



WyreForestSchool

# Full Proposal to increase the number of pupils at Wyre Forest Special School

Representation stage runs from  
Monday 10 July to noon Monday 7 August 2023

# Introduction

Worcestershire County Council, as the Local Authority responsible for education provision, has a statutory responsibility to make sure that there are sufficient places for all of the children in Worcestershire who wish to attend a taxpayer funded school to do so. Taxpayer funded schools are those which are maintained by the Local Authority or receive funding direct from the Government, such as Academies and Free Schools.

Worcestershire County Council is proposing to make a significant change to Wyre Forest Special School under The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) regulations 2013. This statutory proposal document contains all the relevant information to allow interested parties to decide whether to support the proposed change. Worcestershire County Council must follow a statutory process for making prescribed alterations to schools. The publication of this statutory proposal and notices forms part of that process.

## School Details

Address:	Wyre Forest School, Habberley Road, Kidderminster DY11 6FA .
Status:	Community Special School
Commissioned places:	300 (January 2023)

# Description of Proposed Alteration

Wyre Forest Special School is commissioned for 300 full-time equivalent (FTE) pupil places. This proposal is to increase the number of commissioned full-time equivalent places to 354 from September 2023. Accommodation changes are required at the school to increase the pupil numbers.

## Objectives

The objective of this proposal is to provide additional special school places in Worcestershire to manage demand. The additional places will be of good quality and in a school which is popular with parents. The additional places will improve educational outcomes for children that require special school places and who are currently in alternative education provision.

## Educational Standards and Diversity of Provision

Wyre Forest Special School is graded as a good school by Ofsted. This proposal will increase the number of places available in good quality Special school in Worcestershire.

Wyre Forest Special School is located in the Wyre Forest District. The school is one of nine maintained Special Schools in Worcestershire, it has an age range of 3 – 19 years (Reception to YR 14). It is designated a generic special school categorisation, catering for a variety of needs (moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), and autism. All pupils attending will have an Education, Health and Care plan that identifies that they require special school

education provision. Pupils travel to the school from locations outside of Wyre Forest but mainly within 5 – 10 miles of the school. The majority of Wyre Forests pupils live within the neighbouring districts.

## Evidence of Demand

The 2022 SEND Sufficiency report detailed a need for more special school places in Worcestershire. The SEND Team currently have a list of pupils waiting for a special school place, most of whom are currently in Worcestershire mainstream schools or Alternative Provision. The Provision Planning team have also forecast an increased need for special school places based purely on demographic growth of (Reception – Year 14) for September 2023. This does not take into account housing growth, any surplus needed or the pupils within other provision waiting for a special school place.

The Governing Body of Wyre Forest Special School has indicated that they wish to increase the number of pupils at the school to help meet demand for special school places and the County Council supports this aim.

Some of the children who require a place at Wyre Forest Special School in September 2023 are currently in early years settings but have been identified as part of their Education Health and Care plan assessments as requiring a special school place to meet their special educational needs. It is appropriate for these children to move from early years to specialist education provision in a planned way, with transition support.

The table below shows the numbers of pupils on roll each January at Wyre Forest over the last 4 years:

School	2019	2020	2021	2022
Wyre Forest School	274	284	285	299

## School Size

School funding is largely driven by pupil numbers so the proposed increase in commissioned places at Wyre Forest Special School from 300 to 354 will improve the long-term sustainability of the school.

## Proposed Admission Arrangements

No other changes are proposed in respect of the admission criteria for Wyre Forest School.

## Equal Opportunity Issues

An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on this proposal to determine and quantify any positive or negative impact (positive and/or negative) on our staff, service users and Worcestershire residents. No negative impact was identified, positive impact was identified for some pupils currently waiting for special school places.

## Community Cohesion

Pupils attending Wyre Forest School travel mainly from the local area primarily between 5 and 10 miles from the school. The largest majority of pupils reside in the district of Wyre Forest but pupils also travel from other districts of Worcestershire (Worcester City and Bromsgrove).

Demographic growth and recent housing growth has increased the number of children requiring a place in special schools in Worcestershire. This proposal will ensure that the school can continue to serve local

families, keeping the school at the heart of the community.

## Travel and Accessibility

As with any school expansion there are concerns about the impact of additional children on traffic congestion at the start and end of the school day. The school is proactive in encouraging parents and pupils to use sustainable methods of travel to school. It is anticipated that the majority of pupils will continue to receive transport assistance.

## Project Costs and Capital Funding

The increase in pupil numbers from 300 to 354 places in September 2023 has been agreed by the school. This will involve repurposing space in the Early Years Hub currently shared with St Johns Primary School to accommodate additional pupils at Wyre Forest School. Additional accommodation is being provided at St Johns Primary School for the Reception and Year 1 pupils to move into from September 2023. This will be temporary accommodation until the permanent accommodation is build. The accommodation changes are being funded from the Local Authority High Needs Provision Capital allocation.

The revenue funding will be found as part of the High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant. Each full time equivalent place will be funded at £10,000 plus the top up funding required for individual pupils (where appropriate) based on the High Needs bandings submitted by the school to the Local Authority. Some pupils may move from mainstream schools into these places, although this is unlikely to generate any savings.

## School Premises and Playing Fields

Many regulations relating to school premises, including the level of playing field provision, have been dissolved or slimmed down by the Department for Education. Guidelines set out suggested areas for outdoor space but these are non-statutory. The County Council will make what it considers reasonable provision of outside space to support the learning and achievement needs of the children attending the school, taking account of site specific factors in each case.

## Implementation

If approved, this proposal will be implemented by the County Council working in partnership with the Governing Body. The increase in FTE places will start from the September 2023 intake.

# Procedure for responses

Anyone wishing to make a response to this proposal must write to:

Education Sufficiency and Place Planning Team  
Wyre Forest School Proposal  
Worcestershire Children First  
County Hall  
Spetchley Road  
Worcester WR5 2NP

Or e-mail to [SPP@worcschiladrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:SPP@worcschiladrenfirst.org.uk)

Responses must be received by **noon on 7 August 2023**.

## Decision

Any comments on the proposal will be taken into account by the decision maker. If there are objections to the proposal then these will be considered on behalf of the County Council by the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education before a final decision is made on whether to proceed with the proposal. If there are no objections to this proposal, the final decision will be made by the Director Children's Services.

The final decision must be made within a period of two months. However, the aim is for a decision to be made before the school summer holidays begin.