

SEND Sufficiency Report 2024

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

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The Legislative Context – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

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

Requirements are also placed on local authorities by the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 Years (2015)¹ The Code of Practice provides that *'All children and young people are entitled to an appropriate education, one that is appropriate to their needs, promotes high standards, and the fulfillment of potential.'* (SEND Code of Practice, paragraph 6.1)

'Special Educational Needs' is a legal definition and refers to children and young people with learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn than the majority of others of the same age. 'Special educational provision' is educational or training provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people of the same age. (SEND Code of Practice, pp15-16).

The Children and Families Act 2014 secures the general presumption in law of mainstream education in relation to decisions about where children and young people with SEND should be educated, and the Equalities Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination for disabled people (Code of Practice 2015 paragraph 1.26). Children and young people with SEND have different needs and can be educated effectively in a range of mainstream or specialist settings. Most children and young people with SEND will have their needs met within local mainstream provision. This is known as SEN Support. Mainstream educational settings must use their best endeavours to make sure that a child with SEND gets the support they need.

An Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is ordinarily available through SEN Support and sets out the additional support required to meet those needs. Alongside the general presumption of mainstream education, parents of children with an EHCP and young people with an EHCP have the right to seek a place at a special school, special post-16 institution or specialist college (Code of Practice 2015 paragraph 1.38).

Worcestershire's Children and Young People's plan² 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 SEND to be assessed and met in a timely and purposeful manner. Worcestershire's SEND Strategy sets out the vision that 'in Worcestershire we want all children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities to be truly seen and respected as individuals and to be the best they can be'³. Further information regarding Worcestershire's aims for SEND can also be found in the All-Age Autism Strategy.⁴

¹ [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK](#)

² [Worcestershire's Children and Young People's Plan | Worcestershire County Council](#)

³ [Our SEND strategy | Our SEND strategy | Worcestershire County Council](#)

⁴ [All-Age Autism Strategy | Worcestershire County Council](#)

The Worcestershire SEND Local Offer⁵ is a source of extensive local information to enable families to access help and support at the earliest possible opportunity. Training and support are offered to staff in early-years settings, schools and colleges to enable them to develop an inclusive environment for a child with SEND, enable the child to sustain their place and remain with their local community. In cases where this cannot happen, then appropriate support is assessed and an EHCP issued. This will name the school or setting that can meet the needs of the child.

The scope of this report

In order for WCC to achieve the goals and obligations outlined above, future demand for places for children with SEND must be monitored to ensure that 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 2027/2028). It details our existing provision for children and young people with EHCPs, forecasts the need for future places, identifies gaps in provision, and sets out details of our current projects and future plans for securing the additional provision and places required.

Data has been collated to understand the current and projected needs of children and young people with SEND across Worcestershire. This includes local and national data relating to SEN Support and EHCPs.

1. Changes made to SEND Provision in Worcestershire Sept. 2023 - Sept. 2024

WCC's vision is that most Early Years aged children in Worcestershire should be able to attend their local Early Years provider and have their SEND needs identified and met within that setting, with specialist support provided through the Early Years Inclusion Process. However, we recognise that for a small number of children, their complex needs make it difficult for them to attend or receive their full Nursery Education Funding (NEF) entitlement in an Early Years setting. We have therefore commissioned a specialist SEND Early Years provider, Dingley's Promise, to deliver two Early Years Enhanced provisions in Worcester and Droitwich. These settings will be accompanied by extensive outreach support services, including support to local nurseries and families in the south of the county. The outreach support commenced in November 2024, with the settings opening to children in Spring Term 2025. Until this provision is fully open, Vale of Evesham Special School will continue to offer outreach Early Years support. We will closely monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this Early Years Enhanced provision model, with a view to rolling it out to other locations across the whole of the county.

With regards to specialist Early Years provision in the north of the county, due to the continued rise in the demand for Special School Reception places, Wyre Forest Special School closed its

⁵ [SEND Local Offer | Worcestershire County Council](#)

Nursery Assessment Unit from September 2024, moving to an outreach service instead. It is anticipated that this service will be able to support up to 45 children, either in their current Early Years settings or at home.

Our SEND Sufficiency Report 2023 identified Speech, Language and Communication (SCLN) as the most common area of need for pupils, both those with an EHCP and those receiving SEND Support. WCC worked with Honeywell Primary School (Mercian Educational Trust) to present to the Regional Director of the DfE the increased demand for places required for Primary-age pupils with an EHCP identifying SCLN as their specialist need. Approval was granted for a SEND Unit at Honeywell Primary School, which opened in September 2024 and will provide for a maximum of ten students who will be identified via the EHCP consultation process.

Previous data also showed an increase in need for provision to support children and young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH). Unity Academy in the Wyre Forest district, an alternative provision (AP) Free School, opened in September 2023 providing support and advice for up to 60 Primary phase pupils who have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion. From September 2024, WCC has commissioned a further 30 places at Unity Academy for children in years Reception to Year 6 who have an EHCP and a primary need of SEMH. An additional three Alternative Provision places have been commissioned at Riversides SEMH Special School for young people with complex SEMH needs, High Needs Provision Capital was provided to adapt accommodation at their City Walls Road setting.

Within the previous SEND Sufficiency Report, it was highlighted that there is a lack of sufficient provision for children and young people with Autism (ASD), and there is no Special School provision within the district of Malvern Hills, meaning children and young people with SEND are having to travel long distances to attend appropriate provision. WCC were advised by the Department for Education (DfE) in March 2023 that our bid for a new Special free school in Malvern Hills, specialising in ASD, had been successful. In March 2024, the DfE announced that MacIntyre Academies have been selected to run the new school, which will be called Enterprise Academy and will offer specialist education for 120 pupils aged 5 to 19 with an EHCP and a primary need of ASD. It is planned for the school to open from September 2027.

WCC has provided a grant to support Heart of Worcestershire (HoW) College and National Star College in establishing new Post-16 specialist provision at HoW's St Wulstan's Building, Worcester. Students will enrol as HoW College learners, with National Star College tutors, therapists, and care staff delivering the learning, bringing National Star's expertise to local learners with SEND. Five young adults will start at the provision in September 2024, with the expectation that this number will increase with capacity for approximately 12 learners.

2. National and Local Trends in SEND

2.1 Children with Special Educational Needs and EHCPs

The Spring term School Census, undertaken annually in January, records the SEND needs of pupils attending state-funded educational settings located in the Worcestershire county area, including pre-school aged children in school Nurseries, and pupils in Reception to Year 14 (age 4 to 19) in all types of state-funded schools including academies, free schools, alternative

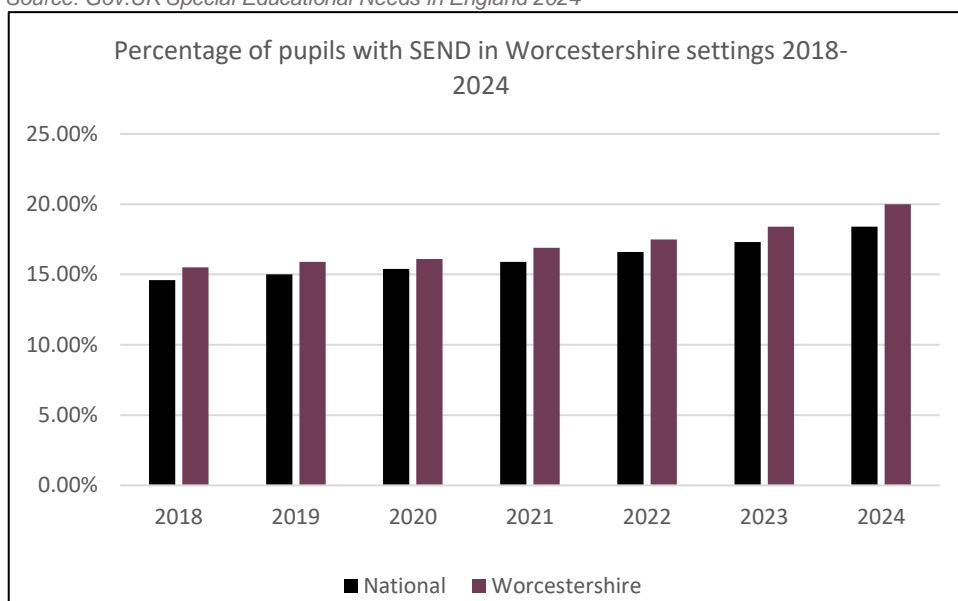
provision, special schools, and sixth forms linked to schools. While this will include some nursery-age children and young people over 16 years old, it will not include those with SEND (including those with an EHCP) who attend private, voluntary, or independent (PVI) early years settings, further education (FE) and sixth-form colleges, independent schools, or those that are Electively Home Educated (EHE) or not on roll at a school on census day. Children and young people with SEND who live in Worcestershire but attend a setting outside of the county will also be excluded from Worcestershire’s census. On the other hand, the Worcestershire census will include pupils with SEND who attend a Worcestershire state-funded setting but who reside outside of the County, including those with an EHCP issued, funded and maintained by another Local Authority.

In addition to the School Census, there is also data from the annual SEN2 survey which must be considered when assessing need across Worcestershire. The SEN2 data includes all children *‘for whom the local authority has a responsibility for the management of the SEN processes, under the 1996 Education Act and the 2014 Children and Families Act’*, i.e. every child or young person with an EHCP that has been issued and is maintained by WCC. This will include children and young people attending both mainstream and specialist provisions, including state-funded and independent settings, PVI early years, alternative provision, out of county settings, EHE and those who are not in education or training due to parental/personal choice.

Worcestershire has a wide range of Independent educational settings, from private nurseries to post-16/19 provision, and many children and young people with SEND are educated within this sector. The School Level Annual School Census (SLASC) is a school level return collected annually from registered independent schools and includes details of pupils with SEND.

For this report, data has been taken from the Government’s publication ‘Special educational needs in England’, which combines information from the School Census (state-funded schools), the SLASC (independent schools) and general hospital school census. The Government’s publication ‘Education, health and care plans’, which is based on data collected in the SEN2 return, is also referred to.

Figure 1: Percentage of Children and Young People (CYP) with SEND attending Worcestershire settings 2018-2024
Source: Gov.UK Special Educational Needs in England 2024



In January 2024, 20% of pupils educated in Worcestershire settings were identified as having SEND, with 15.1% requiring SEN support and 4.9% have an EHCP. This is higher than the national levels of 13.6% of pupils receiving SEN Support and 4.8% with an EHCP.

Figure 2: Percentage of CYP receiving SEN Support attending Worcestershire settings 2018-2024
Source: Gov.UK Special Educational Needs in England 2024

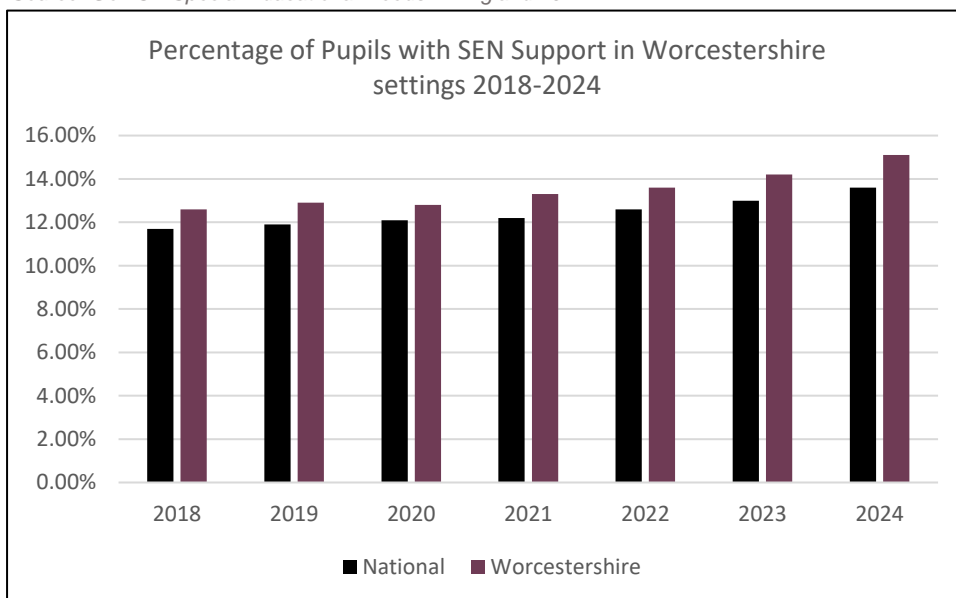


Figure 2 shows that there has been an increase of 0.9 % of children and young people requiring SEN Support in Worcestershire since 2023. Between 2023 and 2024, nationally the percentage points of children and young people requiring SEN Support has increased by 0.6%.

Figure 3: Percentage of pupils with an attending Worcestershire setting 2018-2024
Source: Gov.UK Special Educational Needs in England 2024

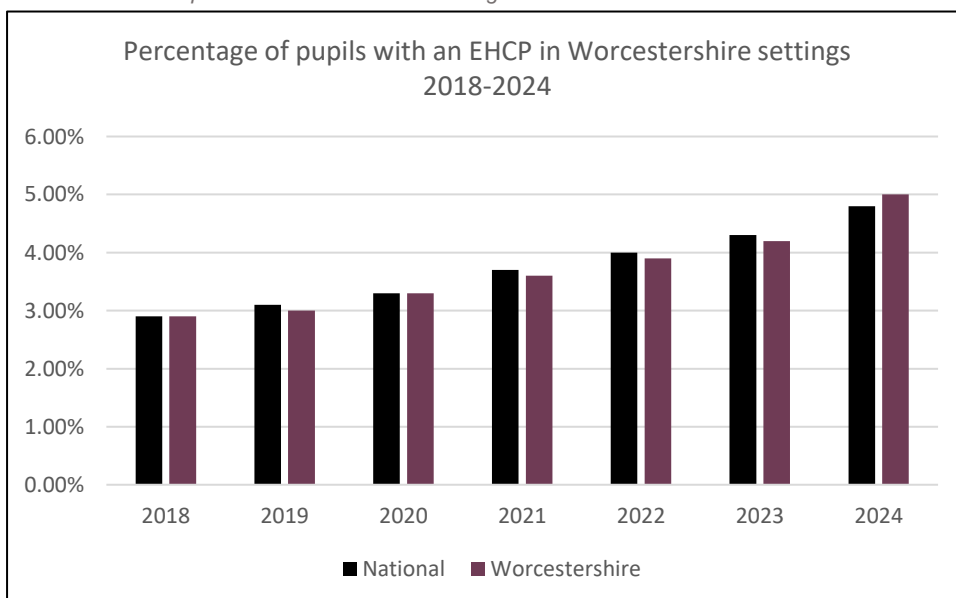
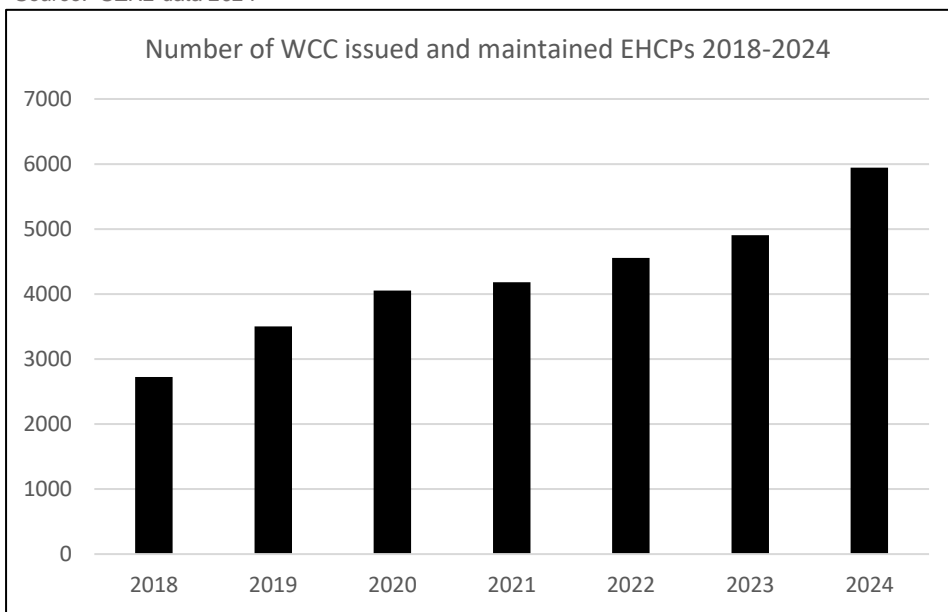


Figure 3 shows that the percentages of children with EHCPs educated in Worcestershire settings have continued to rise. Until 2023, the figures for Worcestershire settings were equal to, or slightly less than, the national figures. However, in 2024, 4.9% of pupils in Worcestershire settings had an EHCP, compared with 4.8% nationally.

As stated previously, the data on which these figures are based is taken from the Government’s publication ‘Special educational needs in England 2024’, and therefore excludes children and young people who have an EHCP issued and maintained by WCC but who attend an educational setting outside Worcestershire county (OOC), those attending settings that are not included in the School Census or SLASC, and those who are not in any form of education or training.

The SEN2 data, however, includes all children and young people who have a WCC EHCP, regardless of where they are educated.

Figure 4: Number of WCC issued and maintained EHCPs 2018-2024
Source: SEN2 data 2024



The 2024 SEN2 data records 5,945 children and young people with an EHCP issued and maintained by WCC. This figure has increased by 3,222 since 2018 – a 118% increase over the six-year period.

Migration out of, and in to, Worcestershire

According to the SEN2 data, in 2024 there were 545 children and young people with a WCC EHCP who were attending establishments located outside the county, including both maintained and independent settings. Section 5.9 of this report will focus in more detail on this out of county provision.

In terms of inwards migration, WCC’s School Census recorded 147 children and young people that have an EHCP and live outside the county but attend provision within Worcestershire. This census also identified 551 children and young people receiving SEN Support in Worcestershire settings but living outside the county. It should be noted, however, that this data does not include those attending independent settings (apart from non-maintained special schools) within Worcestershire.

Of the 147 children and young people with an EHCP who travelled into the county for their education, 57 (10.3%) were recorded as attending a Worcestershire state funded Special School. The most common area of need for children and young people with an EHCP that live out of county but attend Worcestershire provision is ASD (35 pupils), followed by SEMH (26 pupils) and SLCN (22 pupils).

2.2 Types of Needs

The 'SEND Code of Practice 2015: 0 to 25 years old'⁶ explains the duties of local authorities, health bodies, schools, and college to provide for those with SEND under part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014. It identifies four broad areas of special educational need as:

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

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

The SEN Code of Practice emphasises that the '*purpose of identification is to work out what action the education provision needs to take, not to fit a pupil into a category. In practice, individual children or young people often have needs that cut across several areas and their needs may change over time. A detailed assessment of need should ensure that the full range of an individual's needs is identified, not simply the primary need*'⁷.

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

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

⁶ [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

⁷ [Section 6.27 SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

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

Figure 5: Distribution of Primary Needs in Pupils with EHCPs, Special Education Needs in England 2024

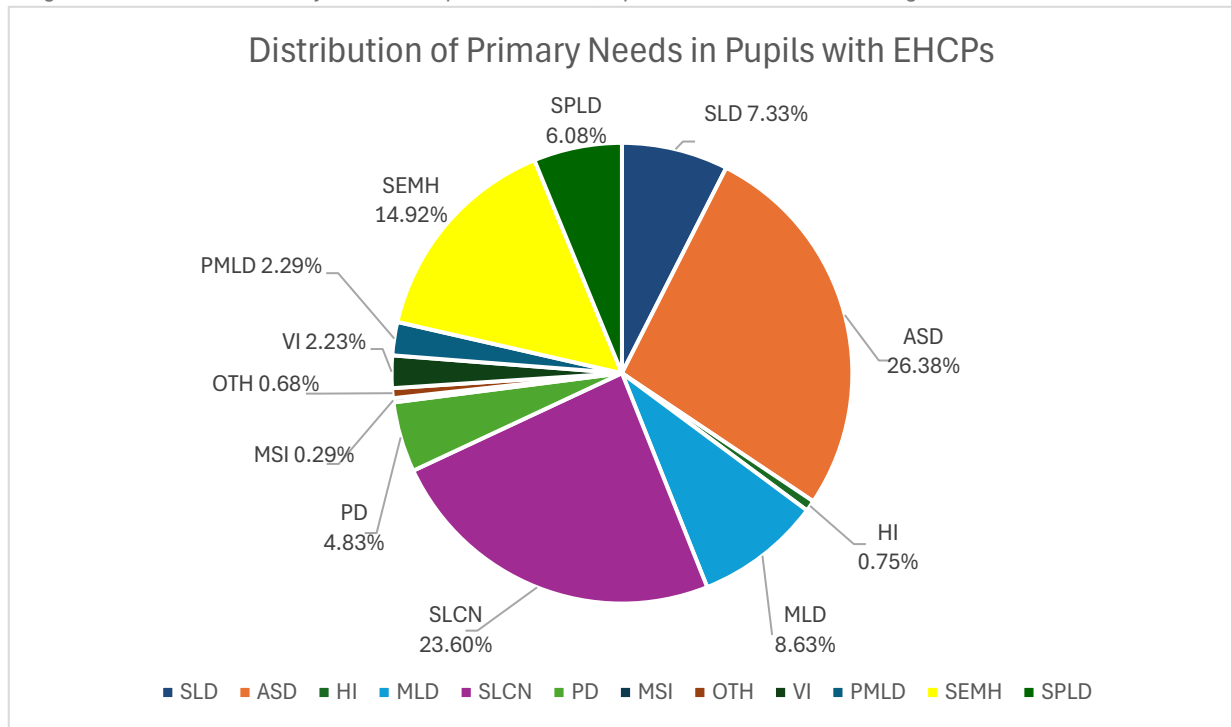


Figure 6: Distribution of Primary Needs in Pupils with SEN Support, Special Education Needs in England 2024

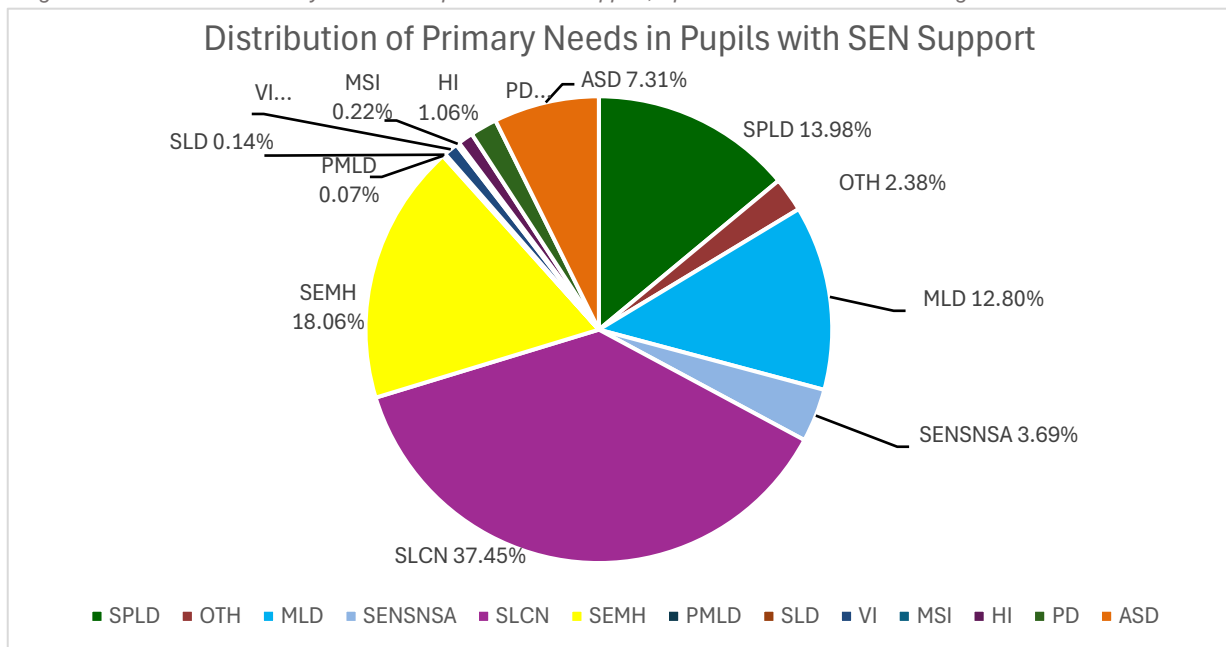


Figure 6 identifies categories of SEND that are more often supported without the need for an EHCP. There are more pupils with SEN Support that have the primary needs of Speech, Language and Communication (SLCN), Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) and Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD). There is a much higher percentage of pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) who have EHCPs.

National data released by the DfE for 2023/24 identifies SLCN as the most common area of need for pupils receiving SEN Support at 25.60% and SEMH at 22.30%. Children with the primary need categorised as ASD is the most common need for pupils with EHCPs at 33.03%.

A child or young person’s primary need may not be their only special educational need. For instance, SLCN can also be a feature of a number of other areas of SEN, and children and young people with ASD may have needs across all areas, including particular sensory requirements.

Figure 7: Children and Young People with EHCPs by Primary Need Attending Mainstream Provision, SEN2 2024

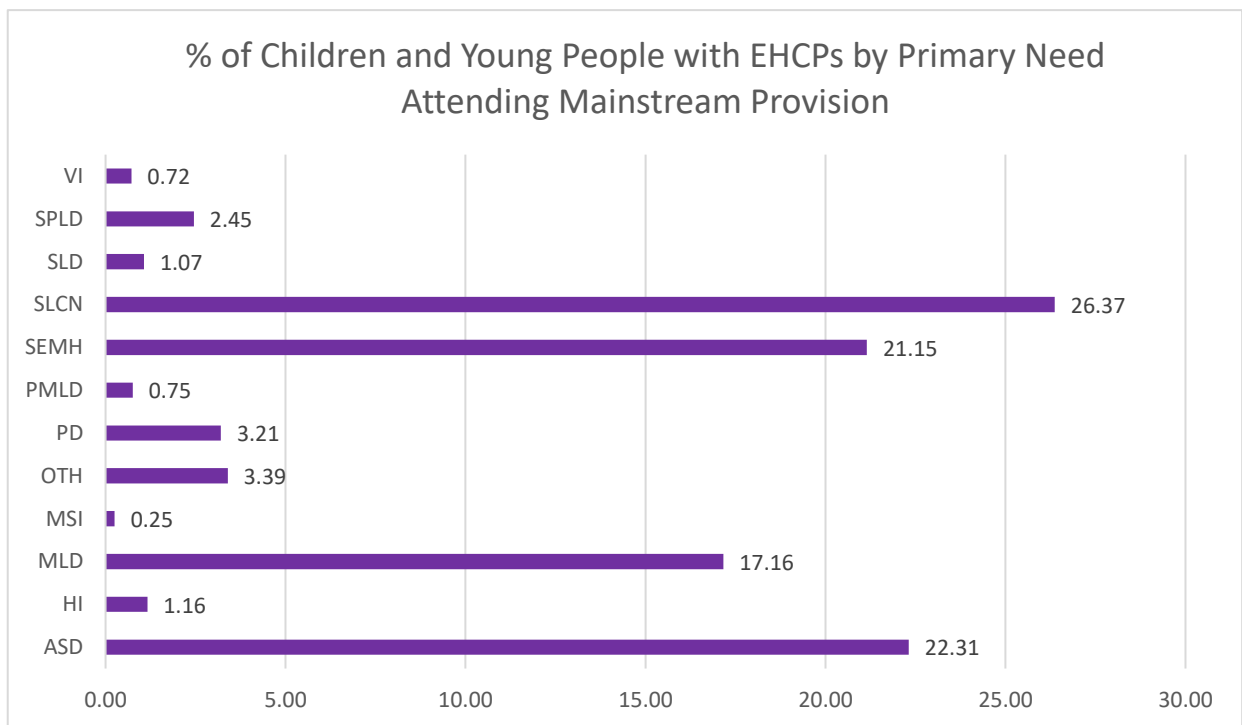


Figure 8: Children and Young People with EHCPs by Primary Need Attending Specialist Provision, SEN2 2024

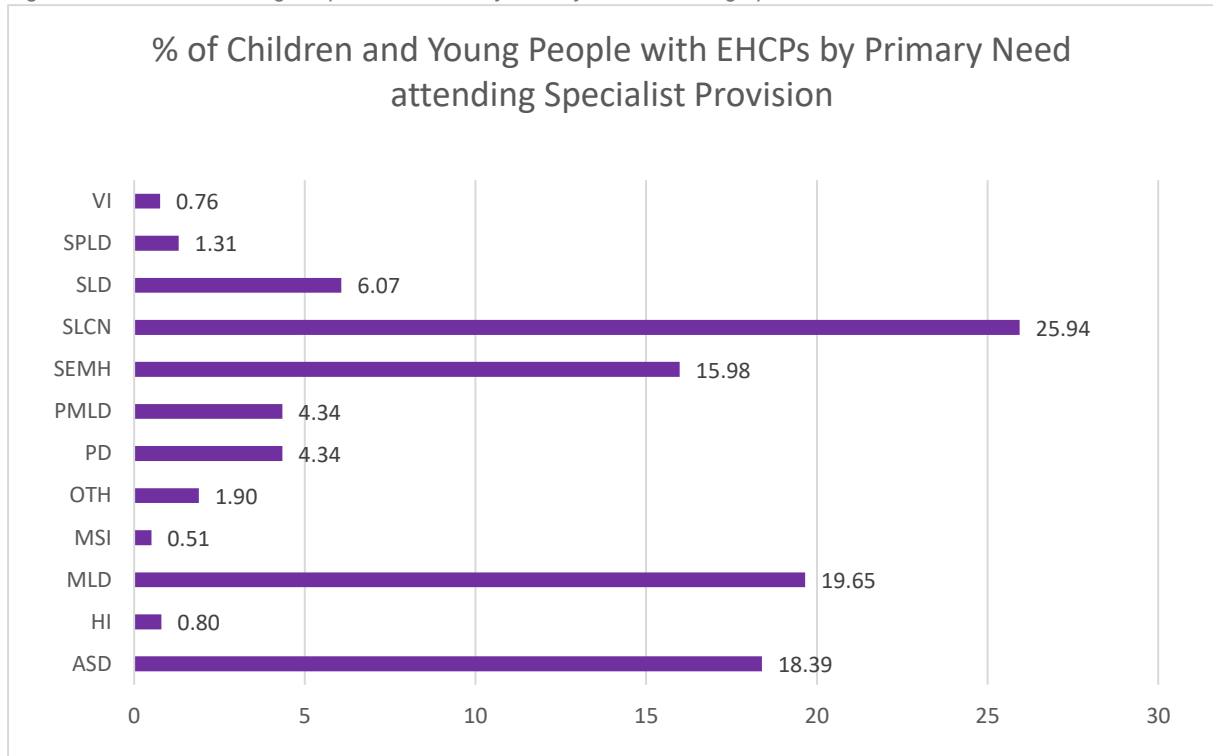


Figure 9: Children and Young People with EHCPs by Primary Need Attending AP/PRU Provision - SEN2 2024 – Worcestershire and National

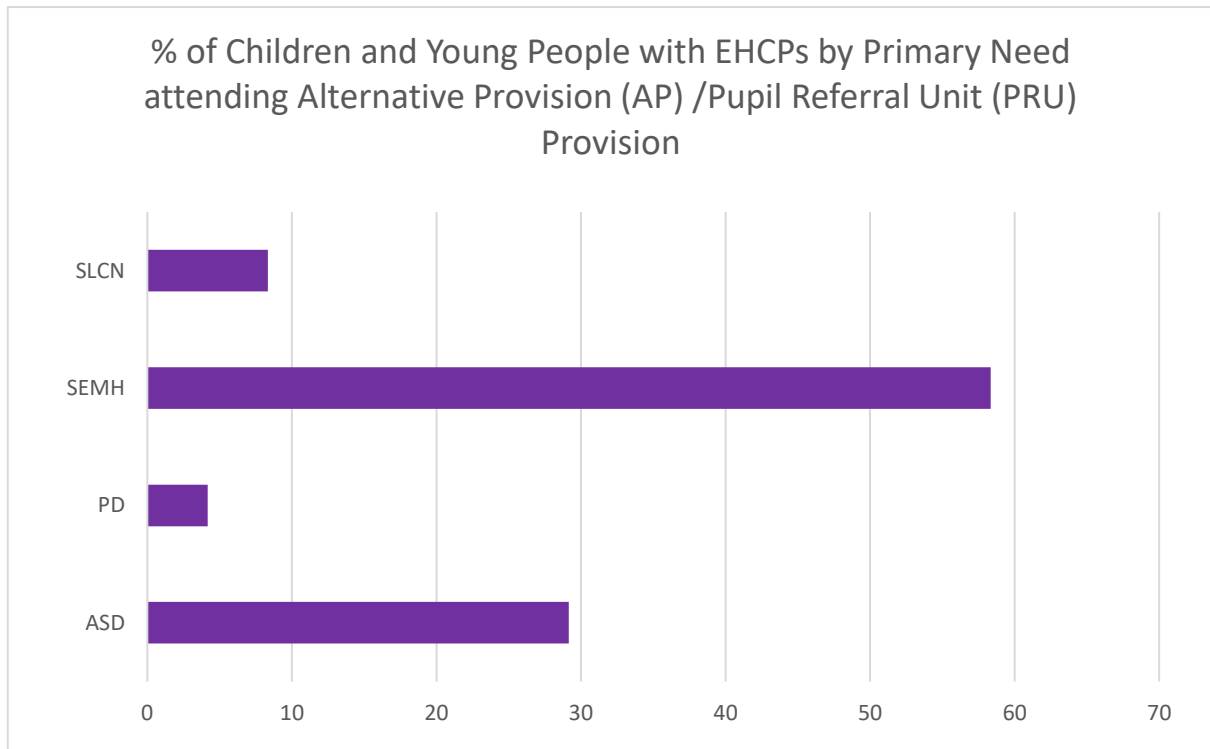
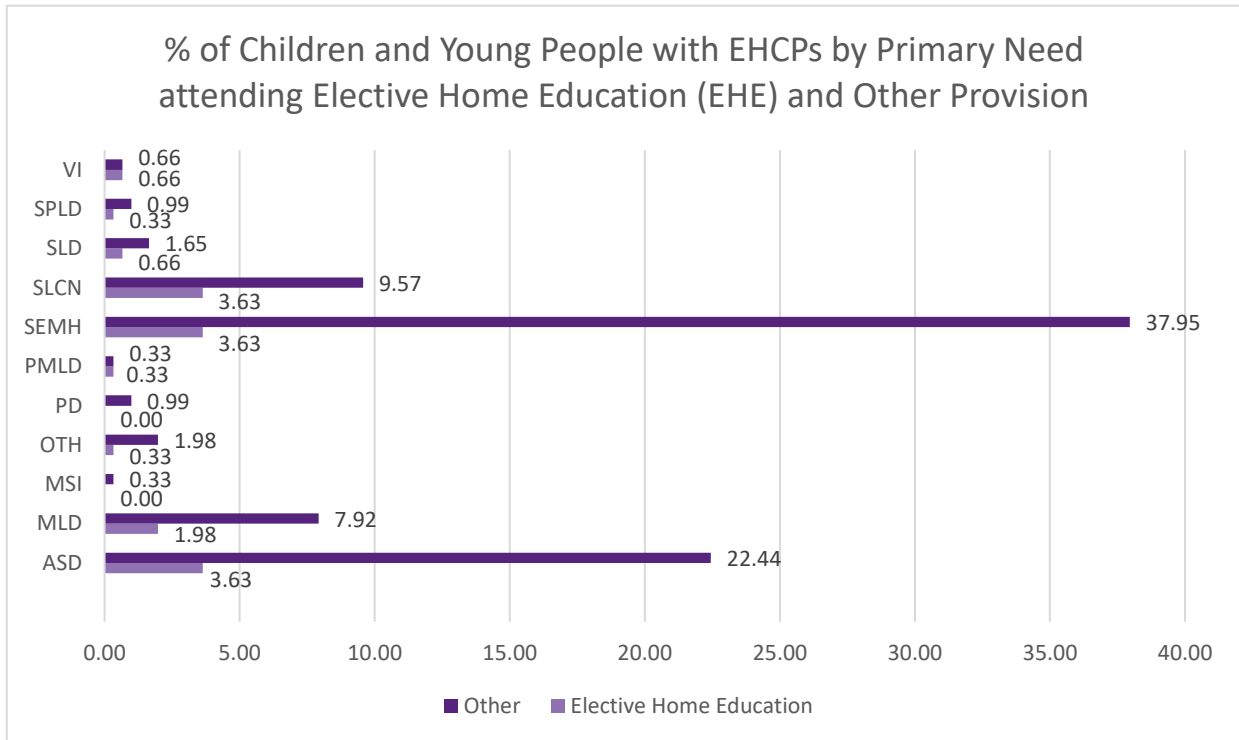


Figure 10: Children and Young People with EHCPs by Primary Need and Other Provision, SEN2



Figures 7 to 10 show the type of provision children with EHCPs are attending and their primary need.

Of children attending Mainstream schools with EHCPs, 26.37% have the primary need of SLCN (the largest cohort) while those with EHCPs and the primary need of SLCN attending specialist provision is 25.94%.

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

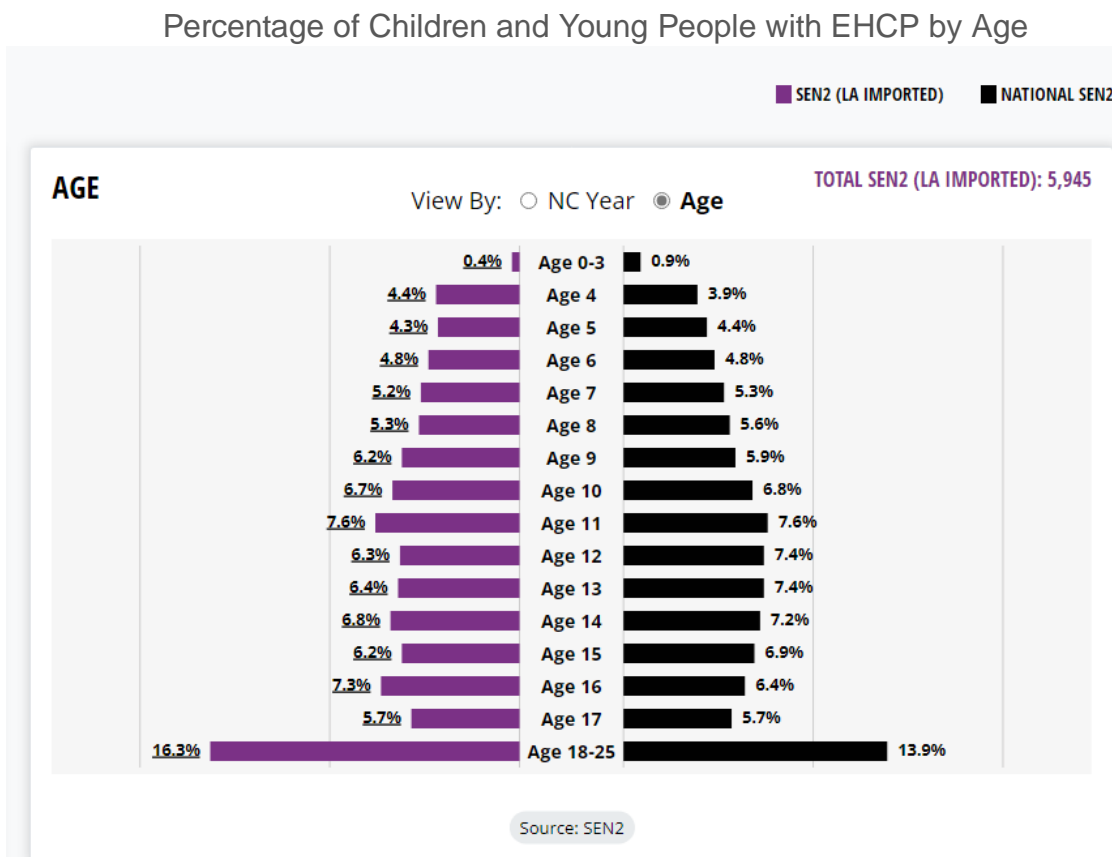
SEMH is the most common primary need for children attending AP/PRU provision (37.95%).

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

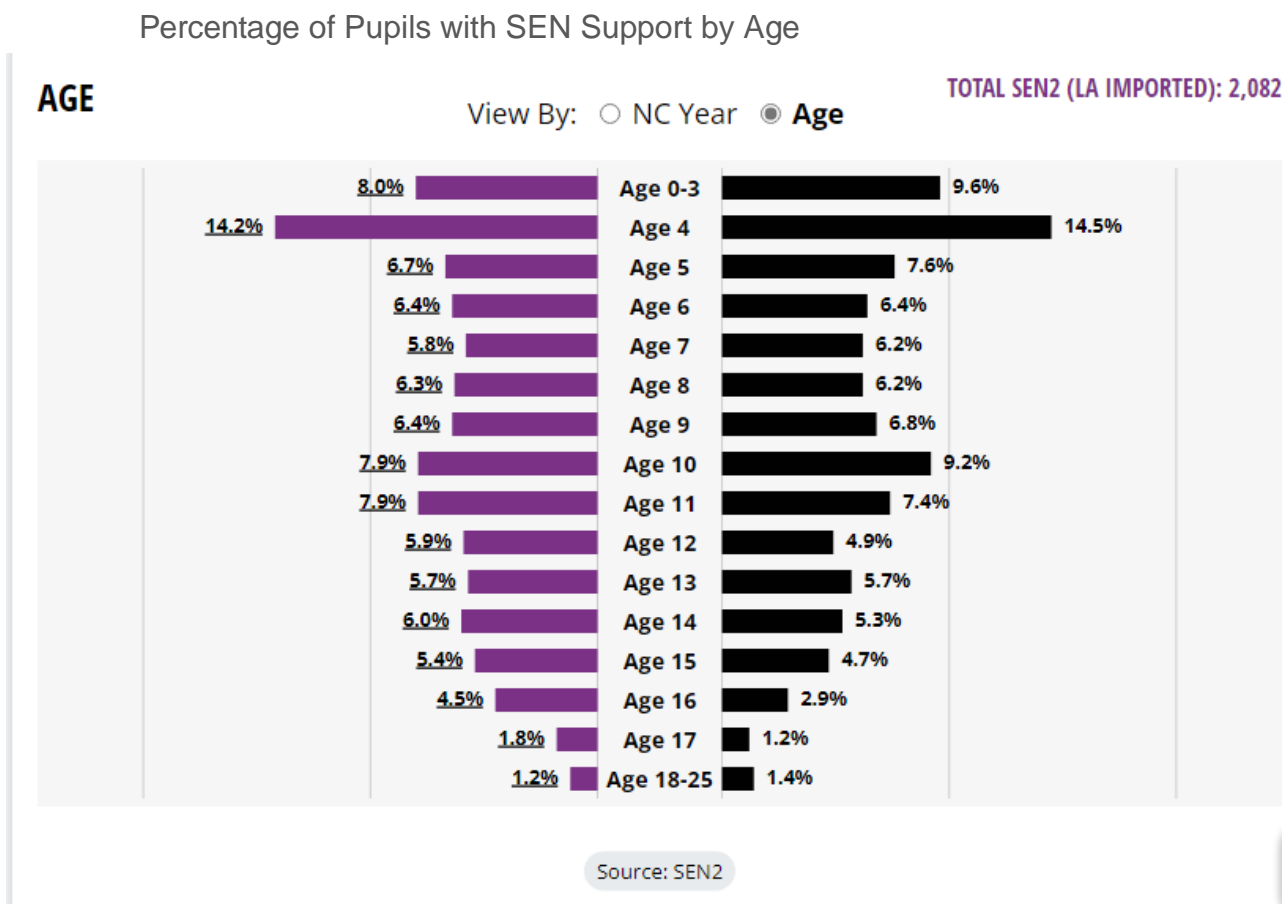
Further analysis of this year's data for children in schools in Worcestershire show that those in the secondary phase (age 11-16) has the highest percentage of pupils with EHCPs, making up 40.6%.

Figure 11: Percentage of Pupils with EHCPs by Age, January SEN2



The percentage of pupils receiving SEN Support by age shows larger numbers in primary phase (children aged 4 to 11) compared to secondary (children aged 11 to 16) and a small percentage where children would be in the sixth form phase. The largest percentage with EHCPs is with 16-year-olds, falling in the NCY Year 11.

Figure 12: Percentage of Pupils with SEN Support by Age, January SEN2



3 Provision for Children with Education, Health and Care Plans

3.1 Trends in EHCPs

The SEN2 data 2024 reports that there were 5,945 Worcestershire children and young people (aged 0-25) with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), for whom the Authority has responsibility⁸. This represents a 14.17% increase from 2023, however new plans are not written uniformly through the year. The significant increase in the number of EHCPs in Worcestershire since 2016 has in part been a result of rising population numbers, however this does not explain the trend entirely. Over the last eight years, the number of EHCPs as a percentage of the total population (including independent schools and post-16 establishments) has increased from 2.9% in January 2016 to 3.66% in 2024. A significant contribution to this has been the rise in the post-16 population with an EHCP following a change in Government legislation⁹ where the educational or training outcomes of the EHCP are not achieved by age 18, the EHCP can remain in place until the young person reaches 25.

⁸ [SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25](#)

⁹ [Children and Families Act 2014](#)

As the Worcestershire School Census includes children who do not reside in the county, whilst excluding those that are Worcestershire residents but are not attending educational settings in the county, we do not have accurate, up to date figures for the total number of children and young people aged 0-25 years resident in the county. The Office of National Statistics¹⁰, based on the 2021 National Census, forecasted that in 2024 there would be total of 162,321 children and young people aged 0-25 years living in Worcestershire. Using this figure, 5,945 children and young people having an EHCP would equate to 3.7% of the total population aged 0-25 years.

Figure 13: EHCPs by Age Range – SEN2

	Jan-18	Jan-19	Jan-20	Jan-21	Jan-22	Jan-23	Jan-24
Under age 5 (NCY 0, -1 & -2)	84	83	110	118	135	109	284
Aged 5 to 10 (NCY 5 - NCY 10)	908	992	1,214	1,293	1,475	1,612	1,936
Aged 11 to 15 (NCY 6 – NCY 10)	1,120	1,220	1,339	1,473	1,612	1,757	1,980
Aged 16 to 19 (NCY 11 – NCY 15)	807	966	959	939	1,055	1,166	1,294
Aged 20 to 25 (NCY 15 – NCY 20)	145	241	431	359	413	514	451
Total	3,064	3,502	4,053	4,182	4,690	5,158	5,945
Annual Increase	13%	14%	15%	4%	12%	10%	15.26%

The highest number of EHCPs are within the age range of 11 to 15 years old, this has been consistent since 2018. This is followed by children aged 5 to 10 years old, which has also been consistent in its positioning since 2018.

¹⁰ [Population statistics and projections | Worcestershire County Council](#)

Figure 14: EHCPs by type of provision in Worcestershire – SEN2

	Jan-18	Jan-19	Jan-20	Jan-21	Jan-22	Jan-23	Jan-24
All Pupils for whom the Authority maintains a statement of Special Educational Needs or EHC Plan	3,064	3,502	4,053	4,182	4,690	5,158	5,945
Special Schools – LA-funded	1,332	1,385	1,517	1,524	1,641	1,756	1,839
Special Schools - Independent	120	134	152	208	228	305	411
Mainstream Schools – LA- funded	808	910	1,207	1,373	1,472	1,707	2,148
Mainstream - Independent	54	80	97	81	125	98	126
General Further Education	553	669	702	696	752	708	946
Specialist Further Education	88	88	93	90	111	129	121
Electively Home	40	39	44	48	31	23	46
Alternative Provision	5	11	24	17	30	24	24
Other	64	186	217	145	183	408	257
Early Years							27
Total	3,064	3,502	4,053	4,182	4,690	5,158	5,945

*Other could include Awaiting Placement, CME/NEET/ Other FE, Other arrangements made by parents or by the LA

In January 2024, of the 5,945 children with an EHCP, 31.2% were attending LA-funded Special Schools and 36.1% attending LA-funded mainstream schools.

With a focus on Early Years, we have decided to record the number of Early Years children with EHCPs separately this year.

1066 young people (17.9%) are attending post-16 colleges. This corresponds to the responsibility to continue education opportunities up to the age of 25 for young people with EHCPs. Those attending specialist further education has continued to increase from 129 in 2023 to 158 in 2024. Some of the colleges will be specialist independent institutions with residential facilities based out of county.

523 children (8.8%) are attending independent school, either special or mainstream. This demand is driven by the suitability of placements and parental choice but may be exacerbated by a shortage of spaces in LA-funded specialist provision.

The number of children with EHCPs in Worcestershire attending maintained special schools has decreased from 45.7% in 2018, to 30.9% in 2024. Nationally, figures have decreased since 2018 from 34.6% to 27.1% in 2024. There has been a continued increase in the number of children with an EHCP attending independent special provision, increasing in Worcestershire by 0.77% since last year from 5.95% to 6.9%. Nationally, this has decreased by 0.2%.

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

Figure 15: Analysis of Forecast SEN Pupils (SEN2 only – gov.uk)

	England.							Worcestershire.						
EHCPs	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
All Schools	279k	354k	390k	430k	473k	517k	576k	2,723	3,502	4,053	4,182	4,555	4,904	5,945
Mainstream Schools	113,367	138,630	152,172	172,023	191,442	213,381	248,016	761	990	1,304	1,454	1,596	1,635	2,274
Maintained Special	96,734	118,999	125,398	132,131	140,036	145,850	155,045	1,243	1,385	1,517	1,524	1,609	1,676	1,839
Independent Special	13,117	17,532	19,641	21,746	24,412	25,886	29,802	101	134	152	208	228	292	411
Further Education	46,854	57,191	64,437	71,728	78,370	76,476	83,781	576	753	795	786	865	805	1,067
AP/PRU	2,109	2,731	3,181	3,239	3,596	3,923	4,471	3	11	24	17	16	12	24
EHE			2,983	3,660	4,098	4,285	5,770			44	48	33	21	46
Other*	11,161	24,591	29,736	34,745	41,039	54,653	60,687	32	39	21	33	35	112	284
% Mainstream	40.6%	39.2%	39.0%	39.9%	40.5%	41.3%	43.3%	27.9%	28.3%	32.2%	34.8%	35%	33.3%	38.2%
% Maintained Special	34.6%	33.6%	32.2%	30.7%	29.6%	28.2%	27.1%	45.7%	39.5%	37.4%	36.4%	35.3%	34.2%	30.9%
% Independent Special	4.7%	5%	5.1%	5%	5.2%	5%	5.2%	3.7%	3.82%	3.75%	4.97%	5%	5.95%	6.9%
% Further Education	16.8%	16.2%	16.5%	16.7%	16.6%	14.8%	14.6%	21.2%	21.5%	19.6%	18.8%	19%	16.4%	17.9%
% AP/PRU	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.1%	0.3%	0.6%	0.4%	0.4%	0.2%	0.4%
EHE			0.8%	0.8%	0.9%	0.8%	1%			1.09%	1.15%	0.72%	0.43%	0.7%
% Other*	3.5%	4.2%	4.4%	4.6%	4.7%	6.7%	6.5%	1.18%	1.11%	0.52%	0.79%	0.77%	2.28%	4.7%

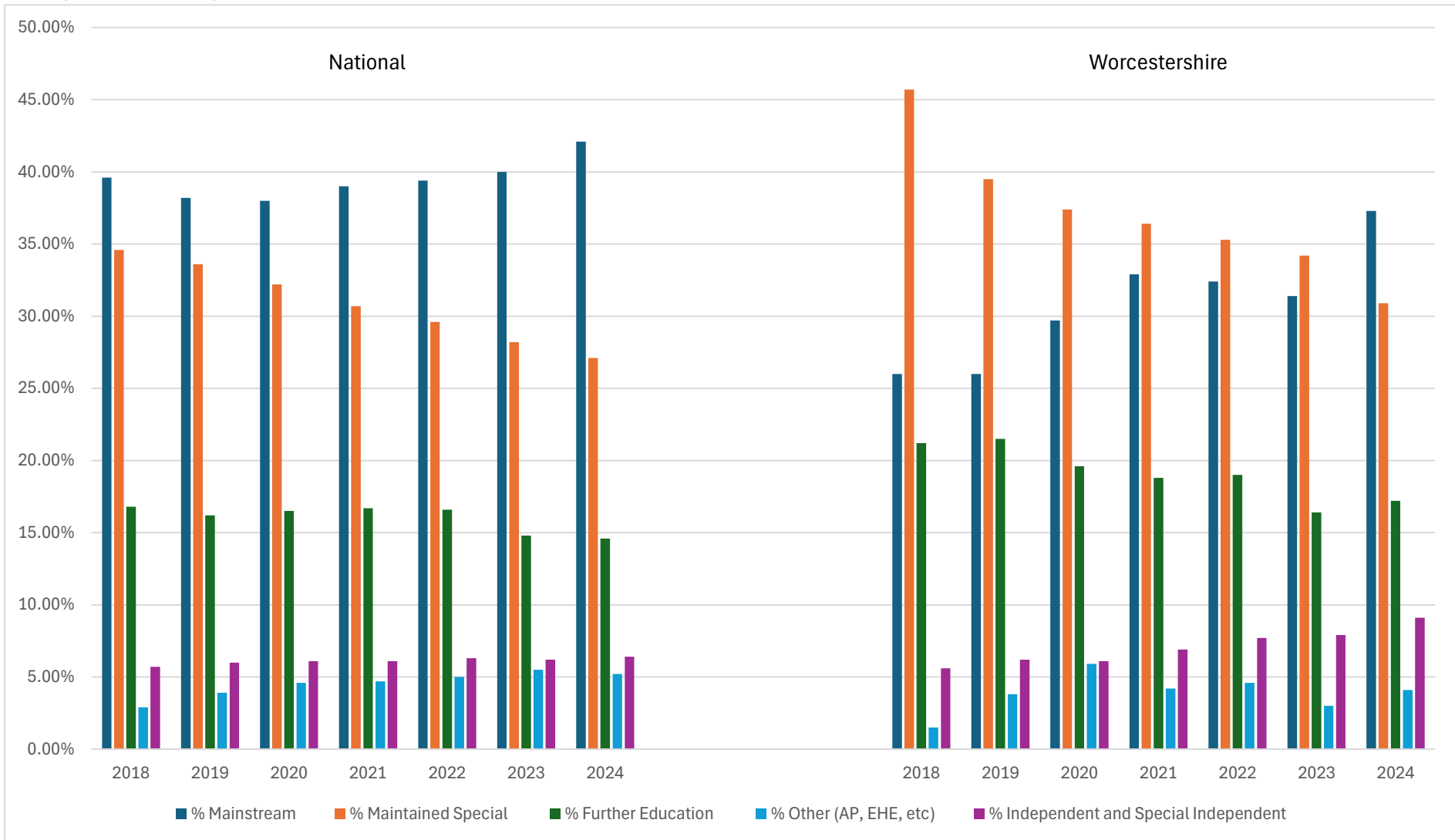
*Other includes NEET, Non-maintained Early Years, Other arrangements by Parents, Other arrangements by LA, Not in Education or training - other, Not in Education to cease issued – Some of these arrangements didn't record data until 23/24 (in the previous year's numbers were a lot lower due to no data being recorded)

In 2024, 38.2% of children with an EHCP attended a mainstream school (this includes SEN units and Resource Provision), this compares with 43.3% nationally. 30.9% of children with an EHCP were attending maintained special provision, nationally this figure is 27.1%. Both figures for maintained special schools have continued to decrease since 2018. The rate in which the percentage of children attending maintained special schools has decreased at a quicker rate than nationally in comparison to last year, by nearly 4%, whereas nationally, this was 1%. There was an increase in children and young people with EHCPs in Worcestershire being Electively Home Educated (EHE) between 2023 and 2024, however, this is in line with the increase nationally.

The percentage of children attending mainstream provision has increased by 3.2% from 35% in 2022 to 38.2% in 2024. There is a difference of 5.1% between national (43.3%) and Worcestershire (38.2%) percentage of pupils attending mainstream schools. There has been a decrease in the percentage of children attending maintained special, which follows the national trend, Worcestershire (30.9%) data is 3.8% higher than the nationally (27.1%). The national percentage has decreased from 28.2% in 2023, and the Worcestershire percentage has decreased from 34.2% in 2023.

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

Figure 16: Percentage of Children with EHCP and Type of Provision – GOV.UK



3.2 Analysis of Current Pupils with EHCPs

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

3.2.1 Communication and Interaction

- 1,238 children from the January Census and SEN2 data have an EHCP with a primary need of Autism (ASD).
- Wychavon continues to have the highest number of children with an EHCP for ASD (285).
- Across all the districts, boys significantly outnumber girls with an Autism diagnosis and an EHCP. 75.1% of children with ASD and an EHCP in Worcestershire are male.
- Consistent with last year's data, the highest number of children with an EHCP with the primary need of ASD across all districts are within the age range of 11 to 15 years old.
- Of the 1,238 children with an EHCP and ASD, 37.2% of children are in KS3 (11 to 15 years old), followed by 34.3% are post-16.
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) also falls under the communication and interaction category, there are 1,512 children in Worcestershire with EHCPs and a primary need of SLCN.
- Worcester has the highest number of children who have an EHCP with SLCN primary need. As with ASD, there are greater numbers of boys than girls with this primary need. Across all districts, the highest numbers of children with SLCN and an EHCP is in the age 4 to 10 category.
- The highest percentage of children with SLCN and EHCP is in Worcester at 21.03% of the county total, this is closely followed by Wychavon at 19.44%.
- Aside from out-of-county children, Malvern Hills has the lowest percentage of EHCPs with primary needs of SLCN across the county at 9.65%.

3.2.2 Cognition and Learning

- The cognition category includes children with Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD), Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD), Profound Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD) and Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD).
- There are 1,487 children and young people with cognition and learning needs and an EHCP.
- Bromsgrove continues to have the lowest number of EHCPs with primary need covering cognition and learning across the districts.
- Of the 1,487, 71.08% of these have the primary need of MLD. Across Worcestershire's districts, the age range of 11 to 15 has the most children with MLD

needs. Children with Significant Learning Difficulties vary most between 5 to 15 years old.

- This is similar with Specific Learning Difficulties, Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Worcester, and Wyre Forest all have the largest cohort in the age range of 11 to 15. Whereas, for Redditch and Wychavon, it is the 5 to 10 age range.
- Numbers of children with Profound Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD) are the lowest of the cohort. Numbers across the age ranges are more spread out – however, 5 to 15 still show as most prevalent.

3.2.3 Sensory and/or Physical

- Sensory and physical disabilities include children with Visual Impairments (VI), Hearing Impairments (HI), Physical Disability (PD) and Multi-Sensory impairment (MSI). There are 334 children and young people with Sensory and/or Physical primary needs and an EHCP in Worcestershire.
- Children with PD make up 63.17% of the cohort, followed by HI at 16.76%, VI at 13.77% and MSI at 6.28%.
- Wyre Forest has the most children with hearing impairment needs, Wychavon with physical disability, Worcester has the highest number of children with visual impairments and Redditch with the highest number of children with Multi-Sensory Impairment.
- 180 children with sensory and/or physical needs are male, closely followed by 154 females.

3.2.4 Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)

- There are 1212 children and young people in Worcestershire with an EHCP and primary need of SEMH, this is an increase from 968 EHCPs in 2023.
- Of the 1212, 34.7% are post-16, followed by KS3 (years 7 to 9) at 30.2%.
- Across Worcestershire, 72.2% of the children with an EHCP and SEMH are male with the highest figures in Worcester, Wychavon and Wyre Forest.
- Across the female data, the number of EHCPs with primary need of SEMH peaks in Year 11, whereas, for males the peak is in Year 7.

3.3 Breakdown of Needs by District

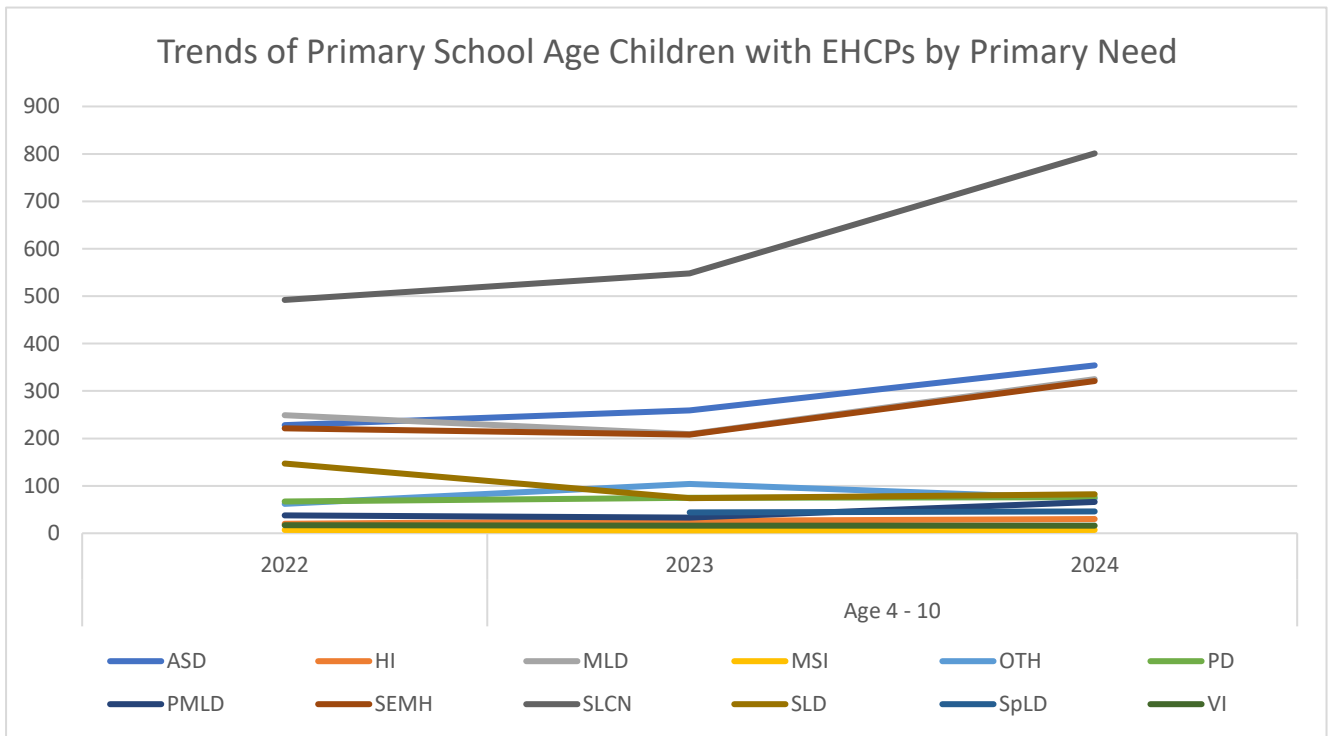
Figure 17: Children and Young People with EHCP and Primary Needs by District, SEN2

Resident District	ASD	Cognition	Other14	SEMH	Sensory/ Physical	Speech
Bromsgrove	218	189	23	133	56	218
Malvern Hills	159	185	19	159	35	146
Redditch	177	247	17	180	60	245
Worcester	192	285	27	254	62	318
Wychavon	286	311	40	273	69	294
Wyre Forest	196	253	35	187	49	281
Out of County	10	17	1	26	3	10
TOTAL	1238	1487	162	1212	334	1512

Figure 17 above shows the breakdown of the grouping of primary needs by Worcestershire districts. Wychavon has the highest number of children and young people with ASD, Cognition, SEMH, Sensory/ Physical and Other needs, whilst Worcester has the highest number of children with Speech needs.

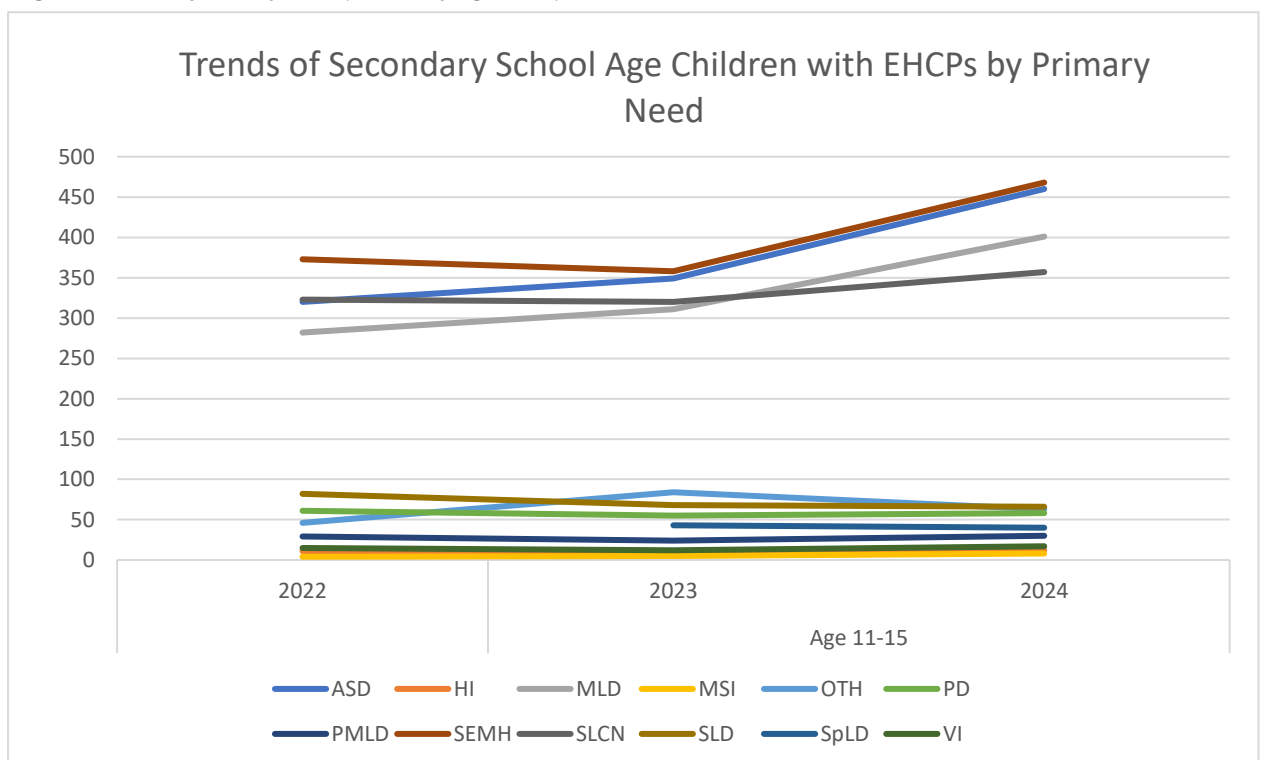
3.4 Trends by Areas of Need

Figure 18: Trends by Primary Need (Primary Age 4-10) – SEN2



The number of pupils with ASD, SLCN, SEMH and MLD primary needs have continued to rise since 2022 for the primary phase age groups (4-10 years). The same types of primary needs are also continuing to rise for secondary school aged children (11-15). The most noticeable increase in the primary phase is the primary need of SLCN, where there has been an increase of 309 EHCPs with this primary need since 2022. Speech and Language needs are highest amongst primary school aged children, however, there has also been an increase amongst secondary school aged children. There has been a decline in the primary need of 'Other' since 2023 where it had peaked, the number of children with an EHCP and primary need of 'Other' has decreased by 31 since 2023. The 'Other' category is sometimes used to classify complex cases which have aspects of ASD and either PMLD or SLD. Also, the category 'Other' may have been allocated due to delay in an official diagnosis by a healthcare professional.

Figure 19: Trend by Primary Need (Secondary Age 11-15) - SEN2



The number of pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties has had a prominent increase since 2022 and is continuing to rise in the secondary phase. The number of children with an EHCP and primary need of SEMH has now overtaken ASD in the Secondary phase with both continuing to rise. The number of secondary school aged children with EHCPs and the primary need of Other has decreased from 84 in 2023 to 63 in 2024.

3.5 Financial Considerations

The diversity of provision to support children and young people with SEN is extensive. Broadly speaking, there are 2 types of funding for SEN. Children attending mainstream and state-funded special schools attract funding from the High Needs Funding Block, related to how much additional support is necessary to meet their education needs. Children and young people attending independent settings are provided for at a unique cost based upon the individual child’s needs and the setting’s provision. These can have similar costs to mainstream provision but are frequently much more expensive. All placements have different durations.

Table 20: Worcestershire HNB Monitoring Costs Period12 Actuals Per Placement by Setting Type

School Type	Total FTE	Total Cost Per Placement (£)	Avg. Cost Per Placement (£)
FE (Including Specialist)	723	14,796,468	20,465
Independent	33	943,890	28,603
Independent Special	407	20,602,829	50,729
Mainstream	2,397	15,703,707	6,551
Special	1,933	18,300,807	9,468
Grand Total	5,493	70,347,701	N/A

The above figures are for the end of the financial year, April 2024. The total number of EHCPs and the numbers for each type of provision may differ from those detailed at other points in this report due to EHCPs ending and/or new EHCPs starting between the January SEN2 data return and the end of financial year reporting.

With the addition of the new Special Free School in Malvern Hills, anticipated to open in September 2027, this should bring down the average cost per pupil placement for Independent Special as some children attending independent settings who have a primary need of ASD can then attend a maintained Special School that specialises in Autism.

3.6 Forecasting Pupil Numbers

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

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

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

Figure 21 shows the forecast number of EHCPs in Worcestershire up to 2029 if the trends of the previous 5 years continue. The forecast methodology takes the forecast number of children and young people living in Worcestershire, the previous year’s EHCP figure by age and the previous 5-year average of new EHCPs to forecast EHCP numbers for the next 5 years:

Figure 21: Worcestershire EHCP Forecast 2025 to 2029

	Actual	Forecast				
Age Range	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Under 5	433	481	534	593	658	730
6-10	2,039	2,263	2,512	2,788	3,095	3,435
11-15	1,933	2,146	2,382	2,644	2,935	3,258
16-19	1,122	1,245	1,382	1,534	1,703	1,890
20-25	418	464	515	572	635	705
Total	5,945	6,599	7,325	8,131	9,025	10,018

If the trends continue as they have over the last 5 years, by 2029 there are projected to be over 10,000 EHCPs in Worcestershire.

4 Worcestershire Provision for pupils with SEND – by District

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

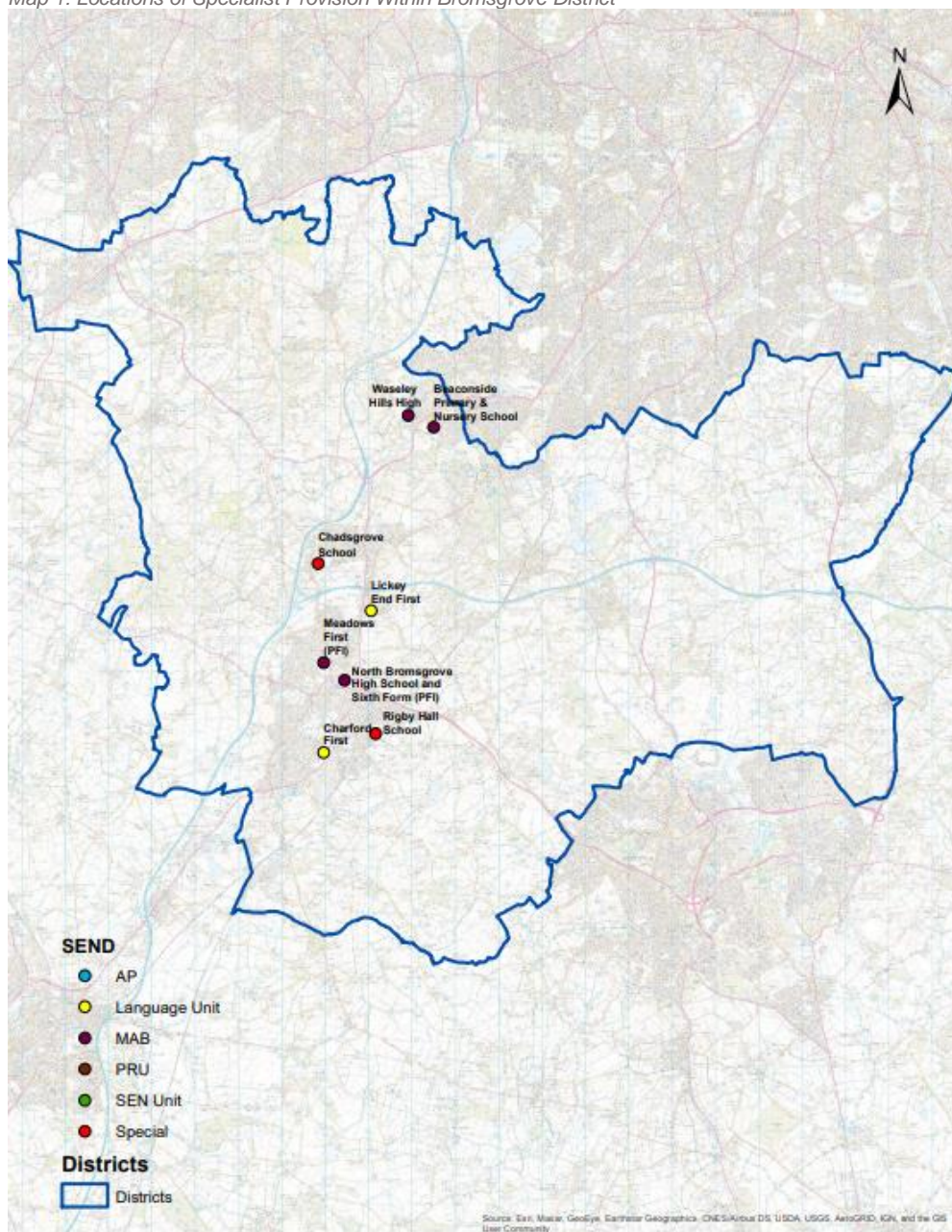
There are:

- 9 State-Funded Special schools,
- 3 Pupil Referral Units,
- 7 Alternative Provision bases,
- 14 Mainstream Autism Bases (MABs) of which 3 are Enhanced Mainstream Autism Bases (EMABs),
- 5 Early Years Language Units,
- 5 School Age Language Units,
- 1 SEN Unit (SLCN focus) and
- 3 Medical Education Team bases.

The areas and locations of Worcestershire’s specialist provision are outlined below by district.

4.1 Bromsgrove

Map 1: Locations of Specialist Provision Within Bromsgrove District

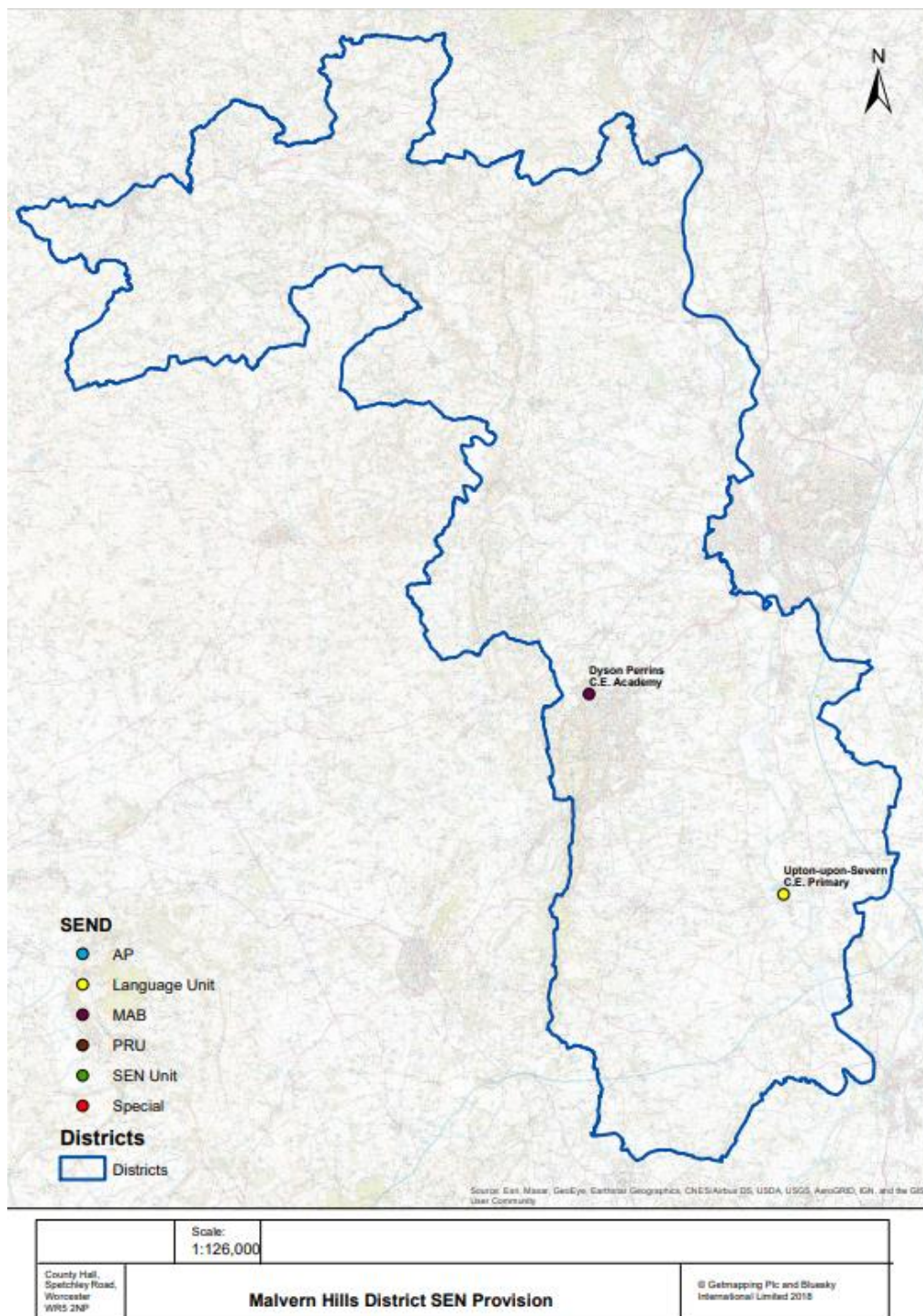


	Scale: 1:75,000	
County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP	Bromsgrove District SEN Provision	© Getmapping Plc and BlueSky International Limited 2015

Bromsgrove has 2 special schools, Chadsgrove School and College (ages 2-25) and Rigby Hall School (ages 4-19). Chadsgrove School specialises in caring for children with Physical Disabilities, Rigby Hall is a generic special catering to a variety of needs. There are 2 Language Units (Lickey Hills School Age and Charford Early Years) and there are 4 MABs located within Bromsgrove supporting children through years Reception through to 11. In January 2024, there were 1,685 children and young people living in Bromsgrove requiring SEN support, and 475 with an EHCP*.

4.2 Malvern Hills

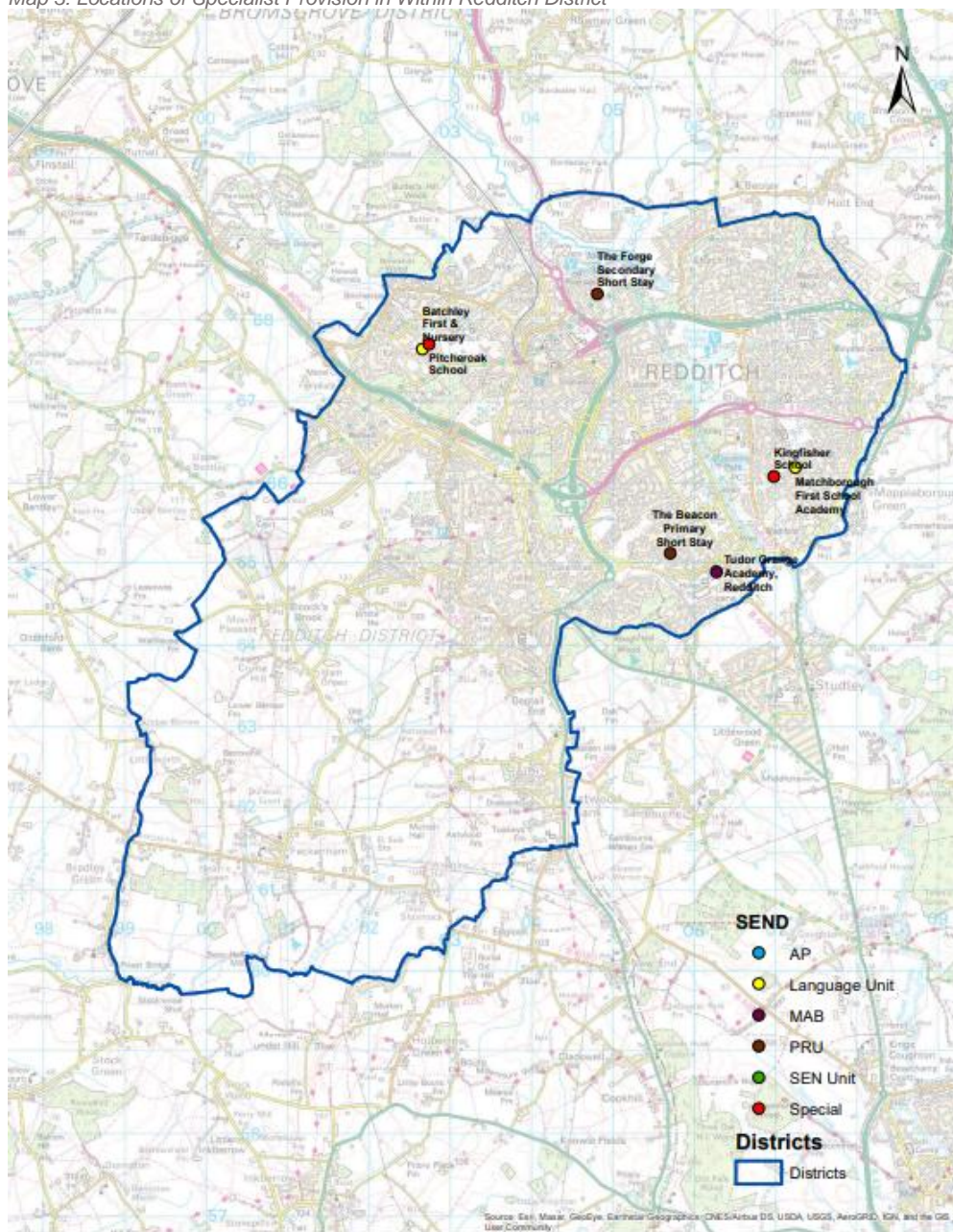
Map 2: Locations of Specialist Provision Within Malvern Hills District



Malvern Hills does not have any Special schools but does have a High school MAB at Dyson Perrins and an Early Years Language Unit at Upton upon Severn CE Primary school (Riverboats). 1,302 children living in Malvern Hills require SEN Support and 437 have an EHCP*. Malvern Hills has the least amount of specialist provision across the districts. However, in September 2027, a new ASD free school is scheduled to open within the district.

4.3 Redditch

Map 3: Locations of Specialist Provision in Within Redditch District

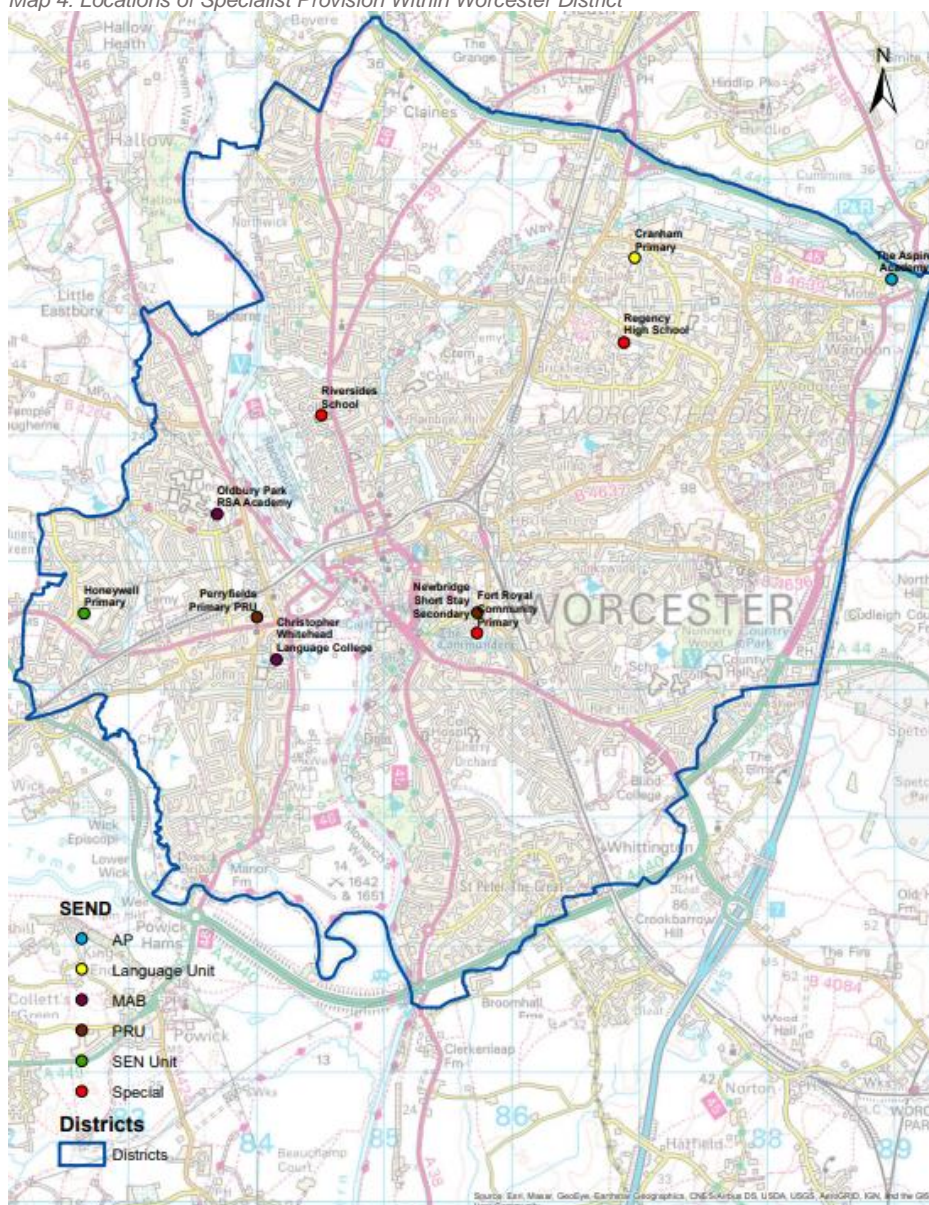


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County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP	Redditch District SEN Provision	© Getmapping Plc and BlueSky International Limited 2018

Redditch has 2 Special schools, Kingfisher school (ages 7 to 18) and Pitcheroak school (ages 4 to 19). Kingfisher specialises in Social, Emotional and Mental Health, whereas Pitcheroak is a generic Special school. There is one Early Years Language Unit at Batchley First School and one School age Language Unit at Matchborough First School. Redditch also has 2 MABs, supporting children through years 5 to 11. Tudor Grange High School has a MAB unit called The Hive with 10 places and EMAB unit called Treetops with 45 places. There are 2 Pupil Referral Units (The Forge and The Beacon) and 1 Medical Education Team Provision. Redditch has 2,021 children and young people living within the district requiring SEN Support and 564 with an EHCP*.

4.4 Worcester

Map 4: Locations of Specialist Provision Within Worcester District

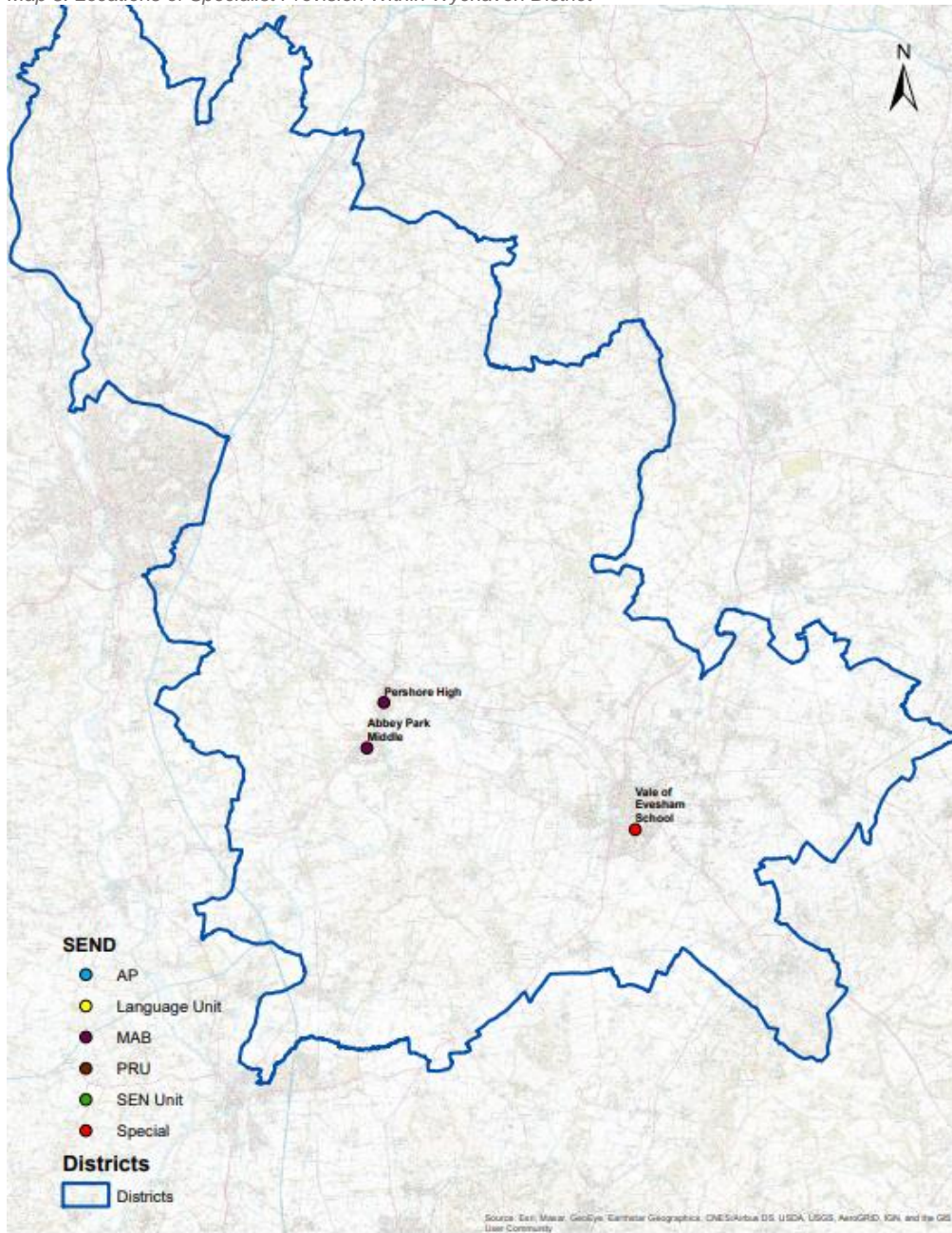


	Scale: 1:25,000	
County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP	Worcester City SEN Provision	© Getmapping Plc and Bluekey International Limited 2018

Worcester has the most Special schools within a district, Fort Royal (ages 2 to 11), Riversides (ages 7 to 16) and Regency High (ages 11 to 19). Fort Royal and Regency are both generic Special schools, whereas Riversides specialises in Social, Emotional and Mental Health. There are 2 MABs located in Worcester, supporting children in Reception to Year 11, and a SEN Unit at Honeywell Primary School which supports pupils with SLCN. There are 3 Alternative Provision/Pupil Referral Units, Aspire Academy AP, Perryfields Primary PRU and Newbridge Short Stay Secondary PRU. The South Medical Education Team are also located at Newbridge Short Stay Secondary PRU. There is also one Early Years Language Unit based at Cranham Primary school. Worcester has 1992 children and young people living within the district requiring SEN Support and 745 with EHCPs*.

4.5 Wychavon

Map 5: Locations of Specialist Provision Within Wychavon District

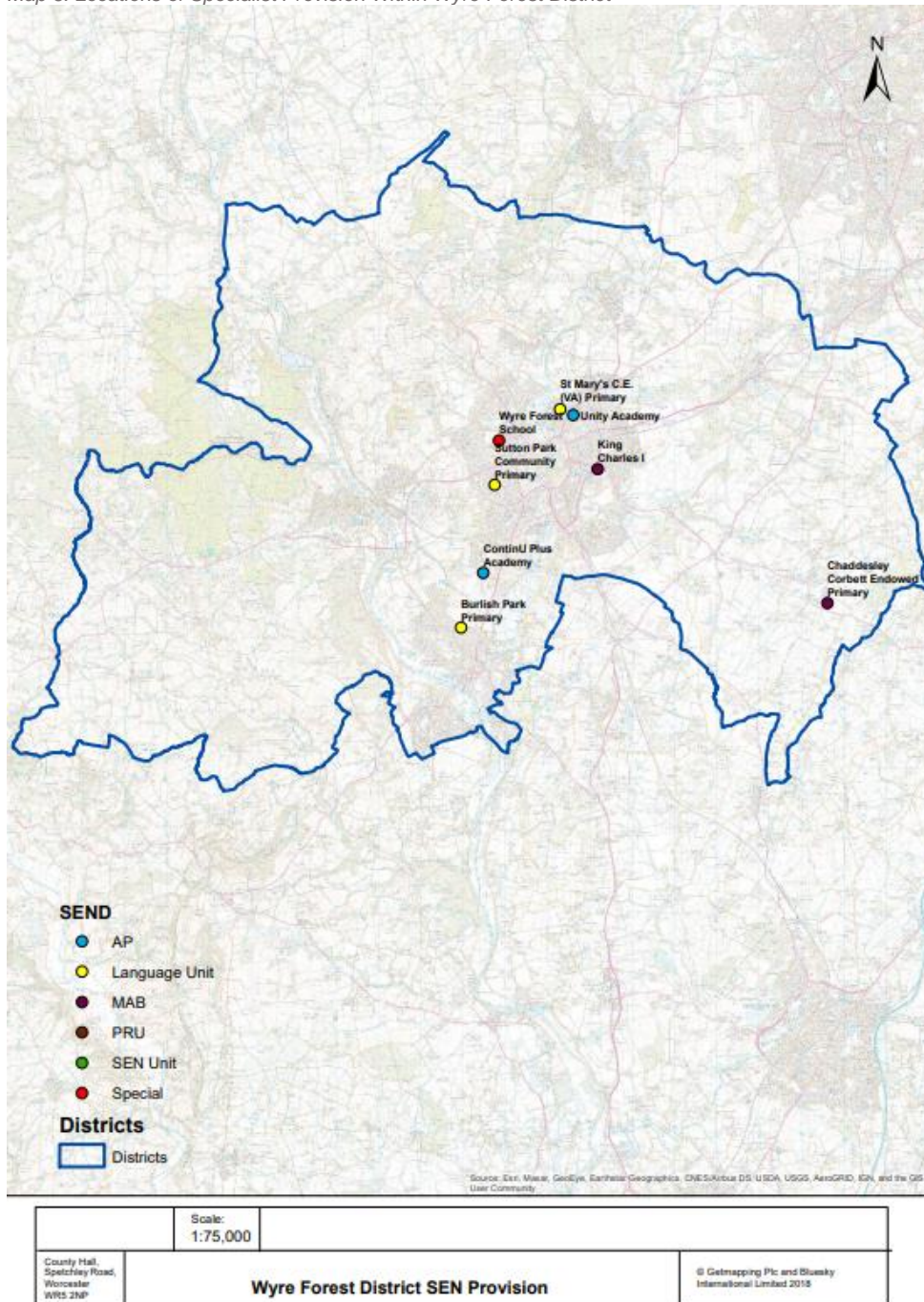


Scale:		1:120,000
County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2HP	Wychavon District SEN Provision	
		© Getmapping Plc and Blawieky International Limited 2018

Wychavon has one generic Special school, Vale of Evesham (ages 2 to 19) and 2 MABs providing for children years 5 to 11. Wychavon has 2,285 children living within the district requiring SEN Support and 766 with EHCPs*, the most out of all Worcestershire's districts.

4.6 Wyre Forest

Map 6: Locations of Specialist Provision Within Wyre Forest District



Wyre Forest has one generic Special school, Wyre Forest School (ages 4 to 19). There are 2 MABs aiding students in Reception to Year 11. There are also 2 Alternative Provision bases. Wyre Forest has the most Language Units, 3 School Age and 1 Early Years. The Medical Education Team (North) are based at Lea Street. There are 2,405 children and young people requiring SEN Support (the largest number across Worcestershire) and 677 with EHCPs*.

*These figures have been taken from the January 2024 census and will not include children and young people that attend independent or out of county provision or children that are not in any provision yet.

5. Current Worcestershire Provision – by Type

The SEND Code of Practice¹¹: 0-25 Years (2015) defines special educational provision as ‘educational or training provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools, maintained nursery schools, mainstream post-16 institutions or by relevant early years providers.’

Worcestershire offers a range of educational provision to meet the individual needs of children and young people with SEND. This includes provision in mainstream settings, specially resourced provision and Special Schools.

5.1 Mainstream Provision

Wherever possible, children and young people should be supported to have their needs met within their local mainstream provision. All educational settings are expected to have an inclusive approach and are required by law to make reasonable adaptations or adjustments to the premises and provision to ensure pupil’s needs are met. Section 1.27 of the SEND Code of Practice stipulates that ‘*Where a child or young person has SEN but does not have an EHC Plan, they **must** be educated in a mainstream setting except in specific circumstances.*’

The SEND Code of Practice (Section 6.37) also states that ‘*High quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEN. Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching.*’ This is usually referred to as Ordinarily Available Provision – the strategies, activities and experiences that remove barriers to learning for children and young people with SEND in all mainstream settings.

Where a child or young person is identified as having SEND, educational establishments should take action to remove barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place. This is called SEN Support and should take the form of a four-part cycle through which earlier decisions and actions are revisited, refined and revised with a growing understanding of the child/ young person’s needs and of what support they need to secure good progress and good outcomes. This is known as the Graduated Response. Worcestershire County Council has produced a guide to the Graduated Response for schools and Early Years settings to use when looking at the support which can be put in place to help their pupils with SEND.¹²

There are also several teams within the Local Authority who work with mainstream schools and educational settings 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.

¹¹[SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf](#)

¹²[The SEND Graduated Response | Worcestershire County Council](#)

Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust are also commissioned to provide certain services such as Speech and Language Therapy, School Nursing and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to support vulnerable children to maintain a place in mainstream settings. The demand for these services is reviewed separately, however, is in part driven by the number of children and young people living in Worcestershire.

5.2 Early Years SEND / Enhanced Provision

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

WCC's vision is that most early years aged children in the county should be able to attend their local Early Years provider and have their SEND needs identified and met within that setting. To enable this to happen the county has a strong Early Help offer provided by a range of partners, and specialist support in education provided through the Early Years Inclusion Process.

All Ofsted-registered Nursery Education Funded early years settings can claim additional funding per hour to support the needs of children with SEND, known as the Graduated Response.

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

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

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

All Early Years settings within Worcestershire are expected to offer inclusive provision. Additional funding (Inclusion Supplement) is available to support settings to meet the needs of children who have an identified need, with higher rates paid for children with more complex needs. 16% of funded 3- & 4-year-olds (1386 of 8517) and 6% of funded two year olds (216 of 3511) received an Inclusion Supplement during the Summer Term 2024.

The table below shows the number of children for whom early years settings in Worcestershire were claiming additional Graduated Response funding to support their emerging needs in summer term 2024 (GR2-4 plus EHC plan).

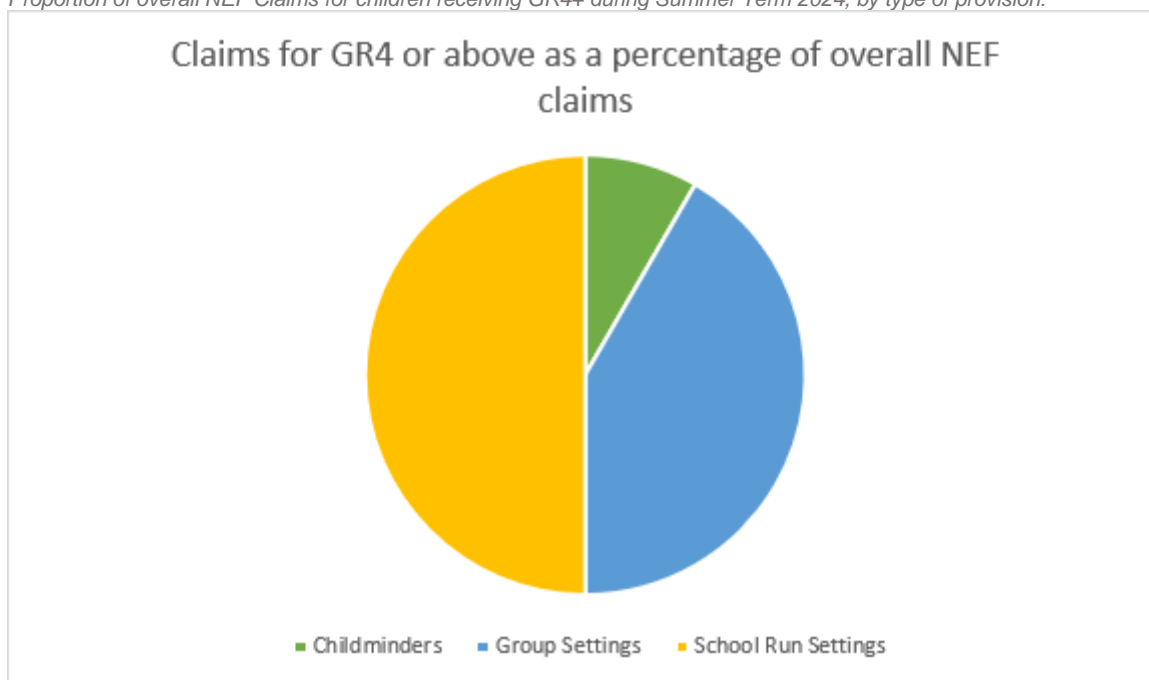
Figure 22: Breakdown of Graduated Response (GR) claims for funded two-, three- and four-year-olds:

	2 Year Olds	3- & 4-Year Olds
GR2	105	659
GR3	35	226
GR4	23	156
GR4+ and Exceptional	53	345
Total	216	1386

The majority of funded children with SEND access early years provision within a mainstream setting or combine attendance across both a specialist and mainstream provider; of 126 children accessing specialist provision during Summer 2024, 104 (83%) split their Nursery Education Funding (NEF) entitlement with a mainstream provider.

Of 464 providers claiming NEF between September 2023 – August 2024, 299 claimed NEF for a child they identified as having Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) (GR1 or above). Childminders make proportionately less claims for children with SEND, with only 1% of NEF claims in the Summer Term 2024 including an Inclusion Supplement for children identified as GR4 or above.

Proportion of overall NEF Claims for children receiving GR4+ during Summer Term 2024, by type of provision:



In addition to the Inclusion Supplement, support is also available for settings and practitioners to enable mainstream settings to identify and support children with SEND. The Early Years Inclusion Process (EYIP) was introduced in November 2023 to both improve the way in which support is allocated and to improve the quality of records held by the Local Authority to support resource management and forward planning. The introduction of the EYIP is encouraging settings to make referrals when a need is first identified, allowing support to be provided earlier.

Number of referrals for Early Years SEND support by age:

Age when referred	Number of Referrals April 2023 – June 2024
0	4
1	8
2	82
3	93
4	11

Prior to September 2023, four Special Schools delivered Nursery Assessment Units (NAU) across the county, to support in assessing the education provision required for pre-school aged children due to start school. In September 2023, due to an unprecedented rise in the demand for Special School Reception places, WCC, in consultation with The Vale of Evesham School and Academy Trust and Fort Royal School, had to prioritise Reception places over Nursery places at both schools and not admit any nursery age children. The Vale of Evesham School instead offered outreach support to pre-school age children in the south of the county who would have attended this provision, either in their mainstream Early Years settings or at home.

In September 2024, Wyre Forest Special School closed its Nursery Assessment Unit and also moved to an outreach service. It is anticipated that Wyre Forest's service will be able to support up to 45 children in the north of the county. Chadsgrove Special School continues to deliver Nursery provision for children from age 2 years whose SEND arises from physical disability or a complex health need. A Nursery Assessment Unit attached to a first school in Redditch (Batchley First School) continues to operate.

WCC recognise that for a small number of children, their complex needs make it difficult for them to attend or receive their full Nursery Education Funding (NEF) entitlement in an Early Years setting. We are therefore developing an Enhanced Early Years provision model that will be delivered by a specialist Early Years provider or school, to meet the needs of children aged 2-4 years whose identified SEND makes it difficult for them to attend an Early Years setting. Places will be allocated via a termly, multi-agency planning meeting for children with complex needs. The needs will have been identified through an EHC Needs Assessment or an EHCP.

From September 2024 WCC have commissioned a specialist SEND Early Years provider, Dingley's Promise, to deliver two Enhanced Early Years provisions in Worcester and Droitwich. Each setting will offer 12-15 full time equivalent (FTE) places, for up to 30 hours per week, term time. This provision will be accompanied by extensive outreach support services, including support to local nurseries and families in the south of the county. Until this provision is fully open, Vale of Evesham Special School will continue to offer outreach support. We will closely monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this Early Years Enhanced provision model, with a view to rolling it out to other locations across the whole of the county¹³.

¹³ [Dingley's Promise - Homepage - Dingley's Promise](#)

5.3 Early Years Language Classes (Resourced Provision)

At Early Years stage, the main Primary need is SLCN. WCC commission Early Years Language classes (Resourced Provision) at First and Primary Schools across Worcestershire. This targeted intervention provides children with specialist provision for typically 6 hours per week to support their SLCN, since early intervention with speech development can eliminate or much reduce the need for SEND support later¹⁴.

The following schools provide Early Years Language Classes:

District	School	No. of children attending 2023/24
Bromsgrove	Charford First host (Batchley First School-provider)	26
Redditch	Batchley First	24
Malvern Hills	Upton upon Severn CE Primary	18
Wyre Forest	St Mary's CE Primary	26
Worcester	Cranham Primary	23
TOTAL		117

The above figures are provided by Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust, whose Speech and Language Therapists oversee the delivery of provision in Language Classes. The information is based on children who commenced their placement at an Early Years Language Class provision during academic year 2023/24 and stayed for a term or longer. There are no EY Language classes within the Wychavon district, meaning more children are having to travel to other districts to attend provision.

A review by WCC of Language Class provision is underway. This service provides part time placements at a small number of schools in Worcestershire for interventions for children with speech and language impairment in partnership with the NHS Speech and Language Service. Recommendations are expected to be shared during 2025.

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

5.4 School Age Language Units

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

Figure 26: School Age Language Units and Commissioned Places 2023/24 by District

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

As stated in Section 5.3, the recommendations of the currently ongoing review of Language Class provision are expected to be shared in 2025.

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

Mainstream Autism Bases (MABs) are a Resourced Provision within Worcestershire Mainstream schools.

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

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

Current Autism Bases across Worcestershire are listed in the table below with the total number of commissioned full-time equivalent places for 2024/25:

Figure 27: MABs by Phase and 2024/25 Commissioned Place

District	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11
Bromsgrove (Rubery)	Beaconside Primary MAB (8)						Waseley Hills High School MAB (10)					
Bromsgrove (Bromsgrove)	Meadows First MAB >					Parkside Middle MAB (10)			NBHS MAB (10)			
Malvern Hills								Dyson Perrins MAB (12)				
Redditch								TGAR Hive MAB (10) + Treetops EMAB (45)				
							Walkwood Middle MAB (8)					
Worcester City	Oldbury Park Primary MAB (8)						Christopher Whitehead Language College EMAB (12)					
Wychavon (Pershore)						Abbey Park Middle MAB (10)			Pershore High School MAB (12)			
Wyre Forest	Chaddesley Corbett EMAB (10)						King Charles High School MAB (17)					

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

Figure 28 shows the number of pupils attending MAB provision year on year.

Figure 28: MABs number of pupils attending by academic year.

MAB Unit	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
Meadows/Parkside (10)	12	11	9	9	10	9	10
North Broms High (10)	8	10	10	10	10	9	10
Beaconside Primary (8)	9	9	8	8	7	5	8
Waseley Hills High (10)	9	11	7	10	11	6	10
Dyson Perrins CofE Academy (12)	10	10	11	12	12	14	12
Walkwood Middle (8)	7	9	13	14	14	3	8
TGAR Hive	3	8	7	10	7	6	10
TGAR Treetops (55)			12	18	25	24	45

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

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

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

34.74% of children attending one of Worcestershire's MABs are in KS3 (years 7 to 9), this is followed by 30.24% in KS4 (years 10 to 11). This shows a larger demand for this provision within these year groups.

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

As of January 2024, 53.1% of the 96 children or young people awaiting SEND provision had a primary need of ASD. Some of these children could have their needs met within a MAB or EMAB. The Sufficiency and Place Planning Team with SEND Officers have identified schools with existing base provision to discuss options to expand the number of places available. High Needs Provision capital has been allocated to create additional provision.

5.6 SEN Units

Some schools have dedicated SEN Units which are specially designed to support pupils with specific SEND needs alongside a mainstream education. Pupils attending a SEN Unit will spend at least half their time in this provision, most children will have an EHCP, but the unit may also provide support for pupils with SEN support. SEN units are designated by the local authority specifically for making SEN provision, and sometimes accommodate pupils registered at other schools on a part-time basis.

Our SEND Sufficiency Report 2023 identified SCLN as the most common area of need for pupils with both an EHCP and those receiving SEND Support. WCC have worked with Honeywell Primary School (Mercian Educational Trust) to present to the DfE Advisory Board the increased demand for places required for Primary-age pupils with an EHCP identifying SCLN as their specialist need. Approval was granted for a SEND Unit at Honeywell Primary School, which opened in September 2024 and will provide for a maximum of ten students who will be identified via the EHCP consultation process.

WCC are currently consulting with a number of Primary schools and Academy Trusts across the county who believe they have the physical capacity, specialist experience and capability to deliver a SEN Unit on their mainstream school sites.

5.7 Accessible Mainstream Schools

All local authorities must have an Accessibility Strategy¹⁵ for the schools it is responsible for such as LA maintained schools. This is a requirement of law outlined in the Equalities Act 2010. The overall aim of the Accessibility Strategy is to ensure that WCC supports schools in meeting the needs of disabled pupils and raising their attainment. The purpose of the strategy is to ensure that accessibility of the curriculum, the physical environment and information for disabled pupils is central to the delivery of services. The strategy aims to provide information and a framework to help schools create individual accessibility plans. Schools should take account of WCC accessibility strategy when drawing up their own school accessibility plans.

Schools must make reasonable adjustments and access arrangements, including the provision of aids and services, to ensure that disabled pupils are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers. This duty is anticipatory – it requires thought to be given in advance to what disabled pupils might require and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent that disadvantage and ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010.

¹⁵ [Support for children and young people with disabilities and medical difficulties | Worcestershire County Council](#)

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

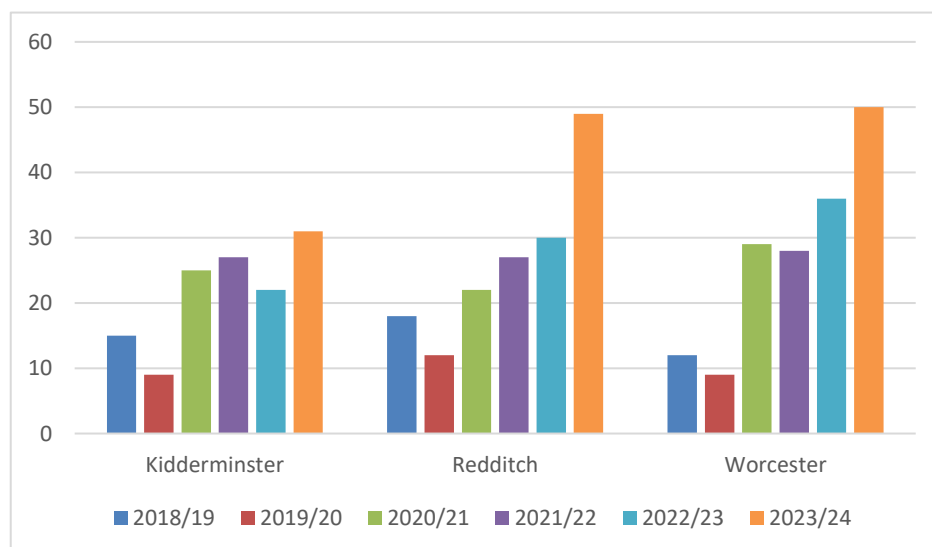
The accessibility of all mainstream schools in Worcestershire is kept under review either when considering placements for individual pupils, when S106 funding is available to improve provision or when other works are planned at schools. All schools are graded depending on how accessible they are for pupils to access the curriculum and support accommodation. This information is recorded in the 'Mainstream School Accessibility Matrix' document, which parents/carers can access via the 'Information for Parents Books' on the School Admissions webpages.¹⁶

5.8 Medical Education Provision (MET)

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

There are a variety of pathways for children who do not or cannot attend school for a period of more than 15 days, one of which is referral to the Medical Education Team. During the academic year of 2023-2024, the team provided education to 130 pupils of all ages on 3 sites: Lea Street in Kidderminster, Easemore Road in Redditch and Newbridge in Worcester.

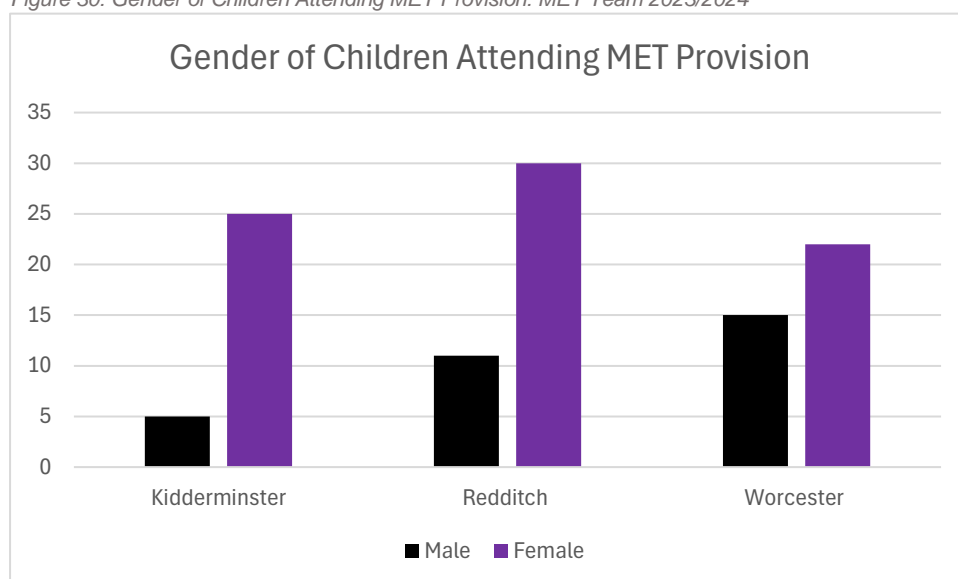
Figure 29: Number of Pupils Attending MET Provision Per Academic Year



¹⁶[Information for Parents Book - School Admissions 2022 - 23](#)

Figure 29 shows the number of children who attended one of the 3 base provisions since academic year 2018/19. During 2023/24, 130 children accessed MET provision at some point - this is an increase on the previous years.

Figure 30: Gender of Children Attending MET Provision: MET Team 2023/2024



More girls that attended MET provision in 2023/24 across all three locations, this is consistent with the last 10-11 years of data. 71.3% of children accessing MET provision are female.

Just 10.2% of children that accessed one of the three MET provisions in 2023/24 had an EHCP.

5.9 Special Schools

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

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

One of the schools (Chadsgrove) has on-site provision for nursery age children, with two (Vale of Evesham and Wyre Forest) providing outreach support, in addition to a further nursery assessment unit at Batchley First School in Redditch.

Figure 31: Worcestershire Special Schools List

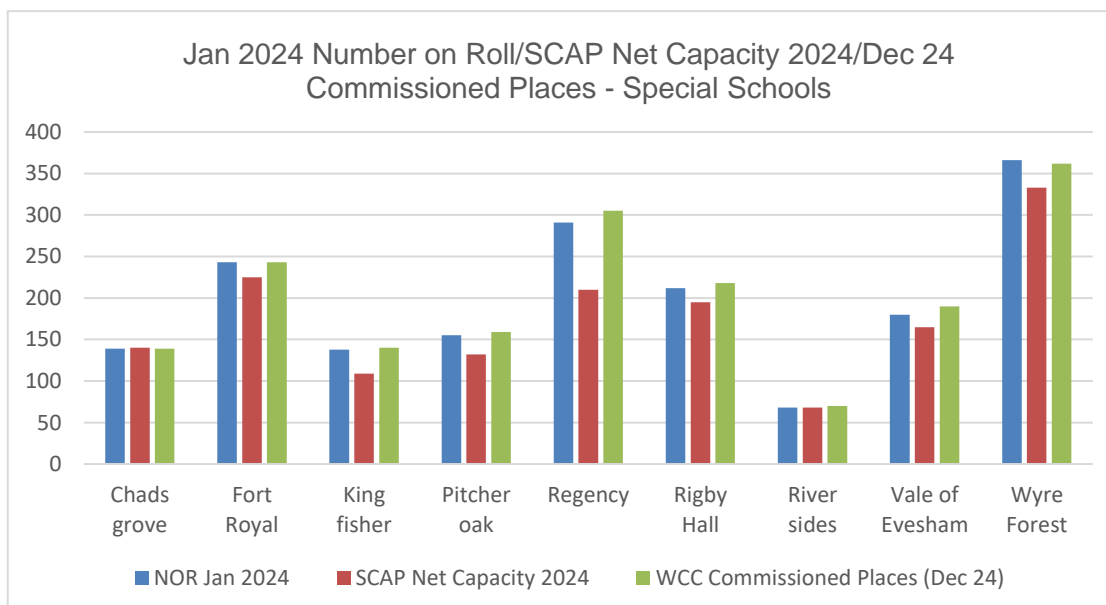
District	Special School	Age Range	Type	Designation
Bromsgrove	Chadsgrove School	2-19	Local Authority	Physical Disability
Bromsgrove	Rigby Hall School	4-19	Local Authority	Generic
Redditch	Pitcheroak School	4-19	Academy	Generic
Redditch	The Kingfisher School	7-19	Academy	SEMH
Worcester City	Fort Royal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

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

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

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

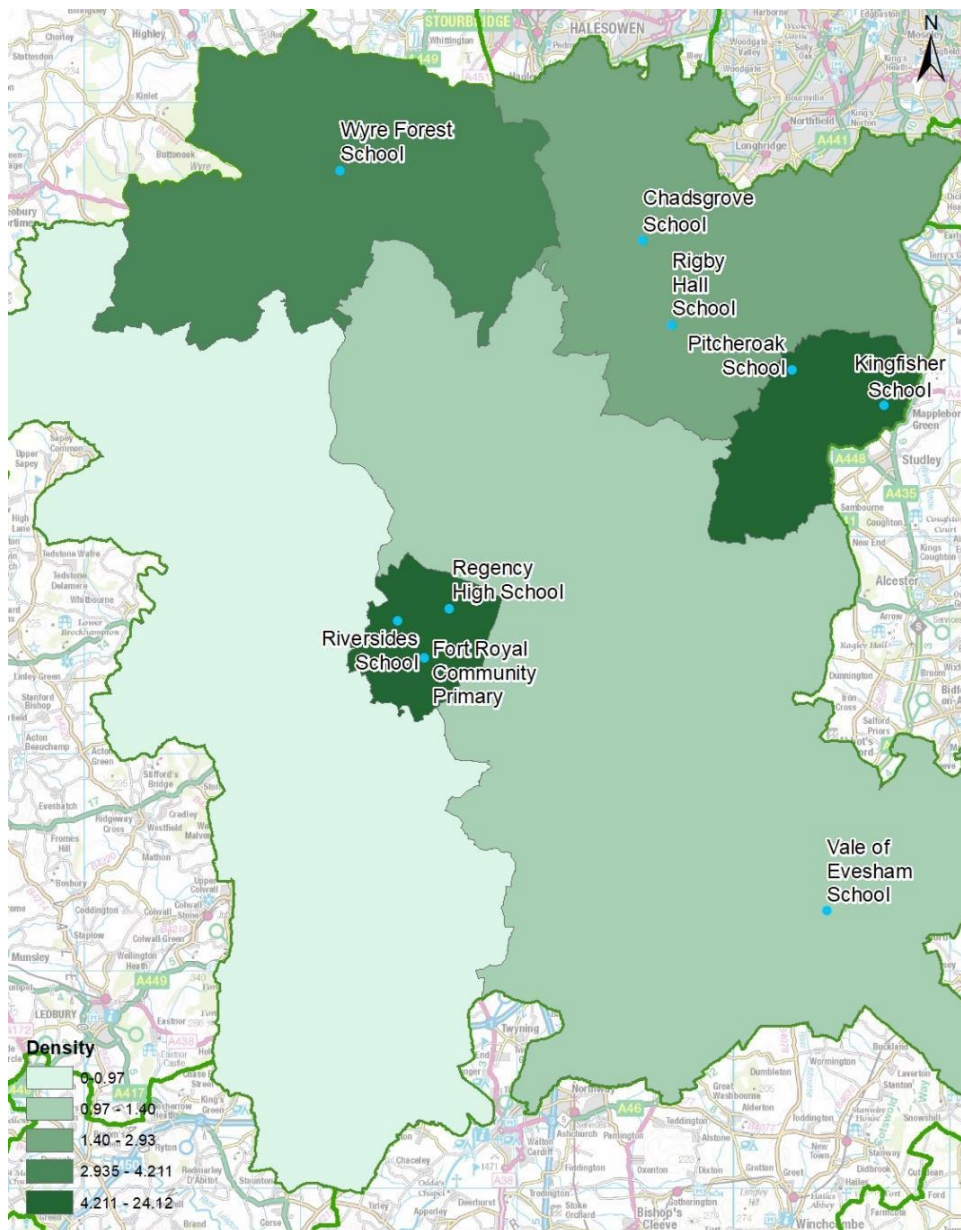
Figure 32: Jan 2024 Number on Roll, SCAP Net Capacity 2024, December 2024 Commissioned Places for Special Schools



	Chads grove	Fort Royal	King fisher	Pitcher oak	Regency	Rigby Hall	River sides	Vale of Evesham	Wyre Forest
NOR Jan 2024	139	243	138	155	291	212	68	180	366
SCAP Net Capacity 2024	140	225	109	132	210	195	68	165	333
WCC Commissioned Places (Sept 23)	139	243	140	159	305	218	70	190	362

Figure 32 shows the differences between January 2024 Census number on roll and the June 2024 SCAP Net Capacity which had been carried out as a requirement for the DfE for the first time in Summer 2023. Six out of the nine special schools have more commissioned places and higher numbers on roll than their Net Capacity Assessments.

Map 7: Locations of Worcestershire's 9 State-Funded Special Schools

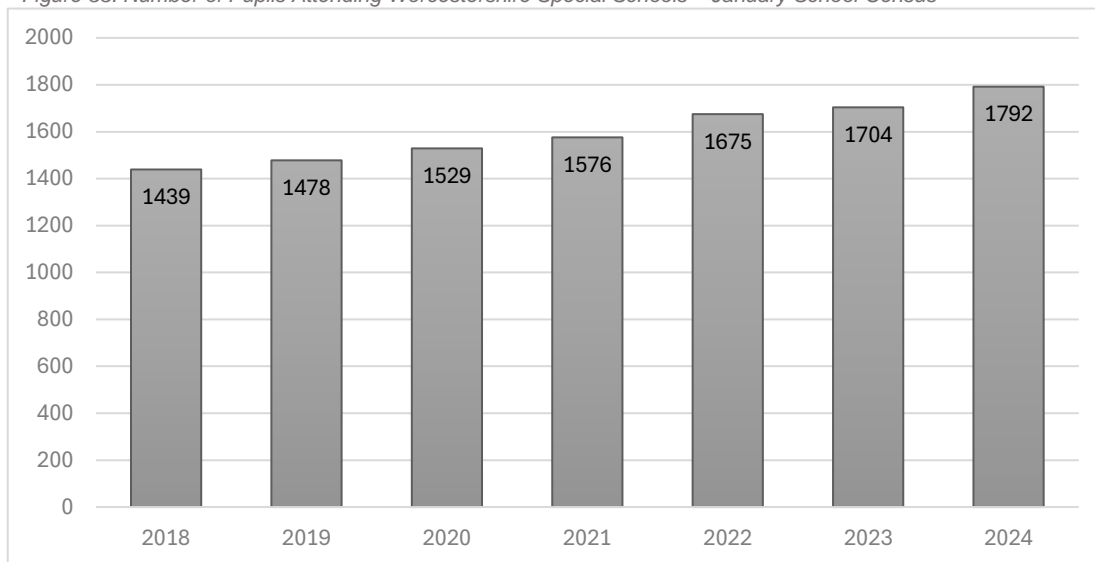


Scale: 1:500,000

Map 7 shows that most of the special schools are in the north of the county, and there are currently no state-funded special schools in the district of Malvern Hills. However, following the successful DfE bid application for a new special free school specialising in Autism, Malvern Hills will have Special school provision from September 2027.

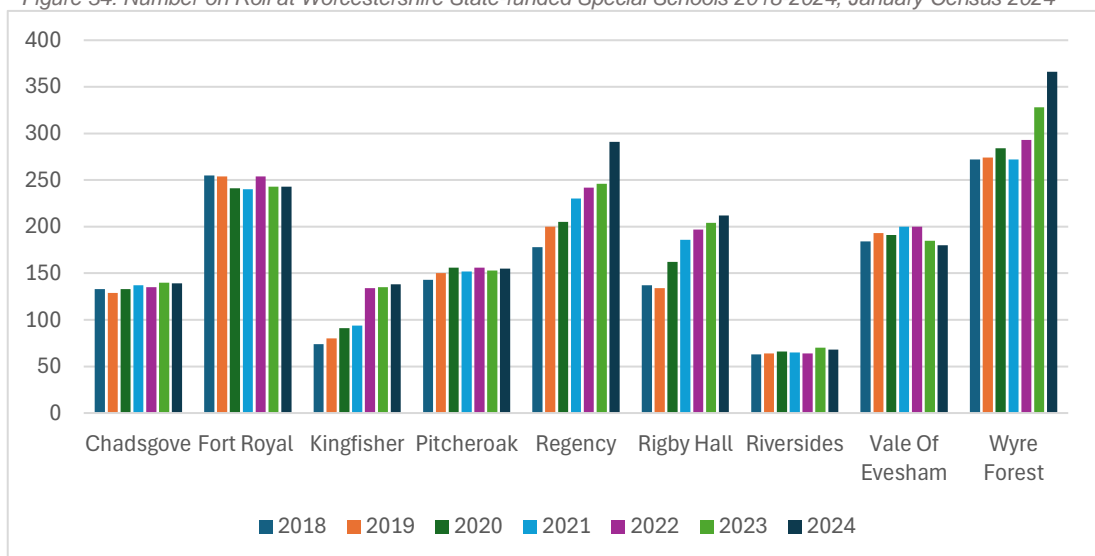
Of the 5,945 children and young people in Worcestershire with an EHCP, 1,738 (29%) are recorded to be attending one of the 9 Worcestershire state-funded special Schools.

Figure 33: Number of Pupils Attending Worcestershire Special Schools – January School Census



Year-on-year, special schools have increased class sizes or expanded provision to accommodate more pupils. Since 2018 the number of children attending Worcestershire special schools has increased from 1439 in 2018 to 1792 in 2024, an increase of 353 pupils. Worcestershire County Council has invested grant funding received from the DfE including Special Provision Capital funding and High Needs Provision Capital funding to create additional places where possible.

Figure 34: Number on Roll at Worcestershire State-funded Special Schools 2018-2024, January Census 2024



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

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

The cessation of on-site Nursery provision at Fort Royal and Vale of Evesham (September 2023) and Wyre Forest (September 2024) has been necessary, due to the increasing demand for Special School Reception places.

In 2024, WCC consulted with all Special Schools, to review existing accommodation and determine the optimum size of each school in order for them to be sustainable and sufficient to meet the needs of the school community. Discussions were also held about the changes that would be required to reach this optimum size, and whether these changes are achievable. Following these discussions, WCC commissioned detailed feasibility studies at Regency High School and Wyre Forest Schools, to explore options for improving/expanding teaching space. In Autumn Term 2024, work has commenced at Regency High to extend existing office space to create one new classroom and additional storage space. This work will be completed in Spring Term 2025, whilst WCC has approved a scheme to create 4 new, permanent classrooms to replace the existing mobile classrooms, with this work anticipated to start in Summer Term 2025. At Wyre Forest, mobile classrooms currently sited at St. John’s Primary School will be relocated to Wyre Forest, to provide a temporary solution from Spring Term 2025 whilst a number of options that will create permanent teaching spaces are developed.

5.10 Independent Special Schools and Out-of-County Provision

Figure 35: Children Attending Out-of-County Provision by Establishment Type, SEN2

Establishment Type	Number of Children with EHCPs Attending
Mainstream	101
Independent	30
Special	100
Independent Special	114
FE	115
Special FE	93
AP/PRU	1
Total	554

Independent Special schools can provide places for pupils with very specific and often complex needs, meaning that in some instances children will be placed in schools that are out of the

county. Independent provision is not recorded on the January School Census as they are not Worcestershire LA-funded schools, however the EHCP remains the responsibility of the Worcestershire LA, the child's place of residence. The SEN2 data shows all children that live in Worcestershire with an EHCP and therefore includes attendance at independent provision, including out of county establishments.

The SEN2 data for 2024 shows that 397 children and young people with EHCPs were attending independent Special schools (this includes state funded special schools and specialist independent schools). The five schools with the highest numbers of Worcestershire children attending are: Norton College, Bridge School Malvern, Cambian New Elizabethan School, Bankside College Malvern and Gloverspiece. Children attending these schools make up 50.9% of the total.

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

43.3 % of children attending independent Specialist provision have an EHCP with the primary need of SEMH. This is followed by 33.5% with ASD. The new special Autism free school provision anticipated to be opened in September 2027 will aim to reduce the numbers of children attending independent specialist provision with an EHCP and primary need of Autism.

However, this data also suggests that more state-funded provision is needed to provide for children with an EHCP and primary need of SEMH in order to reduce the numbers of children attending independent specialist provision. This would in turn, significantly reduce the costs of independent provision for the Local Authority. The largest percentage of pupils awaiting specialist provision are those with a primary need of SEMH. Details of how WCC are developing additional SEMH provision are in section 5.13 of this report.

The largest cohort of children with an EHCP attending out-of-county provision are within the post-16 provision. 55.4% of children attending out-of-county provision are attending specialist settings. The majority attending out of county are male (67%).

Figure 36 shows the primary need of these children as:

Figure 36: Children with Known Primary Need, SEN2

Establishment Type	ASD	Physical/Sensory	Cognitive	Other²²	SEMH	Speech and Language
Mainstream	17	10	20	5	25	24
Independent	2	1	8	3	10	6
Special	27	14	33	5	6	15
Independent Special	33	2	17	4	45	13
FE	31	6	28	1	23	26
Specialist FE	22	23	28	2	3	15
AP/PRU	0	0	0	0	1	0
Total	132	56	134	20	113	99

24% of children with an EHCP attending out-of-county provision have either ASD or Cognitive needs (MLD/SLD/SpLD/PMLD). For both these cohorts, the largest cohort are Post 16 students attending FE/specialist FE provision.

This data highlights an insufficiency in post-16 provision within the county as this is the largest cohort to be attending out of county provision – particularly for those with ASD or Cognitive needs. Details of how WCC are developing additional post 16 SEND provision are in section 5.13 of this report.

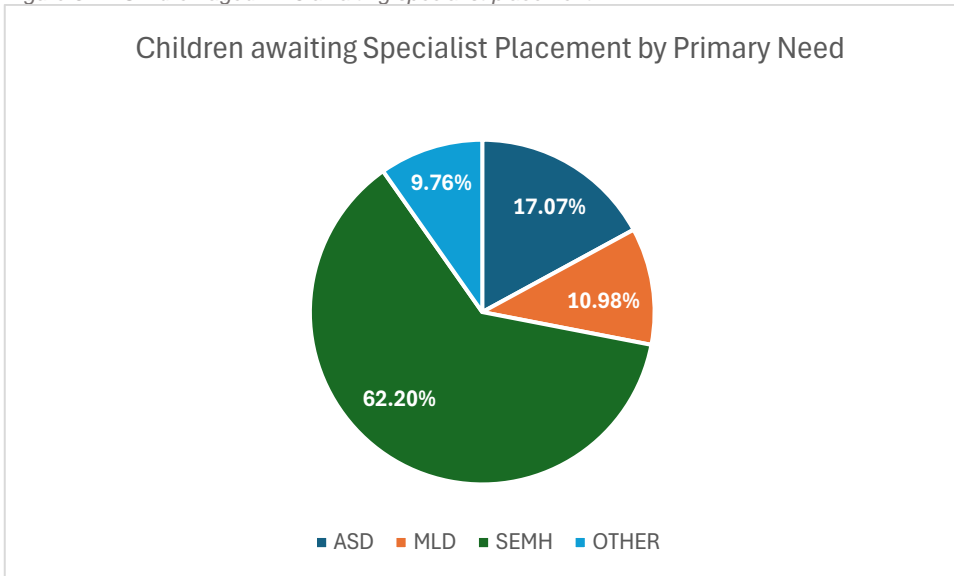
Of the pupils traveling out of county, Alderman Knight (Tewkesbury) has the highest intake of Worcestershire children with an EHCP. 38.7% of those attending have a primary need of ASD, followed by MLD at 35.4%.

5.11 Children Waiting Specialist Placements

As of December 2024, there were 96 Worcestershire children and young people awaiting a specialist placement (aged 4-25), these children and young people are currently in Interim Alternative Provision, Home educated, or we currently do not have a named setting for them. 85.4% of these are children aged 4-16 years and the remaining 14.6% are post-16.

Figure 37 below shows the breakdown of the primary needs of these children awaiting specialist placement:

Figure 37 – Children aged 4-16 awaiting specialist placement.



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

There are three key types of specialist provision that children currently awaiting placement require to meet their needs: ASD Special (17.7%), MLD Special (10.98%) and SEMH Special (62.2%). Again, this highlights the need to ensure Worcestershire has sufficient provision to meet the needs of children with these primary needs, particularly children with SEMH needs. Details of how WCC are developing additional SEMH provision are in section 5.13 of this report.

5.12 Post-16 Specialist Provision

Most Specialist post-16 provision is not recorded as part of the January school census, apart from sixth form provision run by a school. Seven of the state-funded special schools listed above offer post-16 provisions (NCY12-13) and a few young people stay on past this age (NCY14). Using the SEN2 data 2024, 1066 16–25-year-old young people with EHCPs in the academic year 2023/24 attended further education establishments with 11.25% in Specialist Post-16 Institutions.

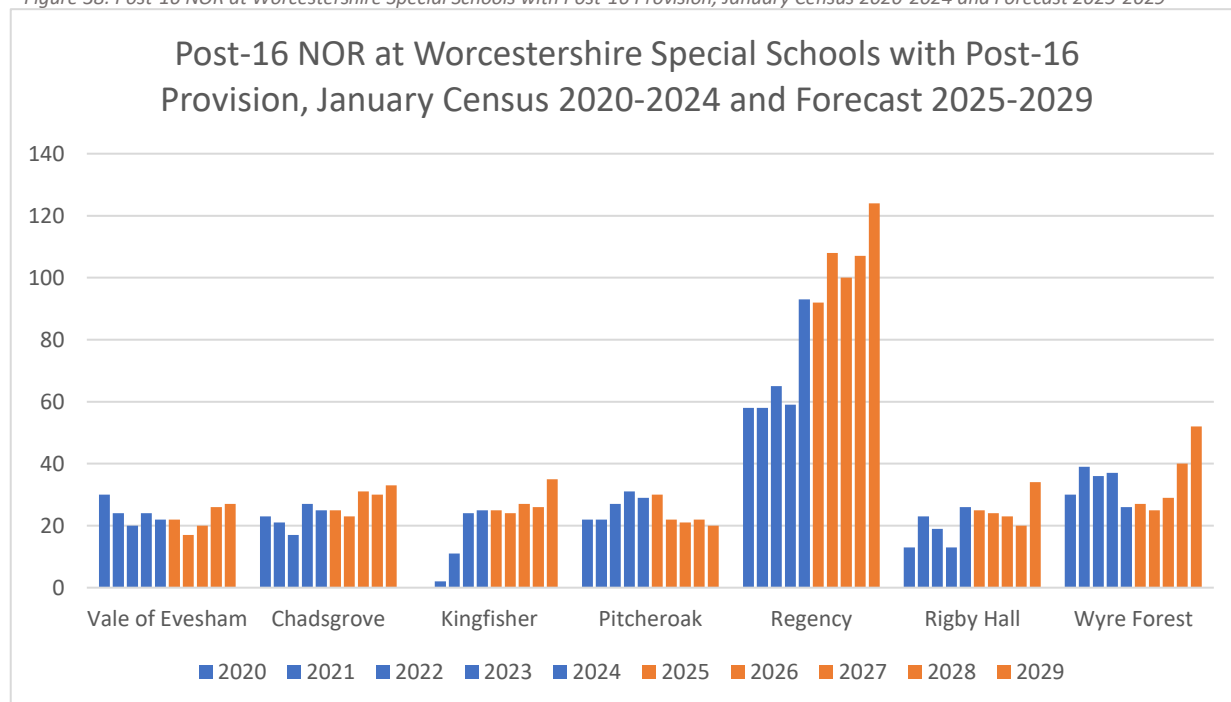
Since the SEN reforms in 2014, 19- to 25-year-olds with EHCPs should have free access to further education in the same way as 16-18 year-olds have. This provides a further 6 years beyond sixth form, to achieve agreed outcomes and to help the young person prepare for adulthood, planning that should start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

384 young people aged 20 to 25 with an EHCP living in Worcestershire have continued with further education. As the number of young people with EHCPs grow, there could be an increase in the number of post-16 young people needing specialist FE provision. However, there are a small number of young people between 16 and 25 who stop attending education, many for the reason of starting in employment.

The number of EHCPs within the post-16 cohort is forecasted to continue to rise from its current level of 1,540 in 2024 to 2,595 by 2029.

The table below shows the forecast for post-16 (Years 12 – 14) student numbers on roll at Worcestershire special schools if the existing previous five-year trends continue:

Figure 38: Post-16 NOR at Worcestershire Special Schools with Post-16 Provision, January Census 2020-2024 and Forecast 2025-2029



6 of the 7 schools that have post-16 provision are forecasted to have their highest number on roll by 2029.

78% of young people aged 20-25 with an EHCP attend mainstream FE colleges, such as Heart of Worcestershire (HOW), Warwickshire College Group or Kidderminster College. This year's data shows that 22% of young people in this age group attend specialist independent post-16 institutions such as National Star College (Gloucestershire), Queen Alexandra College (Birmingham), Mencap, Glasshouse College (Stourbridge) and Chadsgrove Educational Trust (Bromsgrove).

In 2021/2022, £1.5m of the High Needs Capital allocation from the DfE was allocated for the development of additional Post 16 SEND Provision in the county and projects were developed by the Warwickshire College Group (Pershore Campus), Heart of Worcestershire (HoW) College and Kidderminster College.

HoW College have worked with National Star College, an independent specialist FE college based in Gloucestershire, to establish new post-16 specialist provision at HoW's St Wulstan's Building, Worcester. Students will enrol as HoW College learners, with National Star College tutors, therapists, and care staff delivering the learning, bringing National Star's expertise to local learners with SEND. Five young adults will start at the provision in September 2024, with the expectation that this number will increase with capacity for approximately 12 learners.

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

5.13 Travel to Specialist Provision

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

Figure 39: Travel Distance for Children with EHCP by Setting Type – SEN2

Distance Band	Mainstream (inc. AP/PRU)	Mainstream Independent	Mainstream FE	Special	Independent Special	Specialist FE	Totals
<2km	1191	8	102	402	15	1	1,719
2-5km	523	12	141	533	38	0	1,247
5-10km	236	20	128	276	58	10	732
10-15km	102	23	45	315	73	17	577
15-20km	62	20	71	102	63	10	328
>20km	58	39	445	211	164	80	997
Totals	2172	122	932	1839	411	118	5,600

There are similar numbers of pupils with EHCPs attending specialist and mainstream provision, with the majority traveling 0-5km. However, there are a large number of children having to travel over 10km to attend their specialist provision. Of the independent special cohort, 39.9% are having to travel over 20km to attend the relevant provision.

The number of young people at specialist further education settings are relatively low, however, the majority are travelling longer distances of 20km or more to access their education provision.

The table below breaks this pattern down by Primary Need

Figure 40: Travel Distance for Children with EHCPs by Primary Need – SEN2

Distance Band	ASD	Cognition	Speech	Sensory/ Physical	SEMH	Other ²³	Total
<2km	294	420	537	88	317	63	1719
2-5km	253	352	364	59	191	28	1247
5-10km	169	183	182	48	121	29	732
10-15km	118	160	133	49	109	8	577
15-20km	95	72	65	22	70	4	328
>20km	228	247	178	57	266	21	997
Total	1157	1434	1459	323	1074	153	5600

Figure 40 shows there are high numbers for children with ASD, Cognition, Speech and SEMH primary needs that are having to travel over 20km to attend their required provision. 153 children and young people have the primary need of 'Other', with a range of complex needs.

Figure 41: Travel Distances for Children with EHCPs Attending Special Schools by Worcestershire District (Home Address) – SEN2

Distance Band	Bromsgrove	Malvern Hills	Redditch	Worcester	Wychavon	Wyre Forest	Out of County
<2km	12%	0%	15%	33%	14%	28%	6%
2-5km	29%	8%	36%	39%	11%	29%	3%
5-10km	18%	14%	16%	7%	24%	10%	6%
10-15km	23%	48%	14%	3%	24%	4%	9%
15-20km	8%	9%	3%	4%	10%	10%	6%
>20km	11%	20%	15%	14%	17%	18%	69%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Figure 41 above shows only the travel distances across the districts to state-funded and independent special schools. It shows that children residing in the district of Wychavon are travelling greater distances (more than 10km) to a special school than children living in other districts.

6. Combined Special School Forecast

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

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

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

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

In 2024 Worcestershire's statistical neighbour authorities placed between 29% and 46% of children with EHCPs in LA maintained special schools. Worcestershire ranks fourth out of ten statistical neighbours, placing 30.9% of pupils in this type of provision. Nationally, 27.1% of children with an EHCP were placed in a maintained special school.

Worcestershire placed 6.9% of pupils in independent special schools. This is ranked fourth out of ten amongst statistical neighbours.

To aid in this year's forecasting, the forecast uses either the known September 2024 number on roll as provided by the individual special school, or the most recent indicative number on roll for September 2024 if the exact number has not been provided. The next 5 years are forecast using a combination of historical numbers on roll, mainstream forecasts, and transfer rates.

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

Figure 42: Combined Special School Forecast R – Year 14

	Chadsgrove	Rigby Hall	Pitcheroak	Kingfisher	Fort Royal	Regency High	Riversides	Vale of Evesham	Wyre Forest	TOTAL
2025	133	227	157	142	248	305	68	180	399	3884
2026	131	240	151	146	257	317	64	182	422	3936
2027	133	252	152	151	274	299	67	181	438	3974
2028	135	263	152	155	284	304	68	187	470	4046
2029	135	276	154	158	287	308	71	187	497	4102

This forecasts that numbers across all schools apart from three are expected to be at their highest by 2029 as the population grows in Worcestershire, therefore, the demand for special school places is expected to continue to rise. There is forecast to be a significant rise for Rigby Hall (Bromsgrove), Fort Royal (Worcester) and Wyre Forest.

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

Figure 43: Worcestershire Special Schools October 2024 NOR and SCAP Net Capacity Figures

School	Jan 2024 NOR	SCAP Net Capacity
Chadsgrove	139	142
Rigby Hall	212	195
Pitcheroak	155	132
Kingfisher	138	114
Fort Royal	243	225
Regency High	291	210
Riversides	68	68
Vale of Evesham	180	181
Wyre Forest	366	333

Figure 43 details the Net Capacity of each special school, following the DfE guidance for assessment and the most up-to-date plans available for each school. Using the Numbers on Roll (NOR) from January 2024, this shows they all have more pupils on roll that the Net Capacity except for Chadsgrove. It is understood to be a national issue and not specific to Worcestershire, that most special schools have increased the number of pupils per class and therefore will have lower net capacity assessments than NOR.

For September 2023, the capacities at Fort Royal, Regency, Rigby Hall and Wyre Forest Schools were able to be increased by the use of mobile classrooms, remodeling or repurposing of existing accommodation.

Desktop feasibilities have been completed at Pitcheroak, Fort Royal and the Vale of Evesham that have determined that, due to the size of the school sites, no further expansion of provision is possible. There may be opportunities at Pitcheroak and Vale of Evesham, working in conjunction with adjoining school sites, to investigate options further. At Fort Royal, the cessation of Nursery provision and an agreed cap on Reception admissions from September 2025 onwards will allow the school to maintain a number on roll that can be adequately accommodated in the existing building.

Feasibility studies at Regency and Wyre Forest have focused on works that can be carried out to create additional teaching spaces, which will allow the schools to maintain their current numbers but not necessarily create additional places.

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

This report details that there is significant demand for SEMH provision to meet children and young people's needs. Riversides SEMH Special School operates from two sites in Worcester City (Thorneloe Road and City Walls Road). Thorneloe Road was previously a Design & Technology block of an FE college and has limited outdoor space. The school is commissioned for 68 FTE places, the age range of pupils attending Riversides are 7 – 16 years. The school site is limited in terms of internal and external space, and the suitability of the site to meet the needs of the pupils. Kingfisher SEMH Special School in Redditch, expanded age range and size, increasing in September 2022 to 140 commissioned places for 7 – 19-year-olds.

Ahead of September 2025, the Sufficiency and Place Planning Team and SEND Officers are reviewing the forecast demand for all special school places. Intake points and phase transfer points are being considered alongside children and young people awaiting specialist provision. Worcester County Council are meeting with each school / Academy Trust to review forecast numbers compared with available places at each school. Options will be considered where additional places are required, including temporary accommodation to mitigate demand. Options including further Resourced provision / SEN Units on mainstream school sites, will also be considered to meet the needs of children with SEND. We are also working with one of our Special Schools and a Multi-Agency Trust to explore the possibility of opening Satellite Special School provision from September 2025.

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

7. Factors Affecting Demand for Provision

There are a number of factors that affect the demand for specialist provision. Parental preference means that 'parents or young people have a legal right to request that a particular school or college is named in an EHCP (or to express a preference for an independent school, college or other institution)¹⁷. Parental preference for a school may not be the most local school that can meet the child's needs.

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

New housing developments will also have an impact on demand for provision to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and a need for additional specialist provision. Worcestershire is seeing a significant level of new housing either being built or planned as the popularity of the county grows. Since 2019, Worcestershire County Council Education Planning Obligations Policy¹⁸ ('section 106 policy'), which is approved by Cabinet, requests a contribution from housing developers to fund the additional SEND provision that will be required in mitigation of the impact of the new housing. Current policy contributions are requested for SEND on developments of 50 dwellings or more and for school aged children only. The published SEND Pupil Product Ratio (PPR) is based on the average percentage of pupils in Worcestershire with an Education Health & Care plan over the last 5 years (2017 – 2021), which is 3%, with the building cost multiplier as per Government guidance. The Policy has been updated to reflect the changing demand for SEND provision in Worcestershire and will be presented to Cabinet in February 2025. Contributions may be spent on increasing provision to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND at mainstream schools or special schools. The Policy will be updated annually to reflect the increasing percentage of children with SEND.

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

¹⁷ [Choosing a school/college with an EHC plan | \(IPSEA\) Independent Provider of Special Education Advice](#)

¹⁸ <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/planning-and-developments/planning-policy-and-strategy/school-planning-obligations>

8. Conclusion

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

WCC's ambition for all children is a sustainable school placement in their community and for them to receive a good education. To achieve this, a variety of provision is needed to support each individual's unique SEND and to enable them to reach their potential.

The percentage of children identified with special educational need and disabilities has increased over the last 10 years in Worcestershire. This is likely to continue to increase year-on-year as a percentage of the total population, following continual advancement in identification and diagnoses.

This has meant that our reliance on providers who are able to quickly adapt to meet the needs of pupils with SEND has increased, including state-funded special schools, Specialist FE as well as specialist independent schools which are currently supporting 2,371 children and young people with EHCPs in Worcestershire.

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

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

Changes have been made in Worcestershire to provide more places for children with SEND.

WCC are working with our existing MABs/EMABs to determine whether the number of places can be increased, with feasibility studies commissioned at three of the settings to review physical alterations that can be carried out to the accommodation to allow expansion. In addition, we are consulting county-wide with schools and Multi-Academy Trusts and have invited expressions of interest in establishing mainstream SEN Units or Resourced Provision for primary age children that require enhanced mainstream support. A SEN Unit at Honeywell Primary School (Mercian Educational Trust) opened in September 2024, offering 10 places for children with a primary SEND need of SLCN.

One of our Special Schools, working with a local multi-Agency Trust, is developing a proposal to establish Satellite Special School provision within a mainstream secondary school, initially for a KS4 cohort, to commence from September 2025. The pupils will be on the roll of the Special School and be taught by their staff following their curriculum but will be based in surplus accommodation in the mainstream school. We are supporting the school and the trust in this process and pursuing options to develop Satellite Special School provision in other mainstream schools across the county.

Since 2018, the number of young people aged 16-19 years in Worcestershire who have an EHCP has increased by 60%, whilst the number aged 20-24 years has increased by 211%. A significant proportion of this cohort attend independent specialist FE provision that is located outside Worcestershire. WCC is therefore working with a number of existing providers

to develop a better offer, and increased choice, for young people aged 16-25 within Worcestershire.

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

9. Overview of Recommended Actions

The SEND Specialist Provision Plan 2024/25 is currently being updated to detail the areas of demand and actions being taken to investigate options to meet demand. The following summarises the schemes and provision being progressed to deliver additional / enhanced specialist provision with the capital funding available. Additional funding, in excess of the current and forecast grant funding, to deliver the sufficiency of education provision will be required over the next 2 – 3 years.

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

Approved schemes	Issue	School / College / setting	Indicative Delivery Year
Increase Special School places, Worcester	School is currently at capacity and forecast to require additional places. Temporary mobile classrooms to be replaced with permanent accommodation.	Regency High School, Worcester	2025
Increase Special School places, Wyre Forest.	School is currently at capacity and forecast to require additional places. Need to create permanent, additional teaching space, likely to require temporary accommodation in the first instance.	Wyre Forest School, Kidderminster.	2025
Medical Education Provision, Worcester	Current accommodation is not sufficient. Investigating options for alternative accommodation in Worcester City.	MEP, Newbridge, Worcester.	2025
Medical Education Provision, Wyre Forest	Current accommodation is unsuitable/not sufficient. Investigating options for alternative accommodation in Wyre Forest.	MEP, Lea Street, Kidderminster	2025/ 26

Improve accommodation at Mainstream Autism Bases (MAB)	Improve accommodation and increase places by creating separate First and Middle School MABs.	Meadows First/Parkside Middle Schools, Bromsgrove	2025
Improve accommodation at MAB	Change of age range from Middle School MAB to Primary age-range MAB. Increase number of places to 18.	Abbey Park Middle School	2025
Improve accommodation at MAB	Improve accommodation and increase places.	Beaconside Primary School, Rubery	2025
Enhanced Early Provision	Create new enhanced early years provision for pre-school age children who are unable to access their full NEF entitlement due to their complex SEND needs.	Bluebell Wood Children's Centre, Worcester and WANDS Children's Centre, Droitwich.	2025
Enhanced Early Years Provision	Create new enhanced early years provision for pre-school age children who are unable to access their full NEF entitlement due to their complex SEND needs.	Evesham / Pershore Bromsgrove Redditch Wyre Forest	2025/2026
Post- 16 SEND Provision	Create additional Further Education options for young people aged 16+ with SEND.	Kidderminster College	2025
Post-19 SEND Provision	Create additional Post-19 Places for Worcestershire young people with SEND.	Chadsgrove Educational Trust Specialist College	2025
New ASD Special School	Support the Department for Education to delivery the new Special Free School for pupils with a primary need of ASD.	Enterprise Academy, Poolbrook Malvern.	2027

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

Approved schemes	Issue	Location	Delivery Year
Create Primary age Resourced provision / SEN Units	Insufficiency of provision	Countywide	2025/26
Increase places in Generic Special Schools for 4 – 16-year-olds	Insufficiency of provision	Countywide	2026/27
Increase and improve SEMH Special School provision	Insufficiency of provision and lack of suitable provision	South of the County	2026/27
SEN Units for Secondary SEMH	Insufficiency of provision	Countywide	2026/27