



Department  
for Education

# **Shropshire Council Special Free School**

**Seeking proposals to establish a  
Special Free School**

**Shropshire.**

**September 2020**

## SECTION ONE: OVERVIEW

### 1. Summary

The Department for Education (DfE) is working collaboratively with selected Local Authorities to establish new schools that fit within the local authorities' strategies for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and those requiring alternative provision. This opportunity is intended to identify and meet untapped demand for special and alternative provision free schools as a supplement to LAs' existing resources. If a strong proposal is received by a trust that both the Local Authority and the Secretary of State wish to take forward, DfE will provide capital funding and start-up grants subject to value for money assessments.

This document sets out the key information regarding the school that Shropshire will be establishing alongside DfE. Trusts should use the information within this document, alongside the engagement events, to determine whether they are interested in applying to open the school, and to base their application on.

### 2. Key dates

<b>Week beginning 21 September 2010</b>	Virtual Sponsor Engagement Event
<b>20 October 2020*</b>	Deadline for proposers to submit applications
<b>Autumn 2020</b>	Shropshire and DfE to evaluate submitted applications and interview trusts
<b>Late 2020/early 2021</b>	Approved applications announced.

*\*Maybe subject to change*

### 3. Contact details and further information

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

**Name: Julia Dean**

**Job title: Service Manager, Special Educational Needs and Disability**

**Email: [julia.dean@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:julia.dean@shropshire.gov.uk)**

**Tel: 01743 254563**

If you would like any further information or would like to discuss the site, please contact:

**Name: Phil Wilson**

**Job title: Service Delivery Manager - Learning & Skills**

**Email: [phil.wilson@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:phil.wilson@shropshire.gov.uk)**

**Tel: 01743 254344**

Please find below the contact details of the Regional Schools Commissioner:

**RSC: Andrew Warren**

**RSC's office: West Midlands**

**Email: [rsc.wm@education.gov.uk](mailto:rsc.wm@education.gov.uk)**

#### 4. Shropshire Context and Planning

*Please include here details of why the local authority is running this competition and requires this school. Should this be a joint bid, please explain how the local authorities will work together and how other local authorities are involved in commissioning places.*

We have chosen to bid in this wave to establish a new specialist free school that will support the implementation of the local authorities' strategy for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The capital support will enable Shropshire to open a new school to meet the complex needs of children and young people with SEN so that they achieve positive outcomes and prepare effectively for their transition into adulthood alongside their non-SEN peer group.

Shropshire is a good local authority with a rate of improvement in the top 10% of the country. We are committed to developing this free school and believe it is a vital addition to complement the current local education offer.

The geography of Shropshire presents unique challenges as much of the population is spread thinly across large areas. This creates difficulty in ensuring access to appropriate specialist provision and as a consequence many of the most vulnerable learners spend a disproportionate time travelling to and from their school setting.

With existing specialist provision being either full or nearly full, there is limited capacity within the current system to be responsive to growing demand and changing need. We are currently seeing an increase in demand for specialist input in the areas Speech Language & Communication Needs (**SLCN**) and Autistic Spectrum Disorders (**ASD**) especially where children have additional and/or other associated needs.

Our strategy appreciates the fact that many of these learners can flourish in mainstream schools and as a result we have utilised our limited special provision capital fund allocation to create resourced provision in existing primary and secondary schools. We also accept that there are increasing numbers of children who struggle within a mainstream environment but who, with the right level of support and access to specialist approaches, are able to access the mainstream curriculum. Our new special school will be designed with this cohort in mind.

In Shropshire (as nationally) there is a trend of increasing complexity of need; children are presenting with higher levels of need, or with complex combinations of need that have not been experienced before. More and more learners cannot adequately be described by a single category of need and many have a range of overlapping factors that impact on their learning. We therefore do not wish to be overly prescriptive with our categorisations in respect of the new specialist free school.

## **SECTION TWO: THE SCHOOL**

The tables below list key details of the school proposed. Your application must be for a school that has these key characteristics. Please note you only need to complete the relevant table depending on the type of school.

<b>Type of school</b>	<b>Special</b>
<b>Area of SEN provided for (please detail designation alongside additional information known about the cohort's needs and abilities)</b>	<p>Social Emotional and Mental Health including Autistic Spectrum Disorder.</p> <p>This may include additional needs such as: -</p> <p>Communication and interaction difficulties. It is likely that these complexity of need may result in challenging behaviours including withdrawn and depressed attitudes, anxiety and self-harm and uncooperative behaviours.</p>
<b>Which local authorities are committed to commissioning places?</b>	Shropshire Council.
<b>How many places have been commissioned and by which local authority?</b>	Proposed 120 places are to be commissioned by Shropshire Council phased over a 3-year period. 50 places year one. 90 places year two and 120 places year 3.
<b>Per-pupil revenue funding the local authority would expect to pay (if a range of rates, please explain and detail the rates per pupil, including estimates for how many of the cohort will be in each band)</b>	<p>£10,000 per place plus top up anticipated to be in the range of £12000 to £14000, depending on the severity of need*</p> <p>*applicable as of 2020.</p>
<b>Age range</b>	5-16.
<b>Gender (Boys/Girls/Co-educational)</b>	Co- educational.
<b>Total number of proposed full-time equivalent places (once school is at full capacity – this should include 16-19 places but not nursery)</b>	120 places.
<b>Type of placements offered (e.g. full time, short term, part time)</b>	120 FTE including combinations of full time, part and short term in order to be as flexible as possible to meet individual needs and to allow for re-integration back into mainstream where appropriate.
<b>Number of nursery places, if applicable</b>	N/A
<b>Number of 16-19 places, if applicable</b>	N/A

**Any planned outreach, training and/or reintegration support (including details of funding that will be made available to support the school with this)**

It is the intention that the school would provide outreach support to improve outcomes for pupils with SEND attending mainstream schools by building capacity through bespoke training packages and programmes of support, working with staff and children over fixed periods to develop specific skills. Additional support for parents would also be freely available.

The Outreach support would be able to draw upon the experience and expertise of the special school staff, who would provide practical advice and strategies to support:

- assessment of need
- multisensory approaches for effective classroom access
- structuring curriculum routines and developing schedules
- person centred learning
- positive behaviour management approaches
- attachment disorder
- communication programmes
- disability awareness and working with pupils who have specific learning disabilities.

The ambitious plan is to site the special school on the same site as a mainstream all through school. Either as a fully integrated build or extended on a modular basis as funding permits. This approach would maximise the opportunities for young people to access a complete range curriculum options much in the way that resourced provision hubs in mainstream schools operate but on a much larger scale.

## SECTION THREE: RATIONALE AND CONTEXT FOR THE SCHOOL

This section describes the rationale and the context in which the new school will operate.

*3A. Please include a brief description of the existing provision in your area, future expected growth in pupil numbers and how you expect places to be filled.*

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.

	Year of opening	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6
Nursery							
Reception							
Key stage 1 (Y1-2)	10	20	30	30	30	30	30
Key stage 2 (Y3-6)	20	30	30	30	30	30	30
Key stage 3 (Y7-9)	20	30	30	30	30	30	30
Key stage 4 (Y10-11)		10	30	30	30	30	30
16-19: commissioner referred	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	50	90	120	120	120	120	120

The January 2020 school census recorded that there were **6,484** children in Shropshire identified with special educational needs (SEN), making up **14.6%** of the school population. This includes **1,448** children with statements or education, health and care (EHC) plans (**3.6%** of the school population) and **5,036** children receiving SEN support (**11.3%** of the school population).

Shropshire's size and rurality are its biggest challenges in terms of provision of specialist services. In part a consequence of this geography means a significantly higher than average proportion of children with SEN are being supported within mainstream settings. It follows that Shropshire's mainstream schools are supporting more pupils with highly complex needs than is the case elsewhere and as a result there is a real present need for additional special school capacity.

To further evidence this if Shropshire had the same proportion of learners in special school as is the average for its **statistical neighbours** (37.9% as opposed to 28.4%) this would represent an **additional 150 pupils in special schools plus an additional 60 pupils in designated specialist provision.**

If Shropshire had the same proportion of learners in special school as is the average for its **West Midlands neighbours** (55.4% as opposed to 28.4%) this would represent an **additional 426 pupils in special schools plus an additional 56 pupils in designated specialist provision.**

We are positive we are already supporting learners either in independent placements, out of county or in mainstream provision that would fill this school freeing up vital provision to support the growing numbers that require additional support. Whilst we are positive that we already have the numbers to fill this 120 places proposed, we would not consider doing this at the detriment of students who have successful stable placements so would propose that the schools is filled to capacity in a staged process over a three year period.

Whilst we are commissioning this on a solo bid basis we have consulted with our neighbouring authorities and have determined that a number would be interested in commissioning places should the bid be successful.

The current provision in Shropshire is noted below:

School/Academy/Base	SEN Specialism/ Services Provided	Age Range	Capacity
Severndale Specialist Academy	Moderate, severe, complex and profound learning difficulties; autism, complex medical conditions, physical and mobility difficulties	2 - 19	<b>410</b>
Severndale Specialist Nursery	Moderate, severe, complex and profound learning difficulties; autism, complex medical conditions, physical and mobility difficulties	2 to 5	*30
Severndale Mary Webb Satellite	Moderate/Severe learning difficulties	11 - 16	*30
Severndale Futures satellite	Broad Spectrum	16 - 19	
Woodlands School	Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs	11 - 16	<b>82</b>
Woodlands Acorns @ Oswestry (Holy Trinity)	Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs	9 - 11	*14
Woodlands Acorns @ Bishops Castle (CCBC)	Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs / ASD	9 - 11	*12

School/Academy/Base	SEN Specialism/ Services Provided	Age Range	Capacity
Tuition, Medical and Behaviour Support Service (TMBSS)	Encompasses the functions of a PRU, hospital school and 6 <sup>th</sup> day provision for permanently excluded pupils.	4 – 16 (KS1 – 4)	156 across various sites
Kettlemere Centre Hub @ Lakelands Academy	Communication and Interaction / ASD	11 - 16	24
Hub @ Sir John Talbot School	Communication and Interaction / MLD	11 - 16	12
Hub @ Whittington Primary School	Communication and Interaction / MLD	KS1 - 2	8
Hub @ St Andrews School, Nesscliffe	Communication and Interaction / MLD	KS 2	8
Hub@ St Mary's Bluecoat primary School, Bridgnorth	Communication and Interaction / MLD	KS 1 -2	8
The Dell (hub) @ Shrewsbury Cathedral School	Communication and Interaction / MLD	KS 1 -2	4
Planned to open from September 2020			

Hub @ St Lawrence Primary School, Church Stretton	Communication and Interaction / MLD	KS 1 - 2	8
Hub @ Kinnerley Primary School	Communication and Interaction / MLD	KS 1	4

\* *allocation of total placement to individual sites/phases*

*3B Please also include details as to how these proposed new arrangements are likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for children with special educational needs, and the outcomes for pupils, across the local authority and how you expect trusts to support this.*

Shropshire Council's overall aim is to improve outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) by promoting high aspirations and expectations. Children and young people with SEND and their families will feel happier, healthier, safer, more valued, more accepted, and more responsible for their actions.

This will mean that children and young people with SEND living in Shropshire

- are safe and well looked after in a supportive environment
- are resilient with good emotional wellbeing
- are positively engaged in their community
- are as healthy as they can be and see health inequalities reduced
- see any achievement gap narrowed and are successful in achieving their goals
- are prepared for independence and work in their adult lives

In order to achieve this, we will take a strategic approach to the commissioning and coordination of services for children and young people with SEND and their families.

Shropshire is an inclusive authority and works to ensure that, where possible, all children and young people will be able to attend their local mainstream school. Where this is not possible, Shropshire Council's aim is that the majority of children who require specialist provision will be able to access an appropriate school within a 30-minute commute.

Regardless of where children receive their education it is essential that all children and young people with SEN will access an appropriate curriculum.

Following an extensive consultation exercise outlined below:

DATE STAKEHOLDER EVENT OR METHOD OF COMMUNICATION		
10/11/2017	Parents and Carers	Shropshire Parent Carer Council AGM - Shrewsbury
10/11/2017 to 8/1/2018	Various Schools – Special, Mainstream and independent	Face to face meetings with a number of schools across Shropshire
29/11/2017 to 22/12/2017	All stakeholders	Strategic Review Discussion Document and Online questionnaire hosted on Shropshire Council's Website
11/1/2018	Headteachers and Local Authority Officers	Central Policy Group meeting
1/2/2018	Secondary Headteacher's	

84% of respondents were positive about the need for this special school. All were supportive of the increase options this would afford children and young people in Shropshire.

Shropshire has a comparatively high numbers with EHC Plans and Statements and also a high number of children supported in mainstream schools. The introduction the Graduated Support Pathway in September 2017 should allow mainstream schools to continue to support children who do not meet the thresholds for an EHCP. This reinforces the need for training and support for all education providers, and for skill-sharing between the special and mainstream sectors that it is hoped the free school can in part provide.



## SECTION FOUR: THE PROPOSED LOCATION AND SITE

This section describes the provisional site.

<p><b>Full address and full post-code</b></p>	<p>Land at Squinter Pip Way, Bowbrook, Shrewsbury, Shropshire. SY58QB</p> <p><b>Google maps location:</b> <a href="#">google maps location</a></p>
<p><b>Size of site</b></p>	<p>Approximately 7 ha</p>
<p><b>Further details on site (for example, current use/your reasons for choosing it/further developments (e.g. housing) planned for area</b></p>	<p>Bowbrook is a village in Shropshire and a western suburb of the larger conurbation of Shrewsbury. Bowbrook is an area undergoing significant development in terms of housing and it is anticipated that the population will grow rapidly over the next few years. The land proposed for use is currently owned by the Local Authority and is not currently used.</p> <p>Shrewsbury holds the largest population of learners in Shropshire and as such is the area which creates the largest demand for SEND places and in particular SEMH and ASD provision. This would mean that travel to learn times on the whole would be kept to a minimum. The location also provides access to the road and rail networks making it for more accessible than other suitable locations in Shropshire.</p> <p>Whilst this is the preferred location at this time, there are also another 3 suitable locations all owned by the Local Authority that were identified as part of the Free School Bid.</p> <p>Using building bulletin 104 guidelines for SEND and Alternative Provision we estimate the school would require a floor area of between 2500m<sup>2</sup> and 2790m<sup>2</sup>.</p> <p>The site will be made available to the incoming trust by way of a standard academy lease. The Council will retain the freehold.</p>