



Department
for Education

Free school bid form

For local authorities seeking to establish new special or alternative provision free schools

Published: July 2018

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The bid form explained

This free school bid form is for local authorities seeking to establish new special or alternative provision (AP) free schools.

Local authorities (either as a lead or sole bidder) can submit a bid for one special and one AP school in total in their area. Given the limited number of new schools we will create in this wave, it is highly unlikely that we will approve more than one school in any one local authority area. In the most exceptional of circumstances where you plan to make the case for two new schools in your area, you will need to complete a separate bid form for each school, although you should cross-reference where appropriate.

The overview section on the second tab asks for information about the number of bids you are submitting (i.e. one or two), the priority of each bid (if you are submitting two), what (if any) other bids you are supporting, and your expected future need for new special and AP schools (and when they are needed). If you are submitting two bids, you only need to complete the overview page on one form.

If your bid is successful, the opportunity will be advertised nationally, and if a strong proposal comes forward, the new school will be delivered and funded as part of the department's central free schools programme.

Before completing your bid, please ensure that you have read the ['guidance and criteria for local authorities seeking to establish new special or alternative provision free schools'](#) carefully, as this sets out the criteria by which your bid will be judged. Please provide all the information required.

The form should be completed by a local authority representative (or representatives, if it is a joint bid) with the approval of the Director(s) of Children's Services (DCS).

This bid form consists of 14 tabs in total (including this one). Please ensure you read all tabs carefully. You must complete the following tabs in full: overview, confirmation, A1, A2, B, C1, C2, C3, C4 and D. You will also need to complete tab 'A2 continued' if applicable and either tab 'Table C1i' or tab 'Table C1ii' depending on whether your bid is for a special or an AP free school.

Completed bid forms, specifications, and any supporting documentation (e.g. site plans, letters from commissioners)

should be submitted by midday on 15 October 2018. Submit your bid by email to:

APspecial.freeschool@education.gov.uk. Please title your email as follows: **Special/AP free school bid – [insert name of local authority (or lead local authority if joint bid)]**. Your email should not exceed 9 megabytes in size; anything

larger will not be delivered. **If the bid is larger than 9 megabytes**, please split the documents and send two (or more) emails clearly indicating that the emails are connected (e.g. email 1 of 3).

Free school bid forms should:

- maintain the pre-set printing format;
- not include any comments; and
- not include photographs, images or logos.

This opportunity **does not replace the [presumption](#) process and does not replace a local authority's sufficiency duties.**

Annex A of the [guidance](#) sets out how the information you provide will be used.

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1. This section must be completed.
2. If you are submitting more than one bid, you only need to complete this section once (on the form of your preferred bid).
3. Please refer to the 'guidance and criteria for local authorities seeking to establish new special or alternative provision free schools' for information about what to include in this section.
4. Please complete the form as provided, do not create any new fields. The text boxes can be made bigger by increasing the row height. To insert a new line in a text box, press alt + enter.

Overview

While local authorities (either as a lead or sole bidder) can submit a bid for one special and one AP school in total in their area, it is highly unlikely that we will approve more than one school in any one local authority area in this wave. However, we would like you to inform us of expected future need for new schools.

Overview table	
Name of your local authority	Oxfordshire
List the bid(s) you are submitting this wave, as either the lead or the sole local authority (including type of school e.g. special or AP) – please list these in priority order so that the first is your preferred bid	1. Special School - SEMH / ASD 2. Not applicable – submitting 1 bid
List the bid(s), if any, that another local authority is leading on and that you are supporting (including the name of the lead local authority)	n/a
Optional: brief description of your expected future need for new special and AP schools, and when they are needed	Oxfordshire's SEND Sufficiency Strategy encompasses: new resource bases within mainstream schools; expansion of existing special schools; and two new special schools focused on Social, Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH) needs and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The first of these will be Bloxham Grove in north Oxfordshire, due to open 2020. The second, which is the subject of this bid, will be located in Valley Park, Didcot in south Oxfordshire. Oxfordshire has also identified a need for more Alternative Provision capacity. However, at this time we are not submitting a free school bid for an AP school, as further development work is necessary to precisely define the county's needs.



1. This section must be completed.
2. If you are submitting more than one bid, you must complete this section for each bid.
3. Please refer to the 'guidance and criteria for local authorities seeking to establish new special or alternative provision free schools' for information about what to include in this section.
4. Please complete the form as provided, do not create any new fields. The text boxes can be made bigger by increasing the row height. To insert a new line in a text box, press alt + enter.

Confirmation

This confirmation must be signed by the relevant Director(s) of Children's Services at the local authority(ies) putting forward this bid.

I am/we are the Director(s) of Children's services at **OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL** and I/we have seen this expression of interest and support it.



I/we confirm that the information provided in this bid form is correct to the best of my/our knowledge.

I/we further confirm that the local authority(ies) and, if applicable, other commissioners (e.g. local schools commissioning AP places) named in section A of this bid have developed this proposal in partnership and, if the bid is successful, will commit to commissioning the number of places at the school as specified in this bid, and to paying the relevant top-up funding (indicative funding specified in this bid, to be confirmed by the local authority(ies) if the bid is successful).

I/we also confirm that I am/we are aware of the financial consequences of the commissioning on our high needs budget(s).

In addition, I/we intend to commission places beyond the first two years, as per the proposed school growth profile (pupil/capacity build up).

NB: an electronic signature is acceptable. If multiple local authorities are submitting this bid, complete a signature box for each local authority.

Signed:	
Position:	Director of Children's Services at Oxfordshire County Council
Print name:	
Date:	15-Oct-18

Signed:

Position: Director of Children's Services at **[INSERT LOCAL AUTHORITY NAME]**

Print name:

Date:

Signed:

Position: Director of Children's Services at **[INSERT LOCAL AUTHORITY NAME]**

Print name:

Date:

Signed:

Position: Director of Children's Services at **[INSERT LOCAL AUTHORITY NAME]**

Print name:

Date:

Signed:

Position: Director of Children's Services at **[INSERT LOCAL AUTHORITY NAME]**

Print name:

Date:

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1. This section must be completed.
2. If you are submitting more than one bid, you must complete this section for each bid.
3. Please refer to the 'guidance and criteria for local authorities seeking to establish new special or alternative provision free schools' for information about what to include in this section.
4. Please complete the form as provided, do not create any new fields. The text boxes can be made bigger by increasing the row height. To insert a new line in a text box, press alt + enter.

Section A1 – local authority(ies) putting forward this bid

Please complete table A1. If this is a joint bid, information must be provided for each local authority involved and the lead local authority must be stated. **Please note that including a local authority on this list means they have committed to commissioning places.**

If you are the sole local authority submitting a bid (i.e. it is not a joint bid), then you must provide the reason why in box A1.

Table A1 - local authority(ies) putting forward this bid		
Name of local authority	Name of person leading	Contact details
Lead local authority: [select name of lead local authority in cell C30 below. This would be the local authority in which the school would be located]	<div style="background-color: black; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></div>	Telephone: Mobile: <div style="background-color: black; width: 50px; height: 15px;"></div> Email: <div style="background-color: black; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></div> Address: <div style="background-color: black; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></div>
Oxfordshire		
[If applicable, select name of second local authority in cell C36 below]		Telephone: Mobile: Email: Address:
[If applicable, select name of third local authority in cell C42 below]		Telephone: Mobile: Email: Address:
[If applicable, select name of fourth local authority in cell C48 below]		Telephone: Mobile: Email: Address:
[If applicable, select name of fifth local authority in cell C54 below]		Telephone: Mobile: Email: Address:

Box A1 - if you are submitting a solo bid, please explain why

Despite a significant increase in Oxfordshire's maintained special school places in recent years, the numbers of requests for specialist provision have risen more quickly and supply is not meeting demand. This is resulting in year-on-year increases in numbers of children funded from the High Needs block in independent and non-maintained special schools (INMSS), and has doubled the cost of INMSS placements since 2013, leading to ever-increasing overspends in the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block, estimated to be more than █████ in 2018/19. Oxfordshire's SEND sufficiency strategy has as a main aim to reduce reliance on the INMSS sector. In addition, Oxfordshire's population is growing quickly, as a result of Local Plans which intend to add 100,000 new homes to the county by 2031. We are therefore confident that we can fully commission the new school, and are submitting a solo bid. It is also noted that Oxfordshire is a large geographic area, and the proposed new school's location would be beyond a reasonable travel distance for most other authorities, and no other authority has yet committed to commissioning places. However, it may be the case that neighbouring authorities will occasionally identify this proposed school as suitable for one of their pupils.

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1. This section must be completed.
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4. Please complete the form as provided, do not create any new fields. The text boxes can be made bigger by increasing the row height. To insert a new line in a text box, press alt + enter.

Section A2 – evidence that the new school will be fully commissioned

You must complete table A2 on this tab, showing how many places you would use at the school for the first two years of the school's operation. If there are multiple commissioners, you also need to complete the larger table on tab 'Table A2 continued'.

In addition, if you are submitting a bid for a new AP free school, you must also:

- Attach commitments in writing from any commissioners other than local authorities (e.g. local schools) indicating their firm intention to commission a specific number of places in the first two years, including the top-up funding they will pay for the children occupying the places;
- Attach evidence that the commissioners have made an informed decision, for example, confirmation that commissioners have seen your bid, and are aware of the characteristics of the new school and the outcomes you want to achieve; and,
- Provide information in box A2 about the commissioning and funding model used in your area(s). To note, we will ask for further details about how you have engaged with the commissioners, and their level of involvement, later in section C3.

Box A2 - for AP schools only, please use this space to describe the commissioning and funding model(s)

n/a

Table A2 - evidence that the new school will be fully commissioned (to be completed for both special and AP schools)

Commissioner	Year of operation	Number of EY places	Number of KS1 places	Number of KS2 places	Number of KS3 places	Number of KS4 places	Number of 16-19 places
Oxfordshire County Council	First year of opening	0	0				
	Second year of opening	0	0				



1. *This table must be completed if there are multiple commissioners .*
2. *If you are submitting more than one bid, you must complete this section for each bid.*
3. *Please complete the form as provided, do not create any new fields. The text boxes can be made bigger by increasing the row height. To insert a new line in a text box, press alt + enter.*

Table A2 continued

You must complete table A2 on the previous tab, showing how many places you would use at the school for the first two years of the school's operation. If there are multiple commissioners, you also need to complete the table on this tab.

Table A2 continued - evidence that the new school will be fully commissioned (to be completed for both special and AP schools)							
Commissioner	Year of operation	Number of EY places	Number of KS1 places	Number of KS2 places	Number of KS3 places	Number of KS4 places	Number of 16-19 places
[NAME OF COMMISSIONER. COMPLETE A LINE FOR EACH COMMISSIONER]	First year of opening						
	Second year of opening						
[NAME OF COMMISSIONER. COMPLETE A LINE FOR EACH COMMISSIONER]	First year of opening						
	Second year of opening						
[NAME OF COMMISSIONER. COMPLETE A LINE FOR EACH COMMISSIONER]	First year of opening						
	Second year of opening						
[NAME OF COMMISSIONER. COMPLETE A LINE FOR EACH COMMISSIONER]	First year of opening						
	Second year of opening						
[NAME OF COMMISSIONER. COMPLETE A LINE FOR EACH COMMISSIONER]	First year of opening						
	Second year of opening						
[NAME OF COMMISSIONER. COMPLETE A LINE FOR EACH COMMISSIONER]	First year of opening						
	Second year of opening						
[NAME OF COMMISSIONER. COMPLETE A LINE FOR EACH COMMISSIONER]	First year of opening						
	Second year of opening						
[NAME OF COMMISSIONER. COMPLETE A LINE FOR EACH COMMISSIONER]	First year of opening						
	Second year of opening						
[NAME OF COMMISSIONER. COMPLETE A LINE FOR EACH COMMISSIONER]	First year of opening						
	Second year of opening						



1. This section must be completed.
2. If you are submitting more than one bid, you must complete this section for each bid.
3. Please refer to the 'guidance and criteria for local authorities seeking to establish new special or alternative provision free schools' for information about what to include in this section.
4. Please complete the form as provided, do not create any new fields. The text boxes can be made bigger by increasing the row height. To insert a new line in a text box, press alt + enter.

Section B – what type of school is wanted

There are no assessment criteria for section B. Please provide key information about the school you would like to commission in table Bi. Additionally, please set out the expected pupil build up (how the school would fill year-on-year once it opens) in table Bii.

Table Bi - what type of school is wanted	
Type of school	Special free school
Category of provision/needs (if more than one type, with different top-up rates, please explain)	SEMH & ASD
Age range	7 to 19
Per-pupil revenue funding you would expect to pay (if a range of rates, please explain)	Oxfordshire's current funding model is ██████████ per place at special schools, but this is under review and we expect to move to a top-up model with funding moving with the child.
Gender (co-educational/boys/girls)	Co-educational
Total number of proposed full time equivalent places (once school is at full capacity - including 16-19 places, but not including nursery places)	100
Type of places offered (e.g. full time, short term, part time)	Full time
Number of nursery places, if applicable	n/a
Number of 16-19 places, if applicable	30
Describe any planned outreach, training and/or reintegration support (including details of funding that will be made available to support the school with this)	The school would be expected to play a full part in Oxfordshire's support for SEND including through outreach and training. Oxfordshire's current funding model does not provide additional funding for outreach; schools have the option of delivering this through a traded services model. The operating model for Oxfordshire's SENSS team is currently under review, with the aim of better supporting special schools to share their expertise with mainstream.

Table Bii - pupil build up							
	Year of opening	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6
Nursery	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reception	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Key stage 1 (Y1-2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Key stage 2 (Y3-6)	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Key stage 3 (Y7-9)	10	20	30	30	30	30	30
Key stage 4 (Y10-11)	10	20	30	30	30	30	30
16-19: commissioner referred	10	10	20	30	30	30	30
Totals	40	60	90	100	100	100	100

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Section C1 – the current context in your area

We are looking for bids in areas where a new school will most support local authorities to manage current and/or anticipated pressures on special school places or on the overall high needs budget, so that the needs of children can be better met. We will not be inclined to approve bids that have the side effect of decreasing the inclusion in mainstream schools of children with SEN, or who are at risk of permanent or fixed term exclusions, or of creating excess spare capacity in existing special or AP school. Bids will score more highly if they can demonstrate that a new school will be filled by students who would otherwise be going to more expensive or poor performing provision.

Please use box C1 to provide information about existing provision in your area, future expected growth and use of your high needs budget. You should also use this box to provide commentary around the information sources listed in Annex B of the [guidance](#) that we will use to support our assessment of this section.

In addition, please use table C1i (for special schools) or C1ii (for AP schools) - found on the next tabs - to describe the recent, current and projected trends of

Box C1 - the current context in your area <i>(we expect your response to this section to be no more than around 500 words, excluding your entries on table C1i/C1ii)</i>	
<p>Maintained provision for pupils with SEMH/ASD needs is currently led by five special schools located in and around Oxford city, all of which have Ofsted ratings of Good or Outstanding. In addition, many pupils with SEMH/ASD needs attend one of eight community special schools, again currently all Good or Outstanding. In addition, Oxfordshire has an AP academy [Ofsted rating Good] located across three sites in Banbury, Oxford and Abingdon, and there are currently 12 resource bases colocated with mainstream schools, with more in the process of opening. Most resource bases are currently focused on the broad areas of C&I needs. There is only one resource base specifically focused on SEMH needs, and this only opened in 2017.</p> <p>The concentration of SEMH/ASD provision in and around Oxford means that the needs of children living further from the city are not being adequately met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many pupils face long journeys to school. • The shortage of appropriate provision is a barrier to agreeing timely EHCPs, identified as a key shortcoming in a 2017 Ofsted/CQC joint inspection. • Increased reliance on higher cost places at independent and non-maintained schools (INMSS) which has placed the county's High Needs Budget under unsustainable pressure. • The shortage of SEMH and ASD places in particular mean that many pupils with these needs attend community special schools, when their needs might be better met by more specialist schools; if such schools were available, it would free up space at community special schools to meet the needs of the county's growing population. <p>Pupils for this new school will therefore come from two sources:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Population growth, including that resulting from 100,000 new homes planned for Oxfordshire by 2031. ii. Reversing the recent reliance on the INMSS sector. Between 2013 and 2018, the number of pupils placed at INMSS providers more than doubled. Nearly all of this growth has been for the primary needs of ASD and SEMH, which by 2018 accounted for 73% of INMSS placements. The rapid growth in use of INMSS providers has doubled the cost of INMSS placements since 2013: in 2017/18 the total cost of INMSS placements to the council was over ██████. There was an overspend of ██████ by the end of 2016/17 in the DSG High Needs Block, which rose to ██████ in 2017/18 and is estimated to be more than ██████ in 2018/19. <p>Oxfordshire's SEND Sufficiency Strategy, including this new school, would dramatically reduce the use of high-cost INMSS provision, delivering significantly improved value for money. The average cost of an INMSS placement is over ██████, and can be up to ██████ or more, compared to ██████ per place at a maintained special school. The proposed school therefore has the potential to reduce costs by over ██████ pa, while improving access to high quality provision for families living in southern Oxfordshire, and speeding up SEND placements. Other strands of the Strategy will support mainstream inclusion through a strengthened network of resource bases, and ensure other special needs are met through a continuing programme of expansions of community special schools.</p> <p>NB Table C1i illustrates the expected impact of the proposed new school in isolation; in fact, there are other elements of the Sufficiency Strategy which will also affect projections over this timescale. It assumes that the new school opens in 2022 with 40 pupils, growing to 100 pupils by 2026.</p>	<p>Word count: 552</p>

1. This table must be completed if you are submitting a bid for a special free school.
2. If you are submitting more than one bid, you must complete this section for each bid.
3. Please refer to tab 'C1 - current context' as well as the 'guidance and criteria for local authorities seeking to establish new special or alternative provision free schools' for information about what to include in this section.
4. Please complete the form as provided, do not create any new fields. The text boxes can be made bigger by increasing the row height. To insert a new line in a text box, press alt + enter.

Table C1i - trends in your specialist provision for all children with EHC plans

Type of provision	Number of providers used	Please indicate the number of pupils with an EHC plan living in your local authority who are placed within these settings, and the total cost (including base, top-up and transportation if applicable) of all placements at each setting															
		2014 (pupils) (cost)				2018 (pupils) (cost)				Projected figures without the new school you want				Projected figures if your bid for a new school is successful			
		2014 (pupils)	2014 (cost)	2018 (pupils)	2018 (cost)	2022 (pupils)	2022 (cost)	2026 (pupils)	2026 (cost)	2022 (pupils)	2022 (cost)	2026 (pupils)	2026 (cost)				
Resourced provision and units inside local authority	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
Resourced provision and units outside local authority	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
Special schools (either maintained or academies) inside local authority	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
Special schools (either maintained or academies) outside local authority	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
Independent / non-maintained special schools inside local authority	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
Independent / non-maintained special schools outside local authority	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
Mainstream schools inside local authority	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
Mainstream schools outside local authority	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
General FE colleges (if relevant) inside local authority	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
General FE colleges (if relevant) outside local authority	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
Specialist FE providers (if relevant) inside local authority	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
Specialist FE providers (if relevant) outside local authority	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				



Section C1 – the current context in your area

1. *This table must be completed if you are submitting a bid for an AP free school.*
2. *If you are submitting more than one bid, you must complete this section for each bid.*
3. *Please refer to tab 'C1 - current context' as well as the 'guidance and criteria for local authorities seeking to establish new special or alternative provision free schools' for information about what to include in this section.*
4. *Please complete the form as provided, do not create any new fields. The text boxes can be made bigger by increasing the row height. To insert a new line in a text box, press alt + enter.*

Table C1ii - trends in alternative provision																	
Type of provision	Number of providers used	<i>Please indicate the no. of pupils living in your local authority who are placed within these settings, and the total cost (including base, top-up and transportation if applicable) of all placements at each setting</i>								<i>Projected figures without the new school you want</i>				<i>Projected figures if your bid for a new school is successful</i>			
		2014 (pupils)	2014 (cost)	2018 (pupils)	2018 (cost)	2022 (pupils)	2022 (cost)	2026 (pupils)	2026 (cost)	2022 (pupils)	2022 (cost)	2026 (pupils)	2026 (cost)				
		Maintained PRUs inside local authority															
Maintained PRUs outside local authority																	
Maintained AP free schools or academies inside local authority																	
Maintained AP free schools or academies outside local authority																	
Independent AP settings (registered) inside local authority																	
Independent AP settings (registered) outside local authority																	
Independent AP settings (unregistered) inside local authority																	
Independent AP settings (unregistered) outside local authority																	
AP units located in or attached to mainstream schools inside local authority																	
AP units located in or attached to mainstream schools outside local authority																	
Places designated for AP commissioned from special schools inside local authority																	
Places designated for AP commissioned from special schools outside local authority																	
Places designated for AP in further education settings inside local authority																	
Places designated for AP in further education settings outside local authority																	
Other AP inside local authority – please specify																	
Other AP outside local authority – please specify																	



1. This section must be completed.
2. If you are submitting more than one bid, you must complete this section for each bid.
3. Please refer to the 'guidance and criteria for local authorities seeking to establish new special or alternative provision free schools' for information about what to include in this section.
4. Please complete the form as provided, do not create any new fields. The text boxes can be made bigger by increasing the row height. To insert a new line in a text box, press alt + enter.

Section C2 – your strategy for high needs provision

You must use this section to tell us about your strategy for high needs provision. The purpose of this section is to help us understand your plan for children with SEND or those requiring alternative provision and make a judgement about whether the school you are proposing fits within your strategy.

Box C2 - your strategy for high needs provision

(we expect your response to this section to be no more than around 1000 words)

Oxfordshire's SEND Sufficiency Strategy has been in development since 2017, and is currently awaiting final Cabinet approval (due November 2018). The Strategy has been developed in partnership with Oxfordshire's existing network of special schools, in particular through a High Needs Review Steering Group and associated working groups which include representatives from the county's special and mainstream schools. It has also been informed by consultation with all those with an interest in SEND provision. This consultation confirmed the urgent need for more special school places, especially ASD/SEMH provision both at primary and secondary level, and in particular for the north of the county and the Didcot area in the south. Specific concerns were raised about the long travel distances currently required; the time taken to agree an EHCP; and the need for better support to mainstream schools to maximise inclusion.

To address these concerns, the Strategy is intended to:

- i. Ensure the right type of special education provision in the right places to meet the needs of Oxfordshire's growing population.
- ii. Enhance support for Oxfordshire's mainstream schools to provide inclusive education.
- iii. Increase the effectiveness of the use of the High Needs budget to better meet the needs of children with SEND.

This will require by 2022:

- Support for approximately 100 more pupils with EHCPs in mainstream schools, to be supported via an enhanced network of resource bases;
- Approximately 100 more special school places purely related to population;
- An additional 200 special school places to reverse the recent dependence on the INMSS sector and ensure needs can be met through the local authority's provision.

The additional capacity will need to have a particular focus on SEMH/ASD, which are the fastest growing needs in Oxfordshire and together now account for nearly half of Oxfordshire EHCPs.

The SEND Sufficiency Strategy comprises three strands, which set out what Oxfordshire County Council will do to ensure sufficient education provision for children and young people with SEND.

Strand 1: Resource bases focussed on supporting mainstream schools to provide inclusive education

- Include resource bases within the specification for new mainstream schools, except where the local need is already met.
- Open at least 7 resource bases within new mainstream schools by 2022.
- Work with existing schools to identify opportunities to accommodate further resource bases.

New resource bases currently confirmed to open over the next 3 years are:

- Didcot, January 2019 – 8 places, SEMH, primary
- Didcot, January 2019 – growing to 20 places, SEMH, secondary
- Banbury, October 2018 – 10 places, C&I/SEMH, primary
- Bicester, September 2019 – 6 places, C&I, primary
- Bicester, 2020 – 8 places, SEMH, secondary
- Oxford, 2020 – 8 places, SEMH, primary
- Witney, 2020 – 8 places, C&I, primary

This is a total of 68 additional places, which will significantly improve the geographic and primary need coverage of bases. Some gaps would remain, and therefore a longer term programme will pursue further resource bases where new schools are planned. In the remainder of the 2018-22 period this is likely to be where already permitted housing development includes new schools:

- Grove - potential for both primary and secondary resource bases within new school(s) – SEMH, target date 2022.
- North Abingdon – new primary school
- East Carterton – new primary school

While planned new mainstream schools provide the greatest opportunity for adding resource bases, we will also pursue

While planned new mainstream schools provide the greatest opportunity for adding resource bases, we will also pursue opportunities for incorporating resource bases within existing schools, especially in the south-eastern and south-western corners of the county, to further improve coverage. In the longer term, further new schools are expected due to housing development proposed but not yet confirmed through the Local Plan process, providing more opportunities for resource bases.

Strand 2: Expansion of current special schools

- Continue the current programme of special school expansions, with planned expansions totalling 80 additional places by 2022 at:
 - o Fitzwaryn School (Wantage)
 - o Bardwell School (Bicester)
 - o John Watson School (Wheatley).
- Confirm the potential to relocate and expand accommodation used by the secondary phase of Bishopswood School (Sonning Common).
- Provide new, expanded, accommodation to replace that currently used by Northfield School.
- Review additional capacity needs resulting from planned housing growth in each district, once the respective Local Plans are adopted.

Strand 3: New schools

- Open two new special schools:
 - o Bloxham Grove in north Oxfordshire (due to open 2020);
 - o A new school in Valley Park, Didcot in south Oxfordshire, the subject of this Free School proposal.

Each school will be co-educational, with capacity for 100 pupils each, in the 7-19 age range. These new schools will transform the distribution of maintained special capacity for SEMH and ASD, ensuring there is maintained provision in the north, south and centre of the county.

Three quarters of INMSS placements relate to a primary need of ASD or SEMH. It is likely that some placements related to other primary needs could also have ASD or SEMH needs. These needs are therefore the prime target for increasing county provision to reduce the dependence on INMSS providers.

Together, these three strands will support mainstream inclusion; ensure children who need a special school place are able to get one quickly; reduce travel distances and costs; and improve value for money by reducing dependence on the high cost INMSS sector.

The Sufficiency Strategy sits alongside Oxfordshire County Council's wide-ranging SEND High Needs Block Review 2018, which includes recommendations on funding models, ECHP assessment processes, support for SEND across both mainstream and special schools, and High Needs Block governance. Together the two are intended to support the Oxfordshire Local Area Written Statement of Action for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Oxfordshire has ambitious aims for its SEND provision, which will be led by a new Head of SEND who joined the council in October 2018, as part of a restructure that also strengthens the county's capacity to support inclusion and learner engagement.

Word count:

951

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Section C3 – why you want a new school and how it fits with your strategy and the local landscape

We want to open new schools where they are the right solution for the area. We are looking for bids where a new school will help local authorities meet children's needs, fit into the local authority's strategic plan for high needs provision and complement the local education offer.

Please use box C3 to explain the rationale for a new school.

In addition, please use table C3 to provide evidence of engagement with others and attach any supporting evidence of this (e.g. letters) when you submit your bid.

Box C3 - why you want a new school and how it fits with your overall strategy

(we expect your response to this section to be no more than around 500 words)

Expansion of existing schools will keep up with population growth, and provide sufficient capacity for needs other than ASD and SEMH, but will not be sufficient to significantly reduce Oxfordshire's dependence on high-cost INMSS provision, and therefore will not be sufficient to meet the needs of Oxfordshire's population within the funding available in the High Needs budget.

In addition, the geographic distribution of the existing schools, with SEMH/ASD provision concentrated in and around Oxford city, results in unacceptable long travel distances for pupils living in much of the county. To make a decisive improvement in travel times, new schools are required, one of which will be Bloxham Grove in north Oxfordshire, opening 2020. This bid is for the new school required for south Oxfordshire.

The proposed new school covered by this bid is a vital part of our Strategy, and one towards which we have been working for many years, including the identification of a suitable site within one of the many planned new major housing developments in Didcot. The school will be located where there is currently a significant gap in provision, and given the growth in demand for SEMH/ASD provision, is not expected to have a negative impact on existing maintained providers.

The location of the school has been based on two factors: the Didcot area is forecast to have the fastest growing pupil population in Oxfordshire, due to significant housing growth which is already well underway; and the area currently does not have a maintained special school. Pupils instead need to travel into Oxford for the nearest SEMH/ASD specialist provision, and traffic conditions in Oxford dictate lengthy travel times. The nearest community special school is Bishopswood, over 16 miles away. Mainstream headteachers in Oxfordshire have expressed their concern about how they struggle to meet the needs of pupils with complex SEND, and support this planned new school, both for the outreach it would offer, and to ensure a local provision for pupils who are not well served by inclusion in mainstream.

The new special school is primarily being established to cater for the needs of children who would otherwise require expensive independent sector placements as there are currently insufficient maintained sector places to meet their needs. The rationale for this specification is based on analysis of recent trends in SEND provision within Oxfordshire, and in particular on the rapid increase in reliance on the INMSS sector. This shows clearly that the greatest need for provision is for primary needs of SEMH and ASD, and that the shortage of places extends from Key Stage 2 to post-16.

By reducing reliance on the INMSS sector, the new school will enable Oxfordshire to endure local, high quality provision at a lower cost, thus reducing pressure on the High Needs and school transport budgets.

Table C3 - engagement with others		
Who	How you have engaged (e.g. surveys, meetings)	Summary of engagement (e.g. summary of survey findings and/or conversations)
Your neighbouring local authorities – please specify	Direct emails to colleagues in all neighbouring authorities.	No other authorities identified a need to commission places at the proposed school, or identified any potential impact on their own schools.
Commissioning bodies in your area – please specify	The Deputy Director for Children's Services has been strongly involved in the development of the SEN Sufficiency Strategy and this resulting bid, and the Director for Children's Services has been kept fully informed.	Oxfordshire's DCS fully supports this bid.
Local mainstream schools – please specify	Attendance by council managers at partnership headteacher meetings has included discussions of SEND Sufficiency. Mainstream Schools represented on the High Need review Steering Group which has overseen the development of SEND sufficiency planning. Also individual conversations about sufficiency needs.	Specific need for more SEMH provision and greater support for mainstream schools was identified. Specific need for more local provision was highlighted by mainstream headteachers in the south of the county, who support this bid.
School representative bodies e.g. schools forum – please specify	The School Organisation Stakeholder Group and Schools Forum have both included several discussions on SEND Sufficiency.	Specific need for more SEMH provision and greater support for mainstream schools was identified. Schools Forum is concerned to ensure the High Needs Block funding is put to its best use, both for mainstream and special schools.
Representatives of parents and carers and young people e.g. parent/carer forum – please specify	Online consultation held January/February 2018	This confirmed the urgent need for more special school places, especially ASD/SEMH provision both at primary and secondary level, and in particular for the north of the county and the Didcot area. Specific concerns were raised about the long travel distances currently required; the time taken to agree an EHCP; and the need for better support to mainstream schools to maximise inclusion.
Any other partners e.g. community groups, FE colleges – please specify	Online consultation held January/February 2018	As above

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Section C4 – the expected outcomes

To be approvable, bids must demonstrate that the new school will:

- Help to achieve better outcomes for children and young people (compared with existing options); and,
- Support inclusion, including re-integration where appropriate and providing expertise to mainstream schools.

Please use box C4 to describe the impact you expect the school to have, as well as the potential risks and how you would mitigate those.

Box C4 - expected outcomes

(we expect your response to this section to be no more than around 500 words)

Oxfordshire already benefits from good and outstanding SEMH maintained provision but currently there is a lack of special school provision for SEMH and ASD outside of Oxford city, resulting in long travel times to access education, or reliance on high cost INMSS provision. The new school will be expected to deliver consistently good or outstanding education and care for its pupils, ensuring they are able to thrive after they leave. Its location will reduce travel distances for many pupils, and provide specialist SEMH/ASD support for the south of Oxfordshire.

The new school will form part of the highest tier of support to pupils with SEMH/ASD, and it is intended that children will only be admitted once all mainstream and resource base options have been exhausted. It is therefore likely that most pupils, once admitted, will stay until the end of their education, and the school will provide post-16 places for all of its pupils for whom this is an appropriate option.

We recognise the risk that new special school provision will increase the transfer of pupils out of mainstream. In developing Oxfordshire's SEND Sufficiency Strategy we specifically focused on reversing what we called "segment shift" - a recent pattern of movement out of mainstream and into special schools, and from maintained special schools to INMSS special schools. The Sufficiency Strategy, and other elements of Oxfordshire's High Needs Block review, explicitly aims to reverse this segment shift by:

- A stronger network of resource bases with a focus on facilitating 'flow' between special schools, resource bases and mainstream;
- Refocusing the work of the county's in-house specialist support services, and EHCP process re-engineering, to ensure all resources available at mainstream have been exhausted, prior to request for a specialist setting, thus raising the threshold for inclusion across mainstream provision;
- Introducing a more robust and transparent 'the money follows the child' Top-Up banding system.

This school is targeted at children whose needs are so great they are currently placed in specialist INMSS provision, and therefore it is not expected to have a negative impact on mainstream schools. The new school is largely focused on removing the need to use high cost INMSS providers (except where those providers are the most appropriate for the needs of the child). As such, we do not expect the new school to have a negative impact on existing maintained special schools. It is likely that some pupils are currently educated in the existing special schools whose needs would be better met in a more specialist SEMH/ASD school such as the one now proposed; however, in the context of rapid population growth in Didcot and Oxfordshire as a whole, any movement from community special schools to the new school would simply free up the necessary spaces to meet population growth.

Word count:

460



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Section D – the proposed location and site

Finding a suitable site is an essential part of opening a free school. As part of preparing your bid you should investigate potential sites for the school and tell us about them in your bid. In this wave we will undertake a desktop assessment of site and consider the value for money, timescale and delivery risks in securing a site for the proposed school in the proposed area.

We will give preference to those projects where our site assessments shows that we are likely to secure a value for money site in a timely manner with an acceptable level of risk, in particular, those bids that include an available site on a peppercorn basis. Making a site available on a peppercorn lease gives the greatest chance of the school opening successfully, and on time.

Please complete table D to tell us about where the school would be located and the preferred site.

Please also provide the name and contact details for the main local authority lead for sites. The ESFA may contact this person to ask questions about the site. **If you know any of these site details before submitting your bid, please let DfE know (by emailing FSC.EOI@education.gov.uk) so we can start conversations with you.**

Please tick the box below to confirm that the relevant Lead Member for Corporate Property has seen this bid and is content with the information provided about site (if provided).

I confirm that the Lead Member of Corporate Property at **Oxfordshire County Council** has seen this expression of interest and supports it.

Why have you chosen this site? What makes it suitable?	Located within a major growth area, with good transport links. Well-located to fill a gap in the current coverage of special school provision, meeting the needs of both existing and new population.
If known, how big is the building and the site? Please attach any site and building plans as an additional file and send it to APspecial.freeschool@education.gov.uk	1.6ha site
Please comment on the condition of the building. Please attach photos if available as an additional file and send it to APspecial.freeschool@education.gov.uk	n/a
If the named site is part of a housing development or the school is attracting Section 106 contributions, please give as much detail as possible , including: the development and developer, timing and programme of build, number of housing units, status of planning application and any links to planning applications/decision notices, extent of funding coming from the developer plus confirmation of the local authority's position in relation to your free school using this site.	<p>The named site (area 1.6ha) is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]</p> <p>http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P14/V2873/O</p> <p>The planning permission is being secured by a consortium of national housebuilders [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. The special school site is currently anticipated to be offered (serviced and remediated) to the County Council in 2020/21.</p> <p>The county council has secured this site specifically for the</p>

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