

Specification for a new Residential and Day School in Bath and North East Somerset

Introduction

Under section 6A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the ‘free school presumption’) where a local authority identifies the need to establish a new school it must, in the first instance, seek proposals to establish an academy. Bath and North East Somerset Local Authority has identified the need to establish a new Residential and Day School for pupils aged 11 – 17 with complex needs in the areas of Autism with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties. The school will be based in Keynsham and is planned to open in September 2026.

The authority is therefore seeking proposals from appropriate academy trusts to open this new school. This school would be deemed a free school. Proposers should complete the Free School Presumption application form and return it to Education_Commissioning@bathnes.gov.uk. Once the appointment has been made there will be an expectation that the Trust appointed runs a tender process to appoint the provider to run the residential element of the project, although the Trust may decide to run the residential element itself. We have included information on the expectation of the care side for information.

The Regional Director (RD) for the South West Region on behalf of the Secretary of State, will consider the local authority assessments and recommendations before deciding which proposer is in the best position to take forward the new school. The Regional Director will inform the local authority and the successful proposer of its decision, and the local authority will inform any unsuccessful proposers.

If you would like further information or wish to discuss your application, please contact Olwyn Donnelly Head of Education Commissioning email – Olwyn_Donnelly@bathnes.gov.uk

Please return your completed application form found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/establishing-a-new-school-free-school-presumption> (See Annex B) to Education_commissioning@bathnes.gov.uk

Timelines and Bid Process



NB: the local authority led free school presumption route is a different route to the DfE’s central free school programme. Further information about the DfE’s central free school

programme can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/opening-a-free-school>

Background

In-line with the SEND Education Strategy & Action Plan for Transformation and Sufficiency 2021-2024 B&NES are committed to increasing the number of places for children and young people with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) within the local area. In B&NES we are now placing out of county both in other LA schools, which are now often at full capacity, and in the independent sector. Demand for Specialist School places has outstripped capacity and has increased the reliance on out of county placements. This is significantly more costly financially and impacts outcome measures for the child/young person (CYP) as they can no longer be supported close to home.

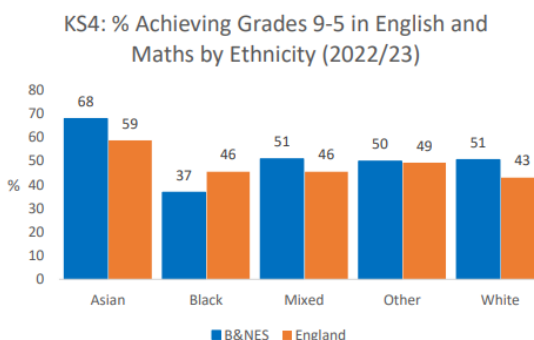
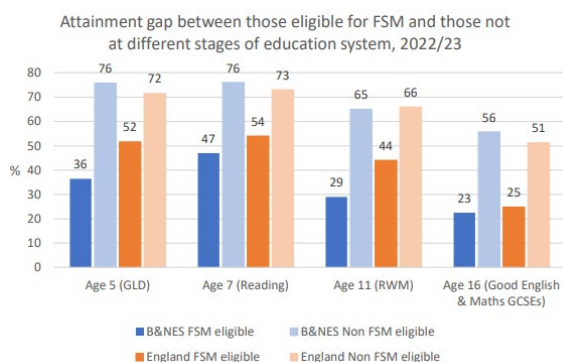
There is currently no residential provision in the area that caters for the needs of the most complex CYP. SEND residential provision within area is urgently needed to meet demand and to curb the escalation of need of CYP and their families, and referrals to specialist services. Therefore, the proposal is that a small school with a residential element is opened within the B&NES locality.

Data

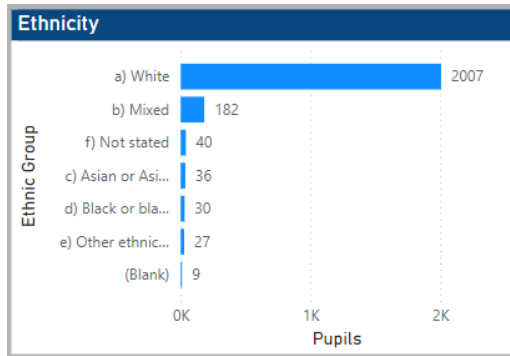
The National data shows the percentage of EHPs as 4.1% in 22/23. In the same year the B&NES percentage was 5.1%.

The population in B&NES has also increased:

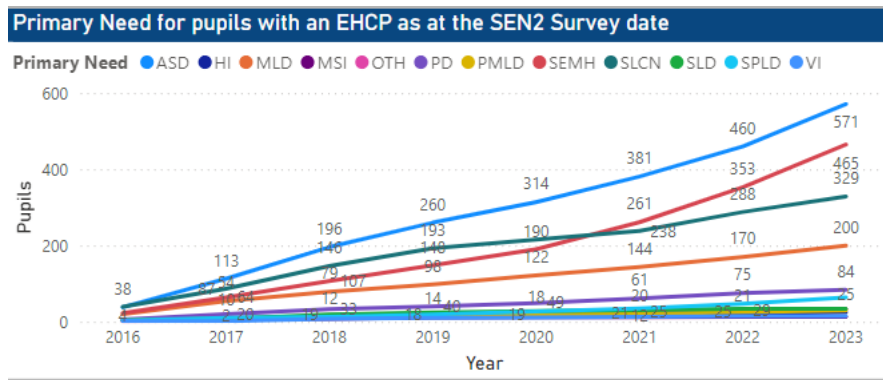
Age	Mid 2012	Mid 2022
10-14	9,421	10,721
15-19	12,380	14,878



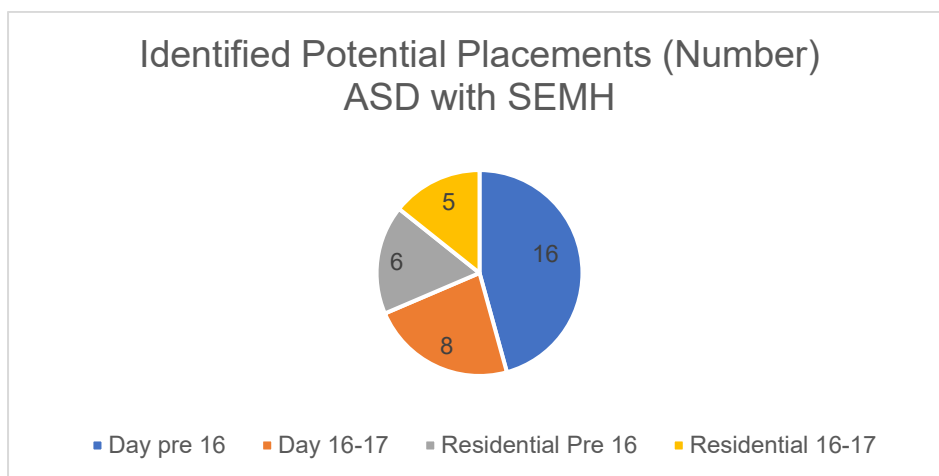
The graph below shows the mix of ethnicity for young people with a current Education Health and Care Plan in B&NES



The following graph shows the levels of need of the young people in B&NES with ASD and SEMH the highest groups and the steepest increase. The proposed new school will cater for those with both needs – our most complex group of students.



The Following Graph shows potential identified placements for the new school based on the current cohort in B&NEs with the correct profile and currently placed in high-cost placements:



Site

A building has been identified in Keynsham by utilising the closure of the care home Charlton House. A feasibility study of the building has been completed to ascertain the adaptations required. The funding of all works relating to the adaptations will be funded by B&NES Local Authority.

School

The proposal is to open the school in September 2026. The school will consist of:

- 12 beds for residential use
- 2 beds for staff
- 18 day placements

The school will cater for pupils aged between 11 and 17 in both the day and residential provision. Young people can only be accommodated residentially up to the day before their 18th birthday. They can however be accommodated up to the year in which they reach 19 on a day placement. It is anticipated that the majority of residential placements will be for 52 weeks.

The designated need of the cohort is complex needs covering for example ASD with additional needs in particular social, emotional and mental health needs. The school will offer places to complex CYP who need full therapeutic care.

Specification for the 30-place school for young people with Complex Needs

Facilities:

- Classrooms, breakout rooms, meeting rooms, staff rooms, communal areas and a kitchen
- Outdoor areas

These facilities will be designed according to the requirements of BB104 for special school provision and to accommodate the specific needs of young people with complex needs.

1. Staffing and Support

Outline the staffing requirements and structure for the school taking into account the ratio of staff to pupil to ensure adequate supervision and support is provided including:

- Headteacher
- Senior Leadership Team
- Teaching Staff – subject specific
- Support staff including HLTA's, TA's and SMSA's
- Kitchen staff
- Administrative personnel

In addition, these young people will need specialist support, for example Mentoring, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy. These specialist agencies will be commissioned by the school where the provision is highlighted in the EHCP under Section F. Where the provision is designated as a Health need (for example Alternative & Augmentative Communication or Eating and Drinking Needs) this will be provided by the local NHS Health Services. Please outline how these support agencies will be engaged.

Identify the need for staff training in such areas as behaviour management and autism.

Alongside specific training for all staff such as AET training for autism and Team Teach to support behaviour, staff can access training via the B&NES Hub

<https://thehub.bathnes.gov.uk/Page/35566>

2. Curriculum Specification

Education Plan

Provide a plan of how you would deliver your educational vision. The plan should be ambitious and deliverable, which is consistent with your vision, pupil intake and financial plan.

Give clear information on the following:

- Your curriculum approach and approaches to meeting the pupils' specialist needs
- Set out your curriculum approach to teaching and learning - specifically how this will ensure the curriculum is delivered in a robust and effective manner, meeting the needs of the expected intake
- Provide information about the subjects/activities:
 - Academic - provide intent and implementation
 - Specialist/ therapeutic
 - Life skills/vocational/enrichment
- Describe the proposed learning environment to support the curriculum offer. The length of the school day, to include any enrichment/ life skills / 24-hour curriculum activities
- Provide information about any bespoke curriculum provision
- Give information about any partnerships that would support the delivery of your education plan and curriculum vision

- Provide the strategies that will be in place to support pupils to be successful when they enter and leave the school

Measuring pupil performance effectively and setting challenging expectations

- The following information should be provided:
 - How you will establish a baseline of pupil's current level of attainment
 - Your explicit, ambitious and realistic expectations for pupil performance, behaviour and attendance and how your assessment system will allow pupil performance and progress to be measured and improved
 - How you will review success measures and expectations regularly to improve the school's performance
 - How you will involve parents and report progress to them
 - How you will share this information regularly and effectively with the Local Authority, and how this will ensure:
 - Appropriate provision is being made for each pupil
 - Successful progression into adulthood

Staffing

How will you ensure that your staff structure:

- Matches your proposed curriculum plan
- Complies with the statutory responsibilities of a special school, including child protection
- Includes an appropriate balance of roles, experience and expertise to meet the complex needs and challenges of this pupil intake
- Can be delivered within your expected income. Your plans for an affordable staffing structure, which takes account of your curriculum plan
- Your planned strategy for successfully recruiting and training high-quality staff to meet this specialist need

3. Safety and Security:

Give clear information on establishing safety and security protocols to ensure the physical and emotional safety of children in the school:

- Include measures to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying, abuse, or self-harm, with clear reporting and escalation procedures in place

4. Partnerships and Communication

Outline proposals to show how you will:

- Link with parents/carers, local organisations, support agencies to support the young people in the school
- Ensure there are clear lines of communication with stakeholders and relevant agencies to share information, where appropriate, regarding the young people's progress and challenges and to ensure the right support is provided at the right time
- Facilitate collaborative decision-making processes to ensure the best interests of children are prioritised at all times.

5. Legal and Regulatory Compliance

Provide assurance that the school will be operated in accordance with relevant legislation, regulations and standards governing residential schools. Including for example:

- Safeguarding policies
- Ofsted compliance and regulations
- Record Keeping
- Compliance to the National Minimum Standards for Residential Schools - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/647f53155f7bb700127fa5c9/Residential_special_schools_national_minimum_standards.pdf
- Compliance with B&NES Council Corporate Strategy 2020 - 2024
- Compliance with the Education Act 1996, The Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice 2014 and the SEND Improvement Plan 2023

6. Financial Breakdown

A full financial breakdown of how the school and attached residential facility will be funded including:

- Staffing costs
- Running costs
- Support agency costs
- Costs of placements both day and residential showing how the costs of the provision would be covered
- Current financial position of the MAT/SAT

Education charges for individual pupils will be negotiated between the Trust and the LA with the support of a provision map provided by the Trust. As such, individual pupil costs will vary but it is anticipated that the total educational cost (including element 3 top up by the LA) will be in the region of £30,000 per annum. The financial breakdown will need to illustrate how these indicative costs could be met.

Residential charges for 52-week educational placements will be negotiated between the Trust and Social Services. As such, individual pupil costs will vary but it is anticipated that the total residential cost will be in the region of £80,000 - £90,000 per annum. The financial breakdown will need to illustrate how these indicative costs could be met.

7. Trust Policies and Systems

Applicants should provide details of their policies and systems that will directly inform the management and operation of the school, for example in relation to quality assurance, safeguarding, school improvement and pupil progress tracking.

8. Vision/Capacity and Capability

Applicants should take account of the relevant criteria in Annex C of the free school presumption guidance [Annex C Presumption Guidance](#)

As a minimum, please ensure you include the following:

- A strong educational vision and a curriculum delivery plan based on high standards of attainment for each key stage
- Plans for appropriate engagement with the local community and parents during the pre-opening period and any on-going engagement
- Excellent support facilities to meet the needs of all the young people particularly looked after young people
- A commitment to excellent outcomes and high quality of teaching and learning
- The resources you would draw on and/or deploy to support the development of the new free school by the opening date
- Clear evidence that you have the range of skills and abilities necessary to set up and then run a school effectively, including managing school finances; leadership; project management; marketing; human resources; safeguarding; and health and safety
- How the school would be organised and what the governance arrangements would look like, including a diagram of the proposed structures
- How you will oversee and tender for the running of the residential element of the

school. Bids that propose working with a partner agency to deliver the residential provision will be considered, however the single/multi-academy trust will be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the leadership, management, and delivery of the residential and welfare provision in the school and take appropriate action where necessary

9. Commissioning and Admissions:

BANES acknowledge that places cannot be reserved for BANES only. Places at the School are subject to the children having an EHCP and;

- a) parental preference for the school irrespective of where the child lives; and
- b) the base being suitable for the child's age, aptitude, ability and special educational needs; and
- c) the child or young person's attendance at the school not being incompatible with the efficient education of others.

Residential element:

Given that B&NES council have provided the capital for this project, BANES stipulate the following:

- BANES to have first priority offer on all 12 places to be managed via the SEND consult process
- Preferential rates will be agreed and maintained for BANES young people at the residential school, regardless of whether the unit is filled or not
- Placements will be made for the residential provision in conjunction with Children's Social Care/Adult Social Care

Remuneration

For the educational element (day provision) of the school remuneration is based on place funding and top-up funding. Place funding is base funding per place. Top-up funding is allocated per child through their EHCP band to meet their needs as outlined in Section B of the plan and to provide the provision as outlined in Section F of the plan.

Each place will be funded by Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)/BANES to the Trust commissioned to run the school.

The ESFA will provide funding to the academy for each filled commissioned place at a rate of £10,000 based on the High Needs template. Each unfilled commissioned place is funded at a rate of £10,000 based on the Local Authority submission (APT) for each academic year.

In the circumstances where the LA requests that the school take additional children over the commissioned number, BANES will fund additional places above commissioned place numbers, then this has to be negotiated with the LA and it is not automatically £10,000 per annum pro rata.

Top-up Funding is through a banding process and will be agreed between BANES Council and the Trust commissioned to run the provision. Place Funding will start from the date of opening and then Top Up Funding will begin from when each pupil is admitted. Top-up funding will be negotiated and agreed between the Trust commissioned to run the provision and B&NES Council.

For the residential element, remuneration will be provided by Children's Social Care for 52-week placements. Although it is up to prospective providers to provide a full financial breakdown regarding the safe and sustainable running of the residential element, indicative average annual costs for a pupil on a 52-week placement have been calculated in the region of £80,000 - ££90,000 per anum.

Specification for a Residential Children's Home for Children with Complex Needs Linked to a School

The residential facility would use a trauma informed approach.

Introduction: 12 bedrooms with 2 staff sleep in rooms, linked to school for children with complex needs.

Location and Facilities: Located in Keynsham

- 12 bedrooms
- communal living areas
- recreational spaces
- Outdoor areas suitable for children's activities and exercise.

Need to ensure the facilities are designed to accommodate the specific needs.

1. Staffing and Support:

Outline the staffing requirements, including:

- Responsible individual
- Registered Manager
- qualified residential care workers
- specialised support staff (e.g., therapists, nurses)
- administrative personnel
- Specify the staff-to-child ratio to ensure adequate supervision and support for children with complex needs

Need to identify emphasise the need for staff training in areas such as behaviour management, communication strategies personal care and working with children with disabilities. to meet the full requirements of the educational offer. Details regarding staffing will need to outline the skill mix and daytime and nighttime staffing costs (the latter including waking and sleeping).

2. Programming and Support Services: -

Describe the programming and support services offered to children in the residential home, including educational support, therapeutic interventions, and recreational activities. - Ensure alignment with the curriculum and goals of the linked school to facilitate continuity of learning and development. - Include provisions for individualised support plans tailored to

each child's unique needs, with input from parents, caregivers, and multidisciplinary professionals.

3. Health and Wellbeing:

Specify provisions for medical care, including access to healthcare professionals, medication management, and emergency response protocols. - Outline strategies for promoting the physical and mental wellbeing of children, including healthy meals, regular exercise, and access to counselling and psychological support services.

4. Safety and Security:

Give clear information on establishing safety and security protocols to ensure the physical and emotional safety of children in the residential home. - Include measures to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying, abuse, or self-harm, with clear reporting and escalation procedures in place. - Implement safeguards to protect children's privacy and dignity, including supervision during personal care routines and respect for cultural and religious practices.

5. Partnerships and Communication:

Indicate how you will foster partnerships with parents, caregivers, neighbours and external agencies to support the holistic development of children in the residential home. - Establish regular communication channels to keep stakeholders informed about children's progress, challenges, and achievements. - Facilitate collaborative decision-making processes to ensure the best interests of children are prioritised at all times.

6. Quality Assurance and Evaluation:

Describe how you will implement systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of care and services provided in the residential home. - Conduct regular assessments of outcomes, satisfaction levels, and compliance with regulatory standards. - Use feedback from children, families, staff, and external stakeholders to drive continuous improvement and innovation in service delivery.

7. Legal and Regulatory Compliance:

Show that there will be compliance with relevant legislation, regulations, and standards governing residential children's homes, safeguarding, and special education. - Obtain necessary licenses and certifications and maintain accurate records/documentation to demonstrate compliance with regulatory requirements.

8. Budget and Financial Management: (see attached spreadsheet, below.)

Provide a detailed budget outlining the financial resources required to operate the residential children's home effectively. - Identify sources of funding, including government grants, tuition fees, and donations, and establish financial management procedures to

ensure transparency and accountability. By adhering to this specification, the residential children's home will be equipped to provide high-quality care and support to children with complex needs, promoting their holistic development and wellbeing in collaboration with the linked school and other stakeholders.

Impact & Equalities Assessment

The Equalities Impact Assessment carried out by the Local Authority regarding the project can be seen on the B&NES website inviting applications to run the new school <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/if-youre-proposer> .

The Academy sponsor will be expected to continue to evaluate the impact as the school is being built.

