

**School-based Nursery Capital Grant 2025 to 2026   
(phase 2) template application form**

This form is intended for schools applying to the School-based Nursery Capital Grant 2025 to 2026 (phase 2) to create or expand a school-based nursery (SBN). It is provided as a template only to help schools gather the necessary information for their application. **You will need to submit your application via** [**the online application service**](https://apply-for-school-based-nurseries-capital-grant.education.gov.uk/) **by 5pm on 11 December 2025. The online application service will be available   
from 24 September 2025.**

Any applications submitted after this deadline or submitted via other means will be excluded and not taken further in the process. Once your application is submitted you will not be able to amend it or submit any further or part completed applications.

When completing your application, you should refer to the [supporting guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-based-nursery-capital-grant-2025-to-2026) which gives details of who can apply, eligibility for funding, how the department will assess applications, and key dates including arrangements for application submission.

## Section 1: Eligibility criteria

Before completing an application, you must first complete an eligibility check to confirm that your project meets all the eligibility criteria listed in the [supporting guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-based-nursery-capital-grant-2025-to-2026). These criteria have been designed to ensure the department upholds its responsibility to manage public money correctly. Failure against any one of the eligibility criteria will result in automatic disqualification, and you will not be able to proceed to the full application stage.

|  | **Eligibility criteria** |
| --- | --- |
|  | Previous SBN grant participation – my school did not receive funding through the SBN Capital Grant 2024–2025. |
|  | Project aim – my project will result in a net increase in the number of childcare places, taking into account any existing provision on site or nearby, including that delivered by external providers. |
|  | Project budget – my project can be delivered with up to £150,000 of DfE capital funding, either alone or combined with other funding sources. |
|  | Project timeline – my SBN will be operational and offering new childcare places before September 2027. |
|  | **Project location**: My project is either:   * An SBN located on a primary-phase school site that already offers Early Years education (e.g. a reception class), or * Part of a maintained nursery school site. |
|  | Landowner permission – I have written permission from the relevant freehold landowner (e.g. local authority, foundation/trust, or religious body) to use the land for nursery provision and carry out the proposed works. |
|  | **Local authority approval** **–** I have discussed my project with the Local Authority’s Planning, Place and Provision (PPP) team and the Early Years (EY) lead and received formal approval for key aspects such as capacity and age range. I will upload a copy of the [local authority approval form](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-based-nursery-capital-grant-2025-to-2026) completed and signed by my local authority alongside my application. |

I confirm this project meets all eligibility criteria:

Yes

No

If your project does not meet the eligibility criteria but you are interested in opening a nursery, you should register your interest on the [online application service](https://apply-for-school-based-nurseries-capital-grant.education.gov.uk/). For more information, see the [supporting guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-based-nursery-capital-grant-2025-to-2026).

## Section 2: About your school or trust (not assessed)

This information will be used to build the department’s understanding of who applicants are and ensure that all communication regarding the application is directed to the correct person.

When you sign into the Online Application Service using your DfE Sign-in account, you’ll first be asked to confirm the organisation you are applying on behalf of.

The service will automatically retrieve your contact details from your DfE Sign-in account and ask you to confirm whether you are the bid coordinator (the person responsible for completing and submitting the application).

* If you select **Yes**, you’ll be asked to provide:
  + Your job title
  + Your phone number
* If you select **No**, you’ll need to provide the following details for the bid coordinator:
  + Full name
  + Job title
  + Phone number
  + Email address

You will then be asked:

| Question | **Answer format in online form** |
| --- | --- |
| Does your school have an existing nursery already operating on site? | Choice:   * No * Yes – school, governor or MAT-led * Yes – PVI or childminder-led |
| Indicate current 2025 to 2026 academic year nursery capacity. If you do not have an existing nursery, please enter 0 for each.  This should reflect the maximum number of children you have at any given time in the nursery space, not necessarily the total capacity of the space, for example if your staff structure doesn't allow. Do not double-count places used in both morning and afternoon sessions – only include the highest number of children expected to be present at once. | Numerical for each:   * Children under 2 years of age * Children 2 years of age * Children 3-4 years of age * Total capacity |

## Section 3: About the project (not assessed)

This information will be used to build the departments understanding of your proposed project, including whether a significant change approval or planning permission is needed.

| Question | **Answer format in online form** |
| --- | --- |
| What type of project is it?  For guidance on determining this, refer to [Annex B](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-based-nursery-capital-grant-2025-to-2026) in the guidance document. | Choice:   * New build * Extension * Remodel * Refurbishment * Heavy Refurbishment * Refresh |
| Are there any potential conflicts of interest, including those related to the use of technical advisors, contractors, or other sources of grant funding? If so, provide details. | Free text(max 400 words) |
| Will your nursery require any of the following? | Choice:   * An update to an existing Ofsted early years registration * A new Ofsted early years registration or registration with a Childminder Agency * None of the above – our nursery will be exempt from Early Years registration |
| Project timeline information. | Future date for each:   * Project start date: the date which you intend trade(s) to start on site doing the work. * Project end date: completion date of construction or works. This is the date all trades people will have completed the required work * Date the nursery provision will become operational. This is the date on which the nursery is planned to open, and pupils will be in attendance. |
| Will you be staggering the availability of places across the 2026-2027 academic year? If yes, please provide details on the nursery capacity at each stage of the rollout, along with the expected dates. | Free text |
| How will the nursery provision be delivered? | Choice:   * School-led * Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) led * Governor run * Private, Voluntary or Independent (PVI) provider-run * Childminder-run |
| *[if applicable]*  What is the name of the PVI or childminder? | Free text |
| *[if applicable]*  Provide a contact name | Free text |
| *[if applicable]*  What is their phone number? | Number |
| *[if applicable]*  What is their address? | Address line 1  Address line 2  Town or City  Postcode |
| *[if applicable]*  What is their email address? | Email |
| Is planning permission required for this project? | Choice:   * Yes * No |
| *[if applicable]*  At what stage is your planning permission at? | Choice:   * I already have planning permission * I have applied for planning application but am awaiting the decision * I need to apply for planning permission |
| *[if choice 2 or 3 is selected]*  Provide more information on steps taken or plans. | Free text (max 400 words) |
| Which of the following statements apply to your project? | Choice:   * I am proposing to open a new nursery that will be run by the school, either directly or through a wholly owned subsidiary company. * The school (either directly or through a wholly owned subsidiary company) will be taking over a nursery previously delivered by private provider on the school site. * This project will result in a change to the school’s official age range as recorded on Get Information About Schools. * The project will result in a reduction in capacity of physical teaching space i.e. classroom space by over 30 (i.e. 31 or more) places. * The project will result in over 30 (i.e. 31 or more) new nursery places. * None of the above statements apply. |
| Does your project require a Significant Change Approval? | Choice:   * Yes * No (only select this if you answered 'None of the statements apply' in the previous question |
| *[if ‘Yes’]*  Upload a summary of your consultation (maximum 500 words), including:   * Who was consulted (e.g. parents, staff, local community, diocese) * The dates the consultation took place * A brief overview of the consultation process * Key outcomes and feedback | Uploaded document |

## Section 4: Assessed questions

This information will be used to assess your application.

**Part 1: Project overview**

This section is designed to ensure you have made adequate considerations during the planning of the proposed project and that it aligns with the programme’s initiatives to deliver additional nursery places in high-quality settings.

| Question | **Answer format in online form** |
| --- | --- |
| In the following text box, please describe:   * A summary of your project, outlining the construction works and equipment required to deliver the proposed nursery places. * How the proposed works enable the delivery of new nursery places. * At least one risk or dependency that could affect your milestones, their likelihood, impact and how you plan to mitigate delays.   Ensure your response covers all of these points. | Free text (max 1000 words) |
| Upload:   * Original floor plan * Proposed floor plan * Site plan (if applicable) * Photographs of current site * Design photos (optional)   Refer to the guidance for detailed instructions on file formatting and naming conventions. Each upload must not exceed 20MB. | Uploaded document(s) |

**Part 2: Local need**

This section is designed to understand how well-informed and responsive your project is to childcare needs in your area, and how you plan to manage any uncertainties or challenges identified within your local needs assessment.

| Question number | **Answer format in online form** |
| --- | --- |
| What sources of information have you used to assess the local need for early years childcare? (tick all that apply) | Choice:   * Local Authority sufficiency analysis * Conversations with the Local Authority * Parent surveys or feedback * Waiting lists or registration data * Engagement with local childcare providers * Community group feedback * Ofsted data * Other, please specify (max 100 words) |
| In the following text box, please describe:   * What gaps or shortfalls in early years childcare you have identified in your area, based on these sources and your existing knowledge. * How your proposed project responds to these needs. * At least one risk related to your assessment of local childcare needs, their likelihood and any planned mitigations. For example, limited or outdated data, assumptions about demand, impact on existing local provision and long-term sustainability.   Ensure your response covers all of these points. | Free text (max 1,000 words) |
| Upload your Local Authority Approval Form.  Refer to the guidance for detailed instructions on file formatting and naming conventions. Each upload must not exceed 20MB. | Uploaded document |

**Part 3: Approach to education**

This section is designed to evaluate how well you will deliver high-quality early years education in alignment with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, and whether your provision supports improved outcomes for children from specific groups, such as those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or English as an Additional Language (EAL).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question | **Answer format in online form** |
| Describe your nursery’s approach to delivering high-quality early years provision. | Free text (max 500 words) |
| How will your setting provide targeted support for children from disadvantaged backgrounds (such as children eligible for free school meals or early years pupil premium) and any other specific groups of children, such as those with SEND or English as an Additional Language (EAL)? | Free text (max 200 words) |

**Part 4: Management of provision**

This section is designed to understand the governance, oversight and management of the provision. It provides assurances that there are established and/or well thought through structures in place which secure the sustainability of the high-quality provision.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question | **Answer format in online form** |
| In the following text box, please describe:   * Who will govern and manage the nursery provision and how this fits into your school’s existing governance and accountability structures. * How you will ensure the nursery is appropriately staffed by the time it opens. * How you will ensure the nursery is financially sustainable in the long term. * At least one risk related to the deliverability and sustainability of your provision, the likelihood and any planned mitigations   Ensure your response covers all of these points. | Free text (max 1000 words) |

**Part 5: Value for money**

This section will be used to score your project’s value for money.

| Question | **Answer format in online form** |
| --- | --- |
| How much DfE Capital Grant funding are you applying for? | Currency – maximum £150,000 |
| Will you be receiving additional funding from other sources? | Choice:   * Yes * No |
| *[if ‘Yes’]*  How much additional funding will you receive from other sources? | Currency |
| *[if applicable]*  Who is providing this additional funding? | Free text (max 50 words) |
| What is the total internal floor area (m2) that will be created or refurbished as part of this project? | Number |
| Provide a detailed breakdown of the following project costs.  These should include both department funding and any additional contributions, reflecting the full capital cost of the project. Non-capital expenditure is ineligible for department funding and should not be included. For guidance on what constitutes eligible and ineligible expenditure, refer to [Annex A](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-based-nursery-capital-grant-2025-to-2026) in the supporting guidance. | Currency for each:   * Building works * External works * Abnormal items * Furniture, fixtures and equipment * Survey and design fees * Technical advisor fees * Risk allowance * Irrecoverable VAT  (if applicable) |
| Indicate your new nursery capacity for each age group. Your total must be greater than the current capacity for 2025-2026 as detailed earlier in your application. If you are staggering the opening of your nursery, please specify the maximum capacity it is expected to reach once fully operational.  This should reflect the maximum number of children you will have at any given time in the nursery space, not necessarily the total capacity of the space, for example if your staff structure doesn't allow. Do not double-count places used in both morning and afternoon sessions **–** only include the highest number of children expected to be present at once.  Please note your project must deliver a minimum of **five** additional childcare places. In exceptional circumstances, we may consider projects that deliver fewer than five additional places, for example if this utilises existing staffing structures more efficiently and/or the places are serving a small rural community. Such cases will be subject to a thorough due diligence process, during which we may seek clarification from applicants to inform our decision. | Number for each:   * Under 2 years of age * 2 years of age * 3 – 4 years of age * Total capacity |
| What will be the opening hours of the nursery provision? Term-time opening hours.  If not applicable leave blank | 24-hour time for each:   * Monday * Tuesday * Wednesday * Thursday * Friday * Saturday * Sunday |
| Will your nursery offer holiday childcare? | Choice:   * Yes * No |
| *[If applicable]*  What will be the opening hours of the nursery provision? Holiday opening hours  If not applicable leave blank | 24-hour time for each:   * Monday * Tuesday * Wednesday * Thursday * Friday * Saturday * Sunday |
| For each quote received, provide:   * Company name * Total estimate * Date quote was received * Any additional information | Free text for each:     * Quote 1 (mandatory) * Quote 2 (optional) * Quote 3 (optional) |
| Upload either:   * A detailed cost breakdown prepared by a suitably qualified professional (typically a RICS-registered Quantity Surveyor), if the project has not yet been tendered, or * A detailed cost breakdown from your preferred contractor, if a competitive tender exercise has already been undertaken and a summary of your tender process, including procurement route and contract form.   Refer to the guidance for detailed instructions on file formatting and naming conventions. Each upload must not exceed 20MB. | Uploaded document(s) |

## Section 5: Confirmation and declaration

You must complete the following declaration before submitting your application.

I confirm that:

* To the best of my knowledge, the information provided is complete and accurate, demonstrating that the relevant criteria have been met. Any applicable supporting documents have been included, and no information submitted is false or misleading.
* I have explored alternative options and confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, the selected project represents the most suitable and effective approach to meet the intended objectives and I would be able to provide evidence of this if requested by the DfE.
* Due regard has been given to duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty.
* The project will comply with all relevant statutory obligations, including public procurement regulations and guidance.
* The governing body, relevant freehold landowner, and, where applicable, the religious authority support the proposal.
* The delivery of this project will not hinder my estates’ capacity to fulfil other statutory duties, including but not limited to [Breakfast Clubs](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/breakfast-clubs-early-adopter-guidance-for-schools-and-trusts-in-england/breakfast-clubs-early-adopter-guidance-for-schools-and-trusts-in-england#delivering-breakfast-clubs).
* There has been due consideration of the local market in collaboration with the relevant Local Authority/is, with the project enhancing the overall local offer without negatively impacting provision in close proximity including that delivered by external providers.
* Funding will be used solely for the eligible costs of the specified works, and any underspend will be returned to the DfE.
* Grant funding will only be used for eligible costs incurred after the grant is awarded. Retrospective claims will not be accepted.
* Any additional funding sources required to complete this proposal have been agreed and secured by the LA/school/relevant parties.
* Any conflicts of interest (e.g. relationships with technical advisors or contractors) have been declared and appropriate action taken.
* No prior DfE funding has been received that would result in double funding. *For example, if funding was received through the 2023–24 Childcare Expansion Capital Grant, this project must deliver additional places.*
* If the funded activities are not completed by 01 September 2027, the DfE reserves the right to recover the grant (clawback).
* The department will not be liable for additional costs above the grant awarded and you will provide regular updates to DfE as required.
* If the use of AI tools has been used to support the generation of the application (such as in building responses to assessment questions), they have been checked and verified for accuracy.
* Should this project be successful, the procurement of this contract will be in accordance with the Local Authority’s Standing Orders and the lowest tender that meets your requirements should be accepted, unless clear evidence and rationale supports otherwise and unless prior agreement is given by DfE

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