



Department  
for Education

# **Local authority commissioned Special free schools**

**Seeking proposals to establish a  
Special free school**

**Portsmouth**

**June 2018**

## **Overview**

Local authorities play a key role in placing pupils with 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 closes at **mid-day on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2018**.

## **Contact details and further information**

### **Local Authority Lead for further information**

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Head of Sufficiency, Participation and Resources  
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### **Local Authority Contact for queries about the site**

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School Place Planning and Capital Strategy Officer, Portsmouth City Council  
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### **RSC Contact**

Maria Dawes  
Deputy Regional Schools Commissioner, South East England and South London  
(SESL)  
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## Section 1 - THE SCHOOL

This section lists key details of the school proposed. Your application must be for a school that has these key characteristics.

<b>Which local authorities are committed to commissioning places?</b>	Portsmouth City Council and Hampshire County Council
<b>How many places have been commissioned and by which local authority?</b>	<p>Size of school: 40 places</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 places at KS1-KS4 will be commissioned by Hampshire County Council.</li> <li>• 30 places at KS1-KS4 will be commissioned by Portsmouth City Council.</li> </ul>
<b>Type of SEN</b>	A school for children with social communication needs and/or Autism and associated challenging behaviour and/or sensory needs.
<b>Per-place funding you expected to be paid</b>	<p>Per place funding would include £10k per place plus Element 3 top up, provided at 3 banding rates, depending on assessed need.</p> <p>Rates would be set by Portsmouth Schools Forum for the 2019/20 financial year, and the banding descriptors would be agreed with the academy sponsor.</p> <p>Indicative (and therefore subject to review) element 3 banding rates are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core band £14k - for the majority of students, likely to be taught in groups of 6-8 with 1 teacher and 2 teaching assistants (estimated to be around 60% of the cohort).</li> <li>• Enhanced band £17k - for students who need a higher level of support, including being taught in groups of 6 (maximum), with 1 teacher and 2 or more teaching assistants (estimated to be around 30% of the cohort).</li> <li>• Exceptional band £24k - for students requiring a very high level of support, tailored to their needs, including one to one adult support (estimated to be around 10% of the cohort).</li> </ul>
<b>Age range</b>	The age range includes Key Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4.
<b>Boys/Girls/Co-educational</b>	Co-educational

<b>Total number of places.</b>	40 places
<b>Early years provision?</b>	N/A
<b>16-19 provision?</b>	N/A
<b>Community use/shared facilities</b>	The site includes designated open space for community use (a Multi-use games area, children's play area, skate ramp and adjacent playing fields).
<b>Number of residential places</b>	N/A

The Portsmouth Parent Carer Forum supports this bid as Portsmouth parents feel that a specialist and inclusive provision is greatly needed in the city. To deliver this, the free school will have the right environment staffed by highly skilled professionals providing effective strategies and resources. This will enable children and young people to access the appropriate education, achieving the right outcomes: to be part of the community, have a job and be independent.

**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.**

	<b>No. of students in first year of opening - 2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	0	0
<b>Year 2</b>	0	1
<b>Year 3</b>	2	1
<b>Year 4</b>	2	2
<b>Year 5</b>	2	2
<b>Year 6</b>	2	2
<b>Year 7</b>	8	8
<b>Year 8</b>	2	8
<b>Year 9</b>	2	4
<b>Year 10</b>	8	4
<b>Year 11</b>	2	8
<b>Totals</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>

Children could be placed in the school in any year group, the vast majority will be placed from Year 3 to Year 11. However, it is hoped that the majority of children will be placed at the start of Year 7 and will remain in the school for the secondary phase of their education. In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to place a child in Year 2.

We envisage that there will be one group of approximately 8 Year 3 to 6 pupils plus 4 groups of Year 7 to 11 pupils.

## Section 2 - THE PROPOSED LOCATION AND SITE

This section describes the provisional site.

- ***Address and postcode:***

Site of the old Wymering Community Centre  
Sevenoaks Road, Portsmouth, PO6 3YB

- ***Size of site:***

9490m<sup>2</sup>

- ***Current use including planning designation:***

Land designations are covered by adopted policy PCS13. Site is designated as "City of Portsmouth protected Open Space". PCS13 land areas surrendered for development must be re-provided.

- ***Estimated date the site would be available for works to commence:***

The site is currently in the ownership of the Local Authority. The site is available immediately.

- ***Tenure upon which the site will be made available:***

125 year peppercorn lease.

- ***If the site is co-located with another school, how will shared access work?***

N/A

- ***Building specifications and high-level design plans:***

The ESFA has undertaken a feasibility study but detailed design plans are not yet available.

## **Section 3 – RATIONALE AND CONTEXT FOR THE SCHOOL**

### ***Admission Criteria***

Young people placed within the Free School will:

1. Have an Education Health and Care Plan or be referred for the purposes of being assessed for an EHC plan in accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014 (Section 34).
2. Be in the age range of 5 -16 years; Year 1 to Year 11.
3. Have Autism and/or social communication difficulties as their primary Special Educational Need that cannot be met within a mainstream school.
4. In addition to their primary need, young people placed within the Free School may have associated difficulties in learning, challenging behaviour, Social Emotional and Mental Health needs and sensory integration difficulties.

### ***Admission Procedures***

1. All children to be considered for admission; including those being placed by Hampshire County Council will be referred via Portsmouth City Council's Inclusion Support Panel (ISP).
2. Following agreement at ISP, a formal request will be made in writing by the Council to the school accompanied by the child's Education, Health and Care Plan, parental views, the annual review report and copies of all professional reports.
3. On receipt of a request for admission the head teacher and governors will consider the child's needs and reply to Portsmouth City Council SEND Team within 15 days.
4. The Free School will contact the SEND Team to check the appropriateness of a parental visit. However, it should be made clear that the placement decision is made by the Local Authority.
5. In the event that the school considers the child unsuitable for admission for any reason, the head teacher will put their concerns in writing and the case will be reconsidered at the next panel. Ultimately the Council is the placing authority.
6. A final decision to confirm the placement and finalise or amend the Education Health and Care Plan will be confirmed in writing to both parents and school. It is the Council's aim that all placements are made with full parental agreement.
7. All pupils placements will be reviewed at least annually, where the review recommends a change of placement this will need to be taken to ISP for consideration.

### ***An estimate of how the school will be funded***

The funding model is based on 'core', 'enhanced' and 'exceptional' banded funding rates. We have assumed that there will be approximately 10% of pupils in the exceptional band, 30% in enhanced and 60% in core.

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

### **Mainstream school provision**

Portsmouth has 58 mainstream schools (including academies). Of these, 9 have an Inclusion Centre (additionally resourced provision), with places commissioned by the LA for pupils with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

- 2 for sensory impairment (1 primary, 1 secondary) - total of 14 places.
- 2 for communication and interaction difficulties (focusing on speech language and communication needs) - total of 30 places.
- 2 for communication and interaction difficulties (focusing on children and young people with autism, 1 primary and 1 secondary) - total of 22 places.
- 2 for communication and interaction difficulties,(focusing on social communication difficulties) - total of 17 places.
- 1 for children with social, emotional and mental health difficulties - 14 places plus 2 for 6<sup>th</sup> day provision for pupils in key stage 2 who have been permanently excluded.

### **Additional support for mainstream schools**

- An outreach service is commissioned from a partnership of all Portsmouth special schools to support mainstream schools and enable them to effectively meet pupils' special educational needs and enable children to continue to be included within mainstream schools.
- Specialist support for children with a sensory impairment is provided by the Inclusion Service.
- Schools can buy in additional support e.g. from the educational psychology service for pupils on SEN support.

## **Special school provision**

There are 5 special schools: 2 are maintained and 3 have academy status. These include:

- 1 specialist nursery school (Willows) - 42 FTE places.
- 1 primary (Cliffdale) and 1 secondary school (Redwood Park) for children with complex needs and autism - 104 and 141 places, respectively.
- 1 all-through school (Mary Rose Academy), including a small nursery for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties - 104 pre-16 places and 28 post-16 places.
- 1 secondary school (The Harbour School) (which also includes a Year 6) for children with social emotional and mental health difficulties (95 places). This school also delivers alternative provision for children from year 6 to year 11 (105 places), and education for children not able to access school for medical reasons. In addition, this school provides individual tuition and Multi-agency Behaviour Support as traded services.

## **Further education**

Students largely attend one of three local colleges in Portsmouth (Highbury and Portsmouth Colleges) or Havant (Havant & South Downs College). Portsmouth College includes specialist provision for young people with significant cognition and learning needs. Highbury College includes specialist provision for young people with social emotional and mental health needs.

## **Needs analysis**

Specialist educational provision in Portsmouth is full. Most nearby provision in neighbouring Hampshire is also full. From an analysis of pupils the council has had to place out of city, and from discussions with the Parent/Carer forum, the council identified a cohort of 10-15 children in Key Stages 2 to 4 for whom the specialist provision the council currently commissions doesn't easily meet their needs.

This is a group of children with social communication needs, many of whom have a diagnosis of autism, with associated challenging behaviour and/or sensory difficulties, but who do not necessarily have significant learning needs.

Hampshire County Council is experiencing similar demand and need 10-15 places for children with social communication needs in the south of Hampshire.

The need for a special school for Portsmouth children with this profile of needs has been confirmed by the SEND Strategic Review which has been carried out over the 2017-18 academic year.

## Section 4 – VIABILITY OF THE NEW SPECIAL SCHOOL

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

Portsmouth has a growing population and an increasing number of children with SEND. Overall prevalence of special educational needs (SEN) in Portsmouth is higher than the national average (16.5% compared to 15.4%). Portsmouth has a higher percentage of children with EHCPs than the national average (3.1% compared to 2.8%). The council has also seen a significant increase in requests for statutory assessment this academic year.

In particular, there has been an increase in children with more complex needs, with the continuing increase in the number of babies with complex needs who survive the neonatal period and infancy in particular. Related to this, there has been an increase in the number of out of city placements from 2% in 2015 to 11% in 2016.

Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties is the most common primary need for those with SEN Support. Speech, Language and Communication Needs is the most common need for those with a EHCP.

The cohort of children the council has identified as requiring this provision are currently attending out of city provision or are in the city's oversubscribed special schools, but do not have an appropriate peer group as their learning needs are not as significant as their peers'. Placement of these pupils within the city would enable the council to make more effective use of the available funding by making provision within the city, would reduce the travel times for pupils who often find the transitions between home and school difficult to manage due to their autism, and would reduce the pressure on the home to school transport budget.

### ***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)***

The council has seen both out of city and home to school transport budgets overspend in recent years and whilst the council supports the creation of additional high needs places within the city, clarification will be sought in terms of the DSG High Needs Block to ensure financial viability for both the special free school and other special school provision in the city, in particular place funding and element 3 top up funding.

**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	9	55	79	90
Resourced provision and units outside LA	0	0	0	0
Special schools (either maintained or academies) inside LA	5	344	449	490
Special schools (either maintained or academies) outside LA	13	28	36	30
Independent / non-maintained special schools inside LA	0	0	0	0
Independent / non-maintained special schools outside LA	20	15	31	20
Mainstream schools inside LA	57	360	351	370
Mainstream schools outside LA	24	63	46	30
General FE colleges (if relevant) inside LA	2	N/A	0	50
General FE colleges (if relevant) outside LA	5	N/A	55	30
Specialist FE providers (if relevant) inside LA	0	N/A	0	0
Specialist FE providers (if relevant) outside LA	0	N/A	0	0

***Any changes to capacity you are already expecting (e.g. planned expansions / closures / other new schools and how this school would sit alongside those)***

The council has already invested significantly in Redwood Park and Cliffdale academies, which has not led to an increase in capacity, but has enabled the schools to educate pupils with more complex needs. The council would want to review the suitability of children already placed in out of city provision, in partnership with the child and their parent, through the annual review process. The council is aware, however, that it may not be in the best interests of the child to move children who are settled and making progress in their current educational placement and so it is likely that placement in the new special free school will increase gradually over the first few years and that the new provision will enable the council to avoid placing children out of city in the future, rather than being able to move all of the currently placed out of the city back to Portsmouth.