

Freedom of Information – Response – 27601

I would be grateful if you could provide:

1. The number and names of independent or non-maintained special schools (day) currently operating within the local authority area, together with their designated need type(s) and current registered capacity and the average costs per pupil per annum covering academic year 2025/26. This should be provided as current spend over the year - it does not need to be qualified spend at year end budget point given that I am requesting average costs.

A –

Independent/Non Maintained Special Schools	Location	Designated Need Types	Current Registered Capacity	Average Cost Per Pupil
Abbey Gardens	Bury St Edmunds	Social, Emotional and Mental Health	48	£61,850.00
Acorn Cottage The Lodge	Elmsett	Social, Emotional and Mental Health	8	£56,511.00
Bramfield House School	Halesworth	Social, Emotional and Mental Health	136	£72,495.14
Broadlands Hall	Haverhill	Autism Spectrum Disorder	65	£86,268.00
Centre Academy East Anglia	Ipswich	Autism Spectrum Disorder	110	£39,500.00
Compass Community School Aylward Park (And Meadow View)	Leiston	Social, Emotional and Mental Health	48	£71,709.00
Ness Point School	Lowestoft	Social, Emotional and Mental Health	50	£52,478.00
New Skill Centre	Ipswich	Social, Emotional and Mental Health	90	£15,670.00
On Track Education Mildenhall	Mildenhall	Social, Emotional and Mental Health	60	£53,580.00
Pushforward Primary School Ltd	Rougham	All areas of need	10	£74,392.50
Pushforward Secondary School Ltd	Stowmarket	All areas of need	12	£85,500.00

Redstone Hall School	Ipswich	Social, Emotional and Mental Health	30	£68,965.00
The Ryes College	Sudbury	Social, Emotional and Mental Health	36	£67,950.00
The Yellow House School	Clare	Social, Emotional and Mental Health	20	£45,287.88
Wetheringsett Manor School	Wetheringsett	Social, Emotional and Mental Health	100	£70,703.27

2. The number and names of independent or non-maintained residential special schools currently commissioned by the local authority for its resident children and young people, whether located within or outside the local authority area and the average costs per pupil per annum covering academic year 2025/26. This should be provided as current spend over the year - it does not need to be qualified spend at year end budget point given that I am requesting average costs.

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Independent/Non Maintained Special Schools	Average Cost Per Pupil
Acorn Cottage The Lodge	£105,938.56
Gretton School	£72,548.40
Hamilton Lodge School	£22,873.80
More House School	£17,273.25
New College Worcester (NMSS)	£20,964.31
Queen Alexandra College	£30,989.69
Royal School for the Deaf Derby	£21,265.72
Ruskin Mill College	£41,535.30
St Elizabeth's College	£36,253.93

The Loddon School	£95,873.64
Wilds Lodge School	£85,160.40
Witham Prospect School	£203,830.93

3. *Details of any Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS), approved provider framework, or equivalent commissioning route used by the local authority for special school, residential, including how a new provider may apply to join. A link or document can be provided.*

A – Suffolk County Council operates its placements with Independent Non-Maintained Schools under the National Association for Special Schools (NASS) contract. SCC do not operate a DPS for this process. In order to work with a provision SCC ask them to demonstrate they comply with our initial assessment. – Please find attached document – Initial Assessment

4. *The name and contact details of the team or individual responsible for SEND sufficiency planning and/or commissioning of specialist placements, to whom a provider may address an expression of interest.*

A – Please contact the Provider Services team at ProviderServices@suffolk.gov.uk

5. *A copy of, or direct link to, the local authority's current SEND Sufficiency Plan, Strategy, or equivalent document, including any published gap analysis by need type (e.g. ASD, SEMH, SLCN) and by geographic area within the local authority.*

A – These can be found on the following links:

[Our SEND Strategy - Suffolk SEND Local Offer](#)

[Suffolk SEND Sufficiency Strategy 2026-2030](#)

6. *Details of any current or planned capital programme, free school proposal, expansion, or new-build project intended to increase special day or special residential school capacity within the local authority area, including expected additional place numbers, need type(s) to be served, and expected opening date.*

A – Please see the following links:

[Our Capital Programme - Suffolk SEND Local Offer](#)

Cabinet have also recently agreed agenda item 7 embedded within the list of meetings accessible in the link below:

[Meeting Documents - Committee Minutes](#)

7. Any published assessment of the local authority's current High Needs Block (Dedicated Schools Grant) position, including whether the authority is subject to a Safety Valve Agreement, Deficit Recovery Plan, or equivalent, and the value of any agreed deficit reduction target.

A – All published information regarding the LA's current High Needs Block position can be obtained from the link below:

<https://suffolklearning.com/finance/schools-accountancy/schools-forum/schools-forum-meetings-2026/>

8. A copy of the send reforms plan as submitted to the DFE in June. This should be the submitted document and appendices.

A – Suffolk County Council (SCC) confirms that it holds this information however, it is being withheld from disclosure under s.22 information intended for future publication of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

At the time the request was received SCC held the information with a confirmed intention to publish the SEND Reform Plan and associated appendices. Publication is planned following completion of SCC's governance processes including consideration through the relevant meetings and the finalisation of the content. Publication is anticipated within the next 6 months.

s.22 is a qualified exemption and requires the application of the public interest test.

Factors in favour of release:

- Promoting openness and transparency about SCC's plans to reform SEND services.
- Enable public understanding of proposals that may affect children and young people with SEND and their families.

Factors in favour of withholding:

- There is a strong public interest in allowing information that is intended for publication to be released in a planned and orderly way.
- The documents remain in draft form and are subject to review, discussion and potential amendments through SCC's processes before they are finalised.
- Disclosure at this stage could result in the circulation of information that may subsequently change, creating the potential for misunderstanding and confusion.
- Publication of the final agreed documents will ensure that the public receive the complete and authoritative version together with any accompanying contextual information and decision arising from the SCC processes.
- SCC has already allocated time and resources to publishing this information, setting aside time in meetings to finalise the documents and preparing staff for when it will be released. To bring the release date forward would cause staff additional work and take them away from being able to provide other services that wouldn't be hindered if the information is published when it is intended to be.
- As publication is intended within the next 6 months withholding the information only causes a temporary delay to public access.

Having considered the competing public interests, SCC has concluded that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure at this time. The requested information is therefore withheld under Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.