



Full Proposal to increase the number of pupils at Fort Royal Special School

Representation stage runs from
Monday 10th July 2023 to noon Monday 7th 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 Fort Royal 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:	Fort Royal Special School, Wyld's Lane, Worcester WR5 1DR
Status:	Community
Number of pupils on roll:	200 (January 2023)

Description of Proposed Alteration

Fort Royal Special School is commissioned for 200 full-time equivalent (FTE) pupil places. This proposal is to increase the number of commissioned full-time equivalent places to 256 from September 2023, this will not involve a physical expansion of the current building however will involve converting the current temporary double mobile classroom into three.

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

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

Fort Royal Special School is located in Worcester City. The school is one of nine maintained Special Schools in Worcestershire, it has an age range of 2 – 11 years (Nursery to YR 6). 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 Worcester but mainly within 5 – 10 miles of the school. The majority of Fort Royal pupils live within the neighbouring districts, Worcester, Wychavon and Malvern.

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 (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 places.

The Governing Body of Fort Royal 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 Fort Royal 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 Fort Royal over the last 4 years:

School	2019	2020	2021	2022
Fort Royal School	209 (254 with nursery)	215 (241 with nursery)	209 (240 with nursery)	218 (254 with nursery)

School Size

School funding is largely driven by pupil numbers so the proposed increase in commissioned places at Fort Royal Special School from 200 to 256 will improve the long-term sustainability of the school. This proposed increase will not change the physical size of the school.

Proposed Admission Arrangements

No other changes are proposed in respect of the admission criteria for Fort Royal School.

Community Cohesion

Pupils attending Fort Royal 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 Worcester City and Malvern Hills but pupils also travel from other districts of Worcestershire (Wychavon).

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 places in September 2023 has been agreed by the school within the existing accommodation of the school. An existing double mobile classroom is being converted into three classrooms. 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
Fort Royal Proposal
Worcestershire Children First
County Hall
Spetchley Road
Worcester WR5 2NP

Via Email: SPP@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk

Responses must be received by **noon on Monday 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 of Children's Services.