



Department
for Education

Isle of Wight Special Free School

**Contextual information for applicant
groups applying to open a new
Special Free School**

Isle of Wight Council

May 2023

OVERVIEW

The Department for Education is inviting applications from proposer groups to open a new special free school on the Isle of Wight.

Applicant groups can access the key school specification information, along with the full 'How to Apply' guidance, on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). You should read these documents carefully before completing mandatory pre-registration.

The school specification document sets out the key factual details about the proposed school, including the proposed size, SEND designation, age range, suggested top-up funding, and proposed site.

This document provides applicant groups with additional contextual information provided by Isle of Wight Council, which includes:

- The rationale, context and need for the school;
- Details on the commissioning of places, including the involvement of any other LAs commissioning places;
- A brief description of the existing provision in the area;
- Future expected growth in pupil numbers; and
- How the LA expects places within the school to be filled.

RATIONALE, CONTEXT AND NEED FOR THE SCHOOL, INCLUDING PROPOSED COMMISSIONING ARRANGEMENTS

Our vision is to provide high quality education opportunities for children and young people (CYP) with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), living on the Isle of Wight (IW), enabling them to achieve and to live as independently as possible when they move into adulthood. CYP with SEND should be educated within their local community, and where possible, within inclusive mainstream provision.

Some CYP with SEND require a more specialist provision which needs to be as close to home as possible and is suitably equipped to meet their needs. Therefore, in developing the proposal for this new school the following underpinning principles were identified and applied when shaping the proposals. These include:

- Providing education within an inclusive mainstream setting wherever possible and as appropriate.
- Providing education within, or as close to, the child/young person's home and local community.
- CYP attending a provision that is rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.
- Having a clear focus upon best outcomes for the child/young person, including developing independence and skills for life.
- Wherever possible, consider re-integration into less specialist provision, providing the necessary support to make the transition effective and long lasting.

The application considered:

- The current sufficiency landscape on the IW
- Maintained special schools
- Independent and non-maintained special schools
- Alternative Provision
- Resourced provision
- EOTAS (Educated Other Than at School) Packages
- FE provision.
- The pressures on places on the Island, and the related effects on transport.

- The need to use resources efficiently
- How the IW education system will build capacity to better meet the needs of children and young people with Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- How data is used to forecast the number of pupils and students requiring a specialist placement, (i.e., resourced provision or special school placement) to plan and develop sufficient and appropriate places; and
- The efficient use of resources and available space in existing schools.

SEN Sufficiency Strategy

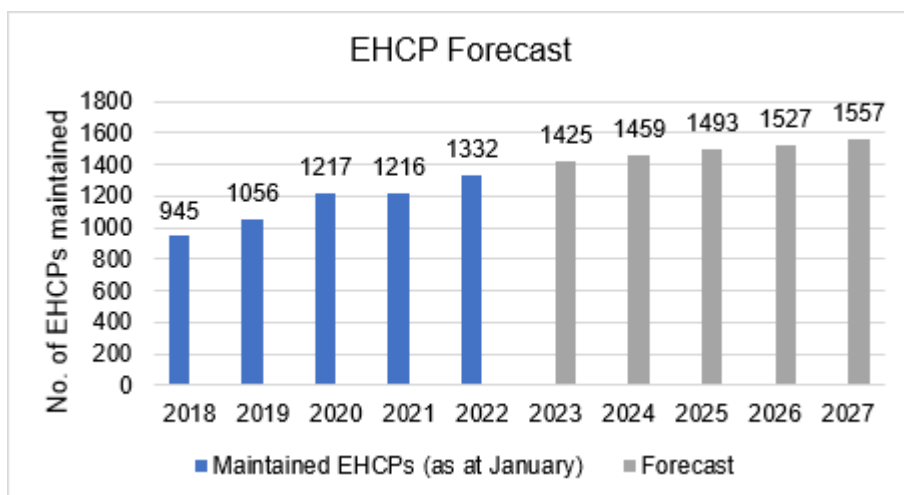
Our draft SEN Sufficiency Strategy is being revised and is currently subject to approval.

The strategy was developed in consultation with a variety of local stakeholders; a sufficiency workshop was held on June 16, 2022 and participants included colleagues from ICB (Integrated Care Board) NHS therapies, representatives from Parents' Voice, SENDIASS, Educational Psychology, Finance, AIM (Third Sector), Education & Inclusion and staff from the Pupil Referral Unit. Another workshop for IW Headteachers was held on 15th September 2022.

It identifies trends in current SEND populations, and projects trends in demographics which may impact on future specialist provision. It also recognises the strengths of current SEND provision, and outlines priorities to further develop specialist provision within mainstream and special schools over the next five years.

Current Context

At a time of significant pressure for local government, the SEND cohort of children with EHCPs has continued to increase year on year since the reforms in 2014. The Island already has the 5th highest number of pupils with EHCP's across England (5.4%). The England average is 4%. We have 1,419(Oct 2022 EHCP's), modelling shows that the number of EHCP's could grow to 1,557 EHCP's by 2027. Despite the rise in EHCPs overall the birth rate on the Island has been steadily declining. However, predictions are that the number of EHCP's could increase, and this is due to "returners" to the Island i.e., parents taking up posts or returning to the Island with young people with EHCPs. Appendix 2 – Table identifies the demographic based model for forecasting the number of EHCPs in the future.



We recognise the importance of considering the needs of all children and young people identified as having SEN and Disabilities, the majority of whom receive their education in a mainstream setting. As of Summer 2022, there were 16,734 children that attended school (R-2 to Year 14). Within this cohort there are currently 948 (5.7%) with an Educational Health Care Plan [R-2 to Year 14] and of these, 294 (1.7%) attend a special school. 2,621 children in schools receive SEN Support representing 15.7% of the cohort. The Island has a good mixture of small, medium, and large primary/secondary schools with the majority of children receiving their first-choice placement. There are a further 497 post 16 young people with EHCP's on the Island. This makes a grand total of 1,419 young people on the Island that hold an EHCP (Autumn 2022).

A recent strategic review of our specialist provision is provided below.

- From 1st September 2021 it was agreed to increase the capacity at St George's Special School from 176 to 188 places (138 pre 16 and 50 post 16) and to create the additional capacity required by developing the former Clatterford Site for the 6th form and creating an Employability Hub.
- An additional Resource Provision at St Francis Primary School of eight places for young people who have ASC opened September 2022.
- Implemented the Early Years Hub at Clever Cloggs Nursery in September 2022

It is the Local Authority's policy to integrate students with disabilities into mainstream settings when appropriate. However, some young people have needs that are so significant and complex that they require specialist facilities and resources. This is provided at Medina House for our primary sector and St George's for the secondary sector with an expansion of an "Employability Hub" in 2021/22 on an adjacent site for sixth formers, releasing further capacity in the main school.

We also have seven specialist provisions that provide support to pupils with an Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) and Complex Needs. Four of these provisions cater for our primary sector and are based at Greenmount Primary School (ASC) [6 places], Brading Primary School (Complex Needs) [8 places], and Hunnyhill Primary (SEMH) [8 places]. For pupils in our secondary sector, these provisions are based at Carisbrooke College (ASC) [12 places], The Bay CE School (ASC) [15 places from September 2022] and Medina College (SEMH) [15 places from September 2023]. In addition to providing pupils with specialist support, these specialist provisions provide opportunities for integration so that CYP experience a mainstream setting alongside peers, when appropriate and in the best interests of the pupil.

It is our intention to expand on this provision over 2022/23 to other primary and secondary schools. Despite any planned expansions and additional resource provisions, this will not replace the need for a dedicated special school for pupils with SEMH/ASC. The cohort of pupils who would meet the criteria for a resource provision are expected to participate in mainstream learning. Currently, the IW does not have any specialist provision for CYP with SEMH/ASC where their complex needs can be met throughout the day.

For our Early Years pupils, we have developed an Early Years Hub at Clever Cloggs Nursery to offer specialist SEN support in an integrated mainstream setting.

A Communication and Language (CAL) team supports children with significant SLCN who require an intensive level of specialist support in order to access the curriculum. This service provides universal, targeted and specialist levels of support to children and their wider learning environments. This involves collaborative and multi-disciplinary assessment, bespoke packages of support around each child, training and integrated working alongside school staff, input around target setting sought from parents, school and the child, with an intensive focus on working closely with school to improve outcomes.

The Specialist Teacher Advisory (STA) Team provides educational advice and support for deaf and visually impaired CYP and their families, from birth. The Team provides ongoing professional development and support to schools and teaching and monitoring support to pupils in order to maximise opportunities for learning, independence and inclusion so that all deaf and visually impaired CYP can achieve their potential. This is done by home visits from birth/diagnosis to promote parental engagement and confidence; visits to pre-schools, schools and colleges across the Island; focusing on language development by providing advice on a range of communication methods and strategies; providing specialist equipment and advising on the effective use of audiological/visual access equipment in a variety of settings in order to improve pupils access to the curriculum; carrying out assessments and

making access recommendations, including adjustments to the environment; providing relevant information to families on the educational, communication and audiological options available in order to enable them to make informed choices; encouraging and promoting positive attitudes towards deafness and visual impairment within the school environment and the local community.

The Voice of the Parents

On the IW, there is an increased demand in requests from parents for specialist provision.

A parent can appeal a decision based on the named school and SEN Needs and there were 55 tribunals in 2021, and of those, 19 were related to the placement.

'Parents Voice IW' is the parent/carer network on the Island, who work collaboratively with the Local Authority and the Clinical Commissioning Group and the NHS. They meet monthly with Officers across all three agencies.

Parents of children and young people with SEND are very clear in their wish for their children's needs to be met on the Island.

Needs Analysis

There are children and young people in other placements due to lack of specialist provision. As at Autumn Term 2022, there were 40 pupils with an Educated Other Than at School (EOTAS) package due to no appropriate school place. There were 31 children who are Electively Home Educated (EHE) and have an EHCP. The Island Learning Centre (the Pupil Referral Unit) has 14 children on an EHCP who are there due to a lack of suitable placement in a school. A minimum of 10 pupils are currently in a mainstream school who should be in a specialist placement but there is a lack of suitable provision.

There is a Dynamic Purchasing system set up for Alternative Provision. This provides the Local Authority with approved education providers, therapy providers and other support agencies. This list can be shared with schools, Parents/Carers and other Local Authority Services. The providers undergo a rigorous quality assurance process and provides the reassurance around safeguarding and DBS checks. The portal is open all the time so providers can apply as and when.

What are we doing to support these children and young people?

To meet the shortfalls in provision we are:

- Using more INMSS schools, and a range of education providers, based both on and off the IW will be necessary, where appropriate.

- Prioritising a new special school for SEMH/ASC (this proposal)
- Scoping work to enlarge any school that expresses a wish to do so.
- Increase the number of Resource Provisions on the Island.
- The Local Authority has a small team of centrally employed speech and language therapists who support pupils with statutory Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) provision within their EHCPs. This team also provides highly acclaimed Eiklan training for schools to support pupils at SEN Support with their language skills and curriculum access. There is a current capacity issue that impacts on fully delivering Eiklan as SLT input must focus on the statutory SLT needs of pupils with an EHCP. The specialist teacher advisors provide statutory support for CYP with HI and VI. The Early Years SEN team supports children 0-5 years with complex needs via Portage and advises EY Settings to support children who require SEN Support.
- There is an Outreach Support Service (SOS) based at Medina House School for all schools to purchase to support Cognition and Learning in the Primary sector and autistic pupils in both Primary and Secondary sector. The LA employs the ASC Outreach Support Worker and ASC Outreach Support Assistant. Close collaboration between the LA and the Outreach Support Service ensures ongoing service delivery. 30 schools currently buy in Outreach Support.

Ofsted / CQC

Ofsted and CQC undertook an area inspection of the arrangements for special educational needs in November 2019 just prior to the pandemic and found that the arrangements were improving. Unlike many Local Authorities, the Isle of Wight was not asked to produce a statement of action. The key findings were as follows:

‘Children and young people with SEND are getting an improving deal on the Isle of Wight. Leaders across education, health and care are committed to tackling the historically poor support that these children have received. Fuelled by this commitment, leaders are working together to ensure that children’s needs are identified early and that they receive the support they need. These developments are leading to better outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Leaders on the Isle of Wight are working well together. They have a good understanding of what is going well for children and young people with SEND. Leaders also know exactly what needs to get better. As a result, there is a shared understanding of the things that need improvement across most services.

Education, health and care leaders have a good understanding of the local area. They are aware of the impact of previously weak services. This knowledge, combined with effective self-evaluation, has produced a way of working that is tailored to the needs and requirements of the Isle of Wight. The current review of special school provision is a good example of this, as it recognises the importance of educating children and young people close to their homes. This is a challenge, as most other areas can take advantage of provision in neighbouring localities.'

EXISTING PROVISION, EXPECTED FUTURE GROWTH IN PUPIL NUMBERS, AND HOW PLACES IN THE NEW SCHOOL WILL BE FILLED

The IWS current provision is identified in depth within section 5 above. However, in addition to this some pupils with SEND, require a more specialist provision and for this to be as close to home as possible to meet their need.

The new school will provide additional capacity for Island children with EHCP's with SEMH/ASC. Our two Special Schools are over APN and cater for pupils with complex learning difficulties not SEMH/ASC. Current Resourced Provisions within maintained primary and secondary schools on the Island are also at capacity and pupils are expected to work towards integrating into the mainstream.

Over the past few years this has become increasingly challenging with the increasing number of EHCP's. The IW has 5.40% of the school age population with an EHCP, higher than the national average (4.0%) The majority of the EHCPs are in Key Stage 2 (25%).

The new school will address our capacity issues which currently result in the need to send young people off Island, to be in receipt of significant alternative provision or on EOTAS packages. It will also allow us to provide local inclusion as stated in our SEN Strategy.