



Department
for Education

Local authority commissioned Special free schools

**Seeking proposals for a new special
free school**

Suffolk County Council

July 2017

Overview

Local authorities play a key role in placing pupils with statements or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, so it is important that they help shape the range of provision in their area. Previously, proposals to establish special free schools have only been taken forward in consultation with local authorities. The Department for Education (DfE) has recently provided a further opportunity for local authorities themselves to identify where a new special free school would benefit their area, inform their Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC), and seek proposals for the new school they want. This opportunity is intended to identify and meet untapped demand for special free schools as a supplement to LA's existing resources. If a strong proposal is received that both the local authority and the Secretary of State wish to take forward the (DfE) will provide capital funding and start-up grants subject to value for money assessments.

Information for proposer groups

Proposed timeline

The competition will run for 4 months, and will close at mid-day on Friday 24 November 2017.

Contact details and further information

If you would like any further information or would like to discuss your application, please contact:

Georgina Green

Head of Service Development SEN / AP

Email: Georgina.green@suffolk.gov.uk

Tel: 01473 264706

Joy Stodart

Schools Commissioning Manager

Email: joy.stodart@suffolk.gov.uk

Tel: 07515 190911

For enquiries related to the proposed site, please contact Joy Stodart.

Tim Coulson

RSC's office: East of England and NE London

Email: tim.coulson@education.gov.uk

Events

Suffolk will offer prospective proposers the opportunity to meet officers and discuss the need for the new school in more detail. We will be holding events for parents and other stakeholders to contribute to the process. Dates of these are still to be confirmed.

Section 1 - THE SCHOOL

This section lists key details of the school proposed.

Which local authorities are committed to commissioning places?	Suffolk
How many places have been commissioned and by which local authority?	60
Type of SEN	<p>This specialist provision would cater for pupils with social and emotional needs with associated behaviours and mental health issues (SEMH). The school would also cater for pupils with underlying communication and social difficulties i.e. pupils referred who have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum condition (ASC).</p> <p>Pupil behaviour will be challenging and will have prevented them from learning within a mainstream school. The pupils referred will have already accessed and exhausted tiers 1 to 3 of the local offer which will usually include a short term intensive intervention either through specialist outreach services or a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).</p>
Per-place funding you expected to be paid	£10k per place plus up to £15k (capped)
Age range	8 to 16 years of age.
Boys/Girls/Co-educational	Co-educational
Total number of places	60 full time
Early years provision?	No
16-19 provision?	No
Community use/shared facilities	The school would be able to have shared use of adjacent sports' facilities – indoor and external playing fields.
Number of residential places	None

Section 2 - THE PROPOSED LOCATION AND SITE

This section describes the provisional site

The LA has a site designated for education use available at Lindbergh Road, Ipswich, IP3 9PZ. Site is 1.038 hectares. A plan is attached.

Adjacent to the site is a 40 place PRU for pupils aged 11-16 (KS3/4). To the north of the site are playing fields and a sports' dome both of which are potentially available for use by a school via a shared lease agreement.

The LA is able to release the site immediately which means that, subject to planning, works could commence at the earliest date agreed. The site could be transferred on a leasehold basis (125 years) at a peppercorn rent.

Key contact for site details: Joy Stodart (joy.stodart@suffolk.gov.uk / 07515190911)

Engagement with local partners	Conversation summary
Neighbouring LAs	<i>We have discussed this proposal with Essex County Council. However, Essex is currently expanding its provision in the south and west of the county and has confirmed that it does not need places in the north east of the county i.e. within travelling distance of Ipswich. For Suffolk, new provision in Chelmsford or Harlow in Essex is too far for pupils to travel daily.</i>
Parent / Carer Forum, or other representatives of parents and young people	<p><i>A well-established parent forum, Suffolk Parent Carer Network (SPCN), is highly supportive of this proposal and is keen to work with a sponsor of a new ASC school.</i></p> <p><i>An event was held on 18 May 2017 to talk to parents about the new school. Parents gave their views on admissions, class sizes, the balance between meeting pupils' academic and SEMH needs, outcomes, specialist interventions and the expertise required, reintegration and support. Parent views will be reflected in more detail when the LA sets out its expectations during the competition process.</i></p>

Engagement with local partners	Conversation summary
Any other partners	<i>Suffolk's Schools' Forum has recently agreed to provide additional funding for SEN across the county in recognition of the pressures Suffolk faces in supporting pupils locally.</i>

NUMBER OF PLACES

The table below details the number of places that the local authority proposes for each year

group at the point of opening until the school is full.

	No. of students in first year of opening	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Year 5	9 across upper key stage 2	0	9	18				
Year 6	<i>See above</i>							
Year 7	12 across key stage 3	0	12	24				
Year 8	<i>See above</i>							
Year 9	<i>See above</i>							
Year 10	9 across KS4	0	9	18				
Year 11	<i>See above</i>							
Totals	30	0	30	60				

Section 3 – RATIONALE AND CONTEXT FOR THE SCHOOL

How it would help meet pressures on special educational provision

The number of school aged children and young people is growing as the county sees spikes in localised population growth, net increases in immigration and a large number of new housing developments.

Our pupil forecasts show the total school population in Suffolk will increase by over 7,500 (8%) in the next 5 years (primary age increasing to over 5%; secondary age increasing over 12% in this period and then continuing to increase further). Suffolk has a duty to respond to this growth in demand for mainstream and non-mainstream places. *There are currently 91 pupils in out of county SEMH/ASC provision and 11 awaiting referral because their needs cannot be met by provision in Suffolk. Of these, 47 are pupils who live in the Ipswich/South Suffolk area. These needs make up the largest proportion of placements with out of county SEN providers. Because Suffolk's existing local providers are full to capacity, we are having to send pupils further away from their homes. This creates a need for residential provision as well as an educational offer. Recent trends in OoC placements confirm that the highest level of need is for SEMH/ASC provision (see Fig 1 below)*

How the school will fit into the broader spectrum of SEN provision in the region (including neighbouring LAs if appropriate)

Suffolk has insufficient places for SEMH/ASC pupils to meet current and future demand. Although the county's SEND Strategy (2017-2020) states that "...every Suffolk child and young person really does matter and all should have their needs met, as far as possible, in their local community, in local early years settings, local schools and further education settings...and offered high quality provision which ensures good health and care and good educational progress, attainment and achievement", we are actually unable to meet this target because of our lack of local and quality provision.

Local community provision

The new SEMH/ASC school will address the need for additional capacity in the area covering the Ipswich district, Martlesham and Kesgrave, Felixstowe, Woodbridge, Holbrook, East Bergholt and Hadleigh.

Presently, pupils with this profile of need are either being held in PRUs for extended periods of time or are being educated in out of county settings away from their homes, families and communities, making it difficult for them to establish supportive relationships that will sustain them as they make their transition through to Post 16 education, employment or training.

High Quality Provision /Quality assurance and challenge

Suffolk is concerned that some of the outcomes for our pupils in out of county schools are poor; pupils are not making expected progress and not being adequately prepared to return to Suffolk once their placement ends.

The new school will bring specialist expertise both to support pupils in their home community and to provide broader support to educational professionals engaged in supporting children and young people in universal and targeted settings. Transition, particularly, will be able to be managed locally amongst providers who understand and work within the local continuum of support (see Fig. 2 over).

A local school will allow the LA to monitor, assure and challenge the providers to ensure high quality provision for some of our most vulnerable young people.

How it would help meet pressures on special educational provision

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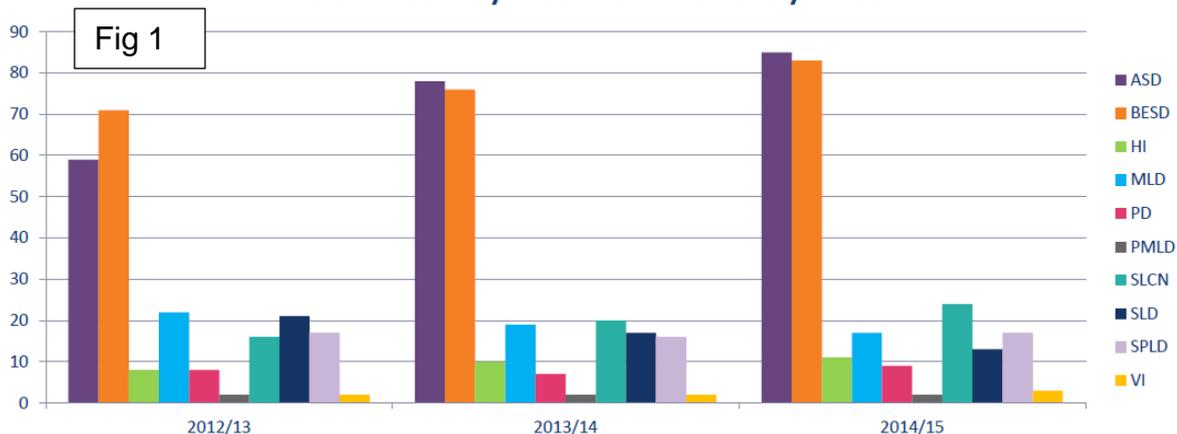
Our pupil forecasts show the total school population in Suffolk will increase by over 7,500 (8%) in the next 5 years (primary age increasing to over 5%; secondary age increasing over 12% in this period and then continuing to increase further). Suffolk has a duty to respond to this growth in demand for mainstream and non-mainstream places.

The cost of providing an out of county (OoC) placement for a pupil with this profile of need is between £40k and £80k. Set against the average cost of an internal in-county placement of £24k, this is not the best use of SEN funding. Ideally, we would bring pupils back into Suffolk and use the savings to expand and improve the provision we offer.

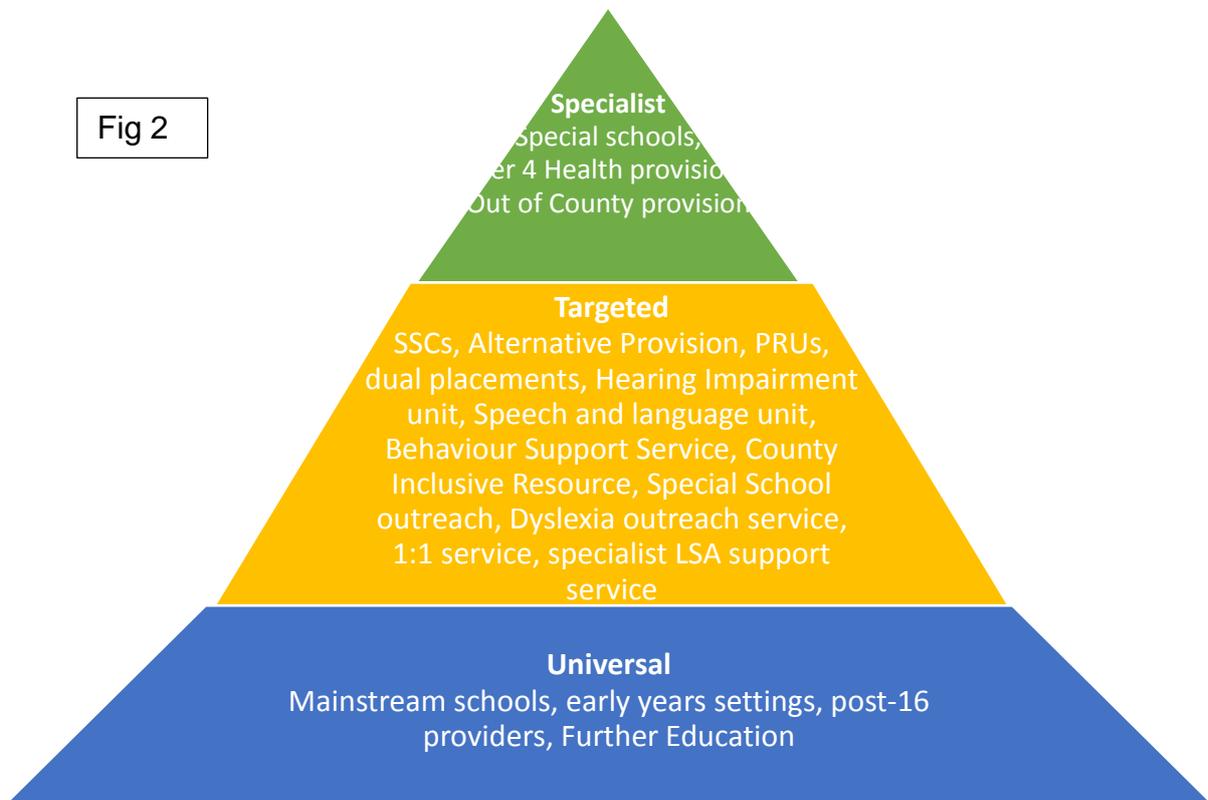
The potential impact on inclusion including where applicable type of expert support you would expect the school to provide to schools in the area.

The new SEMH/ASC school would be part of the continuum of provision (see diagram below) and link with existing providers to support a 'step up/step down' approach to inclusion.

Out of County Placement Trends By Need



The diagram below describes our current continuum of provision.



Evidence of parental demand

Parents of children and young people with ASC have been working with the LA and with the National Autistic Society (NAS) for some time to add provision for ASC pupils to the local (Ipswich and South Suffolk) offer via the free school route. These bids were disappointingly unsuccessful. The Suffolk Parent and Carer Network has since confirmed its support for a new SEMH/ASC school located in the home communities of the pupils who will be attending the provision. The Network is very willing to be engaged in the process going forward.

Local authority admissions criteria/process

The school will specialise in providing places for learners with social, emotional and mental health needs and for learners with underlying communication and social difficulties i.e. pupils referred who have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum condition

(ASC). There will be places for 60 learners aged 8 to 16-years-old and these will be offered for a length of placement that meets the individual needs of each child.

To acquire a place at the school a young person must meet these criteria and will be referred to the school by the County Council. The pupils referred will have already accessed and exhausted tiers 1 to 3 of the local offer which will usually include a short term intensive intervention either through specialist outreach services or a Pupil Referral Unit.

The school is committed to equal opportunities and will admit pupils/students across the full spectrum of academic abilities. All pupils/students have equal access to the curriculum.

Pupils will be admitted as follows:

Type of pupil with SEND	Purpose of admittance	Legislation / Code	
Pupil has an EHC Plan naming the school	Standard admission	Children and Families Act 2014: Section 33	Normal funding agreement arrangements apply
The child or young person (YP) is admitted for the purposes of an EHC needs assessment (and the responsible LA, the head teacher or principal, the parents or YP and anybody else whose advice is required to be obtained, have all agreed to the child/YP's admission)	Temporary admission – which may lead to standard admission on issue of an EHCP	Children and Families Act 2014: Section 34 (5) Code of Practice 2015: paragraph 1.29	Permitted under normal funding agreement arrangements
The child or YP remains admitted in prescribed* circumstances,	Temporary admission – which may lead to standard	Children and Families Act 2014: Section 34 (6)	Permitted under normal funding agreement arrangements

<p>following an EHC needs assessment</p>	<p>admission on issue of an EHCP</p>	<p>The Special Education Needs and Disability Regulations 2014: regulation 48 (1)(a)–(b)*</p> <p>Code of Practice 2015: paragraph 1.29</p>	
<p>The child/YP is admitted following a change in the child’s or young person’s circumstances and the responsible LA, head teacher or principal and parents have all agreed to the child/YP’s admission.</p> <p>Where an emergency placement of this kind is made the local authority should immediately initiate an EHC needs assessment or re-assessment;</p>	<p>Temporary admission – which may lead to standard admission on issue of an EHCP</p>	<p>Children and Families Act 2014: Section 34 (7)</p> <p>Code of Practice 2015: paragraph 1.29</p>	<p>Permitted under normal funding agreement arrangements</p>
<p><u>Special free schools and special academies only</u></p> <p>The child/YP is admitted to a special school or special post-16</p>	<p>Standard admission, but <i>only</i> if permitted within FA</p>	<p>Children and Families Act 2014: Section 34 (9)</p> <p>Code of Practice 2015: paragraph 1.30</p>	<p>Not permitted under normal funding agreement arrangements.</p> <p>Applicants are required to provide additional information which</p>

<p>institution that is an academy and academy arrangements permit the academy to admit children or young people with special needs but with no EHC Plan.</p>			<p>will be considered before specific permission is granted. FA amended if specific permission is granted.</p>
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** Where a child or young person has been admitted to a special school or special post-16 institution for the purposes of an EHC needs assessment, he or she may remain at that school or post-16 institution—*

(a) for a period of ten school or institution days after the local authority serves a notice under section 36(9) of the Act informing the child’s parent or the young person that it does not propose to make an EHC plan; or

(b) until an EHC plan is finalised.

How the school will be funded

The school will receive place funding and top up per full year.

Section 4 – VIABILITY OF THE NEW SPECIAL SCHOOL

Where the pupils will come from

Our intention would be to bring back pupils will come from expensive OoC provision as soon as possible. These pupils would form the core of the new school. We would also consider referrals for pupils who have had to remain in PRUs for inappropriately long periods or who are receiving 1:1 tuition because suitable provision is not presently available.

In the area covered by the proposed new school, we currently have 87 primary schools and 15 secondary schools. In this area alone we are forecasting over 1900 additional pupils by 2020. Proportionately, we anticipate a 1.5 - 2% rise in demand at least for PRU places (29 – 38 additional places) arising from this growth.

The impact on numbers and proportion of students with SEN at mainstream schools

There are 5 PRUs in the Ipswich area providing for 185 pupils. At present, we have no more capacity for SEMH/ASC pupils in these settings. This means that pupils are being held in PRUs and existing special schools and/or are being supported by the County Inclusion Support Service (CISS). There is a waiting list of 39 pupils seeking AP places in this area of Suffolk all of whom *are at risk of permanent exclusion.*

The County Inclusive Support Service supports pupils in mainstream settings. Last year the CISS supported 1821 pupils in the school year. This year 410 pupils have already been identified for consideration for referral to this service.

The multi-agency in-year fair access panel and the new Local Offer Broker roles in our Inclusive Service have served to promote inclusion in our mainstream settings providing support and challenge schools to maximise the local education offer.

The impact of the new special school will be twofold: a) to provide a specialist setting in the local area where there is none now and b) to provide expertise to other parts of the SEN support service so that pupils can be supported more appropriately and in a more timely manner. This should also have the effect of reducing temporary and permanent exclusions.

How the school would be financially sustainable within budgetary constraints in the long term, including (if applicable) how it would help deliver wider value for money (for example in reducing transport costs)

Currently we have 47 pupils placed in long term SEMH/ASC settings from this area of Suffolk with a further 23 being referred for consideration. There is demand for the new school to take the full cohort of 60 pupils very quickly as pupils are brought back into the county and moved from existing AP provision which is not able to provide full time specialised support. Pupil forecasts which incorporate demand from new housing support this.

Savings made from moving from OoC to local provision (approx. £40 k per place) would be reinvested in local provision which will enable more pupils to be provided with support for their special needs. Transport costs are expected to reduce dramatically.

Section 5 – PUPIL DATA - TRENDS IN SPECIALIST PROVISION FOR ALL CHILDREN WITH EHC PLANS

	No. of Settings	Please indicate the no. of pupils with an EHC plan living in your local authority who are placed within these settings		
		2012	2016 (as at Sep 2016)	2020
Resourced provision and units inside LA	28 (14 PRU's, 7 Specialist Support Centres, 4 Hearing Impaired Units and 3 Language Units)	Not Known	PRUs – 79 (495 places) Units and SSC's – 104 (204 places)	PRUs – 84 (520 places) Units and SSCs – 134 (300 places)
Resourced provision and units outside LA	0	0	0	0
Special schools (either maintained or academies) inside LA	10 (9 Special Schools and 1 special free school)	923 special school places	945 special school 32 special free school	1,275 special school 32 special free school
Special schools (either maintained or academies) outside LA	0	0	0	0

Independent / non-maintained special schools inside LA	4 Independent special schools	Not known	67 SEMH and AP Free School not open yet	126 (includes SEMH school)
Independent / non-maintained special schools outside LA	26	124	128	133
Mainstream schools inside LA	310	Not known	2,002	2,102
Mainstream schools outside LA	0	0	0	0
General FE colleges (if relevant) inside LA				
General FE colleges (if relevant) outside LA				
Specialist FE providers (if relevant) inside LA				
Specialist FE providers (if relevant) outside LA				

Other new provision in Suffolk

Independent / non-maintained special schools inside LA:

- 50 places SEMH school in Lowestoft opening 2017
- 24 places Free Primary AP Wave 11 Lowestoft date of opening not yet known.

Mainstream school inside LA:

- Wave 11 free primary school in Ipswich opening 2018/19
- Wave 11 Technical Academy Bury St Edmunds (14-19) opening 2017