

Worcestershire County Council

Foxlydiate First School

Background Information and School Specification

Section A - Introduction

Under section 6A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the 'free school presumption') where a local authority identifies the need to establish a new school it must, in the first instance, seek proposals to establish an Academy. Worcestershire County Council has identified the need to establish a new First School in Foxlydiate to open in 2027. The school specification is designed to guide Academy Trusts in submitting their application to sponsor the new school as outlined below and has been informed by engagement with the local community and stakeholders for which it will serve.

The Foxlydiate area straddles the boundary between Bromsgrove and Redditch District Councils in the north of Worcestershire, within a locality that has attracted several housing developments in recent years. Housing growth generates an increase in population, including of children and young people, and the provision of childcare, school and further education places at local facilities must increase accordingly.

A major housing development on land to the west of Foxlydiate Lane and Pumphouse Lane is expected to deliver c. 2,560 new houses by 2037. This development is forecast to generate around 28 pupils in each year group of first school age (nursery and Reception through to Year 4) by 2027 and 73 pupils by 2031. There are also other developments in the locality which are forecast to generate a further 26 Reception age pupils by 2027 and 39 pupils by 2031. Existing local schools cannot be expanded to accommodate these numbers, so a new first school is required. The developer of Foxlydiate is providing a site within the development, which will enable these pupils to access a first school within their local community, and they are contributing the majority of the construction cost.

The authority is therefore seeking proposals from appropriate Academy Trusts to open this new school. This school would be deemed a free school. Proposers must submit an application via Worcestershire County Council's [In-tend portal](#).

Application Process and Contact Details

Proposers *must* be a DfE approved Academy Trust. If you are not already an approved Academy Trust you will need to apply separately through the formal Academy Trust approval process and this must be completed by the application deadline. You must contact the DfE about becoming an Academy Trust before submitting a proposal and you can find out more information at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/commissioning-high-quality-trusts>

The provisional date by which bids must be submitted is 14 June 2024 at 4pm. Applicants must take account of the relevant criteria in Annex C of the free school presumption guidance and expectations outlined in Section B-G of this document.

All forms can be downloaded from the In-Tend system once expression of interest has been accepted.

Please submit your application by the submission deadline via the In-Tend system.

NB: The Local Authority led free school presumption is a different route to the DfE’s free school programme. Further information about how to establish a new school via the DfE’s free school programme route can be found at: [Opening a free school or maths school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/opening-a-free-school-or-maths-school) and [Setting up a free school - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/setting-up-a-free-school).

Timeline for Provider Competition

The provisional timeline for the competition is as follows. These dates are subject to change:

- Start of Free School Academy Trust Competition – 15/04/2024
- Application deadline – 14/06/2024
- Recommendation shared with the Regional Schools Director – September 2024

The Regional School Director (RSD) for West Midlands, on behalf of the Secretary of State, will then consider the Local Authority assessments and recommendations before deciding which proposer is in the best position to take forward the new school. The RSD will inform the Local Authority and the successful proposer of its decision, and the Local Authority will inform any unsuccessful proposers.

If you would like further information or wish to discuss your application, please contact NewFoxlydiateFirstSchool@worcestershire.gov.uk.

Section B - The School

Overview

Age Range:

First, 2-9

Gender:

Mixed

Proposed Opening Date:

September 2027

Capacity

450 places (three forms of entry) plus a 52-place nursery.

The school will open initially with a nursery and Reception Year cohort only, which will gradually feed through the school until reaching all year groups, allowing the number on roll to grow organically to reach capacity in 2031.

The school site is of sufficient size to accommodate a three forms of entry school.

Special Provision:

The school will be inclusive, with provision for pupils with EHCPs with named mainstream.

Nursery & Wrap-around Care

The school will include nursery provision for 2-4 year olds and wrap-around care facilities (08:00 – 18:00 for the minimum of term time) to meet the legal entitlement and the needs of working families.

Area/Community to be Served:

The need for the school has arisen from growing demand for local places in the Foxlydiate area. The location of the school is to the west of Redditch, to serve the community of the Foxlydiate development. The school will be located on land at Cur Lane on the western edge of Redditch, identified on the map below (red line boundary and yellow star):

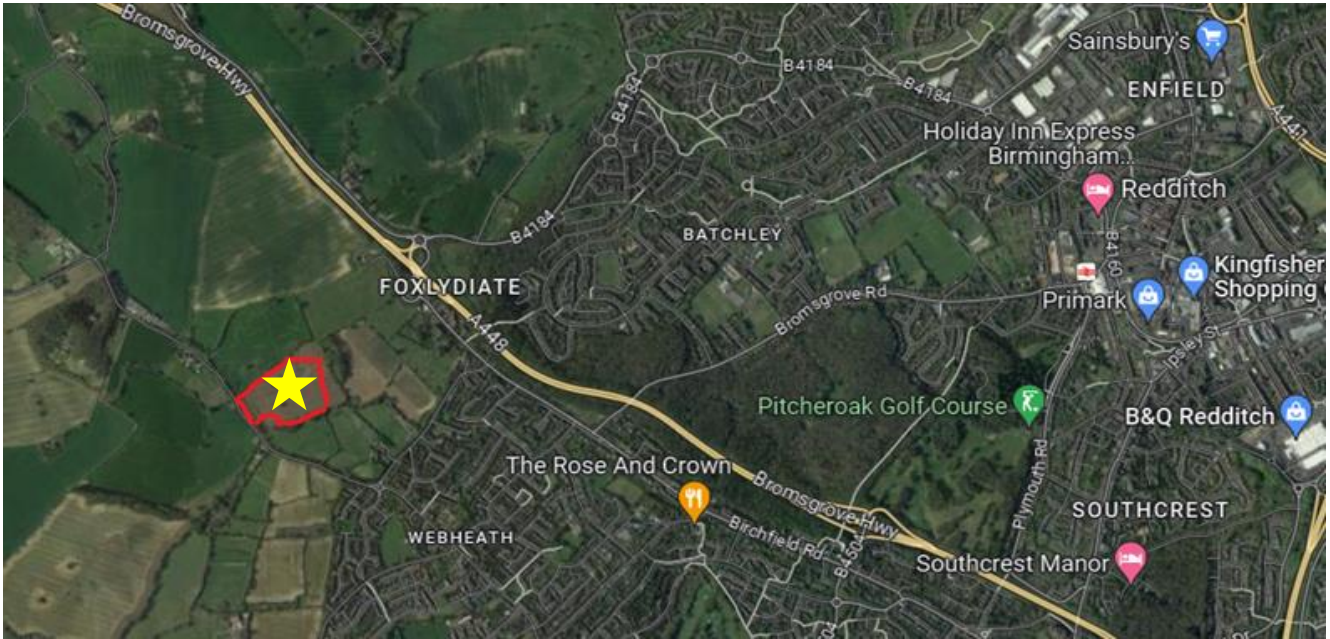


Figure 1 Map demonstrating the location of the proposed First School

Admissions Arrangements

The school will have a published admission number of 90 places. The overall capacity of the school will be 450 (three forms of entry from Years Reception to 4) plus nursery.

The school will need to cater to local demand, and therefore admissions arrangements will be expected to align with that goal. The Academy Trust will be required to abide by the Codes of Practice on admissions and admissions appeals and participate in the Local Authority's co-ordinated schemes for admissions and the In-Year Fair Access Protocol.

It is expected that the school oversubscription criteria will ensure that Children and Young People (CYP) living within the local community of the school will have priority for places, therefore it is the preference of the Local Authority that, after children in care and those previously in care, priority will be given to siblings of pupils at the school, children of staff and then subsequent allocations based on distance.

Once a preferred Academy Trust has been identified, discussions will take place to agree an Admissions Policy for both the school and for the nursery. It needs to be clear to parents/carers that admissions for school and nursery are separate and different admission arrangements apply to each. Please note that the preferred Academy Trust will need to prepare and submit this to the DfE promptly once notified. Please refer to the external guidance on Admissions for further information of requirements¹.

It is expected that the Academy Trust will be part of the co-ordinated admissions scheme of the Local Authority from the year of opening, unless exceptional reasons arise. This is to ensure we are able to work closely on arrangements for opening, and to ensure the

¹ [Department for Education - Free School Admissions Guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

process is clear and streamlined for families wishing to apply for a place at the school. All endeavours must be made by the preferred Academy Trust to be a part of the co-ordinated admissions scheme from the first year of admissions to provide clarity and consistency for applications.

It is expected the Academy Trust adhere to legal and regulatory responsibilities with regards to compliance and follow high quality governance arrangements²

Travel arrangements

The school will be accessible through walking and cycling routes from the community it serves and will be close to major bus routes. A Traffic Impact Assessment will be carried out by the Council as part of the planning process for the build project. The appointed Academy Trust will then be required to develop a School Travel Plan encouraging safe travel to school which promotes walking and cycling.

School and community building parking, and pupil handover off point is planned to be located within the northern part of the school site, minimising conflict with the local centre square.

Facilities

It is expected that the chosen Academy Trust will build an ongoing holistic understanding of their pupils and their needs, and facilities must reflect an ethos of inclusivity and accessibility. The Academy Trust must have an Inclusivity Policy which highlights ways in which this will be achieved.

It will be expected that the Academy Trust will have a strong IT and Digital Policy that seeks to utilise technology to support inclusivity and accessibility for all pupils, including children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) including children with Dyslexia or hearing impairment.

Moreover, the management of other facilities such as bathrooms and staff facilities must link to the Inclusivity Policy of the school, including for those with protected characteristics. The community use of school facilities can have a positive effect on the local community, support in community cohesion and integration, and enable these facilities to be used most effectively. It is expected that the Trust will establish a Community Use Agreement to ensure facilities are available and accessible for community use. Fees and charges for the use of such facilities must be in line with other facilities in the area.

²[Academy trust governance guide - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academy-trust-governance-guide)

Section C – Vision

Accessibility and Inclusivity

It is expected that the chosen Academy Trust must have a strong ethos and evidence of effective practice to ensure inclusivity of all pupils and staff, and ensure all pupils are able to access the curriculum, quality first teaching (QFT) and high-quality teaching. This must include making appropriate reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND, vulnerable learners and Looked after Children. This must be linked to facilities management, the Inclusivity Policy and practice, and behaviour management. The school must fulfil its duty to have the relevant SEND Information Report, SEND Policy, Accessibility Policy and other policies relating to vulnerable learners written and published on the school's website. During engagement with parents and the community, ensuring that the school is responsive to children with SEND and has ingrained values of inclusivity is highlighted as being of key importance for the new school. This is to ensure that pupils feel safe and are able to access their education in a positive and welcoming environment which meets their needs.

It will be expected that the Academy Trust can show an approach to education that includes:

- In addition to QFT the school must use carefully selected and evidence based small group and one-to-one targeted intervention when needed.
- The school must deploy teaching assistants and support staff where needed – these staff will also have access to specific training regarding: SEND, Vulnerable Learners, Young Carers, and Looked after Children. This deployment must reflect what is known about evidence-based practice and there must be clear plans and arrangements in place to review outcomes achieved on a regular basis.
- The school must actively engage with the All Age Disability Service in Worcestershire Children First (WCF) and other professionals to support all areas of SEND and Inclusion. This will include proactive working as well as fulfilling statutory duties for pupils with SEND (including those receiving SEND Support and those with Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs).
- The school must actively engage with the Worcestershire Children First (WCF) Education Engagement team to support the needs of vulnerable pupils and must be compliant with all legislation focused on this cohort of CYP.
- The school must engage with the Virtual School to meet the needs of children that are looked after or have a child protection or child in need plan. The school must also be compliant with all legislation focused on this cohort of CYP.
- The school must have a behaviour policy that does not discriminate against pupils with SEND or vulnerable learners and achieves good outcomes for these CYP in line with evidence-based practice.

- The school must pay full regard to understanding and implementing mandatory guidelines and good practice from the national context such as the:
 - SEND Code of Practice 2015 [SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
 - Equalities Act 2010 [Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
 - [Working Together to Improve Attendance](#)
 - [SEND and Alternative Provision improvement plan](#)
 - Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled pupils – Guidance for schools [reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils 1.pdf \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](#)
 - Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school - [Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

The school will pay full regard to the changing national and local context and current and future guidance for children with SEND, including:

- WCF Graduated Response when supporting pupils with SEND [Graduated Response \(SEND support in education provision\) | Worcestershire County Council](#)
- [WCF Early Years Graduated Response](#)
- [WCF Accessibility Guidance](#)
- The school will be proactive in preventing exclusions and will following the [Graduated Response to preventing Exclusions in Mainstream Schools](#).
- The school must commit to the continuing professional development and training of its staff to upskill senior leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and other school staff in understanding the requirements to meet the individual needs of pupils.
- The school must commit to implementing reasonable adjustments so pupils with SEND can be an active and valued part of the school community and access learning, which will include, but not be limited to effective differentiation of the curriculum.
- The school must meet the parent/carers of CYP with SEND regularly to develop school and parent/carer relationships and agree support/outcomes for pupils to ensure continual integration and access to education and school life. The coproduction of policy and practice for CYP with SEND alongside families will be key to effective provision.
- The school will effectively delegate Pupil Premium funding, as well as Early Years Pupil Premium funding, Disability Access fund and Deprivation funding, and track impact on pupils.
- The school must have a SEND Governor in place – the SEND Governor will be provided with ongoing support & provided with Governor training.

- The school will utilise the Early Help pathway to identify CYP at the earliest stage for support and complete an assessment in line with WCF Community Early Help assessment processes, including the completion of a Supporting Families assessment and follow WCF processes for reporting.
- An Early Help offer must be integrated onto the school website/s to enhance support for parent/carers, CYP and their families.
- Pupil participation in decision-making that directly affects them is critical, and it will be expected that the school will have a formal structure in place which allows pupils, including those students who have SEND and/or are vulnerable learners, to have a real say in issues that affect them and know that their opinions count. We will expect the Academy Trust to, as a minimum, have a School Council which actively encourages participation and engagement in democracy, local and global citizenship and accountability. Further best practice for pupil participation can be found here: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/school-councils-and-pupil-participation>

Health and Wellbeing

It is expected that the Academy Trust will have a strong approach to ensuring the health and wellbeing of pupils and staff, with consideration of both physical and mental health.

Recent engagement with parent/carers and the community emphasised the importance of the Academy Trust having a strong approach to supporting pupil and staff mental health, reducing stress and anxiety, and ensuring pupils develop the skills to thrive after leaving school. We will expect the chosen Academy Trust to have:

- An ethos of pupil and staff wellbeing throughout policy and practice, with evidence of engagement and commitment to National and Local schemes, initiatives and opportunities to promote wellbeing and prevent mental ill health.
- The Trust would have a clear plan and strategy for engaging in ongoing training to ensure Mental health and Wellbeing remained a key priority for Leaders in relation to staff, pupils and community members.
- A designated pastoral and mental health lead.
- A clear Policy which documents the approach to ensuring and improving pupil and staff health and wellbeing.
- Safe spaces and quiet areas accessible to pupils for counselling sessions or to support with emotional regulation or sensory needs.
- Development opportunities for staff and a process for ensuring wellbeing is prioritised.
- An aim to promote active travel journeys to and from school and nursery

The design of the school can also support the health and wellbeing of students and staff, contributing to increased performance and reduced absenteeism. In particular, the integration of green spaces within and around a school improves the mental development

of CYP, increases students' memory, and improves attention span. There is ample opportunity on this site to integrate green infrastructure into school life and we will expect the approved Academy Trust to consider the use of all facilities where possible to improve the health and wellbeing of staff and students.

Section D – Education Plan

Approach to Education

The chosen Academy Trust must have a strong approach to education and be able to evidence:

- Strong leadership track record with experience in a range of schools to provide a depth of knowledge and assurance regarding best practice for school development.
- A strong educational vision and a curriculum delivery based on high standards of attainment for each key stage, including the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- An ambitious, broad and balanced, and deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and pupil intake. This could include Curriculum progression maps and an overview of area specific drivers for curriculum.
- Strategies for measuring pupil performance effectively and setting challenging targets.
- Quality assurance model to ensure pupil performance, behaviour and attendance targets are maintained and improved.
- A staffing structure that will deliver the planned curriculum within the expected income levels; with a focus on effective teaching (including strategies for effective performance management). This could also include an organogram and staff build up chart.
- A dedicated head of school or Head Teacher with experience of strong leadership.
- The Academy Trust is expected to work closely with the recognised Education Trade Unions to negotiate policies, funding, arrangements, and staff terms and conditions.
- Descriptions of how the needs of all CYP are fully provided for and how the school will be fully inclusive (please see section below on accessibility and inclusivity for more details).
- Details of enrichment and extended services, for example: wrap-around care including breakfast, afterschool and holiday clubs; sports clubs; homework clubs; and music/art clubs.
- Welcome and, through teaching, encourage an understanding of and respect for other cultures, faiths, communities, and world views, taking into account the

community that will be served by the school and the views of different groups in the community.

- Be able to provide evidence of the school's approach to: PHSE; the Prevent Duty; safeguarding and welfare; and promoting fundamental British values (democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs)

Partnership Working and Community Integration

We will expect the chosen Academy Trust to work closely with the Local Authority, the local community, other local schools, and community partners to share best practice across Worcestershire, provide added value, and improve outcomes for children and parents. As a minimum we will expect the Academy Trust to:

- Have a local understanding of Worcestershire and the areas for which the school will serve, has a strong commitment to the continuous education experience for children, and therefore can demonstrate effective working relationships with other local early years settings, and other schools in the area.
- Provide additional social value to the local community and be able to provide evidence of working with local community and groups to increase social value. Please follow the link for more information [Social Value | Worcestershire County Council](#)
- Actively take part in Partnership Working and collaboration; taking a proactive approach to providing and supporting Early Help, a Graduated Response for children with SEND, inclusive practices and Safeguarding – including creating a safe and inclusive environment and school community for all CYP and Holiday Food Activities.
- Establish an Early Help offer for the school including relevant links to partner agencies in the local community, including NHS, voluntary sector and district council support and services and countywide agencies that are able to support children in the school through signposting and/or referrals.
- Link with Adult and Family Learning to enhance learning opportunities for CYP and their families in their school and community.
- Work to the Statutory Guidance of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', 'Working Together', and other critical initiatives, including Operation Encompass and GETSAFE, and partnerships to ensure the wellbeing and safety of the CYP.

Section E – Capacity and Capability

It must be demonstrable that the Academy Trust has the resource and experience to successfully provide early years and first school provision in line with this specification. This must include:

- Strong evidence of education outcomes across existing school/s.
- A demonstrable record of strong financial management across the Trust and individual school/s.
- Evidence and proven learning of how the operation and policies of school/s in the Trust have adapted to the needs of their individual and unique communities.
- The resources the Trust will draw on and/or deploy to support the development of the new free school by the opening date.
- Clear evidence that the Trust has the range of skills and abilities necessary to set up and then run a school effectively, including managing school finances; leadership; project management; marketing; human resources; safeguarding; and health and safety.
- How the school will be organised and what the governance arrangements will look like, including a diagram of the proposed structures³.

Section F – Funding and Costs

The design and build costs will be met by Worcestershire County Council from a combination of funding Section 106 developer contributions and capital funding from the Department for Education (DfE) to create additional places. The project will be commissioned by Worcestershire County Council in line with the approved specification.

The land will remain within the ownership of Worcestershire County Council, with a 125-year lease issued to the Academy Trust at a peppercorn rent.

Currently, the funding for mainstream schools is allocated to LAs by the DfE through their National Funding Formula (NFF) from the Schools Block Designated Schools Grant (DSG) on a 'lagged' funding basis using the previous October pupil census. There is also a national Pupil Growth Fund (PGF) allocated by the DfE based upon their national formula, which is designed to support the revenue cost implications of approved growth in pre-16 pupil numbers to meet basic need and revenue costs for new schools.

Funding for the Nursery pupils will be provided via the Early Years Block DSG, paid at the base hourly rate for the hours accessed up to each child's maximum entitlement. Additional supplements will be available for Early Years Pupil Premium, Deprivation, Graduated Response (SEND) and Disability Access Funding, as outlined within the Worcestershire Provider Agreement.

³ [Academy trust governance guide - 2.Governance of the trust - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academy-trust-governance-guide-2-governance-of-the-trust)

The Academy Trust will be expected to sign and adhere to the Worcestershire Provider Agreement on an annual basis, otherwise funding for the Nursery pupils will not be available.

The funding has been based on the current funding structures in place as at the time of the Academy Trust competition. However, it is anticipated that by the school's opening date, the DfE will have implemented their full 'hard' NFF. The implications of this on the Schools Block DSG and PGF are currently unknown but therefore the below may be subject to change by the time of school opening.

It is anticipated that the pre-opening funding required to support the set-up costs for the key appointments e.g., Headteacher and School Business Manager will require a maximum contribution from WCC of £100k.

As the new school will be a free school, the successful Academy Trust will need to enter a revenue funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education, with the ESFA directly funding the ongoing revenue costs of the school. The DfE currently provides £25,000 for legal expenses to the successful Academy Trust.

Section G – Impact and Equalities Assessments

As prescribed by section 9 of the Academies Act 2010 and section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Local Authority must assess the potential impact of any new school on existing educational provision in the area. The Local Authority must also consider whether the new school will impact on any groups with protected characteristics. A full impact assessment has been undertaken on the proposal and the Academy Trust will be involved in assessing such impact as the school is built and delivered.