

**OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

# **Oxfordshire SEND Sufficiency Delivery Strategy 2022/23-2026/27**

**March 2023**

**School Organisation & Planning Team**

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## Contents

1. Executive Summary .....	4
2. Glossary .....	6
3. Introduction and background.....	7
Statutory duties.....	7
Vision.....	7
Scope of this Strategy.....	7
<i>Figure 1: Tiers of provision.....</i>	<i>8</i>
Other Related Oxfordshire Strategies and Programmes of Work .....	9
National Policies and Strategies .....	10
4. Context and background .....	12
Current Oxfordshire Provision .....	12
<i>Figure 2: Specialist provision for SEMH and ASD – 2022.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Figure 3: Specialist provision for SEMH and ASD - 2022 .....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Figure 4: Provision for needs other than SEMH and ASD – 2022.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Figure 5: Specialist provision for needs other than SEMH and ASD – 2022.....</i>	<i>15</i>
Special School Capacities .....	16
<i>Figure 6: Current capacities of Oxfordshire’s special schools.....</i>	<i>17</i>
National and Oxfordshire trends .....	17
<i>Figure 7: Percentage of EHCPs educated in each provision sector.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Figure 8: Total EHCPs in each Key Stage educated in each provision sector, 2022 .....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Figure 9: Numbers of EHCPs by primary need .....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Figure 10: Types of primary need as percentage of total EHCPs .....</i>	<i>19</i>
Equalities .....	20
<i>Figure 11: Percentage of pupils with an EHCP by ethnicity, England 2022 .....</i>	<i>20</i>
Oxfordshire costs.....	20
<i>Figure 12: Total expenditure on SEND provision, 2020-2022 .....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Figure 13: Expenditure by type of provision on SEND provision, 2018-2022, excluding FE .....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Figure 14: Projected High Needs Block deficit by 2027 .....</i>	<i>22</i>
Consultation.....	22
5. Planning for future needs .....	24
Forecasting the need for SEND provision.....	24
<i>Figure 15: Projected pupils with EHCPs in Oxfordshire (excluding the FE sector) .....</i>	<i>24</i>

<i>Figure 16: Projected deficit of special school places 2023-2027</i> .....	25
Spatial population growth .....	26
<i>Figure 17: Estimated rate of growth in pupil population 2022-27 by SEND learning community</i> .....	26
Housing growth.....	27
<i>Figure 18: Planned housing growth 2020-2031 by MSOA</i> .....	27
Type of primary need.....	28
Reducing dependence on INMSS provision .....	28
<i>Figure 19: Heatmap representing children and young people with EHCPs attending INMSS provision in Oxfordshire (points per square kilometre)</i> .....	28
<i>Figure 20: INMSS placements by primary need</i> .....	29
Prioritisation principles.....	29
6. Delivery priorities 2023-2027 .....	32
Mainstream inclusion .....	32
Resource Bases .....	32
Expansions of existing schools.....	32
New schools .....	33
7. Planned outcomes of this Strategy.....	35
<i>Figure 21: Specialist provision for SEMH and ASD - 2027</i> .....	36
<i>Figure 22: Specialist provision for SEMH and ASD – 2027</i> .....	36
<i>Figure 23: Provision for needs other than SEMH and ASD - 2027</i> .....	37
<i>Figure 24: Specialist provision for needs other than SEMH and ASD - 2027</i> ....	38
8. Decision-making processes: new schools and significant changes .....	39
9. Capital funding sources.....	40
10. Monitoring and evaluation .....	41
<b>APPENDIX: Capital Investment in Oxfordshire special schools in the last 10 years</b> .....	42
<b>ANNEX: Forecasts</b> .....	45

## 1. Executive Summary

The challenge of ensuring sufficient education provision for children and young people with Special Education Needs & Disabilities (SEND) is recognised as a national and local priority. The number of children subject to an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) is rising much more rapidly than can be explained by population growth alone, and the subsequent increase in demand for special school provision has been greater than the increase in the supply of maintained special school places. The growing deficit has been met through increased dependence on higher-cost Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMSS), resulting in unsustainable pressure on funding for SEND provision. A shortage of places also means it takes longer to place a child in suitable provision, and may mean that children have further to travel to school.

The detailed analysis in this Strategy of the growth in the numbers of children with EHCPs, existing specialist provision of all types, and forecasts for future demand for places, complements the Oxfordshire Local Area SEND Strategy, and is aligned with the DfE Delivering Better Value (DBV) Programme. It is informed by widespread consultation held during 2022 into the Local Area SEND Strategy 2022-27 and System Reform for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, as well as through the DBV Programme.

This SEND Sufficiency Delivery Strategy only considers the school-based provision for children and young people with EHCPs, and focuses on the demand for, and supply of, specialist SEND provision, whether that is in Resource Bases within mainstream schools or special schools. It does not extend into the commissioning of further and higher education provision.

Projections calculated by DfE-appointed DBV consultants of future numbers of EHCPs show that more children with EHCPs are expected to be educated within the mainstream sector, and mainstream schools will need to be supported to ensure excellence of provision. They also show a clear and urgent need for additional special school provision, especially to meet the rapid growth in the number of pupils needing specialist support for Social, Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH) and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) needs.

For the purposes of planning, SEND provision is considered on a geographic basis, as well as by type of special need and level of provision.

Maintained provision primarily for children with SEMH and/or ASD needs is currently concentrated in and around Oxford city. This is resulting in long travel journeys for pupils living elsewhere in the county, and, in conjunction with an overall shortage of provision, is also increasing the county's dependence on higher-cost independent and non-maintained provision. ASD is the fastest growing type of need in Oxfordshire, and now accounts for approximately a third of EHCPs.

This Strategy sets out a spatial framework to achieve a better distribution of special school provision for these needs, and to provide a structure for the phased expansion of the network of Resource Base provision.

This Strategy also sets out a spatial framework to inform prioritisation of new and expanded special school provision for needs other than SEMH/ASD. It sets an aspiration of a community special school in each of nine SEND Learning Communities.

Capital investment to provide additional SEND provision in Oxfordshire will focus on the following four priorities:

Priority 1: Local access to appropriate high quality provision

Priority 2: Reducing overall cost pressures

Priority 3: Meeting emerging needs

Priority 4: Efficient use of resources to maximise reach and scope of support

This Strategy aims to:

- Support mainstream inclusion, providing capital investment where necessary to resolve building related barriers.
- Open new Resource Bases through a phased and targeted approach, based on evaluation of the effectiveness of recently opened bases.
- Continue Oxfordshire's programme of expansion of existing special schools, where this is shown to be viable, and aligned to investment priorities.
- Open a new community special school in Didcot, completing the spatial framework for special schools focussing needs other than SEMH/ASD.
- Open new special schools focussing on SEMH and/or ASD needs in Faringdon and south-east Oxfordshire, complementing the new special school being built in Bloxham (opening January 2024).

Based on the DBV projections, without further action Oxfordshire would have a shortfall of over 600 maintained special school places by 2027, which would have to be met through increased use of the INMSS sector.

This Strategy's delivery priorities for 2023-2027 aim to reduce this deficit by creating approximately 450 new places through new and expanded special schools.

Based on current projections, by 2027 there would still be a deficit of maintained special school places after taking the actions included in this Strategy. However, this is based on projecting forward past growth in the use of special school provision. Other strands of Oxfordshire's SEND Strategy aim to reduce the use of special school provision by further supporting mainstream inclusion. The success of this work would reduce the scale of growth required in special school provision.

It is also the case for some children INMSS or out of county provision will always be the most appropriate provision, either due to the specialist nature of their needs, or because provision in other local authorities may be closer for pupils living near county borders. INMSS and out of county usage is not, therefore, expected to fall to zero.

This Strategy is a working document and will, therefore, be kept under review, to identify what other actions are necessary based on updated trends and forecasts.

## 2. Glossary

### Types of need

ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
C&I	Communication & Interaction (includes ASD and SLCN)
C&L	Cognition & Learning (includes SpLD, MLD, SLD, PMLD)
HI	Hearing Impairment
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulty
MSI	Multi-Sensory Impairment
PD	Physical Disability
PMLD	Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health. This category replaced Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulty (BESD) in 2015.
SLCN	Speech, language and Communication Needs
SLD	Severe Learning Difficulty
SpLD	Specific Learning Difficulty (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder, dyscalculia and dysgraphia)
VI	Visual Impairment

### Other terms

AP	Alternative provision (education for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education)
DBV	Delivering Better Value
DfE	Department for Education
EHCP	Education, Health & Care Plan
ESFA	Education, Skills & Funding Agency
INMSS	Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools

### 3. Introduction and background

This Strategy supports the [Oxfordshire Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Strategy 2022-2027](#), produced in 2022 by the SEND Strategy Development Group, with representatives from Oxfordshire County Council (education and social care), NHS Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, education settings and Oxfordshire Parent Carers Forum. It sets out how Oxfordshire County Council will work over the next five years to support Strategic Objective 2 of the Local Area Strategy - *Developing a continuum of local provision to meet the requirements of children and young people with SEND*, by increasing the sufficiency of special education provision.

#### Statutory duties

Local Authorities have duties under section 14 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure there is a sufficiency of school places available to meet the needs of all children and young people living within the authority area, or for whom they have responsibilities. This includes having regard to the need to secure provision for children and young people with SEND. These duties are further strengthened under the Equality Act 2010 and the Children and Families Act 2014.

#### Vision

Oxfordshire's ambition is for those with SEND to have rich and fulfilling lives at the heart of their communities.

Oxfordshire's aims for SEND sufficiency are:

- i. Ensure Oxfordshire has sufficient high quality school places to meet the needs of all children with special educational needs and disabilities; ensuring that the provision is developed in the right place, at the right time, with the additional places to address population growth and the identified increase in demand.
- ii. Provide support across Oxfordshire's mainstream schools to ensure they provide inclusive education, and adopts a 'local first' approach wherever appropriate.
- iii. Where appropriate, suitably resourced specialist provision as close to the home as possible.
- iv. Ensure the high needs block funding is spent effectively to meet the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities across Oxfordshire.

#### Scope of this Strategy

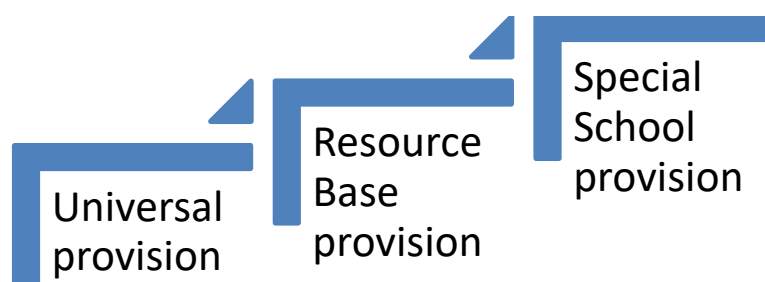
Specialist provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is currently classified as:

- **SEN support** - extra or different help is given from that provided as part of a mainstream school's usual curriculum. The pupil does not have an education, health and care plan.
- **Education, health and care plans (EHCP)** - a formal assessment has been made, and a document is in place that sets out the child's need and the extra

help they should receive. (Prior to September 2014, a statement of SEN was used.)

This Strategy only considers the school-based provision for children and young people with EHCPs.

School-based SEND provision is provided in Oxfordshire in three tiers:



*Figure 1: Tiers of provision*

**Universal provision:** most pupils with SEND are educated in mainstream schools. Every school is required to identify and address the SEN of the pupils that they support. Where a pupil is identified as having SEN, schools should take action to remove barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place, known as SEN support. Where this level of support proves insufficient, the pupil may move onto an EHCP, which may recommend a more specialist provision, but pupils with EHCPs are still very likely to be able to stay within a mainstream school, especially in the primary age group.

**Resource Base provisions** are places that are reserved at a mainstream school for pupils with a specific type of SEN, taught mainly within mainstream classes, but requiring a base and some specialist facilities around the school, which receive additional funding from the local authority. Pupils are allocated places through the EHCP process, and may be drawn from a wider area than the general school population.

**Special schools** are for pupils whose needs cannot be met in mainstream schools, and who need full-time specialist provision. Pupils are allocated places through the EHCP process.

This Strategy focuses on the demand for, and supply of, specialist SEND provision, whether that is in Resource Bases within mainstream schools or special schools. It does not extend into the commissioning of further and higher education provision.

The sufficiency of SEND provision is heavily dependent on the success of universal provision within mainstream schools. Supporting and developing that is a crucial strand of the county council's approach, but is beyond the scope of this Sufficiency Strategy. However, forecasting for SEND demand requires consideration of this cohort of children to understand what proportion of EHCP pupils will attend a mainstream setting.



## Other Related Oxfordshire Strategies and Programmes of Work

In December 2018 the county council Cabinet approved the Special Educational Needs Sufficiency of Places Strategy 2018-2027. This Strategy covered the period 2018-2022 in detail, and also laid the groundwork for longer term work. This new Strategy builds on that foundation, covering the period 2023-2027.

Under the 2018 Sufficiency Strategy, between 2018 and 2022:

- Primary and secondary Resources Bases have opened in mainstream schools in Bicester, for pupils with Communication & Interaction or SEMH needs (32 places).
- Accommodation for primary Resource Bases has been included within newly built primary schools in Oxford, Banbury, Witney, Didcot and Faringdon (36 places).
- Special school capacity was increased at Fitzwaryn School (Wantage), Bardwell School (Bicester), John Watson School (Wheatley) and Kingfisher School (Abingdon) (92 additional places).
- Northfield School, Oxford was rebuilt and expanded as The Orion Academy; The Iffley Academy, Oxford was also rebuilt through an ESFA funded project (79 additional places).
- Two new special schools have been approved by the Department for Education to open, with building work due to complete in 2024 and 2025 (up to 236 places).

As well as building on the 2018 Sufficiency Strategy, this updated Strategy is informed by, and aims to deliver against:

- **The Local Area SEND Strategy for children and young people aged 0 – 25 years.** This was updated by the SEND Strategy Development Group, with representatives from Oxfordshire County Council (education and social care), NHS Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, education settings and Oxfordshire Parent Carers Forum. A public consultation on the Local Area SEND Strategy ran from mid-January to mid-March 2022. This Sufficiency Strategy supports the implementation of the wider Local Area SEND Strategy by increasing local high-quality SEND provision.
- **Oxfordshire County Council System Reform for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.** At the same time as consulting on the Local Area Strategy, the county council consulted on specific proposals aimed at having more high-quality SEND education available closer to home, reducing reliance on out of county provision, and improving educational outcomes for children and young people with SEND. These included reforms to how SEND provision is funded; expanding the use of Resource Bases; increasing the supply of specialist provision; developing enhanced universal provision within schools; and ensuring a more coordinated approach to supporting children with SEND at the earliest opportunity. This Sufficiency Strategy is one strand of this systems reform programme of work.
- **DfE Delivering Better Value Programme.** This is a national programme targeted at local authorities with high levels of overspend on their High Needs

budget. It aims to identify local and national opportunities to improve the outcomes for children and young people with SEND. Government-appointed consultants have been working with Oxfordshire County Council to analyse data on SEND spending and outcomes; dig into the root causes of identified issues; and support the implementation of reform.

The Strategy also supports [Oxfordshire's Strategic Plan 2022-2025](#), which sets out Oxfordshire County Council's vision to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county.

Improving the sufficiency and distribution of specialist education provision directly supports the nine priorities detailed in the Oxfordshire's Strategic Plan:

- Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.
- Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire.
- Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents.
- Support carers and the social care system.
- Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network.
- Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces.
- Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential.
- Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy.
- Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit.

### National Policies and Strategies

In 2022, the Government published the [SEND Review: Right support, right place, right time](#), a Green Paper consultation on the special educational needs and disabilities and alternative provision (AP) system in England. The Government intends to publish a national SEND delivery plan, setting out the Government's response to the consultation and how the proposals will be implemented.

In the meantime, the Government has published [guidance on creating sustainable high needs systems](#), intended to help local authorities manage their high needs budgets and associated spending in a sustainable way. It is also running three programmes offering direct support in respect of the effectiveness and sustainability of LAs' high needs systems: the Safety Valve programme, the Delivering Better Value in SEND (DBV) programme, and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) support programme. Oxfordshire is included within the DBV programme.

Oxfordshire shares the Government's aspiration for a SEND system that offers children and young people the opportunity to thrive, with access to the right support, in the right place, and at the right time, so they can fulfil their potential and lead happy, healthy and productive adult lives.

The Government's aim is for a more inclusive system, where the vast majority of children and young people can access the support they need to prosper in their local mainstream setting. Much of its guidance is on the need for local authorities to proactively work to manage the numbers of EHCPs by meeting needs earlier, reducing escalation of need, promoting parental confidence, and ensuring suitable

thresholds and assessment processes. Oxfordshire's Local Area SEND Strategy and System Reform programmes of work also aim to support inclusion in mainstream schools, and increase parental confidence in that provision, to help reduce the pressure on special school capacity. That work lies outside the scope of this Sufficiency Strategy, but has the potential to significantly affect sufficiency needs.

Over time, the proposals set out in the Green Paper would be expected to change the patterns of demand for special education provision, but it will take some years for any changes to have a full effect. To reflect the changing national and local policy context, this Sufficiency Strategy focuses on a five-year period, in which Oxfordshire has an urgent need to reduce its dependence on high cost Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMSS), and reduce the travel distances pupils face to access suitable provision. The Strategy will be reviewed annually based on the latest data.

#### 4. Context and background

##### Current Oxfordshire Provision

For the purposes of strategic planning of places, provision is set out in this Strategy by broad category of special need and by geographical areas.

##### **Provision for SEMH and/or ASD needs**

Some special schools and Resource Bases focus primarily on children with SEMH and ASD needs, and incidence of these needs is growing fastest. Children in these schools and Resource Bases may also have other special needs.

Oxfordshire currently has five special schools primarily focused on children with severe SEMH and/or ASD needs; these children may also have other SEND. These schools are concentrated in and around Oxford city. One aim of this Strategy is to achieve a better distribution of provision, and to shape that, for planning purposes Oxfordshire is divided into four planning areas: North, Central, South East and South West, as shown below.

<b>Learning Community</b>	<b>Special School (capacities shown in Figure 6)</b>	<b>Primary Resource Bases</b>	<b>Secondary Resource Bases</b>
Bicester	<b>North:</b>	Southwold Primary School [C&I / SEMH, 12 places] Gagle Brook Primary School [C&I / SEMH, 12 places]	Whitelands Academy [SEMH, 8 places]
Banbury			
Bloxham			The Warriner School [C&I, 12 places]
Chipping Norton			
Woodstock			The Marlborough School [C&I, 24 places]*
Cumnor	<b>Central:</b> Endeavour Academy Orion Academy Northern House Academy The Iffley Academy Woodeaton Manor School		
Eynsham			
Kidlington			
Oxford		St Nicholas Primary School [C&I, 15 places]	The Cherwell School [C&I, 20 places]
Thame		St Andrew's Primary School [C&I, 10 places]	Lord Williams's School [C&I, 20 places]
Witney			
Wheatley			

Didcot	<b><u>South East:</u></b>		
Henley			
Sonning Common			
Woodcote			
Watlington			
Wallingford			
Abingdon	<b><u>South West:</u></b>		Fitzharry's School [C&I, 12 places]
Burford			
Carterton			
Faringdon			
Wantage			

Figure 2: Specialist provision for SEMH and ASD – 2022

\*Also shown in Figure 4 as Base also focuses on PD needs

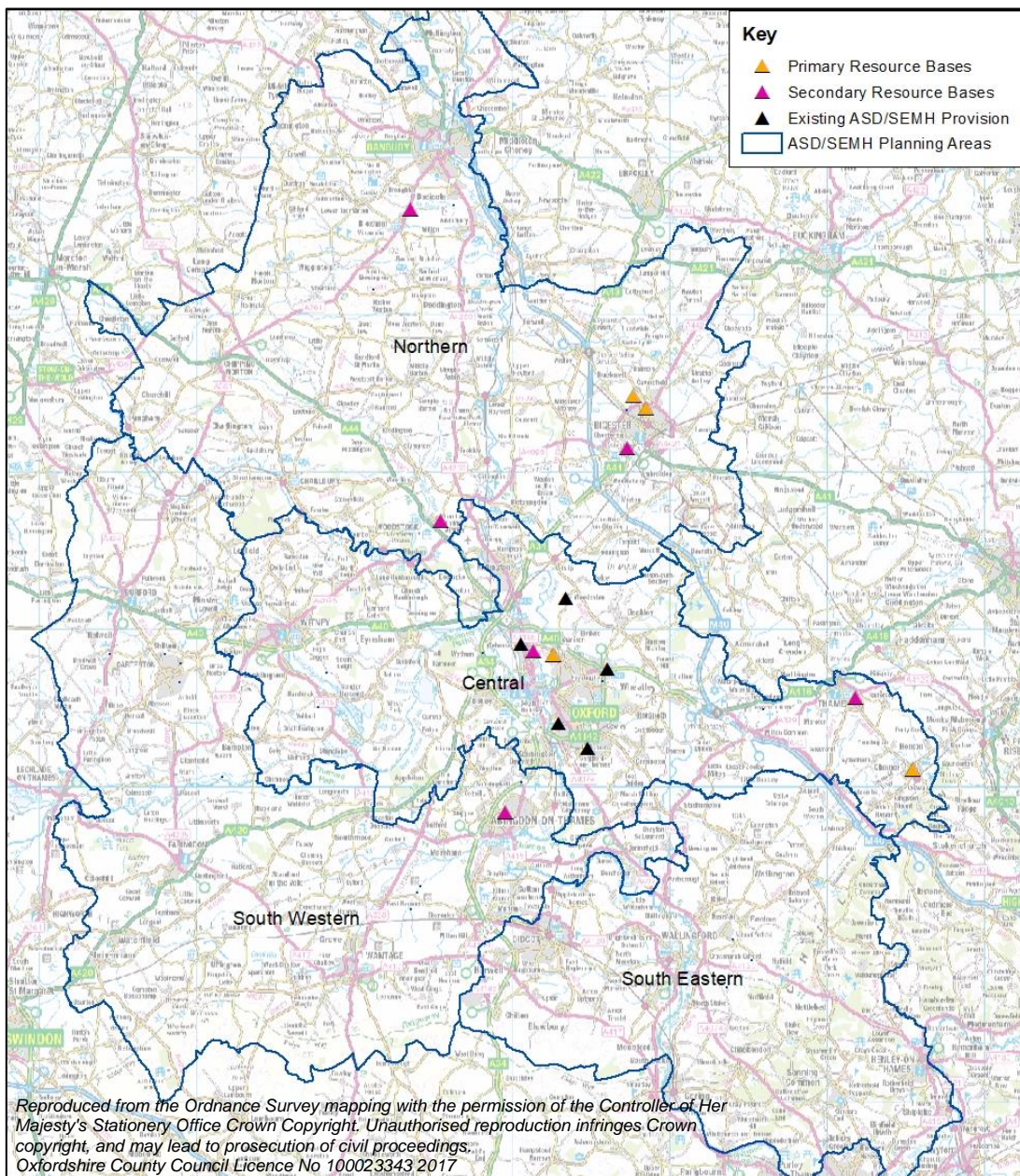


Figure 3: Specialist provision for SEMH and ASD - 2022

Figures 2 and 3 demonstrate there are currently significant gaps in provision across the county for children with SEMH / ASD needs, and this has been a major driver of the county's use of Independent and Non-Maintained Special School provision (INMSS).

### Provision for needs other than SEMH / ASD

Community special schools provide education for children with a wide range of severe needs, particularly focussed on children with needs other than ASD and SEMH, although many pupils will also have these needs.

In addition to the special schools, Resource Bases provide education for children with less severe needs.

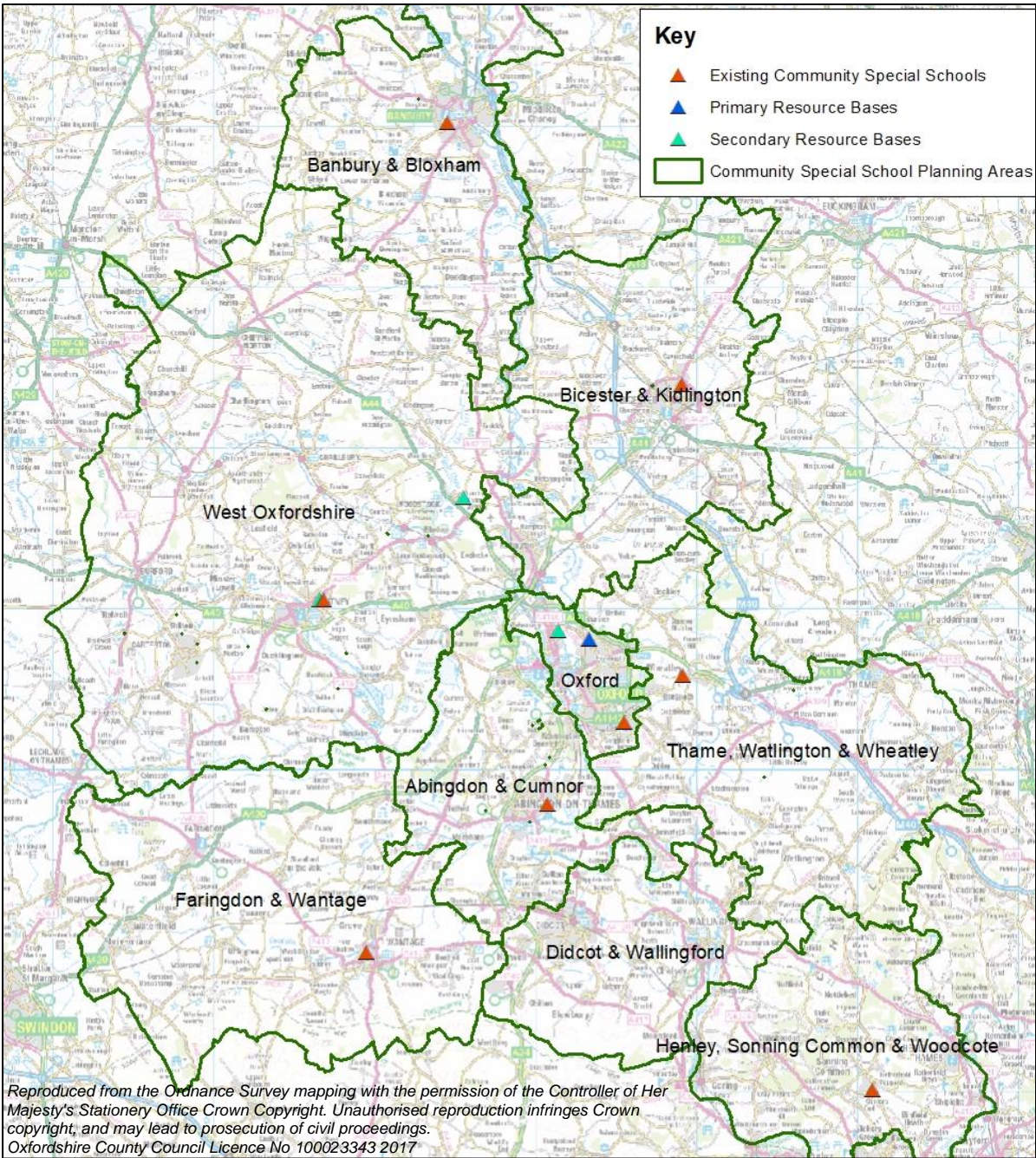
For planning purposes, Oxfordshire is divided into nine community special school planning areas, each served by one community special school. One planning area – Didcot & Wallingford – does not yet have a community special school, although a site has been secured for one to open in Didcot. Children from this area currently mostly attend special schools in Abingdon, Wantage and Sonning Common.

<b>Learning Community</b>	<b>Community Special School (capacities shown in Figure 6)</b>	<b>Primary Resource Base</b>	<b>Secondary Resource Base</b>
Bicester	Bardwell School		
Kidlington			
Henley	Bishopswood School		
Sonning Common			
Woodcote			
Faringdon	Fitzwaryn School		
Wantage			
Banbury	Frank Wise School		
Bloxham			
Abingdon	Kingfisher School		
Cumnor			
Oxford	Mabel Prichard School	New Marston Primary School [HI, 8 places]	The Cherwell School [HI, 10 places]
Thame	John Watson School		
Watlington			
Wheatley			
Didcot			
Wallingford			
Burford			
Carterton			
Chipping Norton	Springfield School		
Eynsham			

Witney	Springfield School	Wood Green School [MLD, 20 places]
Woodstock		The Marlborough School [PD, 24 places]*

Figure 4: Provision for needs other than SEMH and ASD – 2022

\*Also shown in Figure 2 as Base also focuses on C&I needs



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Figure 5: Specialist provision

for needs other than SEMH and ASD – 2022

## Special School Capacities

The physical capacity of mainstream schools is assessed using a well-established methodology called Net Capacity Assessment. This methodology has not previously applied to special schools, and there has been no definitive measure of special school capacity. The capacity of special schools is sometimes measured by the number of funded places agreed each year, but this may not fully reflect physical accommodation.

In 2022, the DfE piloted the application of Net Capacity Assessment methodology to special schools, and they have since released a “Beta Version” of the tool for local authorities to test. While this is hoped to provide more consistency in the assessment of special schools’ physical capacities, it will always convey a range of pupil capacity, because the capacity of a special school can be influenced by the range of pupils’ special needs, or proportions of pupils with a particular need, which can change from year to year. Outputs from the tool are therefore an estimate and should be used for guidance only.

The current capacities of Oxfordshire’s special schools are shown below. In most cases these are based on the number of funded places agreed for 2023/24, except where recent capital works are not yet fully reflected in those numbers.

A priority action for 2023-2024 is to undertake a programme of Net Capacity Assessments of special schools to update and confirm capacities.

<b>DfE Code</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Type of school</b>	<b>Age range</b>	<b>Capacity 2023</b>
7029	Bardwell School	Bicester	ACA	All age	110
7030	Bishopswood School	Sonning Common & Henley	COM	All age	77
7033	Endeavour Academy, Oxford	Oxford	ACA	KS2-KS5	32
7027	Fitzwaryn School	Wantage	ACA	KS2-KS5	118
7010	Frank Wise School	Banbury	COM	All age	118
7011	John Watson School	Wheatley	COM	All age	111
7000	Kingfisher School	Abingdon	ACA	All age	112
7020	Mabel Prichard School	Oxford	ACA	All age	110
5950	Northern House Academy	Oxford	ACA	Primary	86



7004	Orion Academy	Oxford	ACA	Secondary	108
7012	Springfield School	Witney	ACA	All age (no 6th form)	110
7018	The Iffley Academy	Oxford	ACA	KS3-KS5	180
7002	Woodeaton Manor School	Woodeaton, nr Oxford	COM	KS2-KS5	84
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>1332</b>

Figure 6: Current capacities of Oxfordshire's special schools

### National and Oxfordshire trends

National data shows that the percentage of children identified as having SEND has been growing since 2016. In January 2022, the percentage of pupils with an EHCP had reached 4.0%, and the percentage of pupils on SEN support had reached 12.6%. The number of pupils with an EHCP has increased by a total of 50% since 2016, compared to an increase in the total pupil population of only 5%.

Oxfordshire has a smaller percentage of pupils with EHCPs than England as a whole, at 3.5% in January 2022, compared to the national figure of 4%. However, the rate of growth has been faster, increasing by 66% since 2016, and 26% since 2020. Oxfordshire has seen a much faster increase in the percentage of pupils on SEN Support: in 2016 Oxfordshire was in line with the national average of 11.6%, but by 2022 Oxfordshire had risen to 14.6% compared to a national average of 12.6%.

The growth in demand for SEND provision experience in Oxfordshire in recent years is, therefore, part of a wider national picture which is a high priority for the Department for Education, and local authorities across the county.

The majority of children with EHCPs are educated in the mainstream school sector. Oxfordshire has a higher proportion of children with EHCPs in a mainstream setting than the national average, and this proportion has grown by 39% between 2020 and 2023: EHCPs have increased but more of these children are in a mainstream setting. The rise in the percentage of pupils with EHCPs being educated in mainstream schools could reflect both a shortage of specialist provision and a change in the threshold for children qualifying for an EHCP since the 2014 *Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years*.

Nationally, the percentage educated in state-funded special schools has declined slightly since 2016, from 42.9% to 39.4%. However, in Oxfordshire there has been a much sharper decline in the percentage educated in state-funded special schools, from 41.2% in 2016 to 32.4% in 2022. The reduction in the percentage educated in state-funded special schools is an indicator that the supply of state-funded provision has not expanded as quickly as demand for special school places, with the deficit being increasingly met through the Independent and Non-Maintained sector, a situation which is particularly severe in Oxfordshire.

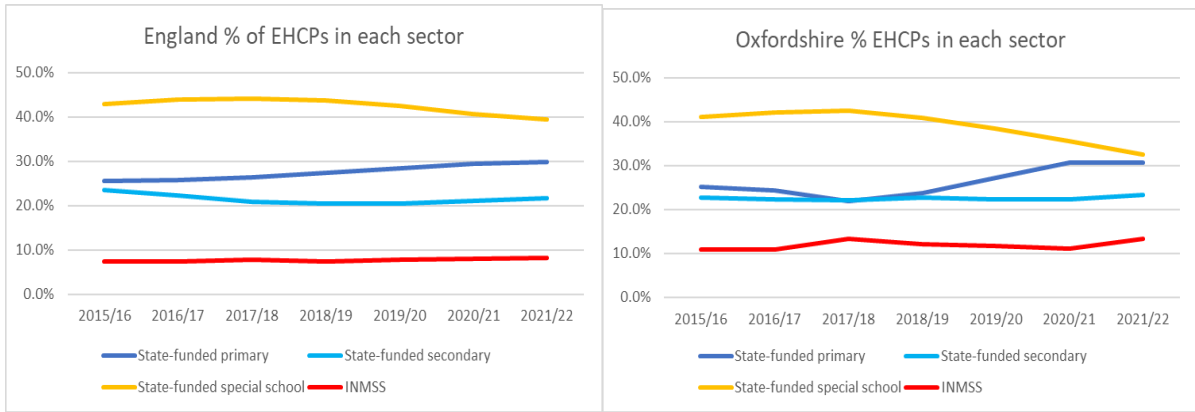


Figure 7: Percentage of EHCPs educated in each provision sector  
 [Source: explore-education-statistics.gov.uk, Special educational needs in England, Jan 2022 data]

Oxfordshire’s use of special school provision, and in particular INMSS, increases as children grow older. In Key Stage 1, 70% of children with EHCPs are educated in mainstream provision, and this falls to under 50% for secondary pupils. INMSS places are almost entirely used for secondary-aged pupils. The data indicates that the primary mainstream sector is more successful at retaining pupils with EHCPs than the secondary mainstream sector, and at secondary transfer a shortage of state-funded special school places results in dependence of INMSS provision.

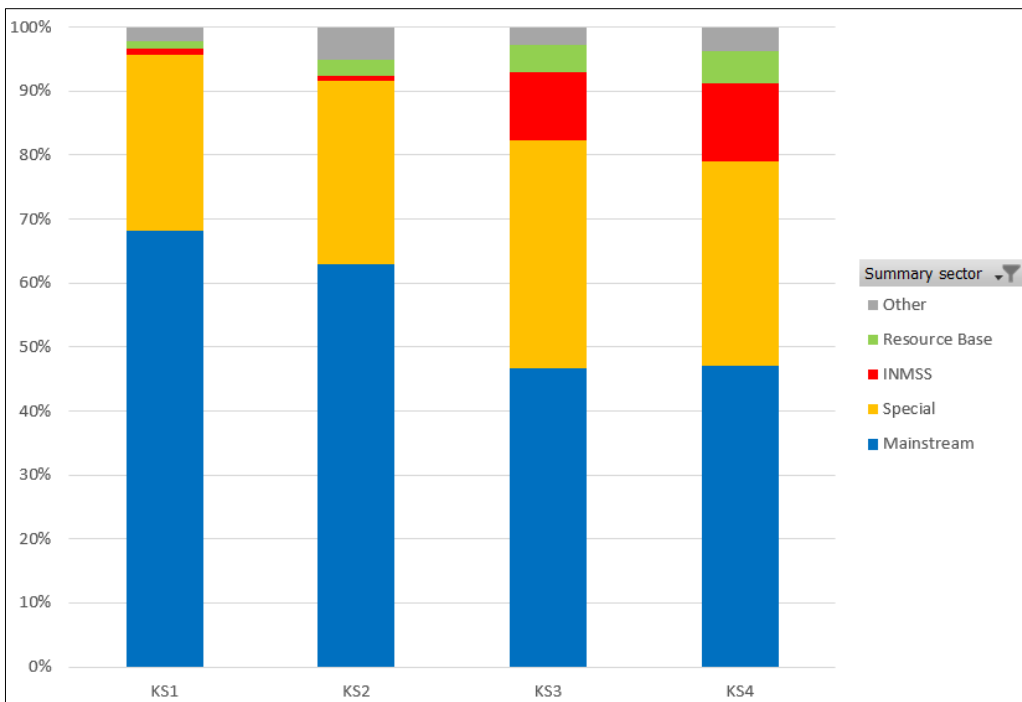


Figure 8: Total EHCPs in each Key Stage educated in each provision sector, 2022  
 [Source: Oxfordshire SEN2, Jan 2022]

In Oxfordshire, a much larger percentage of pupils with EHCPs are educated in the INMSS sector than the national average: by 2022 this had reached 13.3% of pupils with EHCPs, compared to 8.1% for England, indicating a shortage of maintained school provision.

The most common types of need among pupils with an EHCP is Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), which accounts for approximately a third of EHCPs.

There have been some significant changes in the types of primary need recorded in EHCPs, both at national and county levels. ASD has increased from 26% of total EHCPs in England in 2016 to 31% in 2022, while in Oxfordshire it has increased from 28% to 37%. Speech, Learning and Communication Difficulties (SLCN) has also risen as a percentage of total EHCPs. Social, Emotional & Mental Health needs have stayed broadly constant as a percentage of total EHCPs, while Severe Learning Difficulties and Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties (SLD and PMLD) have fallen as a percentage of total EHCPs, from 17% to 13% nationally, and from 21% to 14% in Oxfordshire, although due to the higher number of EHCPs in total, this still represents an absolute increase in pupils with EHCPs for these needs.

This changing pattern of need requires a different approach to provision, with more focus on ASD, while also expanding provision for other needs. The speed of increase in EHCPs listing ASD as the primary need indicates that a wider spectrum of need is now being identified, which has implications for the level of provision which will be required, with the potential for Resource Bases to play a greater part.

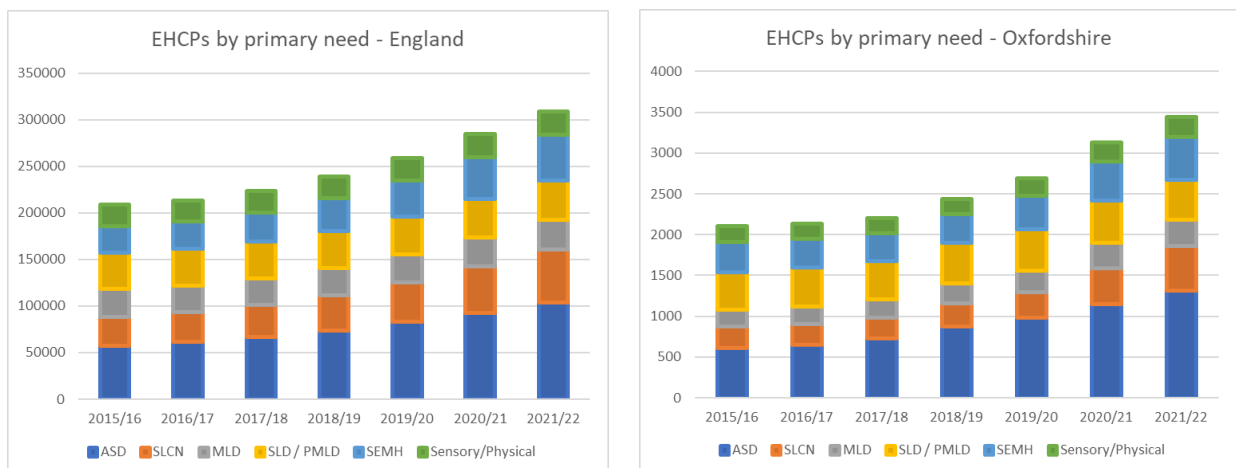


Figure 9: Numbers of EHCPs by primary need

[Source: explore-education-statistics.gov.uk, Special educational needs in England, Jan 2022 data]

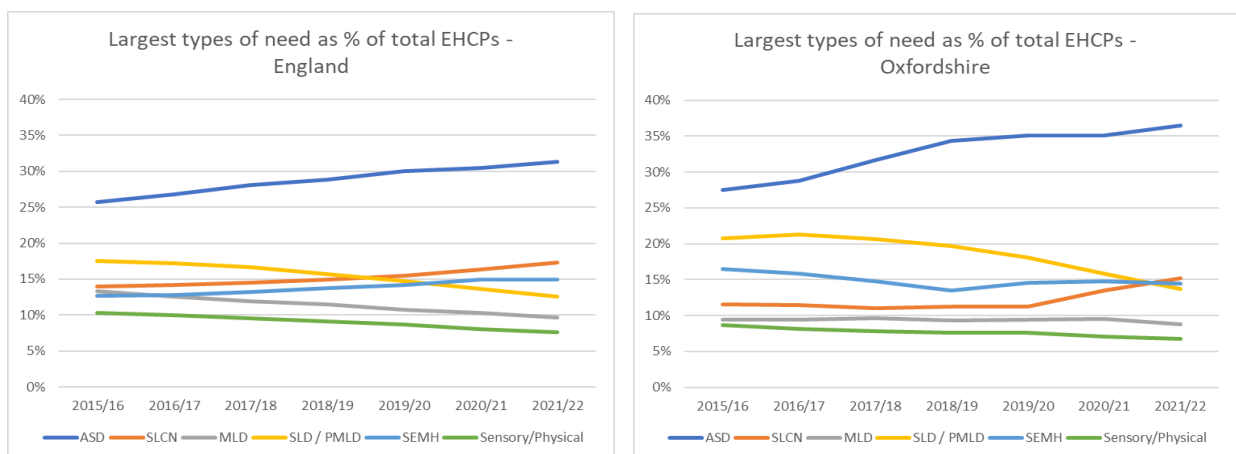


Figure 10: Types of primary need as percentage of total EHCPs

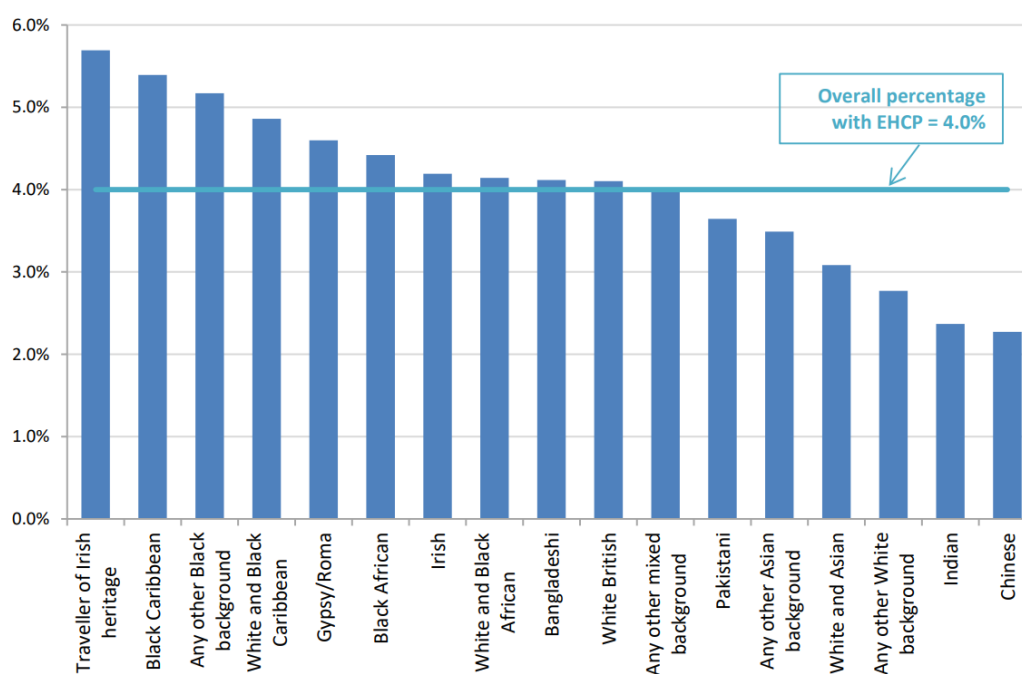
[Source: explore-education-statistics.gov.uk, Special educational needs in England, Jan 2022 data]

## Equalities

Sufficiency of SEND provision has important equalities impacts. National data shows that pupils with EHCPs are more likely to be:

- Male – 73% of EHCPs nationally are for boys.
- Eligible for free school meals – 40% of pupils with EHCPs are eligible compared to 23% of all pupils in schools.
- Speakers of English as their first language – 84% of pupils with EHCPs compared to 80% of all pupils in schools
- Looked after by a local authority – 29% have an EHCP

SEN is most prevalent in the Traveller of Irish heritage ethnic group – in 2022, 5.7% of pupils with this stated ethnicity had an EHCP. Other significantly higher than average rates of EHCPs are seen for pupils of Black Caribbean and Other Black backgrounds. The lowest rate for SEN is in the Chinese and Indian ethnic groups, of whom only 2.3% and 2.4% respectively had an EHC plan.



Source: School Census

*Figure 11: Percentage of pupils with an EHCP by ethnicity, England 2022*

[Source: explore-education-statistics.gov.uk, Special educational needs in England, Jan 2022 data]

## Oxfordshire costs

Oxfordshire's expenditure on provision for children with EHCPs is growing significantly faster than the funding it receives for this purpose. Over the last three years, expenditure has increased by nearly £15m, or 30%.

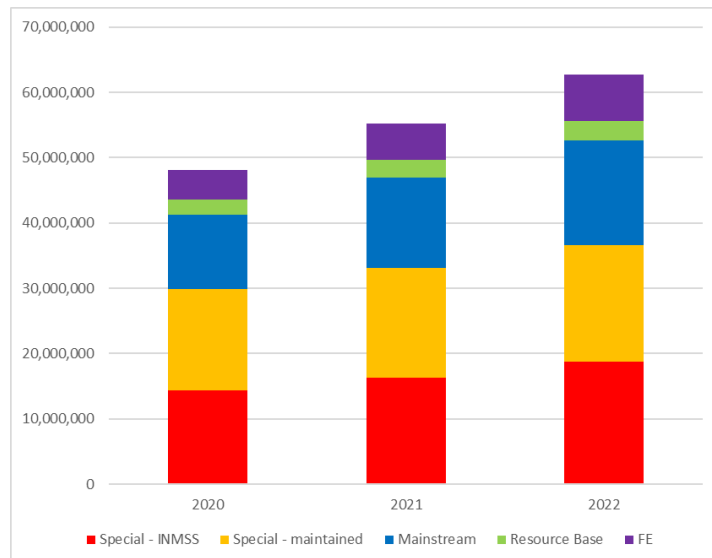


Figure 12: Total expenditure on SEND provision, 2020-2022  
 [Source: analysis for DBV programme, Jan 2023]

A significant driver of this increase has been the very rapid increase in INMSS spending, which has increased by over £4m, or 31%, by 2022 reaching a total of nearly £19m. This has been driven both by a 16% increase in the number of INMSS placements from 265 to 307, and by a 13% increase in the average cost per place of an INMSS place from £54,114 to £61,078.

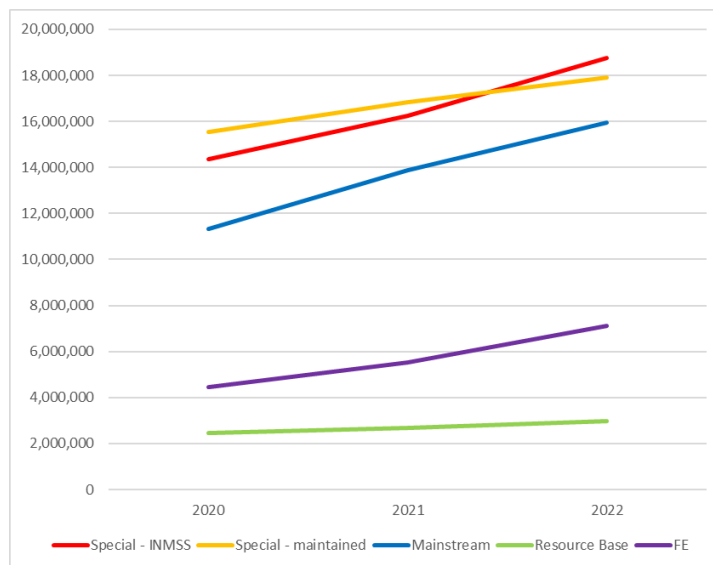


Figure 13: Expenditure by type of provision on SEND provision, 2018-2022, excluding FE  
 [Source: analysis for DBV programme, Jan 2023]

The increase in expenditure has resulted in significant deficits on the county council's High Needs Block (the budget related to SEND provision) which are not sustainable. The work undertaken by Newton for the Delivering Better Value programme has projected that if action is not taken, by 2027 Oxfordshire's High Needs Block deficit would increase from £30m in 2022 to £167m in 2027.

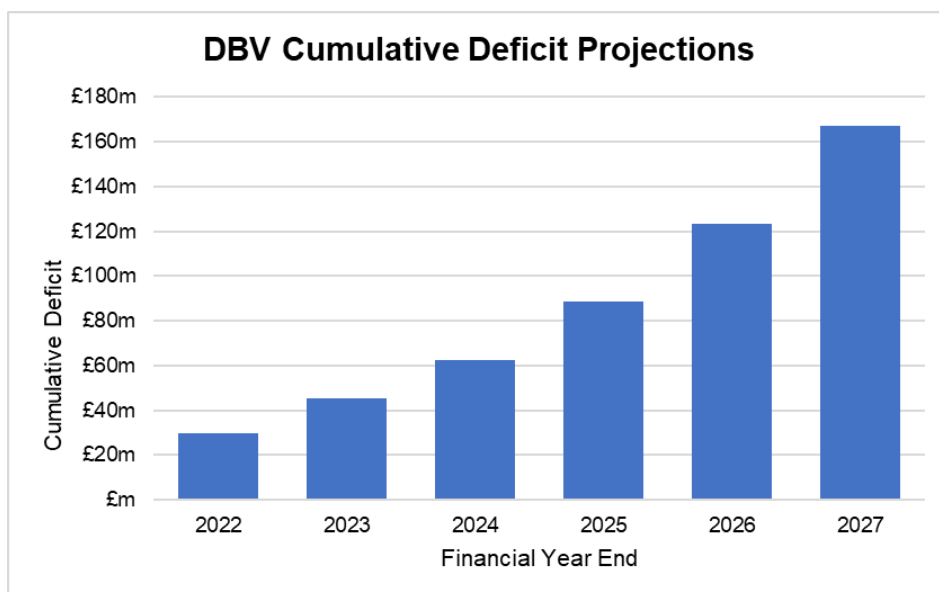


Figure 14: Projected High Needs Block deficit by 2027  
 [Source: analysis for DBV programme, Jan 2023]

The biggest category of expenditure is now INMSS provision, and the average cost of a place at an INMSS provider is nearly £50,000 more than at an Oxfordshire maintained special school. Reducing dependence on INMSS provision is therefore crucial to be able to bring High Needs Block spending under control.

### Consultation

In spring 2022, Oxfordshire County Council and health partners around Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) conducted two interlinked consultations:

- Consultation on draft Local Area SEND Strategy 2022-27. This was undertaken jointly between Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
- Consultation on Oxfordshire County Council System Reform for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities .

Detailed reports on these consultations are available on the OCC website: [Local Area SEND Strategy | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

Of particular relevance to this Strategy:

- The majority of respondents to the Local Area Strategy consultation (95%) either strongly agreed or tended to agree that developing a continuum of local provision to meet the requirements of children and young people with SEND is an important strategic objective.
- Free-text responses stressed the need for more local SEND provision that is closer to a student’s home (31% of responses). 19% commented on a lack of specialist provision and a need for more special schools.
- Comments included:
  - “We need the services in-county that will genuinely offer choice for young people.”

- *“Local provision is key, it also needs to be equal so that our rural communities have the same access as all communities.”*
- The majority of respondents to the System Reform consultation (82%) either strongly agreed or tended to agree with the proposal to increase sufficiency of specialist day placements in Oxfordshire. 68% agreed that Resource Bases should be a core part of the range of provision, and 68% agreed with proposals for Enhanced Pathways within mainstream schools (providing additional support, particularly aimed at ensuring successful transition from primary to secondary school).
- In the open response, 47% of all respondents indicated that they are concerned about a lack of specialist provision, as highlighted by one respondent who argued that *“in order to meet needs of children there needs to be additions to provision of places in both mainstream and special schools”*. 13% made comments related to the need for more local SEND provision needed, closer to home and in particular rural provision. 8% identified a need to “spend to save” – i.e. reducing use of INMSS will save money long-term, but not immediately.
- Open responses expressed some uncertainty over how effective Resource Bases and Enhanced Provision would be, and identified the need for more detail about how these strands of delivery would operate.

The consultations overall provide very strong support for a programme of increasing special school places in the maintained sector, as part of an “invest to save” approach. They also provide support for extending the use of Resource Bases and enhanced provision to enable children to stay within mainstream schools, but given the indications of a lower level of confidence in these approaches, a more gradual approach to these strands is considered to be appropriate, evaluating the early projects to inform later projects.

The Delivering Better Value Programme also conducted a survey of parents and carers in Oxfordshire to gather data around their perception of mainstream schools’ capability, capacity, and motivation to support children with SEND. Over 450 responses were received from across the county, relating to children and young people in a range of schools and educational settings. This identified that the main reason for parents and carers losing confidence in the mainstream sector is a perceived inability to meet the needs of their children. The main concerns are staffing capability and understanding relating to SEND, but other significant factors are the physical and sensory layout of the school buildings, and the resourcing levels in mainstream schools for addressing SEND. The survey also identified many examples of positive experience of mainstream schools meeting the needs of children with SEND, and a significant degree of variation between mainstream schools in how successfully they meet the needs of children with SEND. Confidence levels in Resource Base provision are higher than in mainstream provision, but significantly lower than in special school provision.

## 5. Planning for future needs

### Forecasting the need for SEND provision

There are many possible methods of forecasting potential demand for specialist provision, and forecasting is more complex than forecasting demand for mainstream provision. In 2023, for the first time, the DfE will collect forecasts from all local authorities of the expected demand for different types of special education provision. To support this, at the end of 2022 it issued guidance to local authorities on forecasting demand for SEND provision.

For 2023's data collection, the DfE requires forecasts, at local authority level of the number of pupils in each year group who have an education, health and care plan (EHCP) and will require a placement in specialist provision (as defined below):

- for primary year groups, for 5 years starting from the academic year 2023/24
- for secondary year groups, for 7 years starting from the academic year 2023/24

These forecasts will be broken down by the type of provision these pupils will be attending:

- SEN units
- Resourced provision in mainstream schools
- Special schools (LA-maintained, special academies, non-maintained special schools)
- Independent special schools
- Alternative provision (PRUs, AP academies and independent AP)

These forecasts will be revised annually, and will be included as an annex to this Strategy.

The forecasts as described above will not be complete until later in 2023. Until they are available, planning has been informed by projections created by consultants Newton, as part of the Delivering Better Value Programme. The forecasts to be completed later this year will provide more detail about the age profile of expected growth.

The summary projections calculated by Newton are shown in Figure 15.

Provision	2020 ACTUAL	2021 ACTUAL	2022 ACTUAL	2023 PROJECTION	2024 PROJECTION	2025 PROJECTION	2026 PROJECTION	2027 PROJECTION
Mainstream	1433	1780	2077	2407	2729	3051	3373	3695
Special schools (all types)	1453	1571	1623	1719	1804	1889	1974	2059
Resource Bases	132	145	137	143	146	148	151	153
<b>Total</b>	<b>3018</b>	<b>3496</b>	<b>3837</b>	<b>4269</b>	<b>4679</b>	<b>5088</b>	<b>5498</b>	<b>5907</b>

*Figure 15: Projected pupils with EHCPs in Oxfordshire (excluding the FE sector)*

[Source: analysis for DBV programme, Jan 2023]

The key features of these projections are:



- i. More children with EHCPs will be educated within the mainstream sector, and mainstream schools will need to be supported to ensure excellence of provision.
- ii. Oxfordshire's capacity in maintained special schools is currently 1332 places. As this is already lower than the number of pupils requiring special school places, the deficit requires use of INMSS special schools or out of county schools. Without any further growth of maintained special schools, this dependence would increase. There is a clear and urgent need for additional special school provision, considered in more detail below.
- iii. Oxfordshire's Resource Base capacity currently totals 183 places, following the opening of three new Resource Bases in Bicester in the last two years, offering 32 additional places. This additional capacity is not reflected in the projections, and therefore future use of Resource Bases is expected to be higher than projected, reducing pressure either on mainstream schools or special schools.

The projections provide an indication of the scale of additional maintained special school provision which is required to meet need.

<b>Provision</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>
A: Projected need for special school places (maintained, non-maintained and independent)	1719	1804	1889	1974	2059
B: OCC maintained special school places - existing schools	1332	1332	1332	1332	1332
C: Indicative opening profile for Bloxham Grove Academy (tbc)*	0	40	60	80	100
D: OCC maintained special school places - no further action [=B+C]	1332	1373	1395	1412	1450
E: Deficit (to be met from INMSS or out of county, unless additional places provided, or demand patterns change) [=A-D]	387	431	494	562	609

\*Bloxham Grove is a new school, construction underway, due to open January 2024. Initially planned as 100 places, the academy trust now expects it to be able to grow to a maximum of 118 places. The speed at which places fill will depend on the number of pupils for whom this is an appropriate school to transfer to, and may be faster or slower than shown above.

*Figure 16: Projected deficit of special school places 2023-2027*  
[Based on analysis for DBV programme, Jan 2023]

Additional special school places are therefore needed both to meet the growth in demand, and to reduce the dependence on INMSS and out of county provision.

However, it is noted that for some children INMSS or out of county provision will always be the most appropriate provision, either due to the specialist nature of their needs, or because provision in other local authorities may be closer for pupils living near county borders. INMSS and out of county usage is not, therefore, expected to fall to zero.

## Spatial population growth

While Oxfordshire’s pupil population is growing, it is doing so unevenly across the county. Areas such as Didcot, Bicester and Wantage are experiencing rapid housing growth which is attracting young families. Areas with less housing growth – such as the south of Oxfordshire and Oxford city – are seeing falling pupil populations. The table below shows the estimated rate of growth in the overall pupil population for each SEND learning community area, which would be expected to be broadly mirrored in the special school population.

<b>Learning Community</b>	<b>Community Special School</b>	<b>Pupil population growth 2022-2027</b>
Abingdon	Kingfisher School	13%
Cumnor		
Didcot	None	9%
Wallingford		
Faringdon	Fitzwaryn School	7%
Wantage		
Bicester	Bardwell School	6%
Kidlington		
Banbury	Frank Wise School	5%
Bloxham		
Thame	John Watson School	4%
Watlington		
Wheatley		
Burford	Springfield School	3%
Carterton		
Chipping Norton		
Eynsham		
Witney		
Woodstock		
Oxford	Mabel Prichard School	-6%
Henley	Bishopswood School	-13%
Sonning Common		
Woodcote		

*Figure 17: Estimated rate of growth in pupil population 2022-27 by SEND learning community*

[Source: Oxfordshire forecasts, summer 2022]

One priority for additional special school places would therefore be towards the areas where the pupil population is expected to grow fastest.

The existing gap in provision in Didcot is currently adding pressure to demand for places at Kingfisher School and Fitzwaryn School, as the nearest existing schools. A new school in Didcot would therefore free up spaces at those existing schools to meet their own local growth pressures.

## Housing growth

In the longer term, there will be a growing impact on demand for special education provision resulting from approximately 100,000 new homes across the county between 2011 and 2031 which Oxfordshire's component councils are aiming to deliver to address the severe housing shortage and expected economic growth. Housing delivery is not evenly distributed across the county. Planned housing growth 2020-2031, by Middle Layer Super Output Areas (MSOA), is shown in the map below. The most significant areas of growth are planned for Bicester, Wantage, Didcot, and areas outside the Oxford city boundary to the north and south. Additional maintained provision for those needs is required which is accessible to families living in these areas.

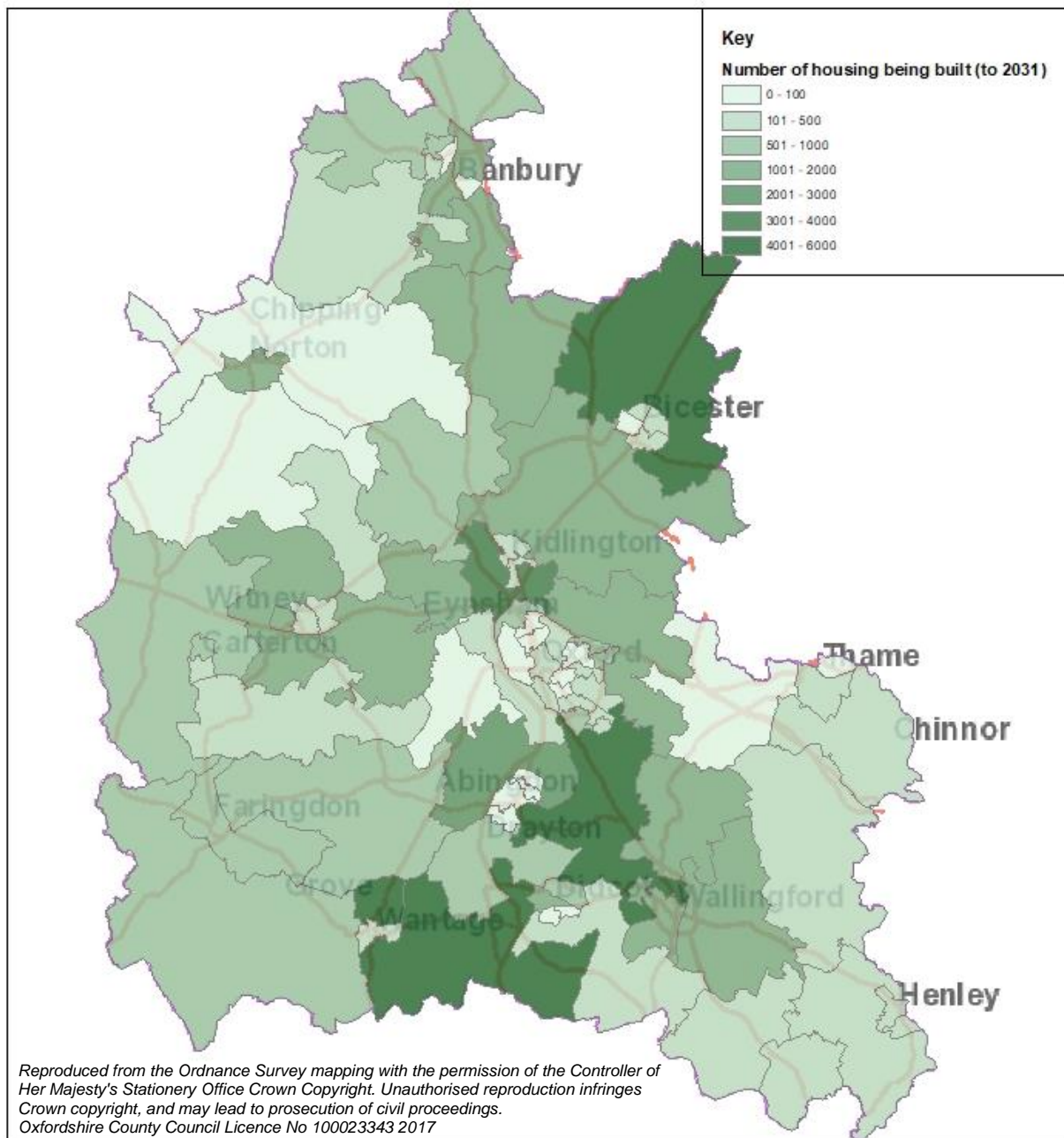


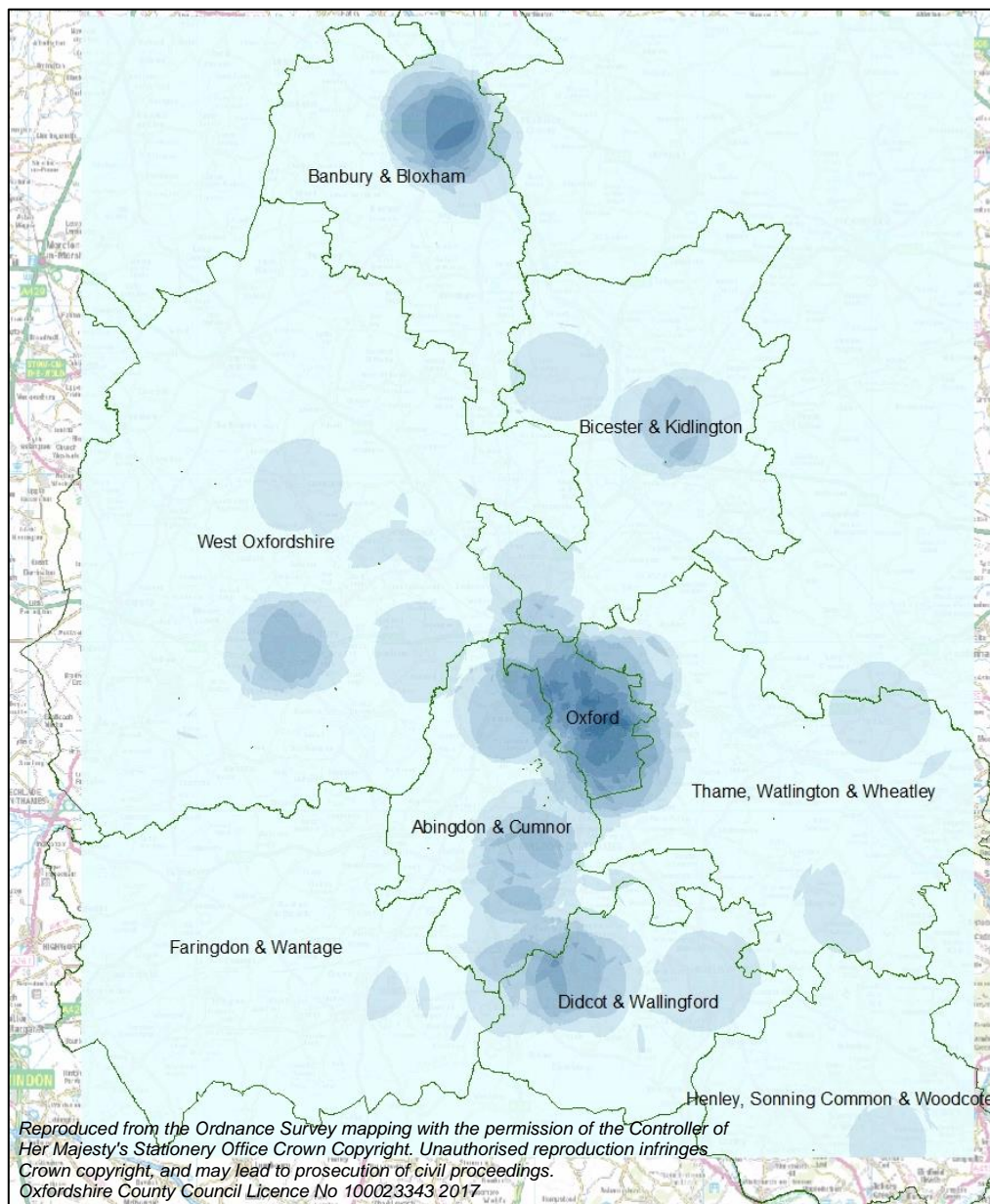
Figure 18: Planned housing growth 2020-2031 by MSOA  
[Source: District Council Annual Monitoring Reports 2021]

### Type of primary need

As outlined in Section 4, growth in EHCPs and in admissions to special schools has grown fastest for the primary needs of ASD and SEMH. These needs are expected to continue to be the main area of growth in demand for special education provision.

### Reducing dependence on INMSS provision

Use of INMSS is particularly high for children living in the Oxford, Banbury and Didcot areas, with further concentrations in the Bicester, Abingdon and Witney areas. Additional maintained provision for those needs is required which is accessible to families living in these areas.



*Figure 19: Heatmap representing children and young people with EHCPs attending INMSS provision in Oxfordshire (points per square kilometre)*

[Source: Oxfordshire SEN2, Jan 2022 data]

Oxfordshire’s use of INMSS provision is particularly concentrated in the primary needs of ASD and SEMH, and provision for these needs will have most impact on reducing INMSS dependency.

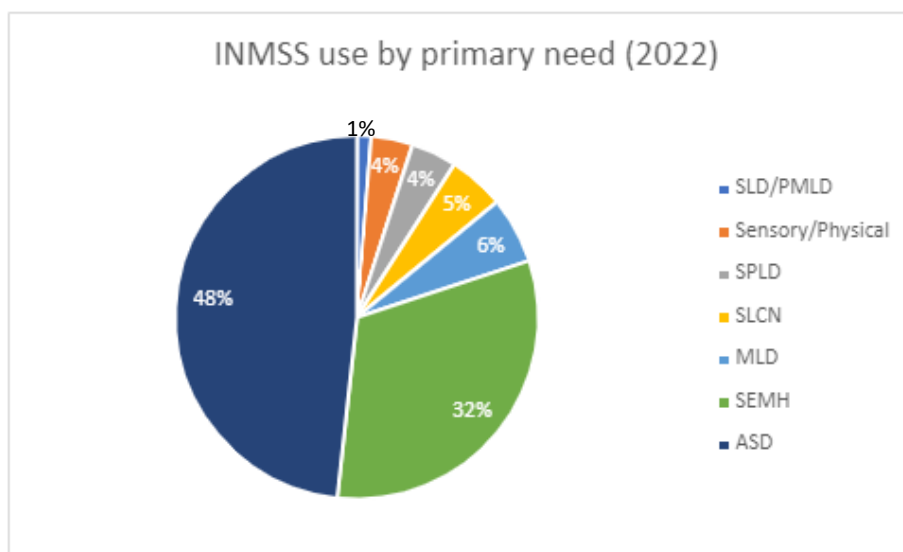


Figure 20: INMSS placements by primary need  
 [Source: Oxfordshire SEN2, Jan 2022 data]

### Prioritisation principles

In line with Government guidance, Oxfordshire County Council is working towards a more effective and sustainable high needs system in which resources and provision are targeted at enabling mainstream schools to be more inclusive, ensuring needs are met early and appropriately and using available local provision effectively.

Detailed case reviews conducted as part of the DBV identified that 43% of pupils being admitted to INMSS provision and 15% of pupils being admitted to maintained special school provision over the last three years could have had their needs met in mainstream provision. For each child educated in mainstream provision rather than INMSS, there is an average revenue saving of over £50,000. Mainstream provision will also be more local to the family, in many cases significantly reducing travel time and cost. However, the DBV research also identified that current levels of parent/carer confidence in mainstream provision is significantly lower than in special school provision

A major strand of Oxfordshire’s SEND reforms is therefore targeted at addressing the root causes of this lack of confidence in mainstream provision. While most of the actions towards mainstream inclusion lie beyond this Strategy, over time this will reshape the demand for special education provision, and the county council will keep its SEND Sufficiency Delivery Strategy under review to reflect changing patterns of demand.

There will still be a need for more special education provision in Oxfordshire, given the growth in population which is expected to arise from large-scale housing growth across the county.

In line with Government advice ([High Needs Provision Capital Allocations Guidance](#), March 2022), when making investment decisions in special education provision, Oxfordshire will prioritise projects that:

- enable and/or increase access to mainstream placements for children and young people who might otherwise have required more specialist provision;
- increase available placements for children and young people with EHCPs in mainstream settings (including new SEN units or resourced provisions);
- increase the local availability of High Needs places where this can help reduce out of area placements and associated transport or residential costs;
- adapt, re-model or improve existing SEND places to make them suitable for emerging needs;
- reduce overall cost pressures, including those associated with out-of-area placements and the use of more expensive independent provision.

In line with general Government guidance about making changes to existing schools and academies, expansions and new Resource Bases will usually only be sought at schools with Good or Outstanding Ofsted ratings, except where an expansion forms part of a wider investment programmes aimed at improving suitability and standards.

Projects will be prioritised which provide good value for investment, to enable the greatest possible impact from available funding. These could include opportunities which arise to repurpose existing accommodation which is no longer required for other purposes, or to relocate a school or expand it onto a satellite site.

Investment will be targeted at identified gaps in provision and areas of greatest growth, both in terms of geographic distribution of provision and the type of need and level of support.

In summary, therefore, based on the data analysis above, government guidance, and stakeholder consultation, Oxfordshire's delivery of additional SEND provision will be prioritised based on the following principles:

**Priority 1: Local access to appropriate, high quality provision**

- Projects which address gaps in the spatial planning frameworks set out in this Strategy.

**Priority 2: Reducing overall cost pressures**

- Projects which are expected to reduce the use of higher cost INMSS provision, and/or reduce travel distances/costs.
- Projects which enable children to remain within mainstream schools, including in Resource Bases or enhanced provision.

**Priority 3: Meeting emerging needs**

- Projects which are focused on growing types of SEND and/or geographic areas of population growth and housing development.

**Priority 4: Efficient use of resources to maximise reach and scope of support**

- Projects which adapt or expand existing accommodation to better meet need, or where the capital investment required represents good value for money.
- If opportunities arise to relocate a school or expand it onto a satellite site, the viability of these will be explored.

- Opportunities to work with neighbouring authorities in a coordinated approach across county boundaries will also be explored, where this results in increased access to local provision for Oxfordshire pupils.
- Feasibility and viability are inescapable prioritisation considerations.

## 6. Delivery priorities 2023-2027

### Mainstream inclusion

Most actions to enable mainstream schools to be more inclusive lie beyond the scope of this Strategy. However, where capital investment would support inclusion, investment will be considered as part of the Sufficiency Strategy. The DBV research identified that the physical and sensory layout of the school buildings is one factor undermining parent/carer confidence in the mainstream sector, and capital projects to address such limitations will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### Resource Bases

Detailed case reviews conducted as part of the DBV identified that a small percentage (9%) of pupils being admitted to INMSS provision over the last three years could have had their needs met in a Resource Base Provision. For each child educated in a Resource Base rather than INMSS, there is an average revenue saving of approximately £50,000. Expanding the network of Resource Base provision to meet the needs of children currently being admitted into INMSS provision is therefore one strand of improving overall sufficiency of provision.

However, the DBV research also identified that current levels of parent/carer confidence in Resource Base provision is lower than in special school provision. For this strand to be effective, there also needs to be further work to improve parent/carer confidence in this type of provision. Expansion of Resource Base provision will, therefore, need to be gradual to ensure it does not outpace demand. Further work is also needed to evaluate which cohorts of children are best suited to Resource Base provision, as determined by the type and severity of their needs.

Three Resource Bases have opened since 2020 in Bicester. Accommodation has been included in new mainstream schools for further bases in Grove, Oxford, Didcot, Witney and Banbury. Places at these Bases will be opened as the pupil numbers in the school grow.

There is potential for further Bases to be created within existing mainstream school accommodation. The county council will continue to include Resource Base accommodation in the specification for all new mainstream schools, except where the local needs is already met by existing schools. The impact of new resource bases will be monitored and evaluated to inform future development in this area, including the most effective type, size and spatial distribution of Resource Bases.

### Expansions of existing schools

Appendix 1 sets out expansions which have taken place of Oxfordshire special schools over the last 10 years. In many cases, further expansion would be challenging due to site constraints. However, expansion of existing schools is likely to be lower-cost and quicker than building new schools, and the county council will continue to investigate opportunities.

Projects under exploration for the next phase of expansions, 2023-25, are:



- Bishopswood School - estimated 3 additional places.
- Mabel Prichard School - estimated 24 additional places.
- Springfield School - estimated 16 additional places; scope to be explored to also extend the age range to add sixth form provision (16 places)
- Woodeaton Manor School – expansion onto a satellite site; estimated 16 additional places.

The current identified potential for expansion is therefore approximately 59-75 additional places.

The county council will continue to work with schools to identify whether further opportunities for expansion exist, including through satellite sites. Opportunities for expansion through satellite sites or relocation may arise which are not currently foreseen. Any such expansions would be given a high priority where they represent good value for money and are well matched to the locations and types of need.

### New schools

The scale of growth in the demand for special school places indicated in section 5 cannot be met through expansions of existing schools. By 2027, the current projections identify a deficit of 609 maintained special school places in Oxfordshire, after including all the planned new places at Bloxham Grove Academy. Deducting the estimated 59 places to be achieved through expansions leaves a deficit of 550 places.

A further programme of new schools is therefore planned. The current priorities for these are:

#### **1: New SEMH special school in Faringdon (Key Stage 2 – Key Stage 5) to:**

- fill the current spatial gap in provision for ASD/SEMH needs in SW Oxfordshire
- reduce travel distances and costs for pupils in SW Oxfordshire
- address the expected population growth in SW Oxfordshire, which will be sustained due to large-scale housing development in the area.

This school is planned to be located at a site in Faringdon previously used by an Infant School, which has now relocated.

Funding for this school has been provisionally secured via the DfE Free School programme, subject to successful progress of the scheme.

This school is planned to provide up to 118 additional places. The average age of a child receiving an EHCP for SEMH needs is 9, and the school is therefore planned to operate from Key Stage 2 upwards.

The opening date of this school is currently estimated as 2025.

#### **2: New community special school in Didcot (Nursery – Key Stage 5) to:**

- fill the current spatial gap in provision for needs other than ASD/SEMH

- address the expected population growth in Didcot, which will be sustained due to large-scale housing development in the area
- release spaces at Kingfisher School and Fitzwaryn School to enable them to meet local population growth.

A site for this school has been secured through a Section 106 agreement with the housing development to the west of Didcot, known as Valley Park. This site is expected to become available in 2025, but this timing is dependent on the speed of progress of the development.

This school is planned to provide 116 additional places. The average age of a child receiving an EHCP for severe learning difficulties is 4, and for physical disability is 6, with some children receiving an EHCP at an even younger age, and the school is therefore planned to operate in all age groups.

The opening date of this school is dependent on the progress of the host development, but is currently estimated as 2026.

**3: New SEMH special school in SE Oxfordshire (Key Stage 2 – Key Stage 5) to:**

- fill the current spatial gap in provision for ASD/SEMH needs in SE Oxfordshire
- reduce travel distances and costs for pupils in SE Oxfordshire
- address the expected population growth in SE Oxfordshire, which will be sustained due to large-scale housing development in the area.

A site for this school has not yet been identified, and an ongoing search for a suitable site is underway. Until a site can be identified there is no timescale for delivery.

This school is planned to provide 150 additional places. The average age of a child receiving an EHCP for SEMH needs is 9, and the school would therefore be planned to operate from Key Stage 2 upwards.

In total these planned schools will add 384 places to Oxfordshire provision. Based on current projects, this would leave a deficit of 166 places. However, this is based on projecting forward past growth in the use of special school provision. Other strands of Oxfordshire's SEND Strategy aim to reduce the use of special school provision by further supporting mainstream inclusion. The success of this work would reduce the scale of growth required in special school provision. Decisions on whether, where and what type of further new schools are required will be based on emerging trends and forecasts as the impact of current work is assessed.

## 7. Planned outcomes of this Strategy

### Provision for SEMH and/or ASD needs

As a result of the actions in this Strategy, by 2027 the provision for children with SEMH and ASD needs will have changed as shown in red below.

In addition, further Resource Bases may have been established where there is evidence of their need and effectiveness to meet the needs of the local population. In other locations, alternative models of enhanced support may have been implemented where this better suits local requirement.

Learning Community	Special School	Primary Resource Bases	Secondary Resource Bases
Bicester	<b>North: Bloxham Grove Academy</b>	Southwold Primary School [C&I / SEMH] Gagle Brook Primary School [C&I / SEMH]	Whitelands Academy [SEMH]
Banbury		<b>Cherry Fields Primary School [C&amp;I/SEMH]</b>	
Bloxham			The Warriner School [C&I]
Chipping Norton			
Woodstock			The Marlborough School [C&I]
Cumnor	<b>Central: Endeavour Academy  Orion Academy Northern House Academy  The Iffley Academy  Woodeaton Manor School - expansion</b>		
Eynsham			
Kidlington			
Oxford		St Nicholas Primary School [C&I] <b>Barton area Primary School [SEMH]</b>	The Cherwell School [C&I]
Thame		St Andrew's Primary School [C&I]	Lord Williams's School [C&I]
Witney	<b>Windrush Primary School [C&amp;I / ASD]</b>		
Wheatley			
Didcot	<b>South East: New Special School</b>	<b>Location tbc</b>	
Henley			
Sonning Common			
Woodcote			
Watlington			
Wallingford			
Abingdon	<b>South West: New Special School</b>		<u>Fitzharry's School</u> [C&I]
Burford			
Carterton			

Faringdon		<b>St John's Academy [SEMh / ASD]</b>	<b>St John's Academy [SEMh / ASD]</b>
Wantage			

Figure 21: Specialist provision for SEMh and ASD - 2027

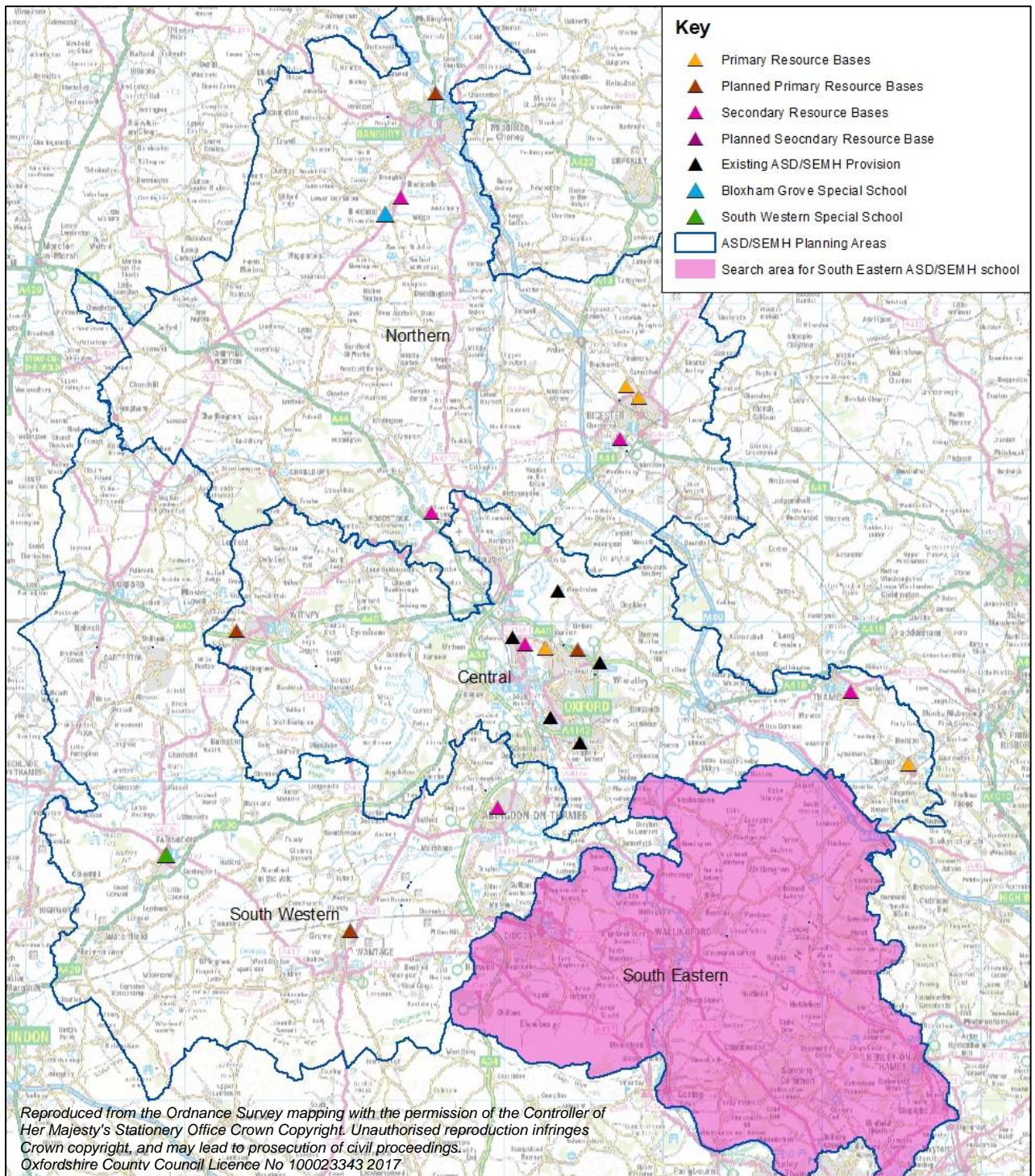


Figure 22: Specialist provision for SEMh and ASD – 2027

## Provision for needs other than SEMH / ASD

As a result of the actions in this Strategy, by 2027 the provision for children with needs other than SEMH and ASD will have changed as shown in red below.

The role of Resource Bases in supporting needs other than SEMH / ASD will have been reviewed, and this may result in changes to the Resource Base provision.

Learning Community	Community Special School	Primary Resource Base	Secondary Resource Base
Bicester	Bardwell School		
Kidlington			
Henley	Bishopswood School - <b>expansion</b>		
Sonning Common			
Woodcote			
Faringdon	Fitzwaryn School		
Wantage			
Banbury	Frank Wise School		
Bloxham			
Abingdon	Kingfisher School		
Cumnor			
Oxford	Mabel Prichard School - <b>expansion</b>	New Marston Primary School [HI]	The Cherwell School [HI]
Thame	John Watson School		
Watlington			
Wheatley			
Didcot	<b>New Special School - Didcot</b>		
Wallingford			
Burford	Springfield School - <b>expansion</b>		
Carterton			
Chipping Norton			
Eynsham			
Witney			Wood Green School [MLD]
Woodstock			The Marlborough School [PD]

Figure 23: Provision for needs other than SEMH and ASD - 2027

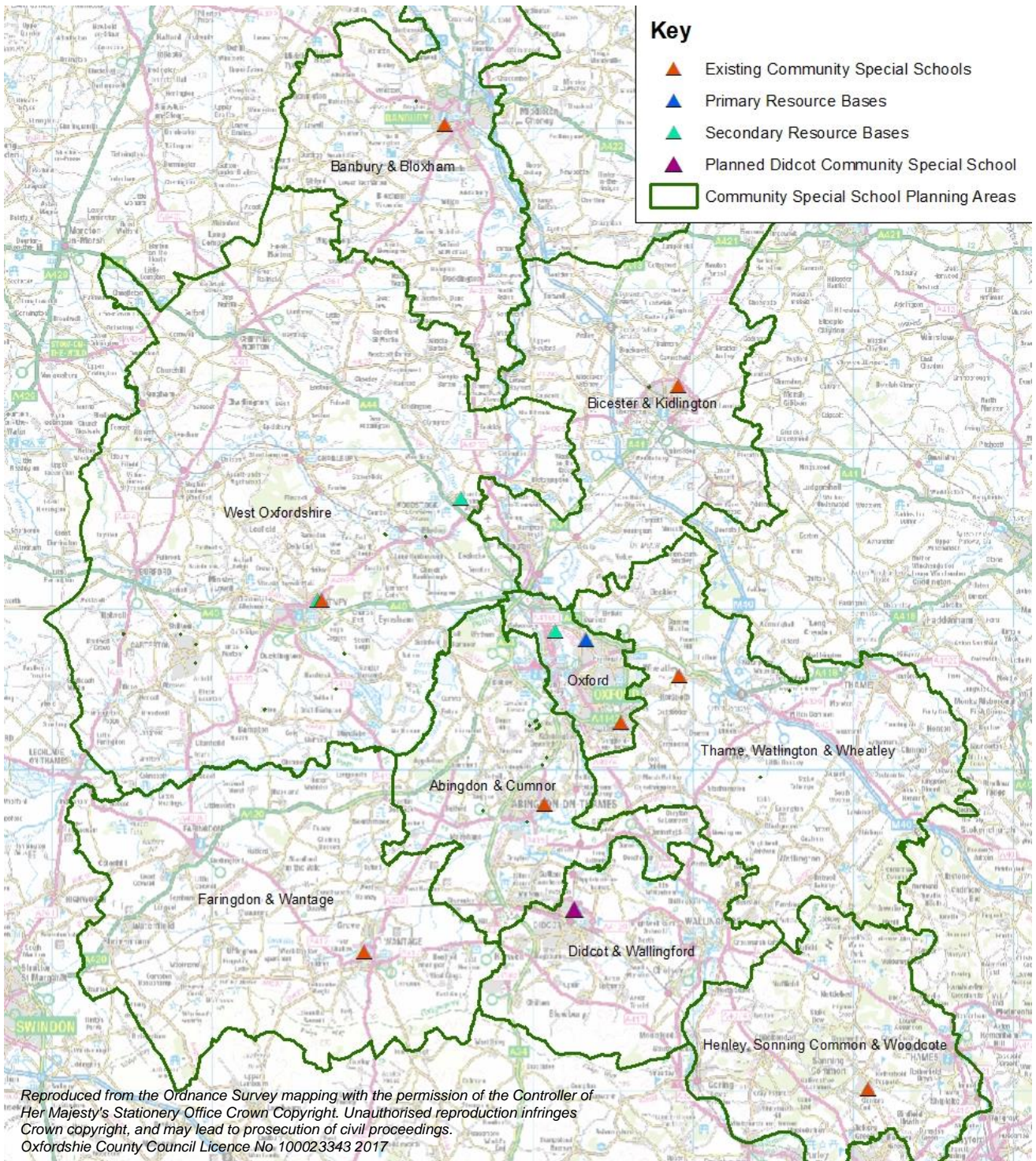


Figure 24: Specialist provision for needs other than SEMH and ASD - 2027

## 8. Decision-making processes: new schools and significant changes

The Department for Education determines the decision-making processes which are required to open new schools, or to make significant changes to existing schools, including expansion or adding a Resource Base. These processes are summarised in Oxfordshire's annual [Pupil Place Plan](#), and vary according to the type of school. In brief, the process requires the publication of proposals followed by local consultation, which forms the basis of a business case (academies) or Cabinet Report (non-academies) to inform the decision made by the DfE Regional Director (academies) or county council Cabinet member responsible for Education (non-academies). To complete the necessary decision-making processes typically takes at least 6 months.

Special school expansions of fewer than 20 pupils and less than 20% (academies) or 10% (non-academies) of current capacity do not require a formal decision-making process.

New schools are expected to be an academy, and can be established through one of two routes:

- The free school presumption process requires local authorities to seek proposals to establish a free school where they have clearly identified the need for a new school in their area. These are often referred to as "presumption" schools or LA-led proposals. The local authority runs a competitive process to invite potential academy sponsors to run the new school.
- Proposers can also apply directly to the DfE to establish a free school, through time-limited application waves. These are often referred to as "wave" schools or "central route" proposals. These can be specifically for special schools.

To build a new special school typically takes around 3 years, once a site has been secured.

## 9. Capital funding sources

Unlike for mainstream schools, there is currently no regular government funding stream for creating special school places. However, in response to the growing need for special school places, for the period 2018/19-2020/21 the government made annual funding allocations to local authorities to make capital investments in provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities through a “Special provision fund”. The total allocated to Oxfordshire through this fund was £4,166,884. This was followed in 2021 by a High Needs Provision Capital Allocations funding stream, through which Oxfordshire has been allocated a further £3,520,938 for 2021/22, £6,988,567 in 2022/23 and £8,675,965 for 2023/24.

Future funding mechanisms for special education have not yet been confirmed, but the DfE is exploring whether special schools should be incorporated into the “basic need” funding process which applies to mainstream schools.

New academies created through applications directly to the DfE – “wave” free schools - can be an important contribution towards ensuring sufficient school places, both for mainstream education and special educational needs. Their capital costs are separately funded by the DfE.

As well as government funding, the government has set out a clear expectation that local authorities should seek developer contributions towards school places – including special schools - that are created to meet the need arising from housing development. Oxfordshire’s Access to Learning team is consulted on all housing developments of ten or more new homes, and advises on the likely impact on local schools, and the measures which would be required from developers in mitigation. Typically, this will include seeking financial contributions towards the cost of expanding local school provision, if there are not expected to be sufficient places available.

Full details of how developer funding is sought towards education provision are available in the [Guide to developer contributions](#) available on the OCC website.



## **10. Monitoring and evaluation**

The measures of success of this Strategy will be:

- i. The number of additional places created in maintained special school provision.
- ii. Reduction in the percentage of Oxfordshire pupils with an EHCP attending INMSS provision.
- iii. Reduction in expenditure on INMSS provision as a percentage of total expenditure.
- iv. Reduction in expenditure on transport to SEND provision, as an indicator of reduced travel distances resulting from more local provision.

Delivery against this Strategy will be reported annually to the Oxfordshire School Organisation Stakeholder Group and the Integrated SEND Board.

The Strategy will be updated annually to include revised forecasts and maintain a rolling five-year programme of a capital investment. It will be published on the OCC website alongside the annual Pupil Place Plan, which provides a broader context of expected population change in Oxfordshire.

## **APPENDIX: Capital Investment in Oxfordshire special schools in the last 10 years**

### **2014**

- **New Endeavour Academy - £4.292m – 25 additional places**

The project included the remodel of a former school building to create a secondary school facility incorporating class bases for KS3, KS4 & KS5 pupils and ancillary accommodation. A new 12-bedroom residential unit was constructed with the grounds comprising 2 kitchens and dining areas and a central social area.

### **2015**

- **Bardwell School Bicester - £1.388m – 9 additional places**

Replacement of prefabricated ‘temporary’ buildings with purpose built sixth form accommodation, part funded from successful bid by Oxfordshire County Council to the Department for Education’s Demographic Growth Capital Fund.

### **2016**

- **Frank Wise School, Banbury - £1.920m – 8 additional places**

Replacement of prefabricated ‘temporary’ buildings with purpose built sixth form accommodation, part funded from successful bid by Oxfordshire County Council to the Department for Education’s Demographic Growth Capital Fund.

- **The Iffley Academy, Oxford - £30k – 8 additional places**

Internal alterations and remodelling to create an additional classroom. The project was undertaken by the Academy with funding provided by Oxfordshire County Council.

- **Northfield Special School, Oxford - £250k – 16 additional places**

Provision of 2 classroom building to provide additional accommodation to support increase in capacity

### **2017**

- **Mabel Prichard Special School, Oxford - £356k – 8 additional places**

Internal alterations to convert former classroom space, being used for Design & Technology/Art, in to a KS2 classroom. Construction of a new Design & Technology/Art facility.

- **Woodeaton Manor Special School - £44k – 16 additional places**

Internal reorganisation to relocate the boys residential facility and convert former residential accommodation to create 2 new classrooms. Project undertaken by Foundation School with funding provided by Oxfordshire County Council.

- **Kingfisher Special School, Abingdon - £480k – 8 additional places**

Replacement of prefabricated 'temporary' building with new 3-classroom block. Project managed by Propeller Academy Trust with funding provided by Oxfordshire County Council.

## 2018

- **Fitzwaryn Special School, Wantage - £560k – 16 additional places**  
Internal reorganisation and remodelling alongside new build post 16 accommodation to create 2 additional classrooms. Project managed by Propeller Academy Trust with funding provided by Oxfordshire County Council.
- **Bardwell Special School, Bicester - £63k – 12 additional places**  
Conversion of former Children's Centre building to provide Foundation Stage facility for Bardwell School. This released 2 classrooms within the main school building providing 12 additional pupil places. Project undertaken by Bardwell School with funding provided by Oxfordshire County Council.

## 2019

- **John Watson Special School, Wheatley - £1.739m – 16 additional places**  
Primary Site - Internal reorganisation and relocation of Wheatley Primary School classrooms to provide additional classrooms for John Watson Special School

## 2021

- **Orion Academy, Oxford - £12.75m – 32 additional places**  
Rebuild and expansion of former Northfield School to provide purpose built SEND School providing 32 additional places (expansion from 76 to 108)
- **The Iffley Academy, Oxford - £n/a – 47 additional places**  
School mostly rebuilt by the Education & Skills Funding Agency, with a new Funding Agreement capacity of 175 places including 24 sixth formers. Based on a 2012 Funding Agreement capacity of 120, plus the 8 places added in the 2016 project, the rebuild has resulted in 47 additional places.

## 2022

- **John Watson Special School, Wheatley - £2.69m – 16 additional places**  
Secondary Site – Extension of existing building to replace prefabricated temporary classrooms and provide additional places.
- **Bardwell Special School, Bicester - £1.575m – 16 additional places**  
Internal remodelling and extension to provide a new hall space and additional places. Project managed by The Gallery Trust with funding provided by Oxfordshire County Council.
- **Kingfisher Special School, Abingdon - £1.151m – 16 additional places**

Internal remodelling and extension to provide additional places. Project managed by Propeller Academy Trust funding provided by Oxfordshire County Council.

## **2023**

- **New Bloxham Grove Special School - £n/a – 118 additional places**  
New Free School catering for pupils aged 7 – 18. Project delivered by Education & Skills Funding Agency. The academy sponsor is The Gallery Trust. The new school will be co-located with Warriner School, Bloxham and is due to open January 2024.

**Total Investment = £29,288,000**

(Excluding cost of Iffley Academy rebuild and new Bloxham Grove Academy – both ESFA delivered/funded)

**Total Additional Places Created = 387**

## **ANNEX: Forecasts**

As outlined in Section 5, in 2023, for the first time, the DfE will collect forecasts from all local authorities of the expected demand for different types of special education provision. These forecasts will be available later in 2023 and will be annexed to this Strategy, and updated annually.