

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

2020

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Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. National Trends.....	4
2.1 Background.....	4
2.2 Type of needs.....	5
2.3 Need by age group.....	8
3. Provision for Children with Education, Health and Care Plans.....	9
3.1 Trend in EHC plans.....	9
4. Current Provision.....	12
4.1 Autism Bases.....	13
4.2 Language units.....	14
4.3 Alternative provision.....	14
4.4 Special schools.....	14
4.5 Independent special schools.....	17
4.6 Nursery provision.....	17
4.7 Post-16 provision.....	19
4.8 Predicted pupil numbers.....	20
5. Forecast, by special school.....	21
5.1 Chadsgrove School (Bromsgrove).....	22
5.2 Rigby Hall School (Bromsgrove).....	23
5.3 Pitcheroak School (Redditch).....	24
5.4 The Kingfisher School (Redditch).....	25
5.5 Fort Royal Community Primary (Worcester).....	27
5.6 Regency High School (Worcester).....	28
5.7 Riversides School (Worcester).....	29
5.8 Vale of Evesham School (Wychavon).....	30
5.9 Wyre Forest School (Wyre Forest).....	31
5.10 Combined Special School forecast.....	32
6. Conclusion.....	33

1. Introduction

Worcestershire County Council 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 difficulty or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn than most children the same age. An education, health and care (EHC) plan 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.

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 within their local community. In cases where this cannot happen, then appropriate support is assessed and an EHC plan issued. This will name the school or setting that can meet the needs of the child. This plan, detailing the additional support, is particularly important for children with physical and complex needs.

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 2024/2025).

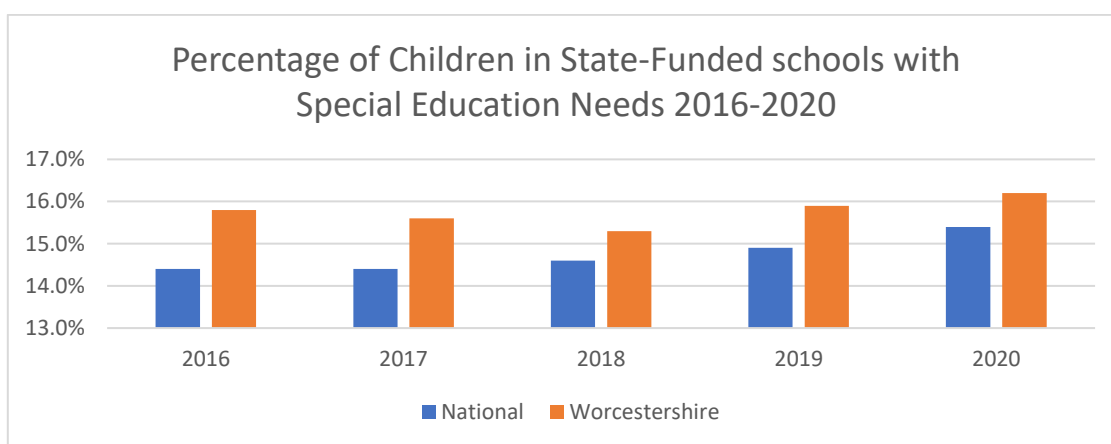
1 <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cypp>

2. National Trends

2.1 Background

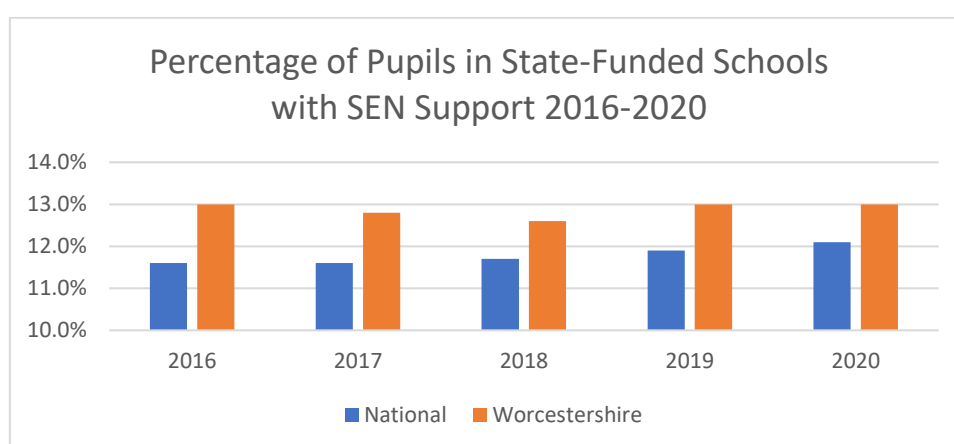
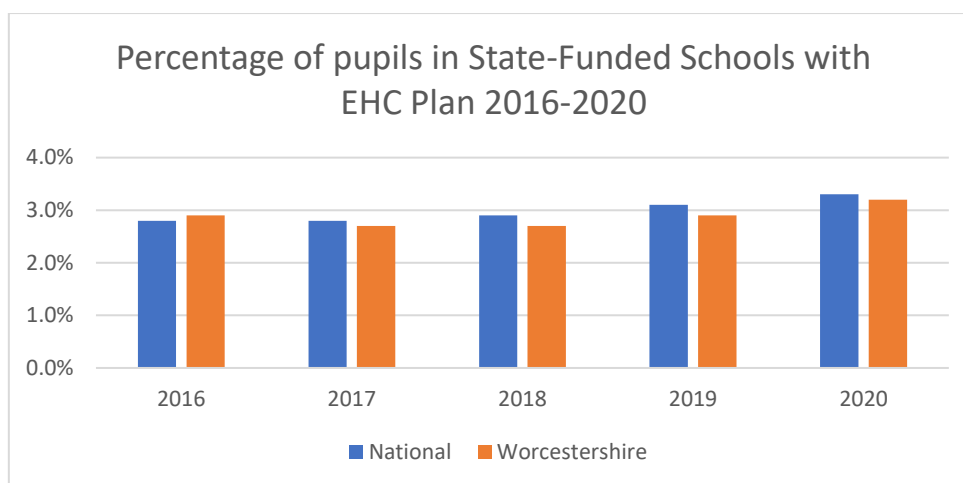
The school census undertaken annually in January, records the special educational needs of pupils currently attending State-Funded schools. This is a national statutory requirement on schools and enables Worcestershire County Council (WCC) to benchmark the needs of our school age children against national trends and changes.

The school census records young children in school nurseries (but not private nurseries), children from age 4 to age 16 in all types of schools including academies, free schools, alternative provision, special schools (but not independent 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 EHC plans attending college, elected home educated, independent schools or not holding a school place on census day. Details of special educational needs and disabilities are recorded in the school level annual school census (SLASC) in the same way as the school census although the proportion of children with SEND could vary.



National DfE returns: Worcestershire January school census

A review of the school census data for January 2020 shows that 16.2% of pupils educated in Worcestershire are identified as having special educational needs with 13.0% requiring SEN support and 3.2% with an EHC plan. The higher rate in Worcestershire compared to the national figures is mainly among those children receiving SEN support in mainstream schools. The current level of pupils with an EHC plan in Worcestershire is similar to the latest known national rate (3.1% of mainstream pupil population).



The largest difference in distribution of children receiving SEN Support in Worcestershire compared to England appears to be the higher percentage of pupils in Worcestershire receiving support for Speech, Language & Communication Needs (SLCN) within Primary schools. (see below for a definition). Evidence has shown that early intervention for children with SLCN needs has a significant impact on social, emotional and mental development².

The number of pupils educated in Worcestershire as at the January school census has grown in recent years by 3,681 from 77,680 in January 2016 to 83,483 in January 2020 (+4.7%), and the level of children with SEND has remained around 15% overall each year, though growing slightly. This is as a result of developing methods of early diagnosis of need and an emphasis on early intervention. It is therefore assumed that over the next several years the percentages of children benefiting from SEND support in schools will increase to 16% in relation to the school population.

2.2 Type of needs

The 'SEND Code of practice 2015: 0 to 25 years old' explains the duties of local authorities, health bodies, schools and colleges 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

² [Bercow Review of Services for Children & Young People with SLCN](#)

educational need and support' to allow the schools to gain an overview of pupils' range of needs. These areas are:

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional and mental health
- Sensory and/or physical needs

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

The SEN Code of Practice emphasises that 'the purpose of identification is to work out what action the school needs to take, not to fit a pupil into a category. In practice, individual children or young people often have needs that cut across all these 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.' (section 6.27)

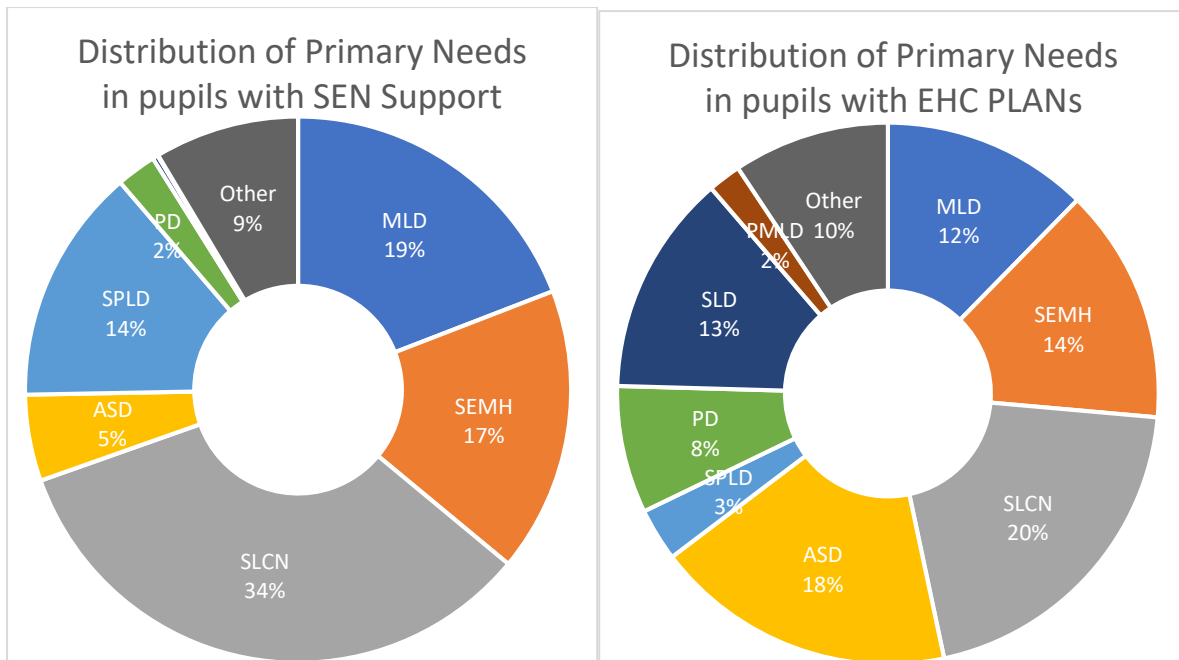
Although Government wishes to move away from assumptions about pupils' needs based upon their difficulty or disability, it is still necessary to record specific categories of need to allow Government and Local Authorities to predict levels of future resource requirements. This is collected through the statutory school census.

The categories used in the school census to define primary need are:

Code	Type of Need
ASD	Autistic spectrum disorder
HI	Hearing impairment
MLD	Moderate learning difficulties
MSI	Multi-sensory impairment
NSA	No specialist Assessment
OTH	Other difficulty or disability
PD	Physical difficulty
PMLD	Profound and multiple learning difficulty
SEMH ³	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
SLCN	Speech, Language & Communication Needs
SLD	Severe learning difficulty
SPLD	Specific learning difficulty
VI	Visual impairment

Table 1: Categories of SEN

³ Since the spring 2015 census, the category defined as 'Behaviour, emotional and social difficulties' (BESD) has been replaced with the category 'Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH)' in order to more appropriately reflect the causes of 'challenging behaviour' and growing awareness about young people's mental health.



Source: school census Jan 2020

This split is typical of the population as a whole and identifies categories of SEND that are more often supported without the need for an EHC plan. As can be seen on these charts, there are many more pupils needing support below the level of an EHC plan with the needs of Specific Learning Difficulties, Moderate Learning Difficulties and Speech, Language and Communication Needs. These types of learning difficulties are more amenable to be managed within a mainstream setting. Conversely there is a much higher percentage of pupils with Severe Learning Difficulty and ASD who have EHC plans as they pose more constraints on teaching within a mainstream setting.

National data released by the DfE in January 2020 identifies Speech, Language & Communication Needs as the most common need for pupils receiving SEN support without an EHC plan at 24% and Moderate Learning Difficulties as a close second at 21%. Whereas children with the primary need categorised as Autistic Spectrum Disorder is the most common need for pupils with EHC plans at 30%, this primary need represented just 7% of pupils requiring SEN support in mainstream schools. The difference between distribution of EHC plans by primary need between Worcestershire and England suggests that ASD is under-represented particularly in younger children whilst Speech, Language & Communication is being over-represented.

There is some debate regarding the effectiveness of this categorisation including the clarity of the definitions for each categorisation of need; the lack of grading for degenerative illnesses; the lack of autism diagnosis in young children; and the level of hands on support and difficulty in managing individual children.

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 by 50% since 2004" (Feb. 2017)⁴. This report considers children with life limiting conditions that are now better

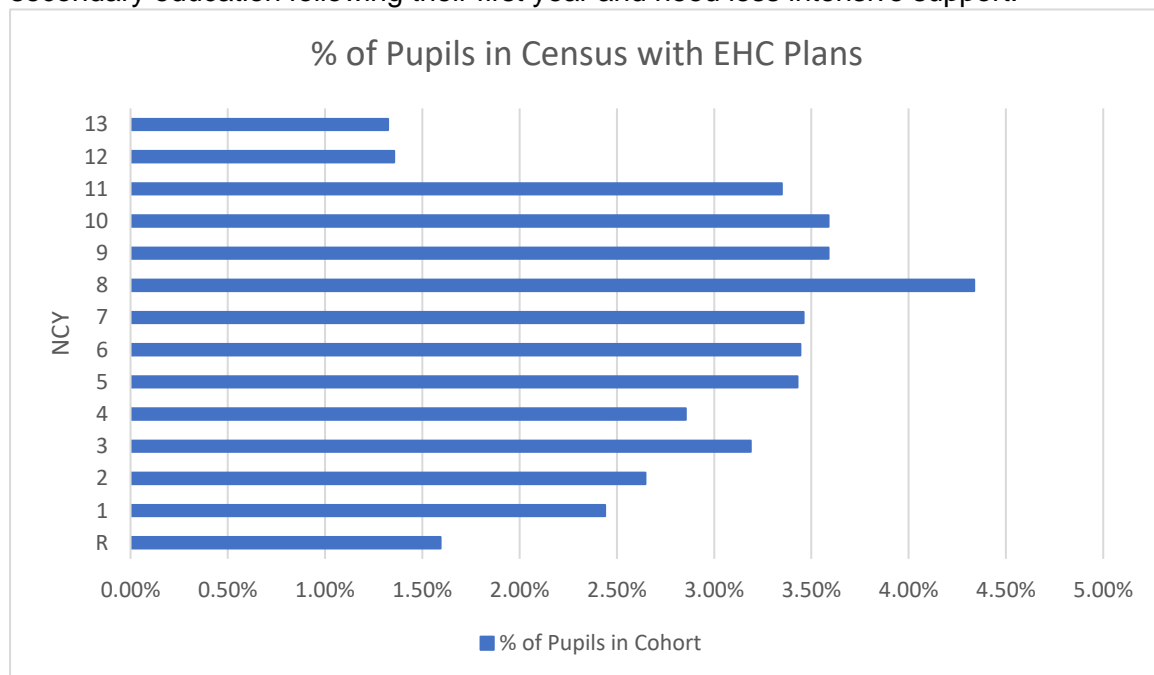
⁴ <https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachment/Data%20Report.pdf>

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 instance, Speech, Language & Communication Needs can also be a feature of a number of other areas of SEN, and children and young people with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) may have needs across all areas, including particular sensory requirements.

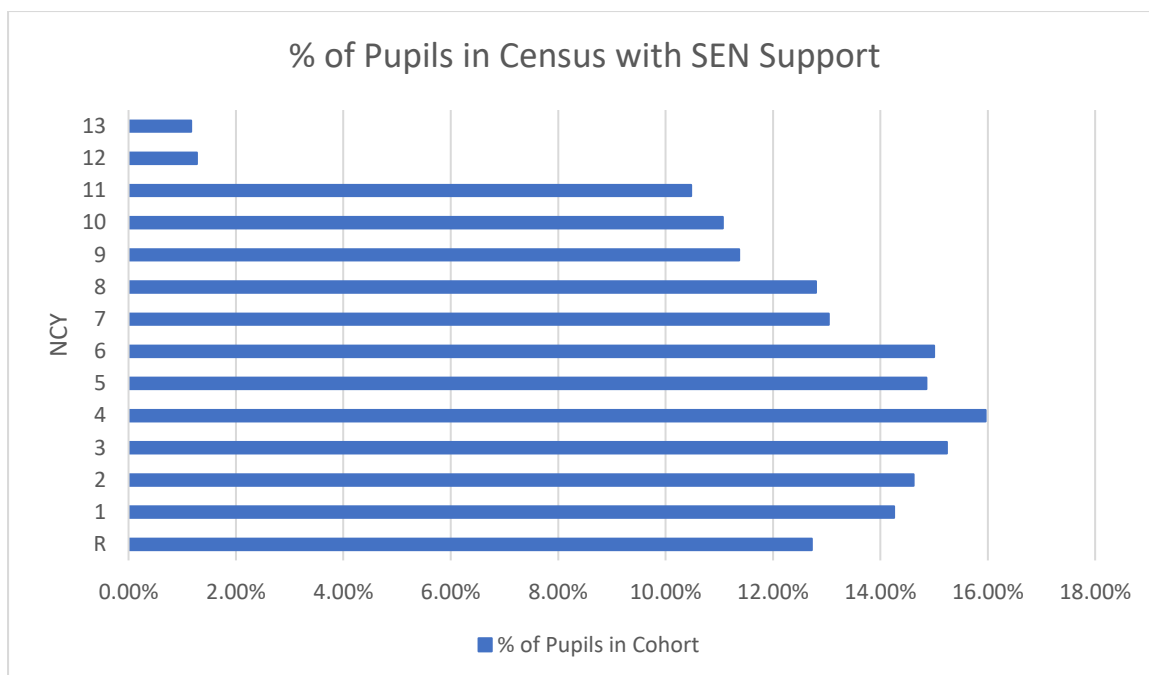
2.3 Need by age group

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 known needs in earlier years due to the difficulty in diagnosis or even being aware there may be a need. In older years children tend to be better able to manage with many of the needs they may have through standard education support. The different profile for year groups of pupils with EHC plans and those requiring SEN support allow us to direct resources to the correct schools to reach the children in need of special educational support.

Further analysis of the children in schools in Worcestershire show that Year 8 has the highest percentage of pupils with EHC plans, which is related to the transition to secondary school. The number of EHC plans per year group then falls back slightly after year 8 indicating that children either leave the state-funded school system or settle into their secondary education following their first year and need less intensive support.



Source: school census, Jan 2020



Source: school census, January 2020

The percentage of pupils receiving SEN support by age shows larger numbers in primary schools compared to secondary schools and a very small number in sixth form. The greatest percentage (16%) are in year 4, but only dropping off significantly in Year 7, whereas the number of EHC plans peaks in Year 8.

Note that this data is from the school census and therefore only includes a particular data set of children.

3. Provision for Children with Education, Health and Care Plans

3.1 Trend in EHC plans

The statutory returns (the SEN2 census) reported that there were 4,053 children and young people in Worcestershire, with Education, Health and Care plans in January 2020, to whom the Authority has responsibility⁵. This represented a year-on-year increase of 15%, an annual trend that has been seen over the last several years. The significant increase in the number of EHC plans 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 EHC plans as a percentage of the total pupil population (including independent schools and post-16 establishments) has increased from 2.9% in January 2016 to 4.6% in January 2020. A significant contribution to this has been the rise in the post-16 population with an EHC plan following a change in Government Legislation⁶ where the

⁵ SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25

⁶ Children and Families Act 2014

educational or training outcomes of the EHC plan are not achieved by age 18, the EHC plan can remain in place until the young person reaches 25.

By extracting the number of school age children with an EHC plan compared to the total pupil population of Worcestershire, we still see a rise, but not one as significant – from 2.5% to 3.1%, which is in line with national expectations. The majority of this rise has been met by special schools across the county as seen in table 3.

	Jan-16	Jan-17	Jan-18	Jan-19	Jan-20
All pupils for whom the authority maintains a statement of special educational needs or an EHC Plan	2,532	2,692	3,064	3,502	4,053
Under age 5 (NCY 0, -1 & -2)	61	55	84	83	110
Aged 5 to 10 (NCY 0 - NCY 5)	871	842	908	992	1,214
Aged 11 to 15 (NCY 6 - NCY 10)	1,089	1,078	1,120	1,220	1,339
Aged 16 to 19 (NCY 11 - NCY 14)	468	628	807	966	959
Aged 20 to 25 (NCY 15 - NCY 19)	37	89	145	241	431
Total	2,526	2,692	3,064	3,502	4,053
Annual increase		6.6%	13.8%	14.3%	15.7%

Table 2: EHC plans by age

	Jan-16	Jan-17	Jan-18	Jan-19	Jan-20
All pupils for whom the authority maintains a statement of special educational needs or an EHC Plan	2,526	2,692	3,064	3,502	4,053
Special schools which is LA funded	1,158	1,228	1,332	1,385	1,517
Special school - independent	61	89	120	134	152
Mainstream school which LA funded	837	767	763	860	1,190
Mainstream - independent	232	56	54	80	97
Out of County⁷	No data	47	12	42	110
Post 16 tertiary education	170	390	628	740	740
Apprenticeships etc	5	8	13	17	16
Residential homes⁸	13	0	57	64	58
Home educated	25	37	40	39	65
NEET	18	39	31	106	39
Alternative provision	5	7	5	11	24
Awaiting placement	8	24	9	24	45
TOTAL	2,532	2,692	3,064	3,502	4,053

Table 3: EHC plans by setting

Of the 4,053 children, 37% have a place in one of the nine LA funded special schools, and 30% are supported within a state-funded mainstream school in Worcestershire.

A further 33% of children and young people are supported in alternative settings such as independent schools or residential homes and are therefore not recorded in the school census but for whom WCC has the responsibility for their EHC plans and ensuring suitable

⁷ Children or Young People with EHC plans “educated in other areas” were only included in data since 2017.

⁸ DfE Residential homes data for 2017 not available.

placements. 795 young people (19%) are attending post 16 colleges. This corresponds to the responsibility to continue education opportunities up to the age of 25 for young people with EHC plans and is the age group which saw most growth in 2018-2019. Some of these colleges will be specialist independent institutions with residential facilities based out of county.

249 children (6%) are in independent schools, 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 special schools, however we can see that the impact on independent schools from the rising numbers over the last several years has not been as great as those seen in other type of provision, particularly state-funded special schools.

Table 4 below compares the proportion of children with EHC plans going to mainstream, independent or special schools in Worcestershire against the whole of England, using DfE statistics.

EHCPs	England				Worcestershire			
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2017	2018	2019	2020
Mainstream schools	121,726	124,886	135,012	148,202	811	808	910	1,207
Maintained special	103,568	111,387	118,999	125,398	1,228	1,332	1,385	1,517
Independent mainstream	3,261	3,228	3,618	3,970	56	54	80	97
Independent special	14,942	15,483	17,532	19,641	89	120	134	152
All Independent	18,203	18,711	21,150	23,611	145	174	214	249
Further Education	32,066	46,854	57,191	64,437	437	641	757	795
Other	11,649	10,698	21,544	28,315	71	109	236	285
% Mainstream	42%	40%	38%	38%	30%	26%	26%	30%
% Independent	6%	6%	6%	6%	5%	6%	6%	6%
% maintained Special	36%	36%	34%	32%	46%	43%	40%	37%
% Further Education	11%	15%	16%	17%	16%	21%	22%	20%
% other (AP, EHE, etc)	4%	3%	6%	7%	3%	4%	7%	7%

Table 4: Analysis of EHCP settings

Source: SEN2 returns, and DfE returns

Whilst the percentage of children with EHC plans going to state-funded special schools in Worcestershire was 46% in 2017 compared to 36% nationally, this percentage has fallen in Worcestershire to 37%, reducing the gap to that seen nationally to 5 percentage points. The percentage of young people in post-16 providers with EHC plans in Worcestershire is also higher than nationally though the gap has shrunk to 3 percentage points over the last 4 years as numbers nationally have risen at a higher rate. The percentage of children with EHC plans going to mainstream schools dropped in 2018 and 2019 but is now climbing. The percentage of children with EHC plans going to independent settings is not significantly above the national average.

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

Following the rise of EHC plans in the last several years, we have seen that the growth in pupils placed in special schools exponentially affected. In Worcestershire, this has been particularly the case, where in 2017/18, 34% of pupils with first time EHC plans were placed in a special school, compared to 21% nationally as special schools were able to respond more effectively to meeting the needs of these children. In 2018/19 this percentage dropped to 28% in Worcestershire and 20% nationally. As a result, although the percentage of total children with EHC plans for Worcestershire is 8th amongst 11 statistically neighbouring authorities, the percentage of these being placed in special schools is 3rd amongst 11.

Moving forwards, the major pressure point that needs to be addressed is the imbalance between placements in mainstream and specialist settings. Although this has improved over the last 2 years, Figures from the 2019 SEN2 census showed that WCC still placed more pupils in specialist settings than most of Worcestershire's statistical neighbours which suggests that a number of pupils currently placed at special schools could be best supported within mainstream schools and taught alongside their peer group with the correct provision in place.

4. Current Provision

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

Each mainstream school has a named specialist to support children at the school SEND. The SENCO (Special educational needs co-ordinator) works in mainstream settings to provide suitable adaptation for children not able to achieve their full potential. Schools can also have teaching assistants to provide 1-to-1 support for a pupils requiring this level of support in a mainstream class.

In addition, many schools also have dedicated SEN units/nurture units which can be specially designed to support pupils with special educational needs alongside a mainstream education. These children will attend specialist timetabled lessons as well as attend mainstream lessons with peers, where appropriate.

There is also a number of teams within 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 to support vulnerable children maintain a place in school. The demand for these services is reviewed separately.

4.1 Autism Bases

Mainstream Autism Bases (MABs) are a key type of provision within mainstream schools and allow pupils with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder with more complex needs to continue to attend school in a mainstream environment with the additional support required to meet their full potential. Current Autism Bases across Worcestershire are listed in the table below.

	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11
Bromsgrove (Rubery)	Beaconside Primary (8)						Waseley Hills HS (10)					
Bromsgrove (Bromsgrove)	Meadows First →					Parkside Middle (12)			NBHS (9)			
Malvern Hills							Dyson Perrins (12)					
Redditch							Walkwood Middle (8)					
							TGA Redditch (10)					
Worcester City	Oldbury Park Primary (8)											
Wychavon (Persnore)							Abbey Park Middle (10)					
							Persnore HS (13)					
Wyre Forest (Kidderminster)							King Charles I (17)					

Table 5: MABs by phase

The autism bases are positioned in schools around the county although Malvern, Redditch, and Wyre Forest have no primary provision at present and Worcester has no high school provision. A place is accessed via a current EHC plan rather than normal admissions. The expertise tends to support the whole school to become an inclusive community which is seen as an advantage to the pupils. Conversely it can also be seen as a potential disadvantage hindering performance in public examinations.

In addition to the MAB in Tudor Grange Redditch, the school opened a new enhanced autism provision in September 2020, for children who previously would only be able to be supported within out of county or specialist independent provision. This new provision, which is the first of its type in Worcestershire, will have a positive impact on these children and will allow them to remain with their peer group and within their home County.

MABs have been shown to be extremely effective at meeting the needs of children with ASD and supporting them to remain within mainstream schools and therefore all MABs in Worcestershire are at capacity for 2020/21. Those in the north of the county are forecast to have space in 2021 onwards for new admissions but those in the south of the county are forecast to remain at or over capacity. ASD is a complex area and every child's needs are unique which means that some children will still be best placed in special schools, however the provision of bases such as these allow children to remain with their peer group and access the benefits of mainstream schools and allow specialist schools to adapt more specifically to more complex cases.

Therefore, Worcestershire Children First is currently working with existing MAB providers and those schools hopeful of developing one, to increase this provision across the County.

4.2 Language units

The mainstream schools listed below have language units to support pupils at the school who may have an EHC plan and require additional language support. These 51 primary school places and 11 high school places are used by the schools to provide intensive specialised teaching for children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). As we have seen earlier in this report, SLCN is much more common before age 11, which with the intensive support provided early on means that there is less need for provision at the high school phase.

District	Language Units	School type	Capacity
Wyre Forest	Burlish Park	Primary	10
Wyre Forest	Sutton Park	Primary	10
Wyre Forest	King Charles	High	11
Bromsgrove	Lickey Hills KS1	Primary	10
Bromsgrove	Lickey Hills KS2	Primary	10
Redditch	Matchborough	First	11

Table 6: Language Units by district

Due to the nature of speech development from birth the discovery and beginning of treatment of an SLC need is often before age 3 and therefore described below in the section on Nursery Provision.

4.3 Alternative provision

Alternative provision (AP) can be offered to support pupils with a short intense intervention in a more nurturing environment. Pupils may be dual registered with the mainstream school or attend full-time. Many AP's undertake out-reach work to support the relationships between pupils and their main school. Funding has recently been granted to Worcestershire for a new 60 place primary AP school to be located in Wyre Forest, with plans to open for September 2022.

District	Alternative Provision	Age Range
Redditch	The Beacon Primary	5-11
Worcester	Perryfields Primary	5-11
Wyre Forest	New Free AP school (Sept 2022)	5-11
Redditch	The Forge Short Stay School	11-16
Worcester	Newbridge Academy	11-16
Worcester	The Aspire Academy	11-16
Wyre Forest	Continu Plus Academy	11-16

Table 7: Alternative Provision

4.4 Special schools

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

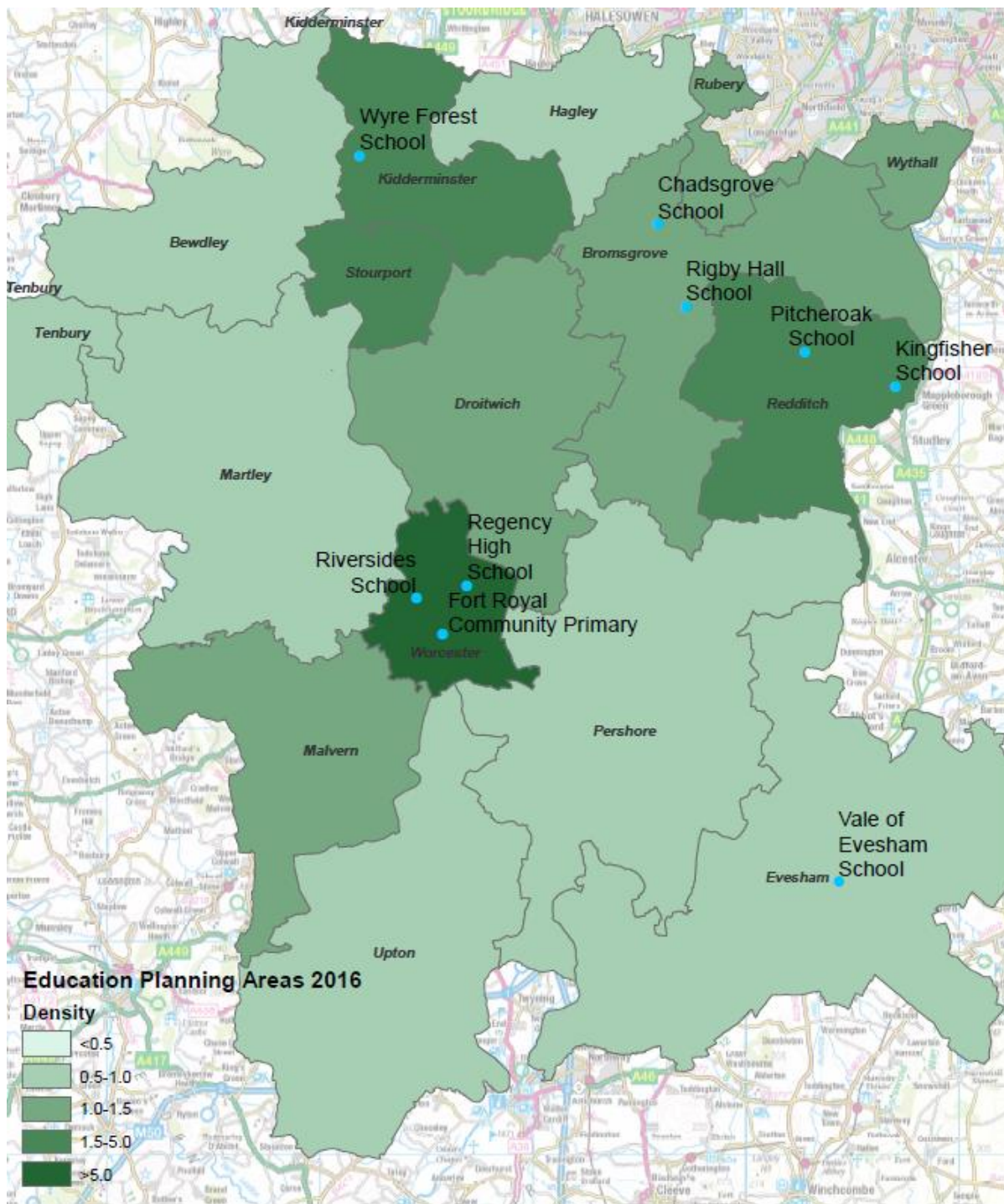
There are 9 LA-funded special schools across Worcestershire, of which 7 provide education for children with a variety of significant needs and 2 with an identified specialism. All but 3 have a nursery, with a further nursery assessment unit at Batchley First School in Redditch.

District	Special School	Age Range	Type
Bromsgrove	Chadsgrove School	2-19	Community
Bromsgrove	Rigby Hall School	2-19	Community
Redditch	Pitcheroak School	2-19	Community
Redditch	The Kingfisher School	7-16	Academy
Worcester City	Fort Royal Community Primary School	2-11	Community
Worcester City	Regency High School	11-19	Academy
Worcester City	Riversides School	7-16	Academy
Wychavon	The Vale of Evesham School	2-19	Academy
Wyre Forest	Wyre Forest School	2-19	Community

Table 8: Special Schools List

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

There is no set pupil admission number (PAN) at a special school. A place is commissioned when approved by the head, on the basis of the needs of the child and the ability of the school to meet those needs.



WORCESTERSHIRE CHILDREN FIRST	Scale: 1:160,000	
County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP	Special Schools & Children with EHCPs per Sq. Km 2020	© Getmapping Plc and Bluesky International Limited 2018

As can be seen most of the schools are in the north of the county but there are none in Droitwich or Malvern. The higher levels of need are in Worcester, Kidderminster, Stourport and Redditch.

4.5 Independent special schools

Independent special schools can provide places for pupils with very specific needs, meaning that in some instances, children will be placed in schools that are out of the County that are more suitable to meet their specific needs. These children are not reported on the school census as they are not taught in Worcestershire in an LA-funded school, however the EHC plan remains the responsibility of Worcestershire, the child's place of residence.

Data from January 2020 shows that 390 children with EHC plans attend independent special schools. This number has been climbing steadily for the last 4 years. Around 75% of these pupils have placements in one of the following 6 schools: Norton College (Tewkesbury), Gloverspiece, Cambian New Elizabethan (Hartlebury), Bright Futures, Hartmore School (Gloucester) and Sunfield Children's home (Stourbridge).

The number of children with EHC plans placed in both special and mainstream independent schools is proportionately higher than for England as a whole (13% opposed to 7%). However, the rate in Worcestershire has been stable since 2016.

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.

4.6 Nursery provision

Most children aged 0 to 5 with SEND will be taught in local Nursery settings as all Ofsted regulated pre-school providers are able to claim additional funding per hour to support the needs of children with SEND through referral to the pre-school forum, known as the graduated response. There is the same responsibility on these providers to make reasonable adjustments to support these children as on schools.

In addition, there is a payment of £615 that can be claimed by a setting to support adaptations, known as the Disability Access Fund (DAF).

Pre-school forum will also receive referrals from Health Visitors, and other health services such as child development clinics, GPs and Speech and Language service to ensure all children who need additional support from this young age are able to access the best start in education.

Those children being taught at school nurseries (including special nurseries or nursery assessment unit) will be included in the school census. Other providers such as child minders and private nurseries return details to the government in the Early Years Census and these children are included in the planning for early years and school places.

Below shows the number of children for whom settings in Worcestershire were claiming an additional payment to support their emerging needs in June 2019 (GR1-4 plus EHC plan⁹)

3 and 4-year-old children in funded nursery place		
	Number	Percentage
No special educational need	8,945	85.7%
Graduated Response 1 (GR1)	284	2.7%
Graduated Response 2 (GR2)	506	4.8%
Graduated Response 3 (GR3)	243	2.3%
Graduated Response 4 (GR4)	313	3.0%
Exceptional Early Years Funding / EHC plan	145	1.4%
Grand Total	10,436	100.0%

Table 9: EY Graduated Response

Source: Synergy System, July 2020

Most children requiring their setting to claim exceptional funding were mainstream, with just 38 of the 145 children attending a Special Nursery. This means that 107 children with the most complex needs (74%) are able to be supported in general mainstream nurseries including private, voluntary and independent, as well as school nurseries.

Five nursery assessment units across the County support in assessing the correct level of provision required by a child for school. Four of these are attached to special schools (Chadsgrove, Fort Royal, Vale of Evesham and Wyre Forest) and a further unit is attached to a first school in Redditch (Batchley). In January 2020, 149 children were being supported in this type of provision with some going on to a special school and some moving into mainstream schools with specific support.

Specialist early years language support is delivered in each district. Two units are being delivered by the NHS, one unit by the nursery assessment unit at Batchley first school and another unit by ICAN at Cranham Primary School. This targeted intervention provides children with specialist provision for typically 6 hours per week to support their speech, language and communication needs.

Districts	Known Children 01.09.2019	SLCN Support Required	Number supported in language classes Sept 2019, and % of known children
Bromsgrove	1,074	19	19 Charford 1.8%
Malvern Hills	636	11	0 *outreach team
Redditch	1,124	20	20 Batchley EYLC 1.8%
Worcester	1,154	23	23 Cranham, WEYLC 2.0%
Wychavon	1,356	24	0 *outreach team
Wyre Forest	1,122	20	26 Birchen Coppice 2.3%

Table 10: Early Years SLCN units

The Pre-School Forum figures suggest that on average 3.5% of known 2-3-year olds will have some Speech & Language difficulties and benefit from early intervention. There are no organised classes in Wychavon or Malvern Hills, but there are NHS Speech & Language

⁹ GR Ratings are explained on [WCC website](#)

Therapists providing services there. It must be remembered that early intervention with speech development can eliminate or much reduce the need for SEND support later.¹⁰

4.7 Post-16 provision

Most post-16 provision is not recorded as part of the school census, unless the sixth form is run by a school. Six of the nine special schools listed above have a sixth form (NCY 12 and 13) and a few young people stay on past this age (NCY14). The majority (44%) of post-16 young people with EHC plans attend further education establishments with 33% in special schools and 11% in mainstream 6th form.

Since the SEN reforms in 2014, 19 to 25-year-olds with EHC plans should have free access to further education in the same way as 16- to 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, which is beyond traditional education age, as well as support to transition to adult social care, if appropriate. There is no requirement to securing education or training for young people aged 19 to 25 who do not have EHC plans.

As we have seen, as a result of this change the number of young people aged 20 to 25 with an EHC plan had increased by 100% from 230 in January 2018 to 458 in January 2019, reducing to 431 in January 2020. 65% of young people 20-25 with an EHC plan attend mainstream FE colleges, such as Heart of Worcestershire (HOW), Warwickshire or Kidderminster colleges. Some young people in this age bracket may attend independent specialist post-16 institutions such as National Star College, Gloucestershire; Queen Alexandra College, Birmingham; Glasshouse College, Stourbridge and Derwen College, Shropshire. WCC will continue to develop and improve the working partnership with local colleges to ensure that we continue to meet our statutory obligations to these young people.

¹⁰ [Bercow Review of Services for Children & Young People with SLCN](#)

4.8 Predicted pupil numbers

We have seen so far in this report some of the trends and changes that are affecting the landscape of the number and type of special education needs across and County and the impact on the places that have been needed to meet these needs.

In order to forecast the number of pupils requiring SEND support or a special school place over the next 5 years, we must firstly look at trends in the total school population.

Places in mainstream schools for next 5 years are forecast in a tested statistical model using the October annual school census, known pre-school children, and the historic 5 year average transfer rates for each year group. It also incorporates new housing assumptions for the period being considered. Using this method, by 2025 we can expect 79,564 pupils in mainstream schools in Worcestershire, an increase of almost 3% from academic year 2019/20.

Taking consideration of state-funded nurseries, special schools and alternative provision, and assuming similar increases across these providers as well, then we can estimate that there will be approximately 83,483 pupils across state-funded schools in Worcestershire for year groups R to Y11. From this we can gain a first indication of the number of children with SEND requiring places in schools over the next 5 years.

Based on the trends seen across the County and Nationally over the last few years, we can assume that the percentages of children needing SEN support or an EHC plan will increase to 14% and 3.3% of the school population respectively by 2025.

Number on Roll (R to Y11, plus school sixth forms)						Forecasts							
Oct-14	Oct-15	Oct-16	Oct-17	Oct-18	Oct-19	Oct-20	Oct-21	Oct-22	Oct-23	Oct-24	Oct-25		
73,672	74,357	74,951	75,760	76,109	77,434	78,875	79,240	79,617	79,725	79,631	79,564		
Annual growth anticipated in mainstream						1.9%	0.5%	0.5%	0.1%	-0.1%	-0.1%		
						Jan-20	Oct-20	Oct-21	Oct-22	Oct-23	Oct-24	Oct-25	
Pupils in mainstream schools, R-Yr11						77,302	78,875	79,240	79,617	79,725	79,631	79,564	
Plus Special schools						1,464	1484	1484	1484	1478	1469	1461	
Special school nurseries						84	86	86	87	87	87	86	
nursery schools, & nursery classes in schools						2,160	2204	2214	2225	2228	2225	2223	
19-25 in mainstream schools						71	72	73	73	73	73	73	
Alternative provision						280	286	287	288	289	288	288	
Dual registered						-207	-211	-212	-213	-213	-213	-213	
Total pupils , in all schools exc independent						81,154	82,796	83,172	83,561	83,665	83,560	83,483	
All SEN support						12.9%	10,602	10,970	11,145	11,322	11,462	11,573	11,688
All EHCPs						3.3%	2,587	2,649	2,678	2,707	2,727	2,741	2,756
% of EHCPs in special schools						1,464	1484	56.6%	56.0%	55.4%	54.8%	54.2%	

Table 11: SEN forecasts to 2025

The actual number of children with EHC plans in special schools represented 56.6% of the school-age children with EHC plans. It is hoped that by 2025 more children with EHC plans will be placed in mainstream settings and that the rate for special schools will drop to 53%. However, although on average a certain number of pupils could be accommodated in a mainstream school or MAB, the combination of existing conditions in settings, skills of available staff and the needs of other children in a given setting could mean that actual numbers of children placed in mainstream settings are less than expected.

Using this forecast of total number of pupils with an EHC plan in relevant provision in 2025 and splitting according to census distribution of districts, and primary need, results in the following distribution across the County

Forecast Pupils with EHC Plans by Need and District 2025

	Cognition & Learning Difficulties	ASD	Speech & Language	Sensory / Physical	SEMH	Grand Total
Bromsgrove	83	98	98	56	43	378
Malvern Hills	80	68	77	12	49	286
Redditch	148	83	97	61	93	482
Worcester	164	101	125	49	103	542
Wychavon	240	83	81	28	67	500
Wyre Forest	170	109	156	40	94	568
Grand Total	885	543	634	245	449	2756

Table 12: SEN forecasts by district

5. Forecast, by special school

Children attending special schools are tracked via the statutory school census completed in January each year by all Local Authority funded schools. The demand trend can then be extrapolated forward to forecast likely future demand. Schools have then reviewed these forecasts for local knowledge. For all special schools the future demand is based upon admissions trends in the previous 5 years. Whilst population in mainstream schools across the county grew annually by between 1% in 2017 and 1.7% in 2019, the special schools grew 3-7% per year. The noticeable expansions were year-to-year increases for Fort Royal Community Primary (14%), Rigby Hall School (21%), Chadsgrove School (14%) and Wyre Forest School (11%).

Over the last several years, demand for places in special schools has been high, driven by parental demand for high quality education and an assumption that children with special education needs can only be supported in special schools. Special schools in Worcestershire have very successfully adapted to high demand and increased the number of pupils at the schools, with 8 out of the 9 schools deemed Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. However, this has put a strain on accommodation. 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 must be found.

In 2019/20 Worcestershire’s statistical neighbour authorities placed between 37% and 59% of children with EHC plans in special schools. The national average was 44% and Worcestershire’s percentage was 56.6%. The national rate of 44% stabilised since 2019. The emphasis over the next several years is to ensure the correct mainstream provision is in place to support children with SEND back into mainstream schools where this would be in the best interests of the child or young person, and bring Worcestershire back in line with national averages.

Based on the forecasting to 2025 we can anticipate there will be approximately 2,756 children within EHC plans in Worcestershire state-funded schools by 2025, and based on historic, as well as current placement profiles, the number of children requiring a place in a maintained special school would be 1,461 in 2025. An impact of forecasting individual school

demand based on historic growth was that the sum of these forecasts exceeded the number of children forecasted to have an EHC plan and requiring this level of support across the County as school populations plateau and the delivery of provision within mainstream schools increases. Therefore, we have chosen to show both forecast trends for schools below. The first being based on 5-year historic growth, and the second based on a more realistic forecast that takes into account County and National trends. It is important to show both of these forecasts to show the impact of continued focus on improving mainstream provision.

The children with EHC plans being placed in mainstream schools and MABs will be the ones most able to benefit from a more mainstream environment. This leaves the special schools with a mix of children with more complex issues. These may require more space, equipment and more qualified or experienced staff.

5.1 Chadsgrove School (Bromsgrove)

Chadsgrove School is an Ofsted rated 'Outstanding' Special School based in Bromsgrove. The school supports children from age 2-19 with a variety of special education needs and physical disabilities.

Chadsgrove has increased in size over the last 5 years and now has 124 children on roll and a further 8 children in the nursery.

NOR	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
Jan-16	7	15	2	1	5	12	7	8	4	11	8	9	11	13	0	113
Jan-17	9	7	17	5	2	8	14	7	8	4	12	8	9	11	8	129
Jan-18	5	7	8	17	6	3	8	15	7	8	5	11	8	9	9	126
Jan-19	7	5	7	7	17	7	2	11	14	7	8	5	11	8	8	124
Jan-20	6	7	5	9	7	17	6	4	11	15	7	7	6	10	7	124

Table 13: Chadsgrove NOR

The school have noted that they have seen an increase in the complexity of support they need to provide as the school is now supporting children with more complex needs than previous, reflective of a national trend discussed earlier in this report. The school have highly skilled staff supporting feeding, medication and educational needs. There is an average of 8 children per class.

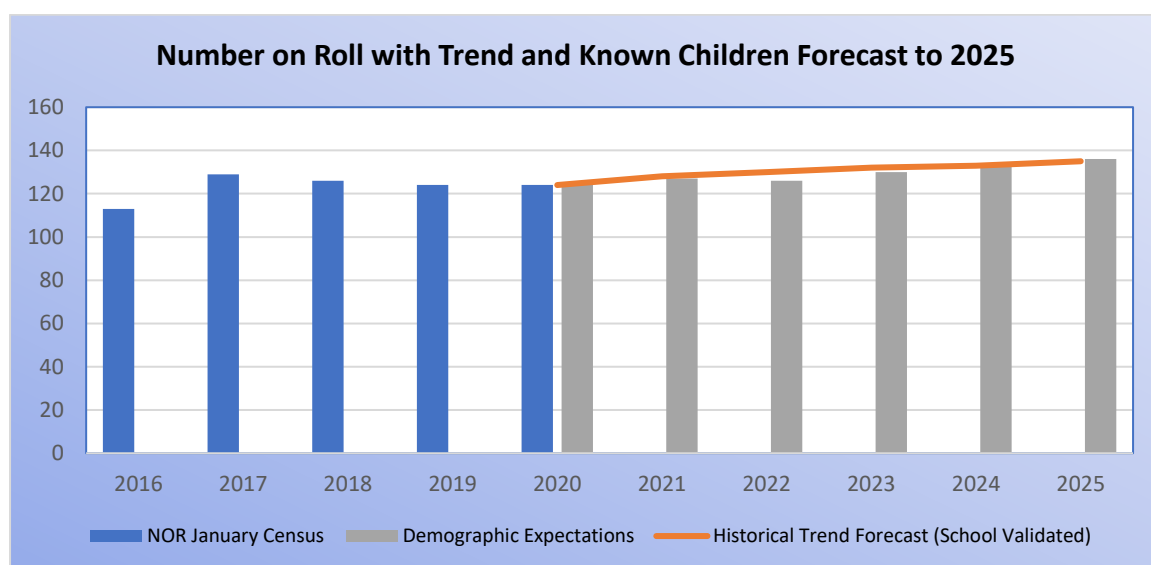
Due to the complex needs and physical disabilities of children attending at the school, most children remain at the school from Reception through to Year 14. Therefore, there is no predicted movement into, or out from, the school between year groups including year 12-14 as this has been demonstrated historically.

Forecast	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
Jan-21	8	6	8	5	9	7	17	7	4	11	15	7	7	6	10	127
Jan-22	9	8	6	8	5	9	7	17	7	4	11	15	7	7	6	126
Jan-23	10	9	8	6	8	5	9	7	17	7	4	11	15	7	7	130
Jan-24	10	10	9	8	6	8	5	9	7	17	7	4	11	15	7	133
Jan-25	10	10	10	9	8	8	9	5	8	8	17	7	4	11	14	136

Table 14: Chadsgrove Forecast

The ability of the school to accommodate these children up to 2024/2025 academic year will depend on the re-utilisation or creation of new space. The school is currently awaiting confirmation that 19-25 year olds (Year 14 and above) currently on roll can move off-site and be taught in the vacant Finstall Centre. This will have the advantage of creating space for other year groups and allow the support of a group of 19-25 year olds on a second site, in Worcestershire, but would be subject to the Finstall Centre project proceeding and the school being the successful provider.

A desktop analysis, using BB104 building specifications, to match teaching space at the school with the recommended space for children showing the profile of needs from the school census in January 2020, revealed 167% space utilisation. This supports the view of the school that no further increase in the number on roll will be possible without building work.



Chadsgrove School: Source: school census and forecast data

5.2 Rigby Hall School (Bromsgrove)

Rigby Hall School is an Ofsted rated “Good” Special School based in Bromsgrove. The school supports children from age 4-19 with a variety of special education needs and disabilities.

The accommodation at Rigby Hall School has been expanded twice recently with the addition of 25 places in 2019. While there were 135 children in January 2019 there was an increase to 164 children in September 2019. There is no nursery class.

NOR	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total
Jan-16	2	2	4	5	9	9	6	15	8	11	10	16	9	3	109
Jan-17	6	2	5	9	10	12	13	9	17	10	11	10	14	4	132
Jan-18	5	10	2	6	11	11	12	15	10	17	9	13	9	7	137
Jan-19	8	7	11	3	8	10	11	12	15	11	17	8	10	4	135
Jan-20	8	11	9	14	8	13	11	12	19	16	12	18	8	5	164

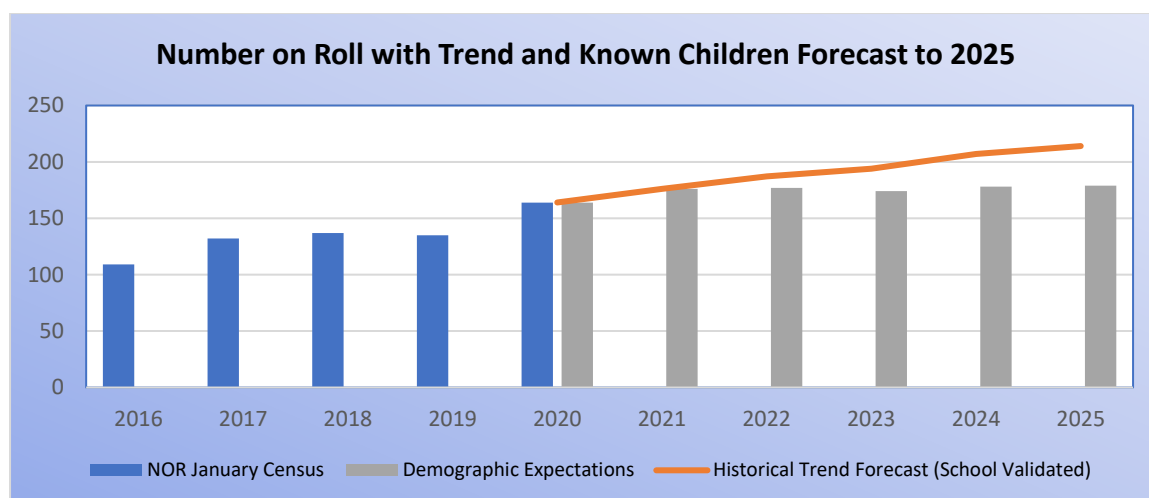
Table 15: Rigby Hall NOR

The numbers show places in each year group, by year. Rigby Hall tends to admit more in-year pupils and therefore years groups show growth as they move up the school, indicating admissions in most years. There are currently no children that stay on past year 13.

The forecast demand for places from historic numbers, as balanced between statistical analysis and known admissions for 2020 is shown below.

Forecast	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total
Jan-21	11	6	12	12	15	10	14	14	12	21	16	11	16	6	176
Jan-22	11	11	8	12	14	15	10	16	14	12	21	14	9	10	177
Jan-23	11	11	13	8	14	14	15	12	16	14	12	19	12	3	174
Jan-24	11	11	13	13	10	14	14	17	12	16	14	10	17	6	178
Jan-25	11	11	13	13	15	10	14	16	17	12	16	12	8	11	179

Table 16: Rigby Hall Forecast



The combined places forecast in Bromsgrove district suggest that 80% of the pupils with EHC plans in 2025 would attend one of these two special schools. As we have seen, this is far above the expectation of actual need and far beyond national ratios, suggesting that a 5 year historic trend estimate would highly overestimate demand.

5.3 Pitcheroak School (Redditch)

Pitcheroak School is an Ofsted rated 'Good' Special School based in Redditch. The school supports children from age 4-19 specialising in Cognition & Learning Difficulties together with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

The school has expanded over the last 5 years to admit a further 17 children on roll.

NOR	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
Jan-16	7	8	5	10	11	14	11	9	12	9	15	4	13	10	0	138
Jan-17	3	7	8	7	10	12	15	13	9	13	9	15	4	13	3	141
Jan-18	7	6	9	10	7	11	12	17	13	10	13	10	12	3	3	143
Jan-19	5	9	7	10	10	11	10	13	17	13	11	13	10	10	1	150
Jan-20	6	9	10	8	11	10	12	12	12	18	14	11	8	7	7	155

Table 17: Pitcheroak NOR

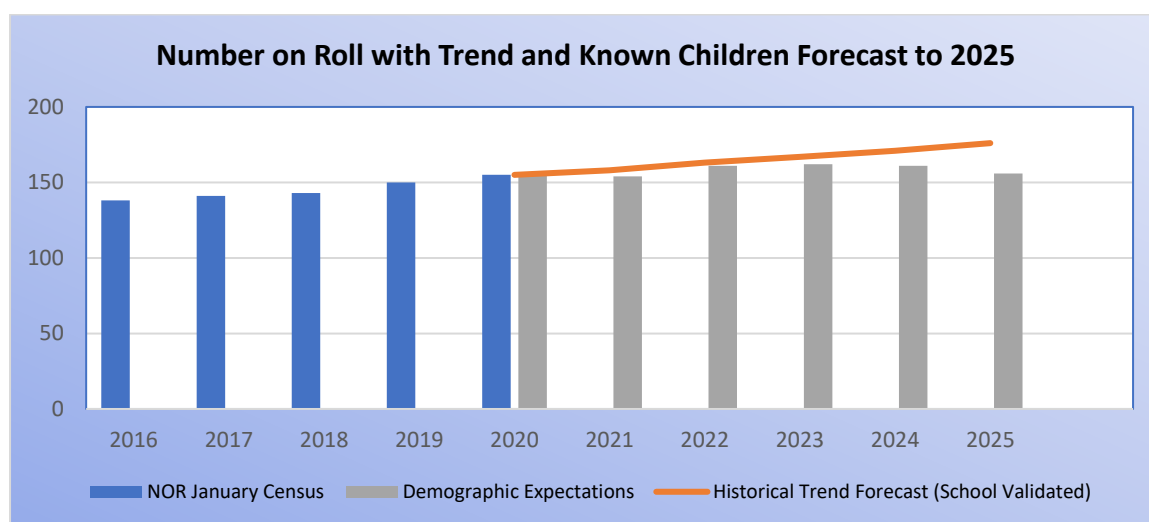
Having reviewed this information, the forecasted demand is as follows. There is no nursery class at the school.

Forecast	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
Jan-21	9	7	10	10	8	11	11	12	12	12	18	14	10	8	2	154
Jan-22	9	9	7	10	10	8	11	11	12	12	12	18	14	10	8	161
Jan-23	9	9	9	7	10	10	8	11	11	12	12	12	18	14	10	162
Jan-24	9	9	9	9	7	10	10	8	11	11	12	12	12	18	14	161
Jan-25	9	9	9	9	9	7	10	10	8	11	11	12	12	12	18	156

Table 18: Pitcheroak Forecast

The needs of children are becoming more complex and additional space is needed to fully support the children, both in terms of class size and in the need for quiet break-out spaces.

The school has had an expansion feasibility study so is hoping to increase capacity and will have a new triple mobile unit in 2020 to support them in the short-term.



5.4 The Kingfisher School (Redditch)

The Kingfisher School is an Ofsted rated 'Good' school supporting children from Year 3 to Year 11 (ages 7 to 16 years old), predominately with a primary need of social, emotional and mental health (SEMH). Places are mainly utilised by older children, from Year 7 to Year 11, however there are admissions each year to every year group. In the last 5 years, the number of children at the school has increased from 61 to 91 (49% increase).

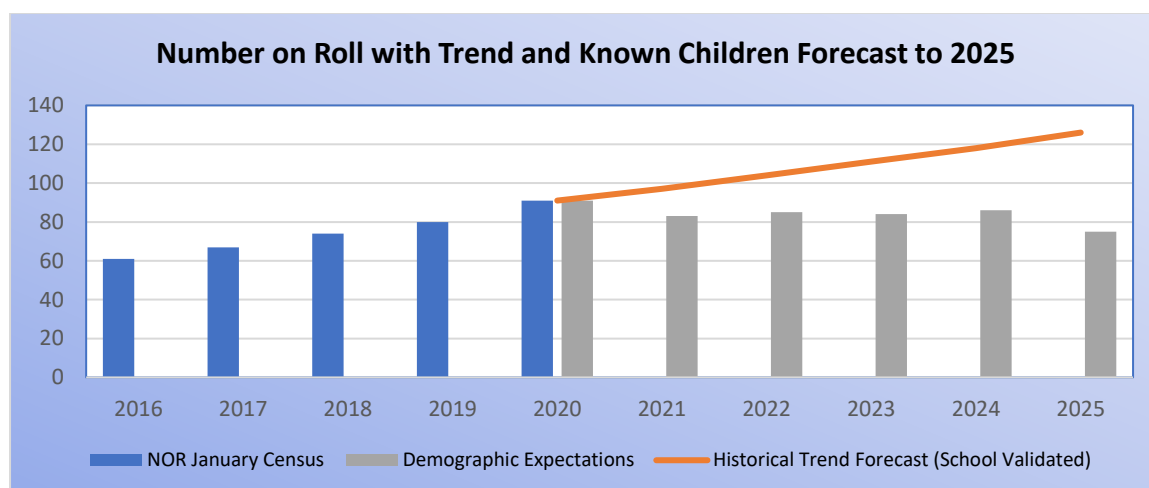
NOR	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
Jan-16				1	2	10	6	5	4	12	11	10				61
Jan-17				1	4	2	13	10	9	5	15	8				67
Jan-18				0	5	5	9	15	10	10	6	14				74
Jan-19				0	3	8	6	14	14	14	13	8				80
Jan-20				3	8	5	10	7	15	16	14	13				91

Table 19: Kingfisher NOR

Having reviewed this historic data, the forecast for the next 5 years would be as follows.

Forecast	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
Jan-21				3	4	6	5	10	8	16	15	16				83
Jan-22				4	4	5	7	8	12	10	18	17				85
Jan-23				4	5	6	6	8	10	14	13	18				84
Jan-24				5	6	5	7	8	10	13	16	16				86
Jan-25				5	5	6	5	7	8	10	13	16				75

Table 20: Kingfisher Forecast



Kingfisher School data

The ability to meet this demand is dependent on the replacement of a portable building which due to age needs replacing, else the school may be at risk of losing space needed to support 16 places by 2023. The school is an academy meaning it is directly funded by Government to make changes of this type. The school have submitted a CIF bid, the process by which they can apply for this funding, for this replacement.

While there are no more rooms available which can be used for learning space, there is land on the site on which could be built more rooms, however at present we do not anticipate that the school will require to provide any further places as the number of pupils on roll stabilise.

However, a desk top analysis of teaching space at the school compared to that recommended for children with needs as recorded in the school census January 2020 showed space utilisation is at 118% so the school will still require review following the replacement of their portable buildings.

5.5 Fort Royal Community Primary (Worcester)

Fort Royal is an Ofsted rated “Good” special school supporting primary school children with a variety of special education needs and disabilities. Over the last 5 years it has grown in size from 164 children on roll to 215 children on roll (31% increase), as shown in the table below.

NOR	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Jan-16	28	25	22	19	33	20	17	164
Jan-17	34	25	27	24	20	37	21	188
Jan-18	35	38	28	27	24	22	36	210
Jan-19	40	37	40	29	28	23	21	218
Jan-20	29	32	39	38	28	27	22	215

Table 21: Fort Royal NOR

Having reviewed the statistically predicted trend using local intelligence such as admissions to the school after Reception, the forecast for number of children needing places is as follows:

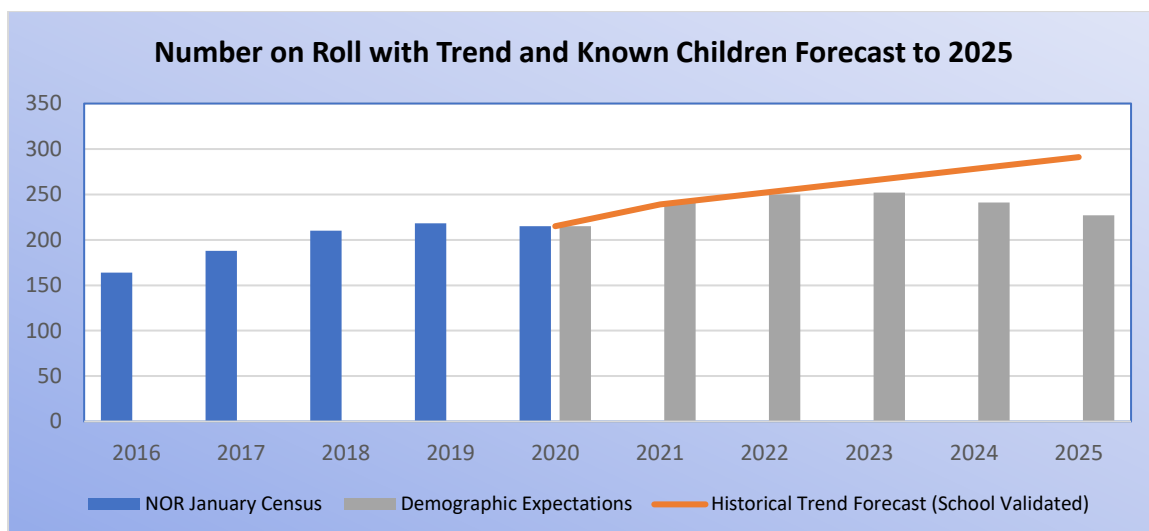
Forecast	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Jan-21	39	38	34	39	38	28	25	241
Jan-22	34	39	38	34	39	38	28	250
Jan-23	30	34	39	38	34	39	38	252
Jan-24	27	30	34	39	38	34	39	241
Jan-25	25	27	30	34	39	38	34	227

Table 22: Fort Royal Forecast

The 5 year trend predicted demand for an additional 52 places over the next 5 years. However, the school was refurbished and extended around 10 years ago to provide 140 places, with average class sized of 7-8 pupils. This met the criteria of BB104, relating to space needed in special schools to meet the needs of these children. There are now many more children on roll (excluding the nursery) and class sizes have grown to around 10. Therefore, further places can only be provided at the school following an expansion project to ensure children are provided with the opportunities they need for the best start in life, and class sizes are suitable to the support the needs of the children. Desktop analysis of teaching space shows 114% space utilisation, for the children on roll in January 2018 (including children in nursery).

There is a portable double-classroom with planning permission due to expire in 2022. To support the anticipated demand for places will require a solution for additional accommodation.

Fort Royal School has been working closely with WCF and neighbouring primary schools to support children from the Fort Royal nursery to move into mainstream reception classes where this is in the best interest of the pupils. They have had some success moving the most able pupils into or back into mainstream primary schools in later years with this additional support and cross-working. These efforts have reduced some of the pressure on capacity, as can be seen in the stabilised numbers in reception forecasted above.



5.6 Regency High School (Worcester)

Regency High School is an Ofsted rated “Good” special school supporting secondary school children with a variety of special education needs and disabilities. It is fed directly from Fort Royal Community Primary school. Regency High School experienced a large increase of pupils in 2018/19 which represented 15% increase from the previous year. 35 of these were the intake from Fort Royal in addition to 11 Year 7 pupils from elsewhere. In 2020, intake at the school normalised back to 25 pupils.

NOR	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
Jan-16								21	22	29	22	25	25	19	11	174
Jan-17								22	25	21	29	22	26	22	9	176
Jan-18								25	24	23	23	29	21	24	9	178
Jan-19								46	25	27	25	23	28	17	9	200
Jan-20								25	46	25	26	25	20	26	12	205

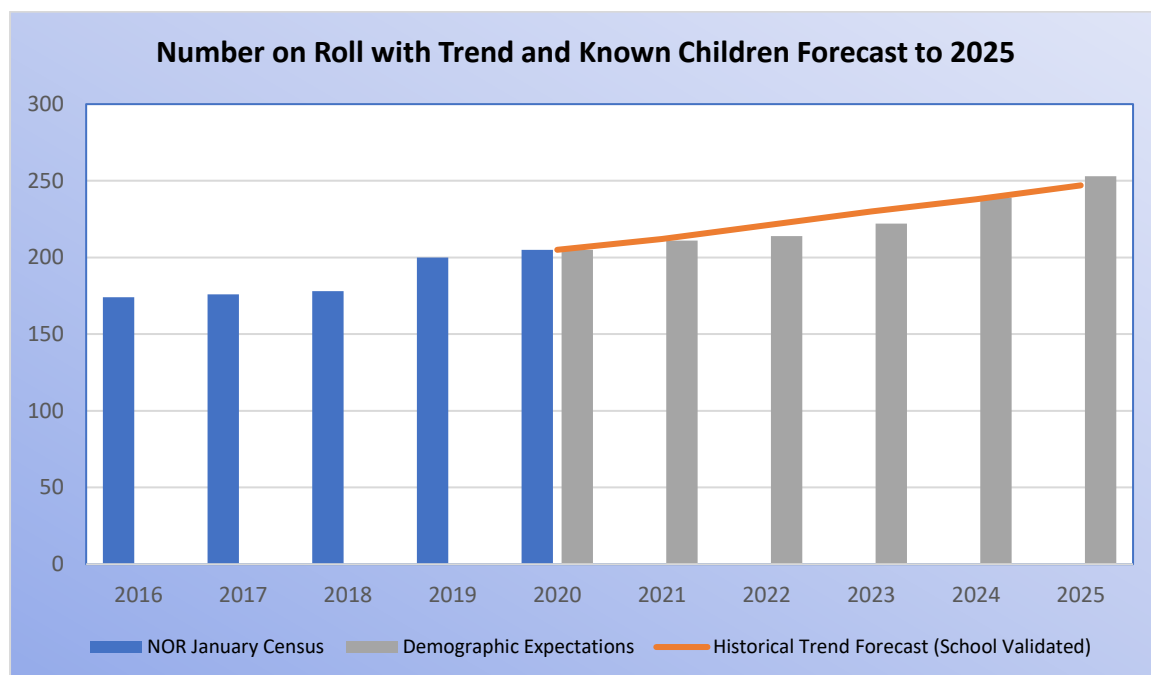
Table 23: Regency High NOR

Using this data, and local intelligence (admissions are almost exclusively from Fort Royal Primary school, also based in Worcestershire), the demand for the following number of places is anticipated in the next 5 years:

Forecast	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
Jan-21								32	26	49	25	26	22	18	13	211
Jan-22								25	34	26	50	25	25	20	9	214
Jan-23								28	27	34	27	50	24	23	10	222
Jan-24								38	30	27	35	27	49	22	11	239
Jan-25								39	40	30	28	35	26	44	11	253

Table 24: Regency High Forecast

The forecast is impacted by large intakes from Fort Royal Primary School in 2024 and 2025. This demand for 42 more places cannot be accommodated on a site built for 210 pupils, so the site will be at capacity in December 2021, which is currently considered to be 230.



5.7 Riversides School (Worcester)

Riversides School is an Ofsted rated 'Good' special school for children with social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) from ages 7 to 16 (year 3 to year 11). The following numbers on roll have been declared in the January school census:

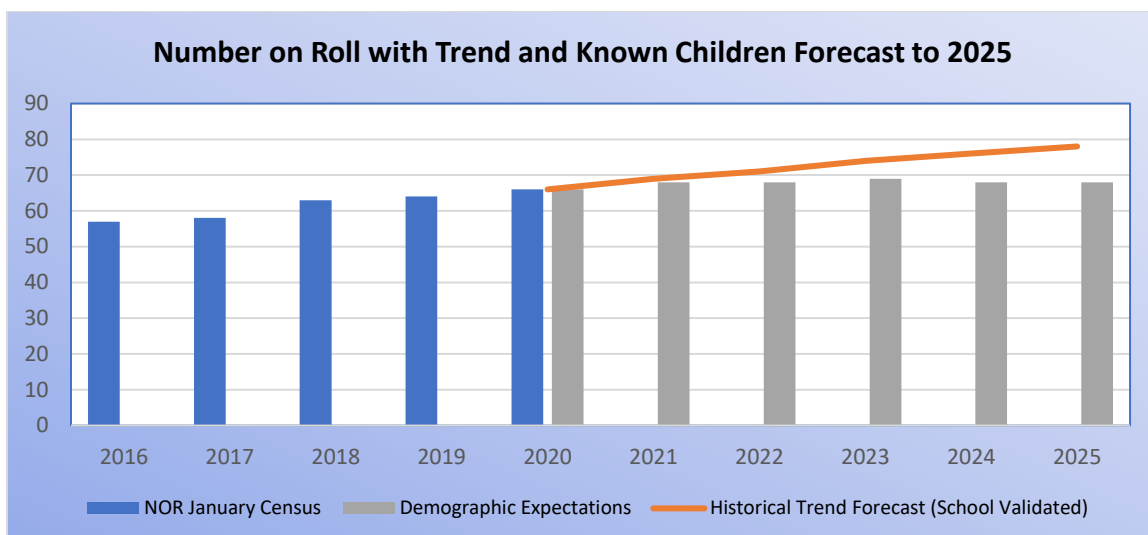
NOR	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
Jan-16				2	3	1	10	6	8	9	10	8				57
Jan-17				4	5	3	2	10	7	7	10	10				58
Jan-18				2	5	8	3	4	13	7	10	11				63
Jan-19				1	3	7	11	7	4	14	7	10				64
Jan-20				4	3	5	10	12	5	6	14	7				66

Table 25: Riversides NOR

This shows a growth of 9 places over the last 5 years, with new admissions in every school year. The following admissions are forecast by the school for the next four years.

Forecast	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
Jan-21				2	4	6	6	13	14	6	7	10				68
Jan-22				4	4	5	8	7	13	14	6	7				68
Jan-23				2	4	5	8	10	7	13	14	6				69
Jan-24				2	2	4	8	8	10	7	13	14				68
Jan-25				3	3	8	8	8	8	10	7	13				68

Table 26: Riversides Forecast



Riversides operates over two sites, KS2 and KS3 at Barbourne and KS4 at City Walls Road in Worcester City. The City Walls site was only intended to be temporary and solutions are limited to providing a more suitable site.

5.8 Vale of Evesham School (Wychavon)

The Vale of Evesham School is a special school in Evesham supporting children with a variety of special education needs and disabilities. Ofsted ratings for this school were outstanding until recently, whereupon it was listed as inadequate. The school is part of an Academy Trust that manages 4 schools across Worcestershire which is currently being re-brokered. The school has grown by 26 places over the last 5 years and sees minor changes to each year group as they move up through the school.

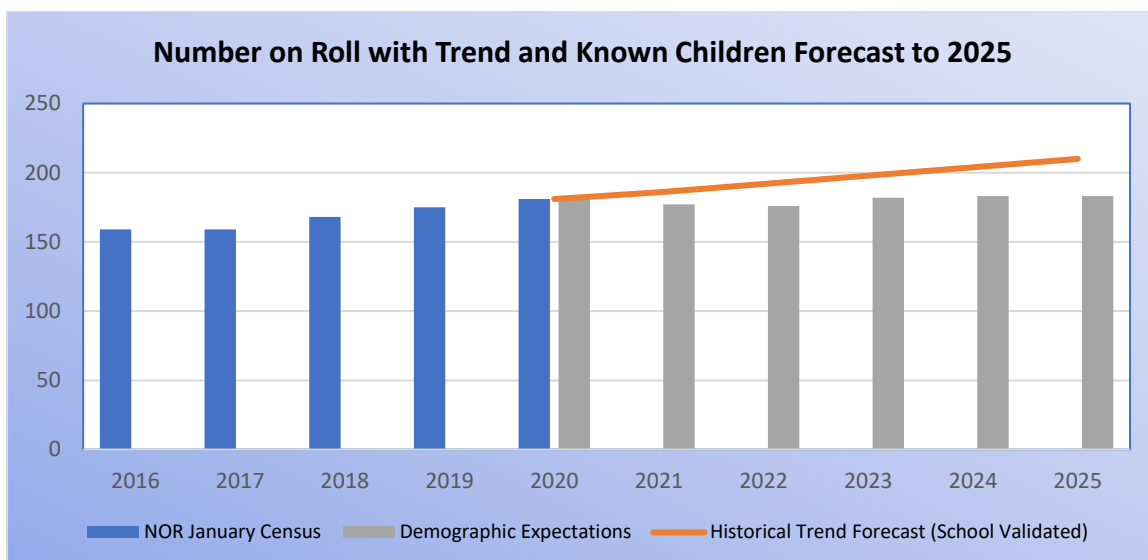
NOR	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
Jan-16	9	11	5	8	8	13	11	10	17	18	14	9	10	12	4	159
Jan-17	12	8	12	6	8	9	13	13	13	16	17	14	9	8	1	159
Jan-18	10	12	10	13	6	9	12	15	13	12	16	17	14	9	0	168
Jan-19	16	10	11	9	15	7	10	12	15	13	11	15	16	13	2	175
Jan-20	17	16	12	10	6	19	7	11	12	16	14	11	13	12	5	181

Table 27: Vale of Evesham NOR

There is also a nursery unit with 19 pupils on roll (January 2020), but not all are admitted to the school. Based on known trends the forecast for the next 5 years will be as follows:

Forecast	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
Jan-21	14	14	16	10	11	9	15	7	10	12	15	13	11	14	6	177
Jan-22	15	14	14	16	10	11	9	15	7	10	12	15	12	10	6	176
Jan-23	15	16	14	15	16	11	11	10	15	7	10	12	14	11	5	182
Jan-24	14	15	16	14	15	16	11	11	10	15	7	10	11	13	5	183
Jan-25	14	14	15	16	14	15	16	11	11	10	15	7	9	10	6	183

Table 28: Vale of Evesham Forecast



5.9 Wyre Forest School (Wyre Forest)

Wyre Forest School is an Ofsted rated ‘Good’ special school in Kidderminster supporting children with a variety of special education needs and disabilities aged 4 to 19 years old. Due to the rise in demand over the last 5 years, there has been a growing number of children taught at the school, despite being built for 220 pupils in 2015. In addition to the 269 pupils on roll in January 2020, there are 25 children supported by nursery places in either full or part time places.

NOR	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
Jan-16	13	7	15	8	17	15	15	23	20	25	14	18	14	15	0	219
Jan-17	17	14	10	17	7	17	15	24	24	22	25	15	7	12	5	231
Jan-18	18	22	17	12	18	10	18	20	25	23	22	25	13	6	8	257
Jan-19	21	19	22	17	13	18	9	23	20	25	22	21	19	7	2	258
Jan-20	25	21	19	22	17	13	18	9	24	20	25	22	14	16	4	269

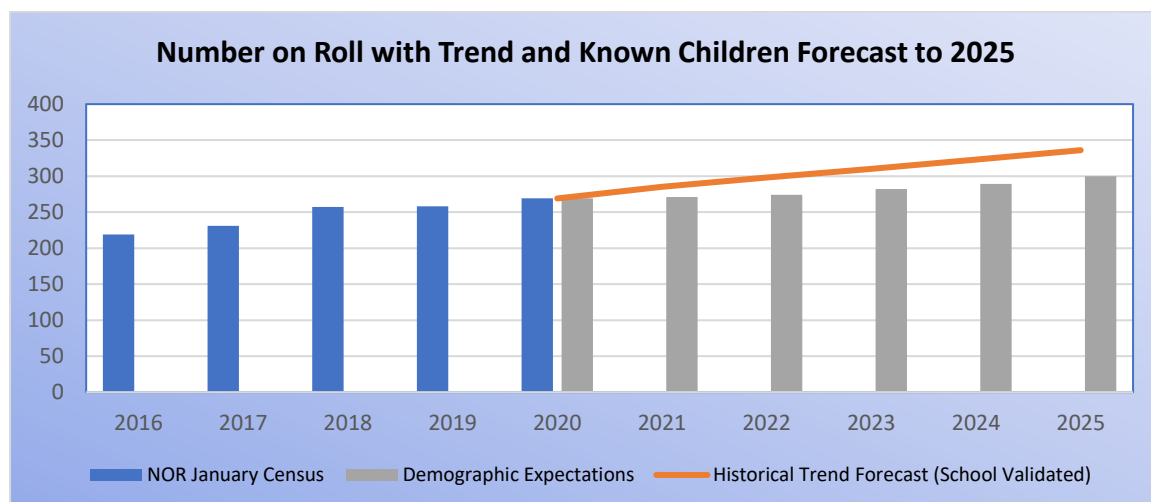
Table 29: Wyre Forest NOR

Having reviewed the historic trends, the forecast of demand for the next 4 years is anticipated to be as follows:

Forecast	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
Jan-21	21	22	21	19	22	21	17	18	9	23	20	25	15	11	8	271
Jan-22	22	22	22	22	19	23	21	18	19	9	24	20	17	11	5	274
Jan-23	23	23	22	23	22	20	23	22	19	19	10	24	13	13	5	282
Jan-24	24	24	23	23	23	23	20	24	23	19	20	10	16	10	6	289
Jan-25	24	25	24	24	23	24	23	21	25	23	20	20	7	12	5	300

Table 30: Wyre Forest Forecast

However, this is unrealistic for the space on site to be able to offer a further 29 places and it is likely that other options will need to be explored to meet this demand. One option being considered by the school is to utilise vacant accommodation in Baxter College.



5.10 Combined Special School forecast

The data for January 2020 is based on children on roll as reported from each school census. From this, the next 4 years are forecast using the combination of individual forecasts for each special school.

Across the County there have been additions to accommodation at special schools including the mobile classroom at Pitcheroak in preparation for September 2020 when the number of commissioned places increases by 85. This is shown in the forecast for January 2020.

	Chadsgrove	Rigby Hall	Pitcheroak	Kingfisher	Fort Royal	Regency High	Riversides	Vale of Evesham	Wyre Forest	TOTAL
2020	124	164	155	91	215	205	66	181	269	1470
2021	127	176	154	83	241	211	68	177	271	1508
2022	126	177	161	85	250	214	68	176	274	1531
2023	130	174	162	84	252	222	69	182	282	1557
2024	133	178	161	86	241	239	68	183	289	1578
2025	136	179	156	75	227	253	68	183	300	1577

Table 31: Combined Special School Forecast

Comparing the forecast distribution of children with EHC plans by phase, primary need and district with the forecast rolls for special schools, the table below shows how many children are likely to be placed outside of special schools. They will either go to mainstream schools or out of county (which includes independent special schools inside the county).

EY/Primary/First Phase – EHCPs expected in 2025							Special School		All pupils	Pupils per place
Cognition	ASD	Speech	Sensory Physical	SEMH	Total	Fcst	coverage			
Pershore/Evesham	85	22	17	7	19	150	104	69%	5,398	52
Worcester/Malvern Hills & Droitwich	152	105	128	38	93	516	249	48%	14,645	59
Wyre Forest	99	64	88	23	53	327	167	51%	8,024	48
Bromsgrove	37	45	41	24	18	164	130	79%	7,436	57
Redditch district	56	32	37	23	35	184	51	28%	4,717	92
Secondary/Middle/High/6th Form Phase - EHCPs expected in 2025										
Pershore/Evesham	104	28	22	9	24	188	79	42%	5,979	76
Worcester/Malvern Hills & Droitwich	136	93	115	33	81	458	253	55%	13,268	52
Wyre Forest	78	50	69	18	42	257	133	52%	6,442	48
Bromsgrove	47	54	56	32	25	214	185	86%	9,711	52
Redditch district	91	51	60	38	57	298	237	80%	7,863	33

Table 32: Special Coverage by District

Although Droitwich and the Vale of Evesham special school are within Wychavon district the distances to special schools in Worcester are less than to the Vale of Evesham school. The national average for children with EHC plans going to special schools in 2020 was 46.6% whilst for Worcestershire it was 58.8%. The table above shows that special schools are catering for more than 53% of the expected numbers of secondary school children with EHC plans in Bromsgrove and Redditch, and for more than 53% of primary school children with EHC plans in Pershore/Evesham and Bromsgrove. There also appears to be a marked insufficiency in Redditch First phase, and Pershore/Evesham Middle/High phase.

6. Conclusion

This report assesses the sufficiency of current provision to meet the needs of children with SEND living within Worcestershire. It does not propose solutions or consider costs but seeks to illuminate current and future requirements so that these decisions can be made with the best possible information.

Potentially every child living in Worcestershire with special education needs or disabilities will be impacted by the county's SEND strategy for the first twenty-five years of their life.

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

We have seen that the percentage of children identified with special educational needs and disabilities has increased slowly over the last 10 years. This is likely to continue to increase slightly year on year as a percentage of the total population following continual advancement in identification, diagnoses and medicine.

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, as well as independent schools which are currently supporting 390 pupils with EHC plans 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.

The growth in the number of children predicted to have an EHC plan is expected to continue and will require support within state-funded schools. By January 2025 there is an anticipated 2,756 children with EHC plans requiring support within state-funded provision compared to 2,587 in January 2020.

There are three possible scenarios depending on strengths of factors. If mainstream schools, MABs and language units place more children with EHC plans according to national and county trends towards 2025 we would expect 53% of children with EHC plans placed in special schools. This equates to 1,461 pupils, less than the current 1,470. If placements to special schools match the current rate of 56.6%, this equates to 1560 pupils, which would require 73 additional places. The combined special school forecast, working with existing pupils and estimated admissions leads to 1,590 pupils (a rate of 57.7%), requiring 120 addition places.

A number of schools have supported recent increases within additional accommodation which would need to be converted into permanent places to meet the needs of children and young people across the County long term.

Each school reports that children's needs are becoming more complex, which supports the trend seen nationally that special schools are providing places for more complex children. These increased needs put added pressure on the accommodation as more space is required for equipment, or breakout areas and quiet rooms. As mainstream schools develop their expertise on special needs education, they will be able to accept more children with SEN, with MABs and language units also providing mainstream places and allowing special schools to meet the needs of the more complex cases.

In addition to this, there are also a number of children and young people living within the County for whom will require additional support from provision that this report does not assess. This included children in specialist nursery classes, independent schools, specialist institutions, placements outside of County or home educated children, as well as the growth in numbers of children aged 19 to 25 with an EHC plan for whom the Local Authority continues to have an obligation to provide education or training opportunities. All these areas will also show growth in the number of children with EHC plans over the same period.

A major focus over the next several years will be to address the imbalance between the numbers of mainstream and specialist placements of children and young people with EHC plans. Nationally the percentage of children with EHC plans attending mainstream schools is 49.2%, with the further 43.0% in LA funded special schools, and the remainder being in independent providers. If Worcestershire matched this trend and as forecast there are 2,765 pupils with EHC plans in 2025, we would expect 1,188 pupils to be placed in special schools, which would be within current capacity. However, will take many years in order for provision and numbers on roll to adapt to more suitably meeting the needs of children. Many pupils already placed cannot be moved away from peer groups, trusted staff and routines without negative health effects. Moreover, cultural preferences for special school provision by parents, mainstream and nurseries, as well as any temporary lack of capacity in an otherwise suitable mainstream school will continue to direct many pupils with EHC plans to special schools. We have seen this has placed pressure on special school capacity.

As a result, a key focus over the last several years has been on the improvement and expansion of provision to enable more children to access the best education within

mainstream settings. At the same time, there are increasing numbers of children within mainstream schools identified as needing SEN support. From a review of the January census' the number of children requiring SEN support will increase from 10,602 to 10,775, growth of 173 by January 2025, making it even more important to improve and expand on the inclusivity of mainstream provision across the County. Change will be slow, but this work will continue and have a positive impact on children and young people with SEND supported in state funded mainstream and special schools over the next several decades.

We have also seen in this report the major impact that the change in legislation has had on meeting the needs of young people aged 19-25 with SEND. This report does not seek to review the sufficiency of provision for this age group, however a prime opportunity in our understanding of sufficiency across the County is in understanding the provision of places for young people of this age group. WCF will continue to work closely with colleges in the area to develop our understanding of demand and to match supply of appropriate places with the growth in numbers of older children with EHC plans wishing to access higher level courses and qualifications, ensuring their relevance to the lifestyle and adulthood these young people can expect.

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.