

Delivering Better Value Focus of Workstream 2: Developing and delivering our sufficiency strategy (continued)

1. Developing an effective SEND Sufficiency Strategy

Dudley, like many other local authorities across the UK, is struggling to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND within its government-allocated funding and locally resulting in an increasing and substantial deficit against the [Dedicated Schools Grant](#)

Moving forward we need to ensure that we develop a robust and cost-effective sufficiency strategy, that establishes a 7-year programme that understands the needs of our children and young people and that we have the right resources in place locally to support them. It will set out the current issues and help us craft our vision for how these issues will be addressed.

To this end we have asked external organisation [1st Planner](#) to work with us look at this piece of work and better help us understand the demand within the system and provide options.

1st Planner has extensive experience of this work and is currently completing this work for Derby, Sheffield, Hackney, Bristol and Westmorland & Furness and have conducted similar exercises for numerous other local authorities.

After Easter this work will begin in earnest with the establishment of key stakeholder task and finish groups including working with our delivery partners (schools and settings) and the Dudley Parent Carer Forum.

The sufficiency strategy is due to be published in the Autumn.

1.a. Dudley SEND Resource Bases

New SEND bases, designed for children with SEND (Special Education Needs and Disabilities), have recently opened at four Dudley borough primary schools.

Recently, four primary schools in Dudley borough have opened new bases specifically designed for children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

This move is part of Dudley's plan to ensure there are enough specialized places available locally for students who require them, known as the sufficiency strategy. These bases aim to ensure that children and young people receive the appropriate support in suitable settings tailored to their needs, following what's called the graduated model of provision.

Situated in Jessons, Dawley Brook, Rufford, and Bromley Pensnett Primary schools, these bases add to the broader SEND provision aimed at helping Dudley borough children with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) stay within their local mainstream schools.

Each of these schools has received up to £150,000 in capital grant funding to develop the setting and provide an environment suitable for meeting the needs of the children placed there.

Students who access these bases spend most of their school day there, but because they're located on school sites, they also have opportunities to engage and socialize in mainstream classes.

These four new SEND Units are an addition to the already established bases hosted by Dudley schools. Over the last five years, Dudley Authority has also developed SEMH bases within two mainstream primary schools: Hawbush Primary and Caslon Primary Schools. These settings have been successful in providing tailored education for children with Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs. Additionally, resourced provision, allowing children to spend most of their learning time in mainstream classes, is available at several primary and secondary schools across the borough.

While the needs of children with SEND vary greatly, the priority is always to support children in staying in mainstream schools whenever possible, as it allows them to be with their siblings and peers in their local community. SEND bases offer specialized support for pupils with EHCPs, including enhanced staffing, equipment, and support available within a mainstream school.

In selecting the schools, the council worked closely with the Dudley Parent Carer Forum throughout the process of identifying these four new bases.

Funding for the four SEND bases has come through the government's Designated Schools Grant High Needs Block.

The council is also collaborating with Woodside and Priory primary schools, part of the Hales Valley Academy trust, with plans to open two more bases by 2025. Crestwood and Ellowes High Schools are also planning to open secondary bases within the next 12 months.

Details of the borough's current and planned SEND bases are provided in the diagram below.

Dudley SEND Resource Bases

Resourced Provision

Fully commissioned to host school. Children on roll at host school. Placement via EHCP. **Children will aim to spend majority of time in mainstream classes. Children can progress through mainstream curriculum**

Current

- Hob Green SLB (24)
- Ashwood Park Deaf Base (20)
- Gigmill ASD Base (8)
- Beacon Hill ASD Base (10)
- Crestwood Deaf Base (12)

Planned

- Crestwood EBSA/ND Base Sep 24 (12)
- Ellowes High SEMH Base – Jan 25 (min12)
- There are also plans for an additional 4 with emphasis on secondary provision (min 12)

Brackets indicated number of pupils

SEND Units

Fully commissioned to host school. Children on roll at host school. Placement via EHCP. Children need enhanced staffing, curriculum or environment. **Will spend majority of time in unit with opportunities in mainstream (min 12 pupils)**

Current

- Maple Tree SEMH Base (Hawbush Primary)
- Beech Tree SEMH Base (Caslon Primary)
- Rufford Primary SEND unit *
- Jesson primary SEND unit*
- Bromley Pensnett Primary SEND Unit*
- Dawley Brook Primary SEND Unit*

Planned

- Woodside Primary (Send Unit) Jan 25*
- Priors Primary (Send Unit) Jan 25*

*For children with communication interaction and cognition and learning all for kids with ECHP

Glossary

- | | |
|--------|-------------------------------------|
| • EBSA | Emotional based school avoidance |
| • ND | Neuro Diversity |
| • ASD | Autism Spectrum Disorder |
| • SEMH | Social, Emotional and Mental Health |
| • EHCP | Education Health & Care Plan |
| • SLB | Speech Language Base |

1.b. Early Years Inclusion Hubs

Dudley is delighted to announce that the 4 out of 5 Early Years Inclusion Hubs are now operational with staff being praised for their amazing work on supporting pre-school children with emerging and additional needs. Details of a fifth hub are expected to be confirmed soon.

The hubs offer personalised, targeted and specialist interventions for children and families. They are designed to have staffing models that deliver best

practice to ensure they are responsive to the individual needs of each child in in localities across the borough and will help children prepare for the future transition into school life.

The Early Years Inclusion Hubs are:

- Dudley Central : Netherton Park Nursery School
- Dudley North : Wrens Nest Primary School
- Halesowen : Caslon Primary School
- Stourbridge : Elmfield Primary School

For further information about the hubs, contact the early years team on 01384 814364 for advice or support.

1.c. Plans for multi-million-pound special school under way

Plans to rebuild Pens Meadow School in Pensnett are taking a step forward with a contractor now appointed to deliver the work.

Dudley Council is investing £15 million in the Pens Meadow School to be built on the site of the former Pensnett High School. Contractor Interclass PLC, a local company based in Wombourne, will be delivering the build with initial site preparatory work to begin this spring.

Once built, the school will provide education for 155 children and young people aged 3 to 19, together with a nursery assessment unit for the borough.

The purpose-built building will deliver better facilities for pupils with complex needs and severe learning difficulties, including autism and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

It will have therapy rooms, a hydrotherapy pool, changing facilities, outdoor teaching and play areas, and 14 classrooms where the layouts can be changed for children with additional needs.

The new school has been designed by the council's project design and delivery team in corporate landlord services. Work is expected to start on site early April.

Construction is programmed to be complete in the summer of 2025. The school is set to be fully operational in January 2026, with a phased transition for some of the pupils to the new site starting in the autumn of 2025.

Video https://m.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=20&v=zBt3Uy-rALU&embeds_referring_euri=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.pens-meadow.dudley.sch.uk%2F&feature=emb_logo

1.d. Halesbury Special School gets green light for extension

Halesbury Special School has taken its first steps towards the construction of a new £3m extension with approval in principle from Dudley Council.

The school is one of seven special schools run by the council and provides education for 165 young people with complex needs and physical disabilities.

Built in 1958, the Halesowen school is one of three borough special schools currently operating significantly above its design capacity and coping with the increased complexity of the needs of its students.

Funded by the Dedicated Schools Capital Grant, the planned extension work at the school will provide upgraded accommodation for the existing number of students plus eight extra places for youngsters aged between four and 19 with complex communication and interaction needs, which means they are considered hard to place.

Subject to planning permission being granted, the council expects work at Halesbury to begin in December 2024 and completed in December 2025.