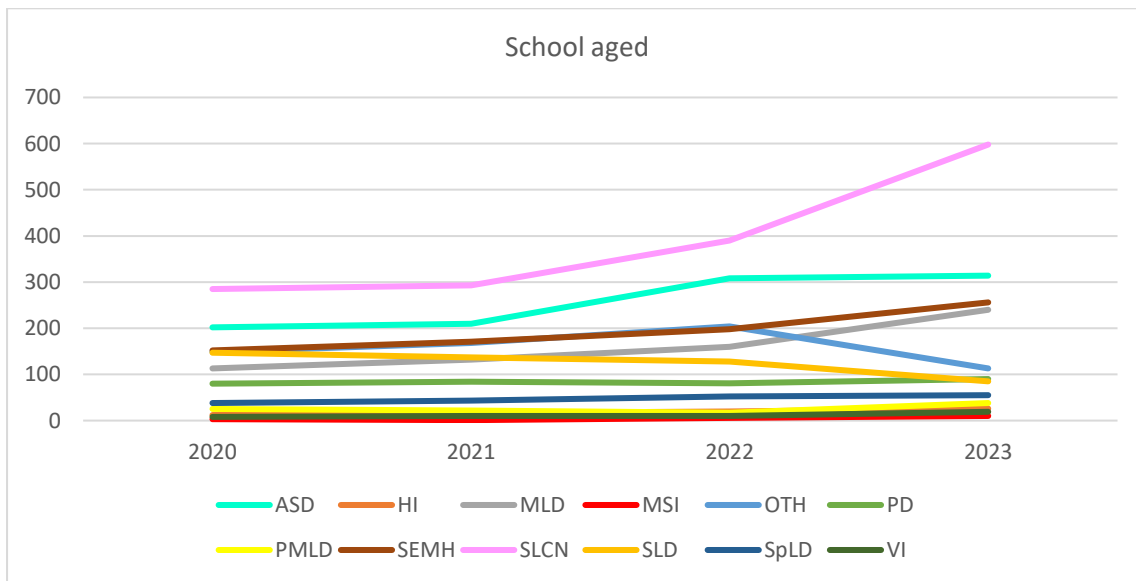
Table 6: Children with EHCP and Primary Needs by District, January Census and SEN2

Resident District	ASD	Cognition	Other ¹⁴	SEMH	Sensory/Physical	Speech
Bromsgrove	168	147	42	95	57	180
Malvern Hills	142	156	41	130	32	122
Redditch	150	230	29	175	63	186
Worcester	157	215	40	186	58	251
Wychavon	251	281	57	198	72	222
Wyre Forest	152	195	48	145	46	238
Out of County	49	39	20	39	25	29

Table 6 above shows the breakdown of the grouping of primary needs by Worcestershire districts. Wychavon has the highest number across all need groups, apart from speech and language, where Worcester has the highest number of children with this need.

4.4 Trends by Areas of Need

Figure 10: Trends by Primary Need (Primary Age) – January Census and SEN2

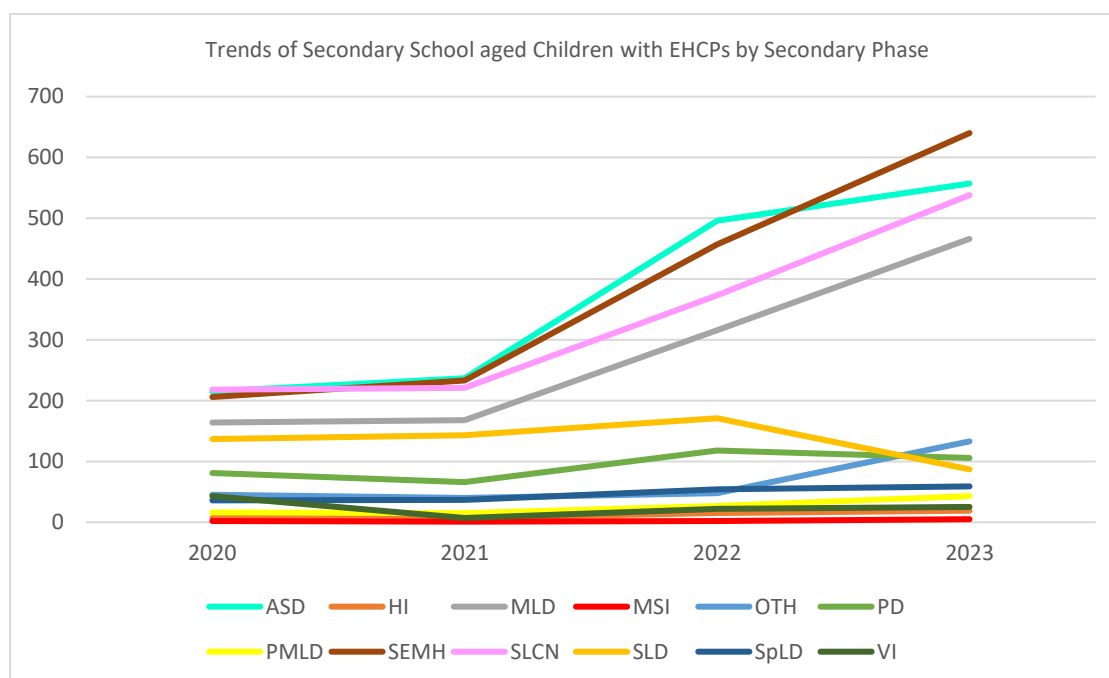


The number of pupils with ASD, SLCN, SEMH and MLD primary needs have continued to rise since 2020 for the primary phase age groups. The same types of primary needs are also continuing to rise for secondary school aged children. The most noticeable increase in the primary phase is the primary

¹⁴ The 'Other' category is sometimes used to classify complex cases which have aspects of ASD and either PMLD or SLD. Also, the category 'Other' may have been allocated due to delay in an official diagnosis by a healthcare professional.

need of SLCN, where there has been an increase of 208 EHCPs with this primary need since 2022. Speech and Language needs are highest amongst primary school aged children, however, there has also been an increase amongst secondary school aged children. There has been a decline in the primary need of Other¹⁵ since 2022 where it had peaked, the number of children with an EHCP and primary need of Other has decreased by 57% since 2022. The 'Other' category is sometimes used to classify complex cases which have aspects of ASD and either PMLD or SLD. Also, the category 'Other' may have been allocated due to delay in an official diagnosis by a healthcare professional.

Figure 11: Trend by Primary Need (Secondary Age) – January Census and SEN2



The number of pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties has had a prominent increase since 2021 and is continuing to rise in the secondary phase. The number of children with an EHCP and primary need of SEMH has now overtaken ASD in the Secondary phase. The number of secondary school aged children with EHCPs and the primary need of Other has remained fairly consistent between 2020 to 2022, however, there has been a large increase from 48 to 133 children with this primary need in 2023. Children with the primary need of Other is the fourth largest increase of cases between 2022 to 2023, following SEMH, SLCN and MLD.

4.5 Financial Considerations

The diversity of provision to support children and young people with SEN is extensive. Broadly speaking, there are 2 types of funding for SEN. Children attending mainstream and state-funded special schools attract funding from the High Needs Funding Block, related to how much additional support is necessary to meet their education needs. Children and young people attending

¹⁵ The 'Other' category is sometimes used to classify complex cases which have aspects of ASD and either PMLD or SLD. Also, the category 'Other' may have been allocated due to delay in an official diagnosis by a healthcare professional.

independent settings are provided for at a unique cost based upon the individual child’s needs and the setting’s provision. These can have similar costs to mainstream provision but are frequently much more expensive. All placements have different durations. The table below shows the total cost per placements for children attending provision 2022/2023.

Table 7: Worcestershire HNB Monitoring Costs P6 Actuals Per Placement by Setting Type

School Type	Total FTE	Total Cost Per Placement (£)	Avg. Cost Per Placement (£)
FE	566	6,450,332	11,396
Independent	42	1,289,935	31,461
Independent Special	342	16,567,611	55,042
Mainstream	2,036	10,248,520	5,033
Special	2,163	26,277,804	12,148
Specialist FE	148	8,228,429	58,357
Grand Total	5,297	69,062,631	N/A

There has been an increase in the average cost per placement across all types of provision. The average cost per placement at independent special schools has increased by around £4,000 in comparison to last year’s data. There has also been an increase in the average cost per placement for specialist FE provision.

With the addition of the new special free school in Malvern anticipated to open in September 2027, this should bring down the average cost per pupil placement for independent special as some children attending independent settings who have a primary need of ASD can then attend a Worcestershire local authority-funded special school that specialises in Autism.

Figure 12: Worcestershire Cost Per Placement in Independent Mainstream, State-Funded Special Schools and Independent Special Schools 2023

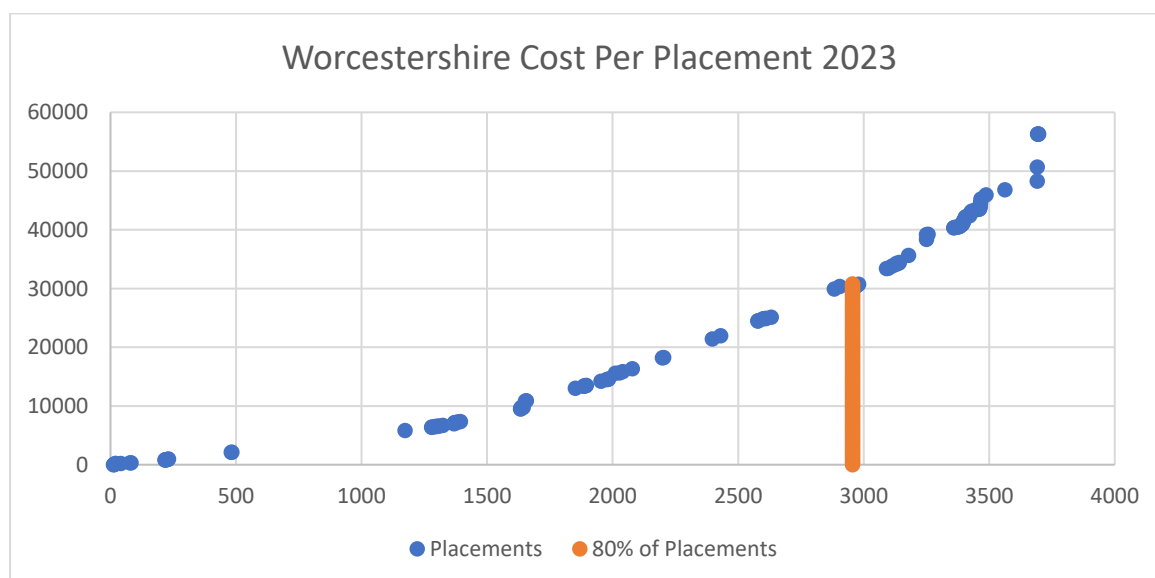


Figure 12 shows that if all placement costs are added up, with smallest first, the lowest 80% of the placements together cost £659,756. Another way of saying this is that the 80th percentile placement has a cost per placement of £22,745 per year. From here, the graph continues to curve upwards with the 90th percentile at a cumulative cost of placements at £40,364 and reaching over £50,000 at the higher end.

Table 8: Cost Per Placement by Primary Need (KS1/KS2)

Primary Need	KS1			KS2		
	FTE	Annualised Cost (£)	Avg. Cost Per Place (£)	FTE	Annualised Cost (£)	Avg. Cost Per Place (£)
ASD	96	534,208	5,564	175	1,115,608	6,374
Cognition	84	635,690	7,567	324	2,036,618	6,285
SEMH	47	260,112	5,534	211	1,420,271	6,731
Sensory/Physical	46	437,710	9,515	68	682,882	10,042
Speech & Language	223	1,353,961	6,071	392	2,393,833	6,106
Other ¹⁶	51	337,810	6,623	48	391,721	8,160
Total	547	3,559,491	6,507	1,218	8,040,933	6,601

For KS1, speech and language is the most common primary need, but has the third lowest average cost per placement. The highest cost per placement within KS1 and KS2 is for pupils with sensory or physical primary needs (visual impairment, hearing impairment, multi-sensory impairment and physical disability).

Table 9: Cost Per Placement by Primary Need (KS3/KS4)

Primary Need	KS3			KS4		
	FTE	Annualised Cost (£)	Avg. Cost Per Place (£)	FTE	Annualised Cost (£)	Avg. Cost Per Place (£)
ASD	213	1,416,720	6,651	104	727,074	6,991
Cognition	309	2,179,882	7,054	150	1,104,630	7,364
SEMH	181	1,357,063	7,497	129	1,054,234	8,172
Sensory/Physical	46	392,890	8,541	27	213,887	7,921
Speech & Language	216	1,278,654	5,919	130	816,010	6,277
Other	35	272,344	7,781	11	112,602	10,236
Total	1,000	6,897,553	6,897	551	4,028,437	7,311

The largest cohort in KS3 are those with cognitive needs 57% of this cohort are attending state-funded special schools. The largest cost per placement in KS4 is for children with a primary need recorded as 'other'¹⁷, 36% of these children are attending specialist provision, both state-funded and independent.

¹⁷ The 'Other' category is sometimes used to classify complex cases which have aspects of ASD and either PMLD or SLD. Also, the category 'Other' may have been allocated due to delay in an official diagnosis by a healthcare professional.

Table 10: Cost Per Placement by Primary Need (KS5/19+)

Primary Need	KS5			19+		
	FTE	Annualised Cost	Avg. Cost Per Place	FTE	Annualised Cost	Avg. Cost Per Place
ASD	71	768,251	10,820	10	233,693	23,369
Cognition	118	823,646	6,980	12	118,883	9,906
SEMH	80	505,474	6,318	1	1,438	1,438
Sensory/Physical	33	237,654	7,201	7	36,738	5,248
Speech & Language	135	627,004	4,644	6	8,630	1,438
Other	3	24,276	8,092	0	N/A	N/A
Total	440	2,986,305	6,787	36	399,382	10,510

There are few placements for 19+ young people, however the placements are at a very high cost. For both KS5 and 19+, cognitive primary needs were highest. Young people (19+) with ASD have the higher average cost per place, this is also the case for the KS5 cohort with ASD.

4.6 Forecasting Pupil Numbers

We have seen so far in this report detailed some of the trends and changes that are affecting the landscape of the number of pupils and type of SEND needs across the county and the impact on the provision and places therefore that are required to meet these needs.

In order to forecast the number of pupils requiring additional or specialist provision to meet their SEND needs over the next 5 years, we must firstly look at trends in the total school population.

Places in mainstream schools for the next 5 years are forecast in a DfE-approved statistical model using the October annual school census, known children (children aged from birth to 4 years resident within Worcestershire who are registered with a GP surgery), and historic 5-year average transfer rates for each year group. It also incorporates new housing assumptions for the period being considered.

Table 11 shows the forecast number of EHCPs up to 2028. The forecast methodology takes the forecast number of children and young people living in Worcestershire, the previous year's EHCP figure by age and the previous 5-year average of new EHCPs to forecast EHCP numbers for the next 4 years:

Table 11: Worcestershire EHCP Forecast 2024 to 2028

Age Range	Actual	Forecast				
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Under 5	176	164	275	279	279	279
6-10	1,316	1,394	1,341	1,376	1,376	1,365
11-15	1,731	2,022	2,251	2,478	2,686	2,852
16-19	1,489	1,516	1,746	1,955	2,111	2,300
20-25	446	721	863	1,001	1,186	1,368
Grand Total	5,158	5,810	6,476	7,089	7,638	8,164

5 Current Worcestershire Provision

To meet the needs of children with SEND, a range of education provision is available in Worcestershire, within mainstream and special schools to provide the best education to support individual needs.

Each mainstream school has a named specialist to support children at the school. The SENCo (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) works within mainstream settings and is the 'school teacher who is responsible for assessing, planning and monitoring the progress of children with special educational needs and disabilities'¹⁸. Schools can also employ additional specialist support for individual pupils.

Some schools have dedicated SEN Resourced provision or SEN Units which are specially designed to support pupils with specific special educational needs alongside a mainstream education. Pupils attending a SEN unit will spend at least half their time in this provision, most children will have an EHCP but the unit may also provide support for pupils with SEN support. SEN units are designated by the local authority specifically for making SEN provision, and sometimes accommodate pupils registered at other schools on a part-time basis. Pupils attending Resourced Provision have places reserved at a mainstream school with a specific type of SEN, and are taught for at least half their time within mainstream classes, but require a base and specialist facilities around the school. Resourced Provisions are designated by the local authority specifically for making this kind of SEN provision.

There are also a number of teams with the Local Authority who work with mainstream schools to support pupils including the Autism and Complex Communication Needs team, Learning Support Team, Medical Education Team, Sensory Impairment Team, Physical Disability Outreach and the Virtual Schools Team.

Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust are also commissioned to provide certain services such as speech and language therapy, school nursing and child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) to support vulnerable children to maintain a place in school. The demand for these services is reviewed separately, however, is in part driven by the number of children and young people living in Worcestershire.

5.1 Early Years SEND / Enhanced Provision

Under the Equalities Act 2010, local authorities must ensure they promote equality and inclusion, by removing barriers of access to funded childcare. This is achieved by working with parents to know what is available and by working with providers to support and promote best practice and provision to meet the needs of young children and working parents.

The Sufficiency and Place Planning Team received a list of known children living in Worcestershire and registered at a Worcestershire GP every year from the NHS to support education provision planning.

¹⁸ [Special Educational Needs Coordinator \(SENCo\) | The Good Schools Guide](#)

Most children aged 0-5 with SEND will be taught in local early years settings. All Ofsted-registered Nursery Education Funded early years settings, are able to claim additional funding per hour to support the needs of children with SEND, known as the graduated response.

Where a child aged 0 – 5 years is identified by either a health, education or social care professional as possibly having special educational needs, they will submit an initial notification to the Local Authority Early Years Inclusion Process (previously the Pre-School Forum). The notification should always be discussed with the parent carer prior to being submitted.

A multi-agency team meets monthly to discuss the notifications received and actions agreed to assess whether additional support or additional education provision is required in their pre-school years.

Some pre-school aged children are referred for specialist nursery provision (including special school nurseries, Nursery Plus or Early Years Language class provision) - these children are included in the School Census. Other early years providers including child minders and private nurseries return child level details on the Early Years Census and these children are included in the planning for early years and school places. More information about the [Early Years Inclusion Process](#) can be found on our website.

The table below shows the number of children for whom early years settings in Worcestershire were claiming additional Graduated Response funding to support their emerging needs in January 2023 (GR1-4 plus EHC plan¹⁹).

Table 12: 2, 3 and 4 Year-Old Known Children (KC) in Funded Early Years Settings

	Total KC (2 – 4 yrs)	%	No of 2 Yr Olds	% of 2's	No of 3 Yr Olds	% of 3's	No of 4 Yr Olds	% of 4's
No Special Educational Need	8,584	83.58	873	85.67	5,948	84.26	1,763	80.39
Graduated Response 1 (GR1)	244	2.38	29	2.85	161	2.28	54	2.46
Graduated Response 2 (GR2)	666	6.48	49	4.81	454	6.43	163	7.43
Graduated Response 3 (GR3)	224	2.18	10	0.98	149	2.11	65	2.96
Graduated Response 4 (GR4)	327	3.18	47	4.61	220	3.12	60	2.74
Exceptional Early Years Funding/EHC plan	226	2.20	11	1.08	127	1.80	88	4.01
Grand Total	10,271		1,019		7,059		2,193	

The total of known children 2-4 years old in funded early years settings has decreased from last years total of 10,637 children. However, there has been an increase in the number of funded 3-year-olds. There are an additional 1,229 funded 3-year-olds for 2023. There has been a 0.93% increase in

¹⁹ GR Ratings are explained on WCC Website - [The SEND Graduated Response | Worcestershire County Council](#)

exceptional early years funding/EHC plan for 3 year old children, another significant increase is in 3 year old children receiving graduated response 2, by 1.06%.

5.2 Early Years Enhanced Provision / Nursery Assessment Units

Two of the nine special schools have nursery assessment units attached to support in assessing the education provision required for pre-school aged children due to start school. A further unit is attached to a first school in Redditch (Batchley First School). In November 2022, WCF invited mainstream and specialist nursery providers to take part in open discussions about the future of Nursery Assessment Units (NAU). A questionnaire was also sent to providers and parent carers for their feedback on what was working well and what could be improved. The NAU Review identified a need to consider the sufficiency of places where children with complex needs could access their full Nursery Education Funding (NEF) Entitlement and a redesign of the Pre-School Forum model. The outcome of the NAU Review is that we are developing Enhanced Early Years provision, delivered by an early years provider or a school, to meet the needs of children whose identified complex needs make it difficult for them to attend an early years setting. Places will be allocated via a termly, multi-agency planning meeting for children with complex needs. The needs will have been identified through an EHCP Needs Assessment or an EHCP.

Prior to September 2023, four special schools delivered nursery assessment units across the county. In September 2023, due to an unprecedented rise in the demand for special school reception places, WCF in consultation with The Vale of Evesham school and Academy Trust and Fort Royal school had to prioritise reception places over nursery places at both schools. The Vale of Evesham school offered Outreach support to children that would have attended the Vale of Evesham and Fort Royal Nursery Assessment Units, either in their mainstream provision, or at home. This support continues whilst Enhanced Early Years providers are being identified for Worcester City/Malvern and Wychavon districts. We are now also beginning to review and consider the other districts of Wyre Forest and Redditch / Bromsgrove to develop Enhanced Early Years provision, market engagement will begin in March 2024.

Once providers have been identified to deliver Enhanced Early Years provision, statutory consultation to open and close SEN provision will begin. Capital investment may be required to deliver new provision in new locations, funding will be proposed to Capital Board and Cabinet.

5.3 Early Years Language classes (RP)

At early years stage (2-4 year olds), the main Primary need is SLCN. WCF commission Early Years Language classes (Resource Bases) at first and primary Schools across Worcestershire. This targeted intervention provides children with specialist provision for typically 6 hours per week to support their speech, language and communication needs, since early intervention with speech development can eliminate or much reduce the need for SEND support later²⁰.

The following schools provide Early Years Language Classes; Batchley First School (Redditch), Cranham Primary School (Worcester), Upton Upon Severn CE Primary School (Malvern) and St Mary's CE Primary School (Wyre Forest).

²⁰ [Bercow Review of Services for Children and Young People with SLCN](#)

There is a significant difference in the number of 3- and 4-year-olds attending Early Years Language classes by gender. 71% of children attending one of the settings listed below are male.

Wyre Forest has the highest percentage of known children (1.38%) attending an EY language class in relation to its population. The majority of children attending this setting (Kidderminster Language Centre) are 3 years old. This is closely followed by Redditch where 1.31% of the known children in the district attend the EY Language class at Batchley First School.

Children who live in the Wychavon district are travelling the furthest distance to attend an EY Language class (over 20km). 7 children travel to Riverboats Speech and Language Class in the Malvern Hills district. There are no EY Language classes within the Wychavon district, meaning more children are having to travel further distances to attend the provision from this district.

Table 13: Known 3 and 4 Year-Olds and EY Language Unit Setting They Attend as at Summer 2022/23

District	Known Children (3&4 yrs)	Children in District		Children in Setting		Total Registered	% of Known Children	Settings attending
		3 Yr Olds	4 Yr Olds	3 Yr Olds	4 Yr Olds			
Bromsgrove	1,432	1,075	357	11	4	15	1.05	1) Charford First School EY Language Class 2) Redditch EY Language Class
Malvern Hills	926	686	240	6	3	9	0.97	1) Cranham Primary EY Language Class 2) Riverboats Speech and Language Class
Redditch	1,448	1,127	321	14	5	19	1.31	1) Redditch EY Language Class 2) Charford First School EY Language Class
Worcester	1,709	1,303	406	6	6	12	0.70	1) Cranham Primary EY Specialist Language Class 2) Riverboats Speech and Language Class
Wychavon	1,865	1,425	440	12	8	20	1.07	1) Riverboats Speech and Language Class 2) Cranham Primary EY Specialist Language Class 3) Charford First School EY Language Class
Wyre Forest	1,375	1,043	332	12	7	19	1.38	Kidderminster EY Language Centre
Totals	8,755	6,659	2,096	61	33	94		

In September 2023 WCF began a review of the Language class provision in Worcestershire to best understand how we can effectively support the most children in Worcestershire and have the most impact to our children and families.

5.4 School Age Language Units

The mainstream schools listed below have Resource Base School Age Language Units to support pupils at the school who have been referred for a place within a Resourced Language Class provision based on a recommendation from their Speech and Language Therapist. The Local Authority commission 52 primary school places and 11 High school places used to provide intensive specialised teaching for children with significant Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN). As has been evidenced earlier in the report, SLCN is much more common before the age of 11, which, with the intensive support provided early on, means that there is less need for provision at Secondary/High school phase.

Table 14: School Age Language Units and Commissioned Places 2022 2022/23 by District

District	Language Units	School Type	Commissioned Places
Wyre Forest	Burlish Park Primary	Primary	10
Wyre Forest	Sutton Park Primary	Primary	10
Wyre Forest	King Charles I High	Secondary	11
Bromsgrove	Lickey Hills KS1 Primary	Primary	21
Bromsgrove	Lickey Hills KS2 Primary	Primary	
Redditch	Matchborough First	First	11

Due to the nature of speech development from birth, the discovery of an SLC need and beginning of treatment is often before age 3. Further information is provided in the section on early-years and nursery provision.

In September 2023 WCF began a review of the Language class provision in Worcestershire to best understand how we can effectively support the most children in Worcestershire and have the most impact to our children and families.

5.5 Mainstream Autism Bases (MABs) and Enhanced Mainstream Autism Bases (EMABs)

Mainstream Autism Bases (MABs) are Resource Base provision within Worcestershire Mainstream schools.

MABs are an integral part of the special education graduated response provision commissioned by WCF, providing focused educational provision for pupils whose academic needs are well matched to a mainstream setting, but who require specialised autism specific provision that is often difficult to replicate in mainstream schools.

Enhanced Autism Bases (EMABs) enables a higher level of need to be provided for with an enhanced range of provision and is anticipated that children and young people may spend more time in this provision.

Current Autism Bases across Worcestershire are listed in the table below with the total number of commissioned full-time equivalent places for 2022/23:

Table 15: MABs by Phase and 2022/23 Commissioned Places

R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11
Beaconside Primary MAB (8)						Waseley Hills High School MAB (10)					
Meadows First MAB >					Parkside Middle MAB (10)			NBHS MAB (10)			
							Dyson Perrins MAB (10)				
							TGAR Hive MAB + Treetops EMAB (55)				
						Walkwood Middle MAB (8)					
Oldbury Park Primary MAB (8)						Christopher Whitehead Language College EMAB (12)					
					Abbey Park Middle MAB (10)		Persnore High School MAB (12)				
Chaddesley Corbett EMAB (10)						King Charles High School MAB (17)					

To meet an increased demand for Autism base provision, Chaddesley Corbett EMAB opened in September 2022, Christopher Whitehead Language College MAB opened in September 2023 and Tudor Grange Academy Redditch Treetops EMAB also increased its places by 25 for September 2023.

Table 16 shows the number of pupils attending MAB provision year on year.

Table 16: MABs number of pupils attending by academic year

MAB Unit	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
Meadows/Parkside (10)	12	12	11	9	9	10	9
North Broms High (10)	8	8	10	10	10	10	9
Beaconside Primary (8)	8	9	9	8	8	7	5
Waseley Hills High (10)	7	9	11	7	10	11	6
Dyson Perrins CofE Academy (12)	13	10	10	11	12	12	14
Walkwood Middle (13)	8	7	9	13	14	14	3
TGAR Hive	8	3	8	7	10	7	6
TGAR Treetops (55)				12	18	25	24

Oldbury Park Primary (8)	8	8	8	8	8	8	5
CWLC (0)							
Abbey Park Middle (10)	11	10	8	7	8	8	9
Pershore High (12)	14	12	11	13	14	18	9
Chaddesley Corbett Endowed Primary (10)							9
King Charles I (17)	20	17	17	16	17	18	18

A place within a MAB is accessed via a current EHCP rather than normal school admissions. It is important for MAB provision to exist through all phases in an Education Planning Area as this allows children to remain with their peer group throughout their education journey.

MABs have been shown to be extremely effective at meeting the needs of children with Autism and supporting them to remain within the mainstream schools. 8 of the Mainstream Autism Bases are either at or nearing capacity. ASD is a complex area which means that some children will still be best placed in special schools, however the provision of bases such as these allow children that can, to remain with their peer group and access the benefits of mainstream schools and allow special schools to adapt more specifically to more complex needs.

Of those attending MABs during the academic year of 2022/23, 41.06% of the children have a primary need of ASD, this is followed by 15.89% that have a Primary need of SEMH and 15.23% with a primary need of SLCN.

40.4% of children attending one of Worcestershire's MABs are in KS3 (years 7 to 9), this is followed by 33.77% in KS4 (years 10 to 11). This shows a larger demand for this provision within these year groups.

Chaddesley Corbett Primary E-MAB in Wyre Forest opened in September 2022 and is already near capacity. The opening of Christopher Whitehead Secondary MAB in Worcester City will relieve pressure and demand for KS3 and KS4, as the tables above show that 5 out of 6 of the MABs that accommodate these key stages are either at nearing or at capacity if commissioned places, or over.

As of January 2024, 31% of the 248 children or young people awaiting SEND provision had a primary need of ASD. Some of these children could have their needs met within a MAB or EMAB. The Sufficiency and Place Planning Team with SEND Officers have identified schools with existing base provision to discuss options to expand the number of places available. High Needs Provision capital has been allocated to create additional provision.

5.6 Accessible Mainstream Schools

All local authorities must have an accessibility strategy²¹ for the schools it is responsible for such as local authority-maintained schools. This is a requirement of law outlined in the Equality Act 2010. The overall aim of the Accessibility Strategy is to ensure that Worcestershire Children First supports schools in meeting the needs of disabled pupils and raising their attainment. The purpose of the strategy is to ensure that accessibility of the curriculum, the physical environment and information for disabled pupils is central to the delivery of services. The strategy aims to provide information and a framework to help schools create individual accessibility plans. Schools should take account of Worcestershire Children First accessibility strategy when drawing up their own school accessibility plans.

Schools must make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of aids and services, to ensure that disabled pupils are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers. This duty is anticipatory – it requires thought to be given in advance to what disabled pupils might require and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent that disadvantage. Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinators (SENCOs) must work with the headteacher and school governors to ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements.

A key consideration in the approach to addressing matters is the need to manage reasonable adjustments along with expectations, as well as school sites, and funding limitations. Because of these factors, WCC focuses on those adaptations that ensure the pupil has reasonable access to the curriculum and support accommodation. Often it is not possible to provide unimpeded access for a pupil with a disability to all parts of the mainstream school site and consequently, adjustments need to be underpinned by effective school time tabling arrangements that ensure those pupils along with their peers are located in rooms and areas that have been reasonably adapted, or have natural ease of accessibility, .e.g. use of ground floor specialist teaching rooms, etc.

The accessibility of all mainstream schools in Worcestershire is kept under review either when considering placements for individual pupils, when S106 funding is available to improve provision or when other works are planned at schools. All schools are graded depending on how accessible they are for pupils to access the curriculum and support accommodation²¹.

5.7 Medical Education Provision (MET)

Section 19 of the Education Act (1996) states that ‘each local authority shall make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school for those children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them’. This duty applies to all children, whether they have special educational needs (SEN) or not.

There are a variety of pathways for children who do not or cannot attend school for a period of more than 15 days, one of which is referral to the Medical Education Team. During the academic year of

²¹ [Support for children and young people with disabilities and medical difficulties | Worcestershire County Council](#)

2022-2023, the team provided education to 88 pupils of all ages on 3 sites: Lea Street in Kidderminster, Easemore Road in Redditch and Newbridge in Worcester.

Figure 13: Number of Pupils Attending MET Provision Per Academic Year

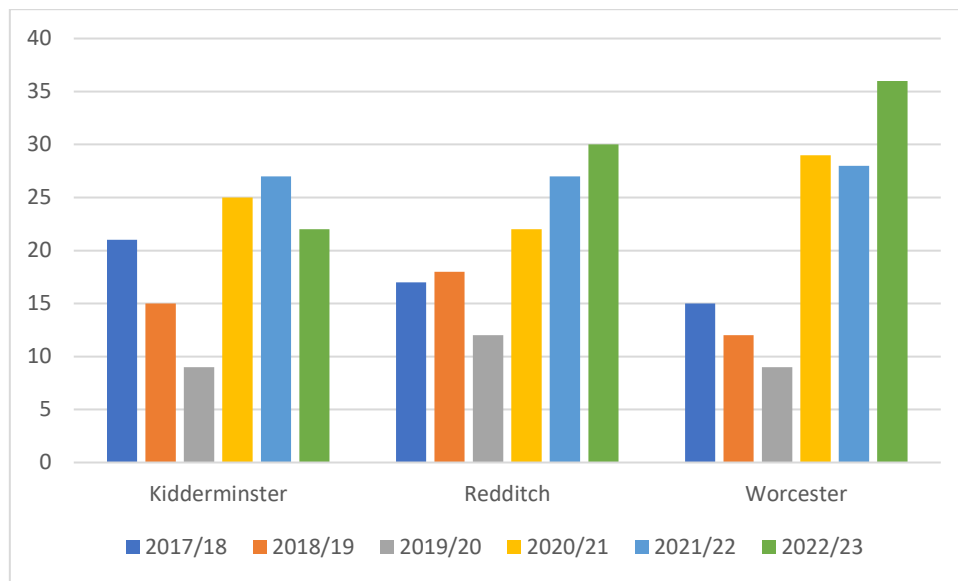
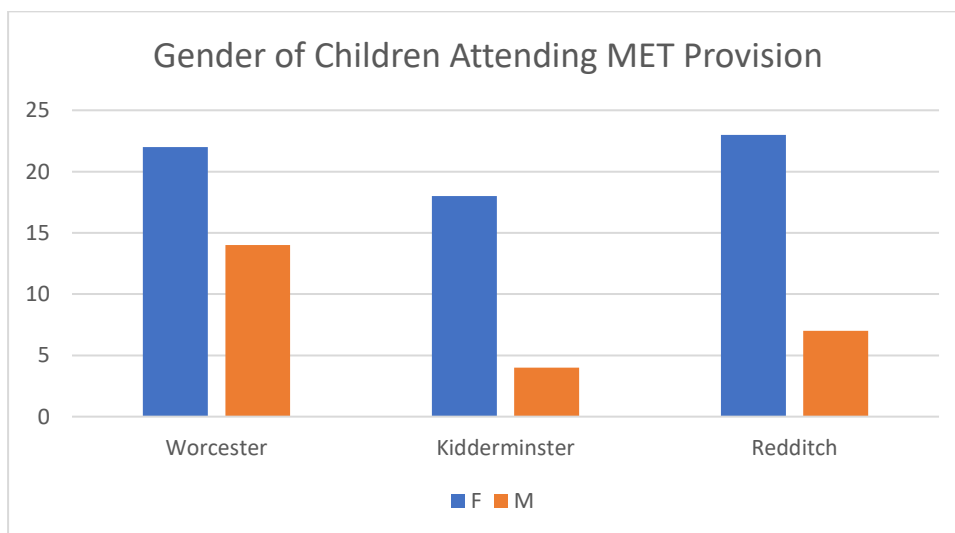


Figure 13 shows the number of children who attended one of the 3 base provisions since academic year 2017/2018. During 2022/23, 88 children accessed MET provision at some point - this is an increase on the previous years.

Figure 14: Gender of Children Attending MET Provision, MET Pupil Action Log 2022-23



More girls that attended MET provision in 2022/23 across all three locations, this is consistent with the last 9-10 years of data. 71.6% of children accessing MET provision are female.

Where data has been provided, 82% of children accessing MET provision have been referred due to Mental Health issues, the most common form of mental health for children that attended all three provisions is anxiety, alongside secondary reasons.

Just 10.2% of children that accessed one of the three MET provisions in 2022/23 had an EHCP, of the 88 children that attended, 23.9% had an ASD diagnosis.

5.8 Special Schools

If the needs of a child are more complex than reasonable adaptations can accommodate within Mainstream schools, then a place at a special school may be required to ensure a child's needs can be met.

There are 9 LA-funded special schools across Worcestershire, of which 6 provide education for children with a variety of significant needs and 3 with an identified specialism.

Two of the schools cater for nursery age children, with a further nursery assessment unit at Batchley First School in Redditch.

Table 17: Worcestershire Special Schools List

District	Special School	Age Range	Type	Designation
Bromsgrove	Chadsgrove School	2-19	Local Authority	Physical Disability
Bromsgrove	Rigby Hall School	4-19	Local Authority	Generic
Redditch	Pitcheroak School	4-19	Academy	Generic
Redditch	The Kingfisher School	7-19	Academy	SEMH
Worcester City	Fort Royal Community Primary School	2-11*	Local Authority	Generic
Worcester City	Regency High School	11-19	Academy	Generic
Worcester City	Riversides School	7-16	Academy	SEMH
Wychavon	The Vale of Evesham School	2-19*	Academy	Generic
Wyre Forest	Wyre Forest School	3-19	Local Authority	Generic

*Although Fort Royal and the Vale of Evesham still have nursery age ranges, they are unable to accommodate nursery age children on site. A change of age range will be proposed.

District	Supported Provision	Age Range	Type
Redditch	Batchley First Nursery Plus	2-4	Community mainstream

There is no set Published Admission Number (PAN) at a special school. Places are commissioned by the Local Authority with each school dependent on demand, needs of children and the physical capacity of the school.

Figure 15: Jan 2023 Number on Roll, SCAP Net Capacity 2023, September 2023 Commissioned Places for Special Schools

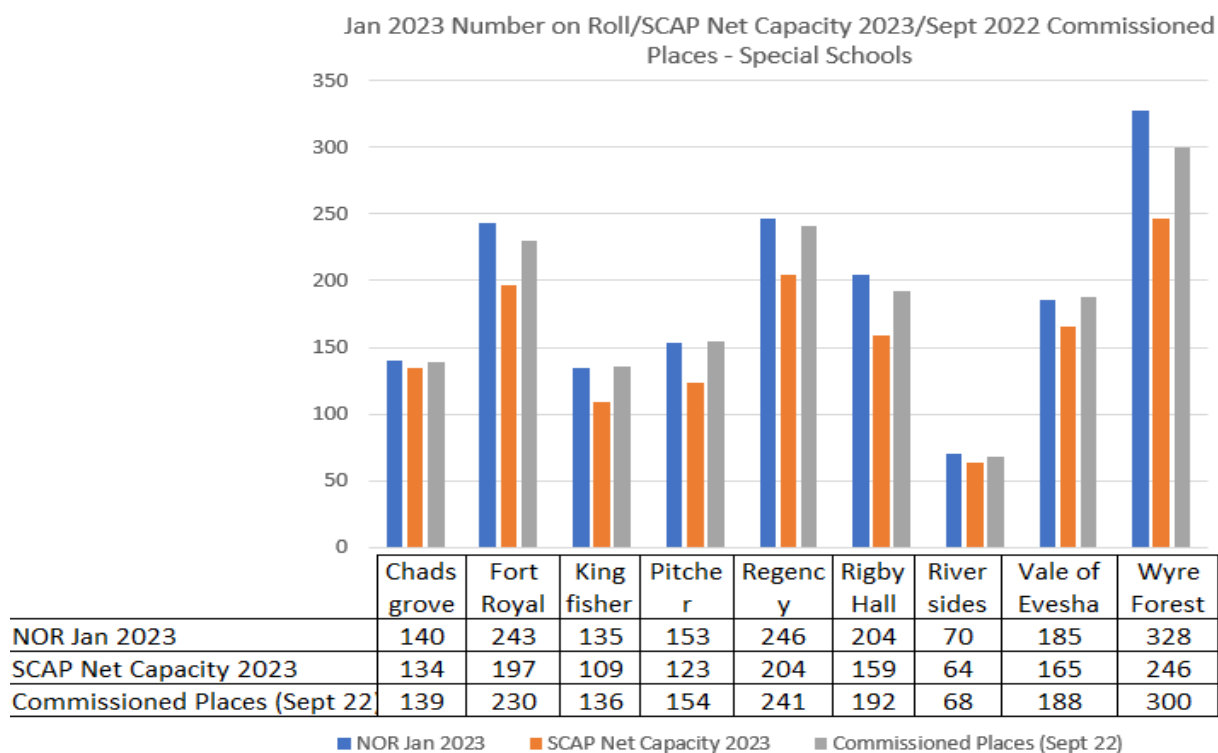
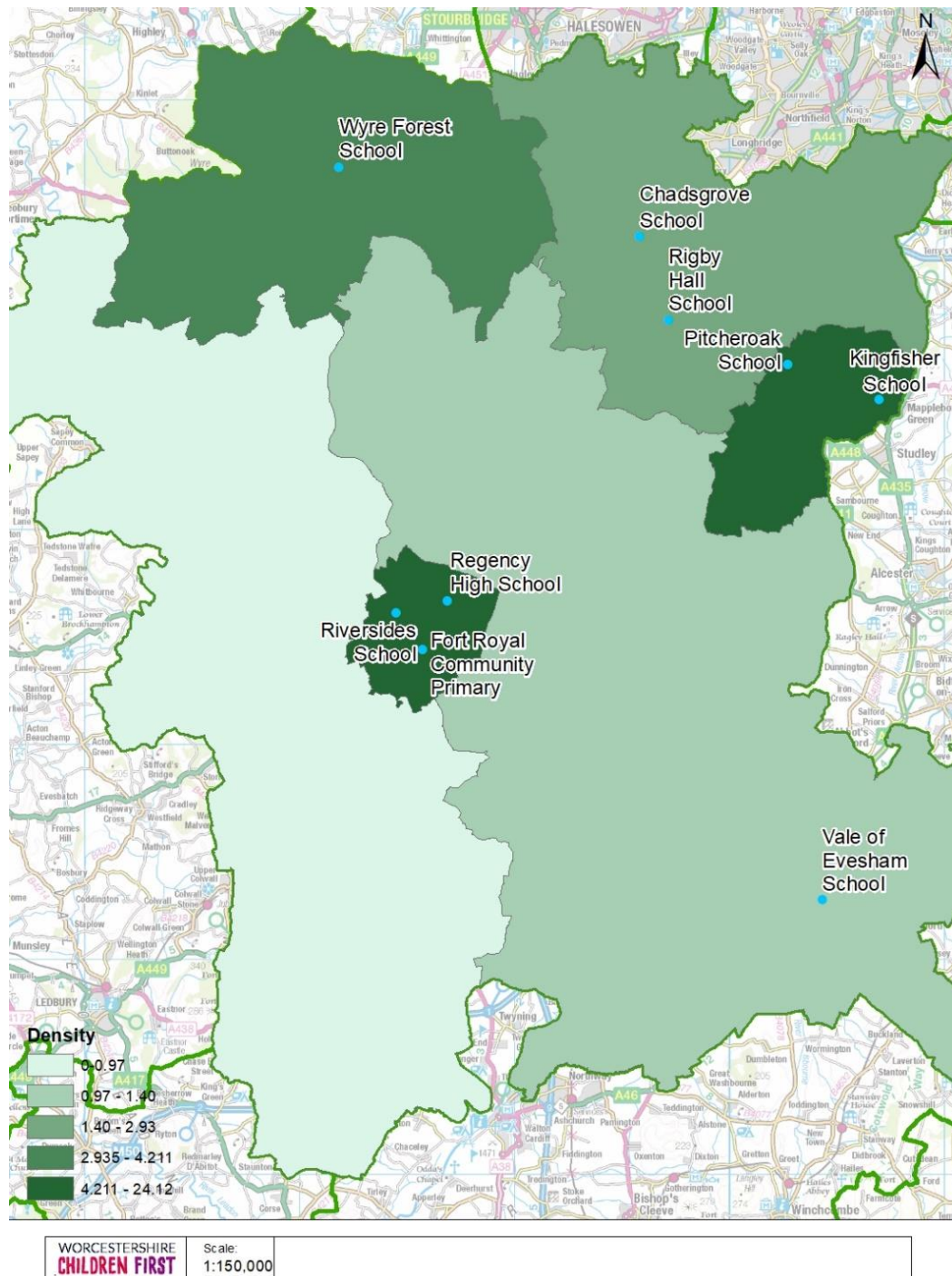


Figure 15 shows the differences between January 2023 Census number on roll against the June 2023 SCAP Net Capacity which had been carried out as a requirement for the DfE for the first time in Summer 2023. All schools have higher commissioned places and higher numbers on roll than their Net Capacity Assessments.

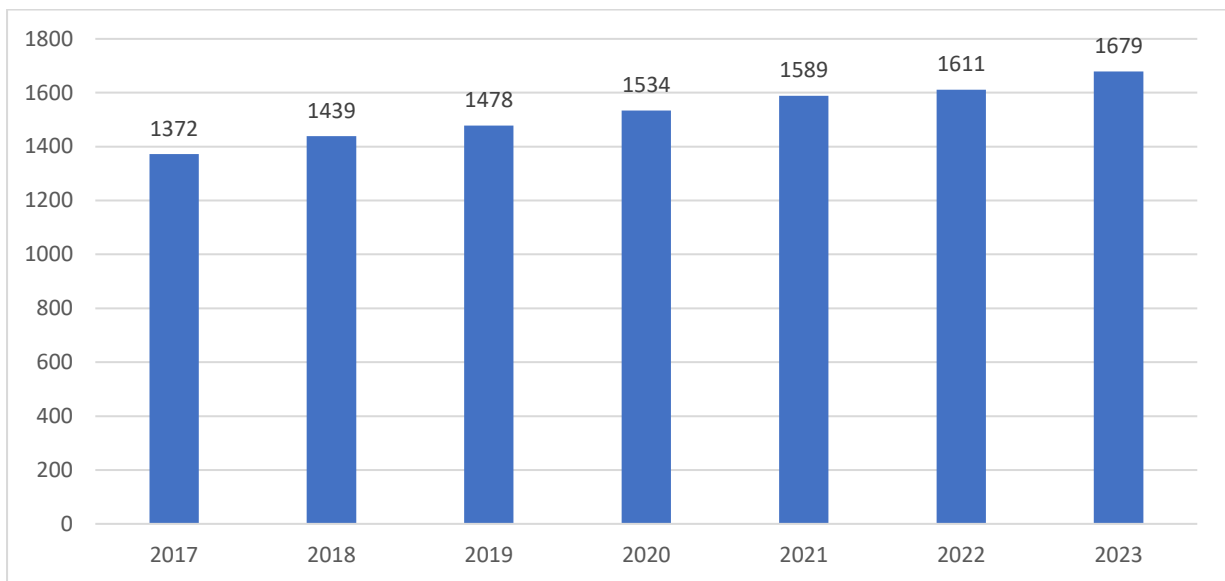
Map 6: Locations of Worcestershire's 9 State-Funded Special Schools



Map 6 shows that most of the schools are North of the county, and there are currently no state-funded special schools in the district of Malvern. However, following the successful DfE bid application for a new special free school specialising in Autism, Malvern will have Special school provision from September 2027.

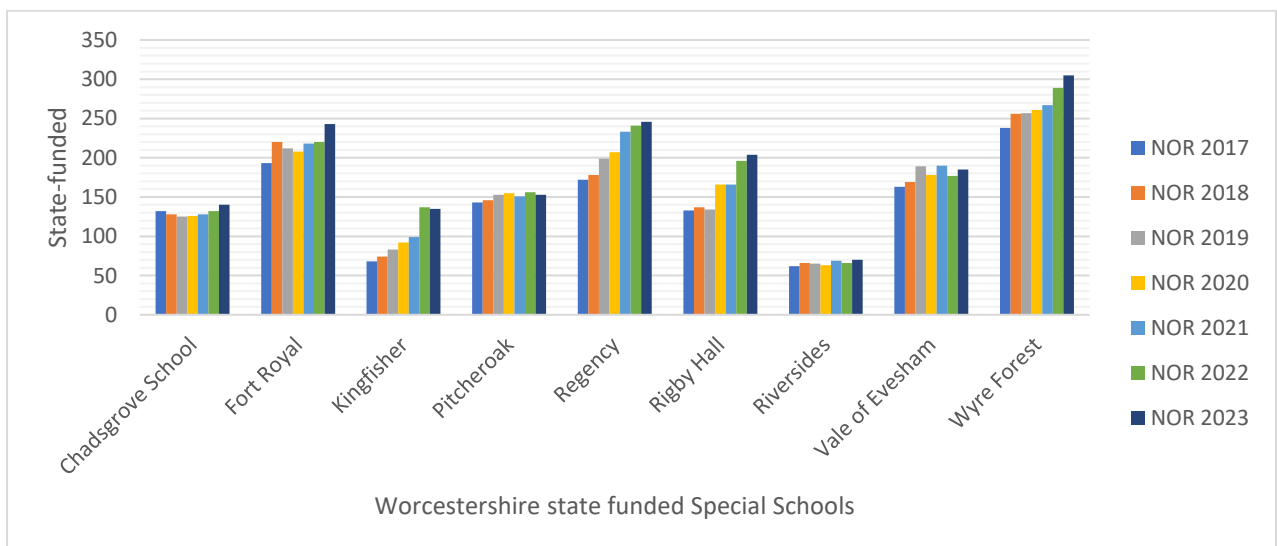
Of the 5,158 children and young people in Worcestershire with an EHCP, 1,679 (33%) are recorded to be attending one of the 9 Worcestershire state-funded special Schools.

Figure 16: Number of Pupils Attending Worcestershire Special Schools, January Census and SEN2



Year-on-year, special schools have increased class sizes or expanded provision to accommodate more pupils. Since 2017 the number of children attending Worcestershire special schools has increased from 1304 to 1681, an increase of 377 pupils. Worcestershire County Council has invested grant funding received from the DfE including Special Provision Capital funding and High Needs Provision Capital funding to create additional places where possible.

Figure 17: Number on Roll at Worcestershire Special Schools 2017-2023, January Census



Children attending special schools have differing levels of need and complexity. Each school receives consultations for placements, and usually more than one school will be consulted for the same child. However, a growing number of these consultations are responded to with either the school being able to meet the child's need but do not have the space or the school could not meet the child's needs. This is likely linked to the increase trend in complexity of need and the limited space due to increased class sizes in most special schools.

For September 2023, three of the nine schools were provided with capital funding to increase the number of places available. These were Regency High School (Worcester), Fort Royal School (Worcester), and Wyre Forest School. Some of the other schools were also able to accommodate additional pupils within their existing accommodation.

5.9 Independent Special Schools and Out-of-County Provision

Table 18: Children Attending Out-of-County Provision by Establishment Type, January Census and SEN2

Establishment Type	Number of Children Attending
Mainstream	140
Independent	17
Special	77
Independent Special	81
FE	207
Specialist FE	117
Total	639

Independent Special schools can provide places for pupils with very specific and often complex needs, meaning that in some instances, children will be placed in schools that are out of the county. Independent provision is not recorded on the January School Census as they are not Worcestershire LA-funded schools, however the EHCP remains the responsibility of the Worcestershire LA, the child's place of residence. The SEN2 data shows all children that live in Worcestershire with an EHCP and therefore includes attendance at independent provision.

The SEN2 data for 2022/23 shows that 305 children and young people with EHCPs were attending independent Special schools. The five schools with the highest numbers of Worcestershire children attending are: Norton College, Bridge School Malvern, Cambian New Elizabethan School, Gloverspiece and Norton College Tewkesbury. Children attending these schools make up 58% of the total.

These places are funded as needed based on very specific and individual needs, meaning they are difficult to predict or commission in a more structured long-term manner.

42% of children attending independent Specialist provision have an EHCP with the primary need of SEMH. This is followed by 28.9% with ASD. The new special Autism free school provision anticipated to be opened in September 2027 will aim to reduce the numbers of children attending independent specialist provision with an EHCP and primary need of Autism.

However, this data also suggests that more state-funded provision is needed to provide for children with an EHCP and primary need of SEMH in order to reduce the numbers of children attending independent specialist provision. This would in turn, significantly reduce the costs of independent provision for the Local Authority. The largest percentage of pupils awaiting specialist provision are those with a primary need of SEMH.

The largest cohort of children with an EHCP attending out-of-county provision are within post-16 provision. 46.2% of children attending out-of-county provision are attending specialist settings. The majority attending out of county are male (67%).

Table 19 shows the primary need of these children as:

Table 19: Children with Known Primary Need, January 2023 Census and SEN2

Establishment Type	ASD	Physical/Sensory	Cognitive	Other ²²	SEMH	Speech and Language
Mainstream	27	14	26	12	26	35
Independent	2	1	3	3	6	3
Special	22	9	23	12	2	9
Independent Special	24	2	5	4	35	10
FE	51	17	60	8	35	36
Specialist FE	29	24	38	3	5	18
Total	155	63	155	42	109	111

24% of children with an EHCP attending out-of-county provision have either ASD or Cognitive needs (MLD/SLD/SpLD/PMLD). For both these cohorts, the largest number of these are attending FE/specialist FE provision and are post-16. The top attended provisions for this cohort are Warwickshire College Group (FE) and Mencap (specialist FE).

Of the specialist independent provision, Alderman Knight (Tewkesbury) has the highest intake of Worcestershire children with an EHCP in out of county provision. 41.6% of those attending have a primary need of ASD, followed by MLD at 33.3%.

This data highlights an insufficiency in post-16 provision within the county as this is the largest cohort to be attending out of county provision – particularly for those with ASD or Cognitive needs. Details of how WCF are developing additional post 16 SEND provision are in section 5.11 of this report.

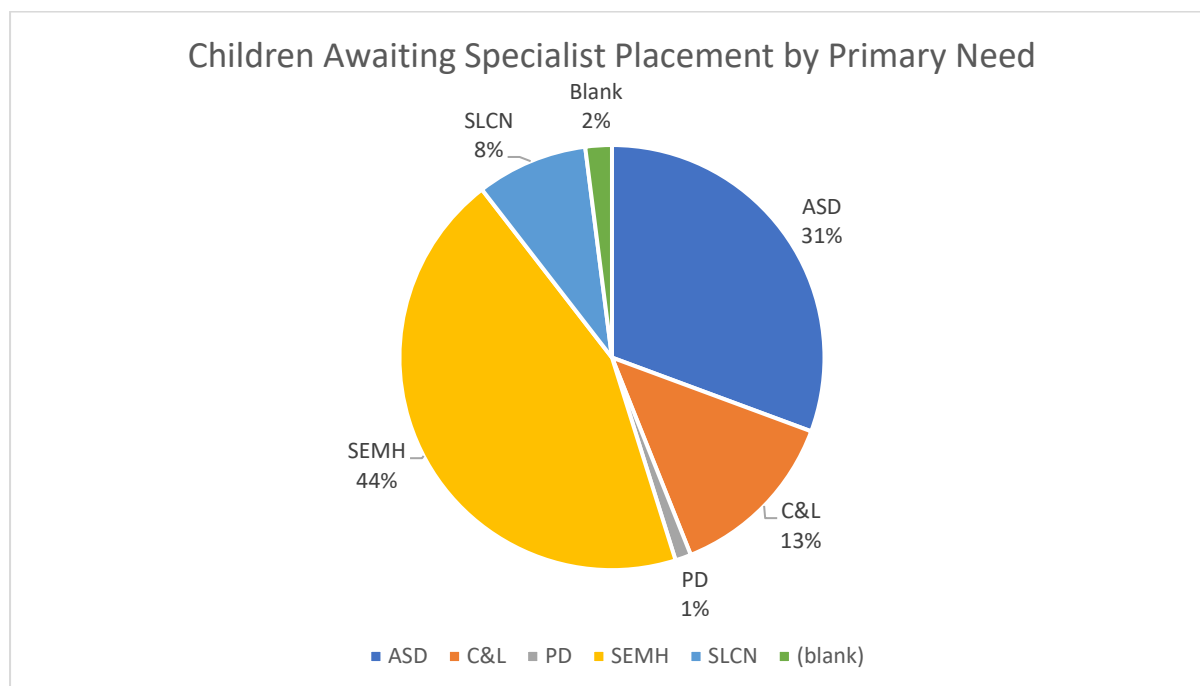
5.10 Children Waiting Specialist Placement

As of January 2024, there were 248 Worcestershire children and young people awaiting a specialist placement, 73 were not on roll at any education provision and the remaining were on roll within a mainstream or specialist provision. For a child already on roll in a specialist provision, it has been identified that they require a different type of provision to suit their needs.

Figure 18 below shows the breakdown of the primary needs of these children awaiting specialist placement:

²² The 'Other' category is sometimes used to classify complex cases which have aspects of ASD and either PMLD or SLD. Also, the category 'Other' may have been allocated due to delay in an official diagnosis by a healthcare professional.

Figure 18: Children Awaiting Specialist Placement by Primary Need, CAT1 and CAT2



Of the children awaiting a specialist placement, those with SEMH primary needs are largest cohort, this is followed by children with the primary need of Autism.

27% of children and young people waiting for a specialist placement live within the Worcester district, this is followed by 23% in Redditch.

There are three key types of specialist provision that children currently awaiting placement require to meet their needs: ASD Special (19%), MLD Special (19%) and SEMH Special (45%). Again, this highlights the need to ensure Worcestershire has sufficient provision to meet the needs of children with these primary needs, particularly children with SEMH needs.

5.11 Post-16 Specialist Provision

Most Specialist post-16 provision is not recorded as part of the January school census, unless sixth form provision is run by a school. Seven of the state-funded special schools listed above offer post-16 provisions (NCY12-13) and a few young people stay on past this age (NCY14). 32.5% of 16-25 year old young people with EHCPs in the academic year 2022/23 attended further education establishments with 24.2% in special schools and 7.67% in specialist further education.

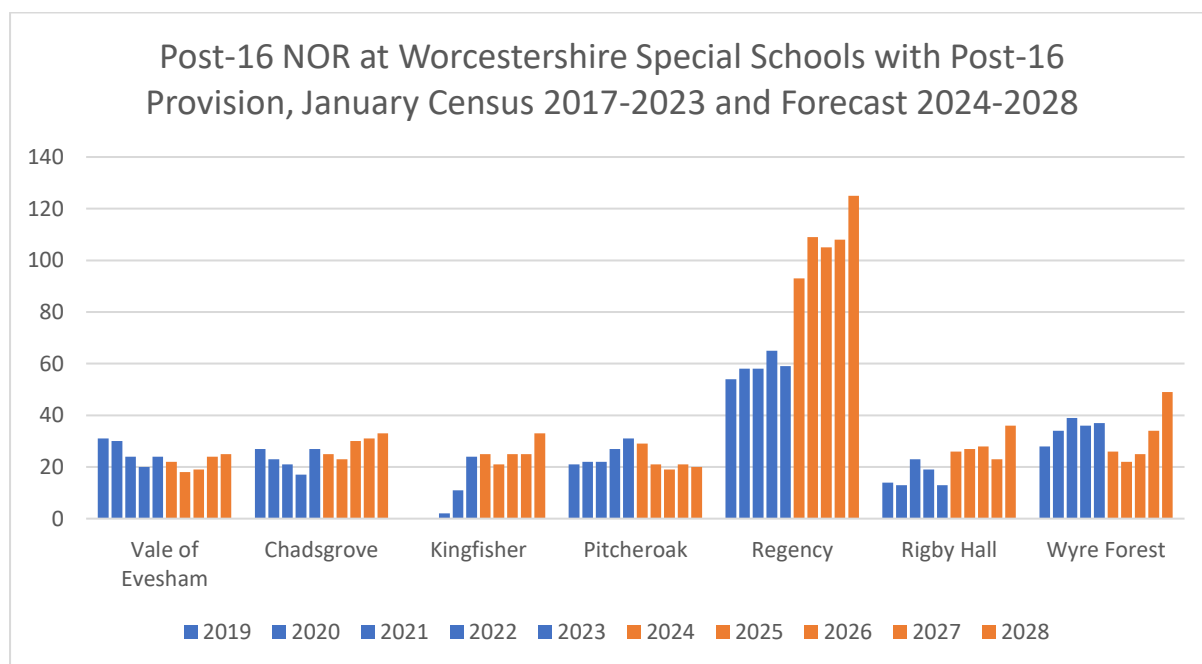
Since the SEN reforms in 2014, 19 to 25 year-olds with EHCPs should have free access to further education in the same way as 16-18 year-olds have. This provides a further 6 years beyond sixth form, to achieve agreed outcomes and to help the young person prepare for adulthood, planning that should start in Year 9 (SEND Code of Practice 2015). This means that young people need opportunities and places, beyond traditional education age, as well as support to transition to adult social care, if appropriate. There is no statutory requirement to secure education or training for young people aged 19 to 25 who do not have EHCPs.

The number of young people aged 20 to 25 with an EHCP has continued to increase from 413 in 2022 to 514 in 2023. As the number of young people with EHCPs grow, there could be an increase in the number of post-16 young people needing specialist FE provision. However, there are a small number of young people between 16 and 25 who stop attending education, many for the reason of starting in employment.

The number of EHCPs within the post-16 cohort is forecasted to continue to rise from its current level of 1,680 in 2024 to 3,668 in 2028.

The table below shows the forecast for post-16 (Years 12 – 14) numbers on roll at Worcestershire special schools:

Figure 19: Post-16 NOR at Worcestershire Special Schools with Post-16 Provision, January Census 2017-2023 and Forecast 2024-2028



6 of the 7 schools that have post-16 provision are forecasted to have their highest number on roll by 2028.

51% of young people aged 20-25 with an EHCP attend mainstream FE colleges, such as Heart of Worcestershire (HOW), Warwickshire College Group or Kidderminster College. This year’s data shows that 17% of young people in this age bracket attend specialist independent post-16 institutions such as National Star College (Gloucestershire), Queen Alexandra College (Birmingham), Mencap, Glasshouse College (Stourbridge) and Chadsgrove Educational Trust (Bromsgrove).

WCF will continue to develop and improve the working partnership with local colleges to ensure that we continue to meet our statutory obligations for young people with SEND.

In 2021/2022 WCF prioritised the £1.5m High Needs Capital allocation from the DfE to develop additional Post 16 SEND Provision in the county. Expressions of interest were received, and three providers were successful: Warwickshire Group, Pershore College; Kidderminster College and Heart of Worcestershire College. The Warwickshire College Group (WCG) Pershore Campus will create a

new Preparation for Adulthood Centre and improve existing teaching and support facilities resulting in better provision that is more accessible, creating 12-16 new places for young people aged 19-24 with complex needs by September 2024 or sooner. The project will take place within existing buildings on the Pershore College site (Avonbank, Pershore).

The HOW College will create new teaching and therapeutic accommodation for 12 young people available within one of the existing College buildings (St Wulstan's) in Worcester City Centre and would provide teaching spaces, therapy rooms, two bathrooms and inclusive built environment and all services to support this function including hoists, access door control (independent key fob access) and outdoor space for therapeutic use.

The Kidderminster College proposal was approved, however since, the college have completed a strategic estate review and are keen to review the location of the new provision. WCF are working with Kidderminster College to review a revised proposal that continues to meet the brief.

High Needs Provision Capital has been granted to all three colleges.

5.12 Travel to Specialist Provision

One way to monitor how well the needs of pupils with SEND are being met and the sufficiency of provision within the county is to analyse the distances pupils are travelling to their education settings.

Table 20: Travel Distance for Children with EHCP by Setting Type

Distance Band	Mainstream (inc. AP/PRU)	Mainstream Independent	Mainstream FE	Special	Independent Special	Specialist FE	Totals
<2km	914	8	63	390	14	0	1,389
2-5km	441	6	117	481	32	2	1,079
5-10km	198	20	96	273	46	11	644
10-15km	99	14	42	306	60	17	538
15-20km	46	16	55	118	47	12	294
>20km	32	34	324	190	104	87	771
Totals	1,730	98	697	1,758	303	129	4,715

There are similar numbers of pupils with EHCPs attending specialist and mainstream provision, however, significantly more children are having to travel over 10km to attend their specialist provision. Of the independent special cohort, 34.4% are having to travel over 20km to attend the relevant provision.

The number of young people at specialist further education settings are relatively low, however, the majority are travelling longer distances of 10km or more to access their education provision.

Table 21 breaks this pattern down by primary Need.

Table 21: Travel Distance for Children with EHCPs by Primary Need

Distance Band	ASD	Cognition	Speech	Sensory/ Physical	SEMH	Other ²³	Total
<2km	241	322	439	91	224	72	1,388
2-5km	208	312	304	60	154	41	1,079
5-10km	133	149	159	52	117	34	643
10-15km	106	150	109	60	91	22	537
15-20km	75	64	58	23	65	9	294
>20km	188	190	113	55	192	33	774
Total	951	1,187	1,182	341	843	211	4,715

Table 21 shows while a large number of children with primary needs are travelling less than 5km to their provision, there are also high numbers for children with ASD, Cognition, Speech and SEMH primary needs that are having to travel over 20km to attend their required provision. 211 children and young people have the primary need of 'Other²³', with a range of complex needs.

Table 22: Travel Distances for Children with EHCPs Attending Special Schools by Worcestershire District (Home Address)

Distance Band	Bromsgrove	Malvern Hills	Redditch	Worcester	Wychavon	Wyre Forest	Total
<2km	34	3	58	130	71	103	404
2-5km	72	18	121	150	50	97	515
5-10km	46	41	58	24	107	43	330
10-15km	55	109	57	14	103	22	383
15-20km	18	27	17	11	41	40	177
>20km	26	53	48	69	91	71	381
Total	251	251	359	398	463	376	2,190

Table 22 above shows only the travel distances across the districts to state-funded and independent special schools. It shows that children residing in the district of Wychavon are travelling greater distances (more than 10km) to a special school than children living in other districts.

²³ The 'Other' category is sometimes used to classify complex cases which have aspects of ASD and either PMLD or SLD. Also, the category 'Other' may have been allocated due to delay in an official diagnosis by a healthcare professional.

6 Combined Special School Forecast

All pupils attending the Worcestershire state-funded schools are recorded on the statutory school census completed in January each year. The demand trends can then be extrapolated forward to forecast likely future demand. Currently for all special schools, the future demand is based upon housing and admissions trends in the previous 5 years, therefore there is a risk that forecasts do not take into account any unmet demand for special school places in the county.

Over the last several years, demand for places in special schools has been high, driven by parental demand for high quality specialist education provision. Special schools in Worcestershire have very successfully adapted to high demand and increased the number of pupils attending the schools, with all 8 of the 9 schools deemed either Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. However, there are constraints to further growth - for example the physical accommodation and size of school sites available. So far, schools have managed within existing facilities with managed expansion projects at various schools, however, this growth in demand for special school places is not sustainable and broader solutions need to be considered.

Worcestershire Children First have been working closely with our special schools who provide termly data information in order to aid with providing a more accurate forecasts. Each term, each school has been provided with a template to fill in to confirm their current number on roll, the breakdown of this number by primary need, and also their expected next academic year number on roll. This data-gathering means we can use much more up-to-date figures to help with the accuracy with our forecasting.

As per the Worcestershire Local Area Partnership SEND Strategy 2023 to 2026, priority 2 there is sufficient and effective SEND provision is critical along with the priorities in the Worcestershire SEND Accelerated Progress Plan including increasing the percentage of pupils with an EHCP remaining in mainstream settings.

In 2022/23 Worcestershire's statistical neighbour authorities placed between 24% and 38% of children with EHCPs in LA maintained special schools. Worcestershire ranks second out of ten statistical neighbours, placing 34% of pupils in this type of provision. Nationally, 30% of children with an EHCP were placed in a maintained special school.

Worcestershire placed 8% of pupils in independent schools (both mainstream and special). This is ranked fifth out of ten amongst statistical neighbours.

To aid in this year's forecasting, the forecast uses either the known September 2023 number on roll as provided by the individual special school, or the most recent indicative number on roll for September 2023 if the exact number has not been provided. The next 5 years are forecast using a combination of historical numbers on roll, mainstream forecasts, and transfer rates.

The following forecasts show that if schools could accommodate more places, the demand following the previous 5 years trends against the population of Worcestershire including housing growth would continue to increase year on year.

Table 23: Combined Special School Forecast R – Year 14

	Chadsgrove	Rigby Hall	Pitcheroak	Kingfisher	Fort Royal	Regency High	Riversides	Vale of Evesham	Wyre Forest	TOTAL
2024	139	224	157	142	252	296	69	181	369	1,829
2025	138	237	151	143	263	308	65	185	396	1,886
2026	138	248	151	150	284	301	68	186	430	1,956
2027	140	257	152	155	298	303	70	192	462	2,029
2028	141	269	155	158	303	299	74	193	495	2,087

This forecasts that numbers across all schools apart from two are expected to be at their highest by 2028 as the population grows in Worcestershire, therefore, the demand for special school places is expected to continue to rise. There is forecast to be a significant rise for Rigby Hall (Bromsgrove), Fort Royal (Worcester) and Wyre Forest.

As previously mentioned in the report, nationally, 28% of children with an EHCP attend state-funded specialist schools, table 24 below shows the difference in numbers of pupils attending Worcestershire’s special schools if the percentage of population aligned with the national percentage of 28% attending special schools.

Table 24: Combined Special School Forecast (if in Line with National Statistics (28%))

Number of pupils on roll at each special school if in line with National Statistics (28%)										
	Chadsgrove	Rigby Hall	Pitcheroak	Kingfisher	Fort Royal	Regency High	Riversides	Vale of Evesham	Wyre Forest	TOTAL
2024	127	205	133	121	212	249	58	154	304	1,563
2025	126	217	128	121	221	259	55	157	312	1,596
2026	126	227	128	128	238	253	57	158	325	1,740
2027	129	235	129	132	250	254	59	164	337	1,689
2028	129	247	132	134	255	251	62	165	349	1,724

There are significant differences (circa minus 260+ children in 2024) in the numbers of children that would attend Worcestershire special schools if in line with the national 28%. The largest impact would be seen in Wyre Forest and Worcester (Regency High and Fort Royal).

This year, the DfE made it statutory for Local Authorities to complete the School Capacity Survey (SCAP) for all special schools and resourced provision. This is the first year that this information has been required.

Table 25: Worcestershire Special Schools Jan 2023 NOR and SCAP Net Capacity Figures

School	Jan 2023 NOR	SCAP Net Capacity
Chadsgrove	140	134
Rigby Hall	204	159
Pitcheroak	153	123
Kingfisher	135	109
Fort Royal	243	197
Regency High	246	204
Riversides	70	64
Vale of Evesham	185	165
Wyre Forest	328	246

Table 25 details the Net Capacity of each special school, following the DfE guidance for assessment and the most up-to-date plans available for each school. Using the Numbers on Roll from January 2023, each school has more pupils on roll than its Net Capacity. It is understood to be a national issue and not specific to Worcestershire, that most special schools have increased the number of pupils per class and therefore will have lower net capacity assessments than NOR.

For four of the nine special schools, the Local Authority agreed to increase the numbers of places for September 2023.

For September 2023, Fort Royal has increased to 256 FTE, made possible by converting a temporary double mobile classroom into three classrooms. Rigby Hall increased to 220 FTE following a project to improve accommodation onsite. Wyre Forest increased to 354 FTE, the Early Years Hub previously shared with St John’s Primary School was repurposed to accommodate additional pupils at Wyre Forest School. Additional accommodation is being provided at St John’s Primary School. Regency High increased to 298 FTE, with temporary accommodation to create four additional classrooms.

Desktop feasibilities have been completed at Rigby Hall, Pitcheroak, Fort Royal and the Vale of Evesham that determined that due to the size of the school sites, no further expansion of provision is possible. There may be opportunities at Pitcheroak and the Vale working in conjunction with adjoining school sites to investigate options further. Desktop feasibilities do suggest additional places could be provided at Regency High and Wyre Forest School.

The DfE intention to deliver the new Autism special free school in Malvern for September 2027 opening on a phased approach will provide for some of the demand for special school places, however this will not meet all of the additional demand and will not cater for in particular those children and young people with increasing complex SEMH needs.

This report details that there is significant demand for SEMH provision to meet children and young people’s needs. Riversides SEMH Special School operates from two sites in Worcester City (Thorneloe Road and City Walls Road). Thorneloe Road was previously a Design & Technology block of an FE college and has limited outdoor space. The school is commissioned for 68 FTE places, the age range of pupils attending Riversides are 7 – 16 years. The school site is limited in terms of

internal and external space, and the suitability of the site to meet the needs of the pupils. Kingfisher SEMH Special School in Redditch, expanded age range and size, increasing in September 2022 to 140 commissioned places for 7 – 19 year olds.

Ahead of September 2024, the Sufficiency and Place Planning Team and SEND Officers are reviewing the forecast demand for all special school places. Intake points and phase transfer points are being considered alongside children and young people awaiting specialist provision. WCF are meeting with each school / Academy Trust to review forecast numbers compared with available places at each school. Options will be considered where additional places are required, including temporary accommodation to mitigate demand. Options including further Resourced provision / SEN Units on mainstream school sites, will also be considered to meet the needs of children with SEND.

The SEND Specialist Provision Plan 2024/25 is currently being updated to detail the areas of demand and actions being taken to investigate options to meet demand, these are summarised in section 9 of this report. Additional funding, in excess of the current and forecast grant funding, to deliver the sufficiency of education provision will be required over the next 2 – 3 years.

7 Factors Affecting Demand for Provision

There are a number of factors that affect the demand for specialist provision. Parental preference means that ‘parents or young people have a legal right to request that a particular school or college is named in an EHCP (or to express a preference for an independent school, college or other institution)’²⁴. Parental preference for a school may not be the most local school that can meet the child’s needs.

Families are also choosing to electively-home-educate their children (EHE), this may be due to being dissatisfied with their local schools or that they are unable to get a place in their desired provision.

New housing developments will also have an impact on demand for provision to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and a need for additional specialist provision. Worcestershire is seeing a significant level of new housing either being built or planned as the popularity of the county grows. Since 2019, Worcestershire County Council Education Planning Obligations Policy²⁵ (‘section 106 policy’), which is approved by Cabinet, requests a contribution from housing developers to fund the additional SEND provision that will be required in mitigation of the impact of the new housing. Current policy contributions are requested for SEND on developments of 50 dwellings or more and for school aged children only. The published SEND Pupil Product Ratio (PPR) is based on the average percentage of pupils in Worcestershire with an Education Health & Care plan over the last 5 years (2017 – 2021), which is 3%, with the building cost multiplier as per Government guidance. The Policy is currently being updated and will be presented to Cabinet in 2024 to take into account the changing demand for SEND provision in Worcestershire. Contributions can be spent on increasing provision to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND at mainstream

²⁴ [Choosing a school/college with an EHC plan | \(IPSEA\) Independent Provider of Special Education Advice](#)

²⁵ <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/planning-and-developments/planning-policy-and-strategy/school-planning-obligations>

schools or special schools. The Policy will be updated annually to reflect the increasing percentage of children with SEND.

The growth in new housing means there is likely to be an increase in demand for specialist provision, on top of current demand. As children’s needs can be identified at any stage, we would expect to see more children with EHCPs across new developments as they grow older.

Table 26: Percentage of EHCPs in comparison to population

Area	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Change from previous year
Worcestershire	3.10	3.00	3.00	2.90	2.70	2.90	3.00	3.30	3.60	3.90	4.2	0.30
West Midlands	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.90	3.00	3.10	3.10	3.30	3.60	3.80	4.0	0.20
Statistical Neighbours	2.89	2.91	2.91	2.92	2.96	3.03	3.16	3.43	3.74	4.02	4.2	0.18
England	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.90	3.10	3.30	3.70	4.00	4.3	0.30

8 Conclusion

This report assesses the sufficiency of current provision to meet the needs of children with SEND living in Worcestershire.

Our ambition for all children is a sustainable school placement in their community and for them to receive a good education. To achieve this, a variety of provision is needed to support each individual’s unique special educational needs and disabilities and to enable them to reach their potential.

The percentage of children identified with special educational need and disabilities has increased over the last 10 years in Worcestershire. This is likely to continue to increase year-on-year as a percentage of the total population, following continual advancement in identification and diagnoses. Where previously babies with difficulties of various causes wouldn’t survive early childhood, today they are living fulfilling lives through school and beyond, with a variety of special needs.

This has meant that our reliance on providers who are able to quickly adapt to meet the needs of pupils with SEND has increased, including state-funded special schools, Specialist FE as well as specialist independent schools which are currently supporting 1,899 children and young people with EHCPs in Worcestershire.

At the same time, research is constantly being undertaken into ways to support children with various needs to remain within mainstream settings, alongside their peers, in their local communities.

Most schools report that children’s needs are becoming more complex which supports the trend seen nationally that special schools are providing places for more complex children. High level of complex needs more often require more physical space for equipment, or breakout areas or quiet rooms. As Mainstream schools develop their expertise on special needs education, they are likely to be able to accept more children with EHCPs. Resourced provision and SEN Units within Mainstream schools, enable special schools to meet the needs of pupils with more complex needs.

Changes have been made in Worcestershire to provide more places for children with special educational needs. Previously, there was an insufficiency highlighted for children with Autism. In October 2022 Worcestershire Children First successfully submitted a bid application to the DfE to create a new 120 place special free school for children with an EHCP for ASD that will be located within Malvern. This will be the first Autism specific special school in Worcestershire and will help to accommodate a large cohort of children that require this provision.

Within the last 12 months, Worcestershire Children First have also commissioned the expansion of one of the EMABs (Tudor Grange Academy Redditch), the expansion allowed for an additional 25 children and young people to attend. WCF also opened a new EMAB in Worcester, Christopher Whitehead Language College. This will allow more children with Autism to stay within mainstream provision while attending a specialist unit when required.

Four of Worcestershire’s special schools - Regency High (Worcester), Fort Royal (Worcester), Wyre Forest (Wyre Forest) and Rigby Hall (Bromsgrove) - also agreed increases in pupil numbers for September 2023, allowing more children that require special school places to receive the provision they need.

Further improvements are needed to accommodate the insufficiency highlighted within this report, with a focus on children attending out of county independent provision, particularly for the post-16 cohort and to continue to monitor and mitigate for special school place demand.

The planning process for education places will now use this data, along with current local policies and budget restrictions, to support children and young people and ensure that places are available for all children with SEND which meets their needs.

9 Overview of Recommended Actions

The following schemes were approved by Cabinet to respond to increased demand for provision to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND (High Needs Capital) as outlined above and agreed with schools and Academy Trusts to be delivered.

Approved schemes	Issue	School / College / setting	Indicative Delivery Year
Improve Medical Education provision	Accommodation not sufficient	Redditch base	2024
Improve Mainstream Autism Base	Accommodation not sufficient	Meadows First School and Parkside Middle School	2024 / 2025
Improve Mainstream Autism Base	Accommodation not sufficient	Beaconside Primary School	2025

Additional Post 16 SEND provision	Insufficient Post 16 provision	Pershore College HOW College Kidderminster College (TBC)	2024 2024 2025
Fund the abnormal costs for the DfE Free School	No Autism school	New DfE Special Autism Free School	2027

Capital grant funding has been approved by Cabinet to address the need for additional provision / places (High Needs Provision Capital allocation) as outlined in this report above, however, which schools or settings are yet to be confirmed.

Approved schemes	Issue	Location	Year
Improve Medical Education provision	Accommodation not sufficient	Wyre Forest and Worcester City bases	2025
Increase MAB / EMAB provision	Insufficiency of provision	Worcester City primary Malvern secondary Pershore First and Middle Wyre Forest secondary	2024 2024 2024 2025
Create Enhanced Early Years Provision	New provision	Worcester / Malvern Wychavon Redditch / Bromsgrove Wyre Forest	2024 2024 2025 2025
Create Resourced Provision / SEN Units for KS 1	New provision	Countywide	2024/5
Increase Special School places for age 5 – 16 years	Insufficiency of provision	Countywide	2025
Create Resourced Provision / SEN Units for SEMH	Insufficiency of provision	Countywide	2024/5