



Central Bedfordshire Specialist School Place Plan 2022 – 2030

(Revised version October 2023)



SEND | Together is better



A great place to live and work.

FOREWORD

We believe SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) is everyone's business. The Specialist School Place Plan is a key part of the SEND Strategy 2022 – 2025 which sets out our vision for children and young people:

'In Central Bedfordshire, we will strive for every child and young person with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to have the best possible start in life, and a childhood where they feel included and valued for their individuality both at home and within their community. Our ambition is for every child and young person to do well in education, and to fulfil their aspirations as they move into adulthood so that they can take their place in society as healthy, engaging and



contributing members of the community. We commit to a local area with an inclusive culture where professionals and services feel valued, enabling them to build meaningful relationships with families where they can make a difference. Our services will make a difference to the lives of children and young people with SEND by being available and accessible to them at the right time and in the right place.'

Our Specialist School Place Plan sets out how we will create more of the right school places for the future which will meet children's need, based on feedback from partners and our forecast of need.

Working with and alongside the SEND community, our Plan will be reviewed annually to make sure we are responding to the changing needs of our children and young people until 2030 and beyond.

Sarah-Jane Smedmor

Director of Children's Services,
Central Bedfordshire Council

Cllr Hayley Whittaker

Executive Member for Children and Families

Introduction

Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) is committed to delivering the best for our children and young people. Increasing the number of specialist school places for children and young people with SEND is a priority, working alongside our parent/carers community, with schools, early years settings and other partners including Health.

CBC has statutory duties in relation to children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including those who are assessed to require an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This includes the requirement for CBC to keep under review the educational provision in its area for children and young people with SEND and outside of its area for children and young people with special educational needs for whom it is responsible, and children and young people in its area who have a disability. CBC is required to consider the extent to which this provision is sufficient to meet the educational needs of these children and young people.

This plan is a key element of the SEND Strategy which says we will deliver suitable educational provision.

Suitable educational provision

We want children and young people to attend school as close to where they live as possible. If a child or young person requires specialist provision, (either an Additionally Resourced Provision or a Special School) we want to be able to have sufficient and the right type of provision to meet need. We work closely with our special schools and ARPs to continue to provide high quality provision as follows:

- Increased specialist educational places in the local area so that children can stay in their local community;
- Inclusive mainstream education with the right resources and training to support children at the point at which needs are identified;
- Regular and high-quality reviews of plans for children and young people to ensure educational provision is based on their needs and aspirations as they change over time.

CBC, like many other councils across the country, is experiencing an increase in the number of children with EHCPs. We've seen in excess of a 65% increase in all EHCPs (0 – 25 years) between January 2019 and January 2023 and this is subsequently leading to increasing demand for specialist education provision.

The number of pupils with an EHCP maintained by CBC is forecast to increase significantly during the 2020s, from approximately 2300 in January 2022 (Reception to Year 14) to almost 3900 by January 2028, with levels expected to remain relatively stable after this point. This is being driven by a combination of population growth and rising incidence of SEND. We are actively working on an Inclusion Strategy including improved multi-agency working and a more effective early intervention offer so that children and young people with SEND have their needs met at the earliest point.

The majority of children and young people with SEND, including those with an EHCP will have their educational needs met well within mainstream schools/colleges.

This plan sets out how CBC will meet the demand for specialist provision with provision for over 40% of EHCP school aged pupils (Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs) and Special Schools). This percentage of children and young people with an EHCP accessing specialist provision is in line with the Regional and National average.

This plan covers Reception to Year 14. Providing new school places will require either existing schools to expand or new schools to be built. CBC has no legal powers to propose or determine changes to academies, which includes two of the four special schools situated in Central Bedfordshire. Collaborative working is essential as part of a common commitment to inclusion and increasing the access to specialist places that meet the needs of all pupils.

The latest pupil data will be used to update our forecasts and this plan on an annual basis. This plan currently adds around 280 ARP places and around 600 special school places by 2030.

Parent feedback

The public consultation on the future of Special Schools and Additional Resource Provisions in 2021 was the most extensive listening exercise the Council has ever undertaken into the provision of specialist school places.



The proposals in the consultation were well supported and are being delivered. However, there was strong feedback that the number of places we were forecasting to provide would not be enough. The council committed to revising its forecasts based on the latest data available and using this alongside parent feedback from the consultation to develop a longer-term plan.

From the consultation respondents emphasized the importance of more provision, local provision and the right provision – children have a variety of different needs.

Overall, there was support for the principles of the plan. Comments identified the shortfall in places, with children being without suitable provision. Responses also identified the importance of local provision, along with ensuring the right provision is available.

Mainstream

There were high levels of support for the vision for mainstream inclusion with comments around the need for experienced staff to make it worthwhile. Ultimately it needs to be the right provision for the child. There were also comments identifying the need to make sure schools are funded correctly to be able to provide mainstream inclusion, as well as needing support from Special schools.

Meeting children's needs through the right provision

CBC has a statutory duty to conduct an Education, Health and Care needs assessments for a child or young person who has or may have special educational needs and for whom it may be necessary for special educational provision to be made in accordance with an EHCP, in order to determine whether an EHCP is required. For children and young people with EHCPs, CBC has a statutory duty to make sure there are sufficient school places, including special educational provision (ARPS and Special Schools), for the local community.

Nationally as well as in CBC most pupils with EHCPs are educated within mainstream schools/colleges.

This document focuses upon the designated specialist provision through Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs) within mainstream schools or through Special Schools. This document is a school organisation/place planning document.

It is important to note:

- The forecasts for EHCPs and special school places sets out the expected number of pupils in Reception to Year 14 with EHCPs maintained by CBC irrespective of where those pupils are educated (i.e., irrespective of the type of provision they attend, or the geographic location of that provision).
- Mainstream schools (including those with ARPs) and special schools within Central Bedfordshire educate children and young people where the EHCP is maintained by CBC, but also pupils where the EHCP is maintained by another local authority.
- CBC only has statutory powers to propose and determine school organisation changes to schools that are maintained by CBC – this means community, foundation, and voluntary-aided schools within Central Bedfordshire. CBC has no legal powers to propose or determine changes to academies, which includes two of the four special schools situated in Central Bedfordshire. Our two academy special schools continue to work with us and are supporting the aim to increase capacity where space at their sites allows for it. Collaborative working is essential as part of a common commitment to inclusion, increasing the access to specialist places that meet the needs of all pupils.

Principles

CBC is committed to:

- a) Promote inclusion in mainstream settings to support pupils identified at SEND Support and those with EHCPs where those pupils can access the curriculum and their other needs can be met through reasonable adjustments.
- b) Agree a strategic approach to ARPs and their number/designation/location/ size / entry and exit strategies.
- c) Develop robust collaborative working with ARPs to ensure that there are clear accountability processes.
- d) Increase places available in special schools and address accommodation shortfall / suitability so that they can meet the needs of our children and young people with the most complex needs; and
- e) Embed culture / processes that share and develop expertise, capacity and resilience across our schools, including strong leadership, secure safeguarding, quality assurance, and appropriate levels of staffing with identified development.

In respect of principle (a) above in mainstream settings:

- i. CBC's intention is that pupils who can access a mainstream education should do so at a school closest to where they live, subject to parental preference, and receive the support that they require.
- ii. All settings should have a culture of inclusion and provide effective support to pupils identified as requiring SEND Support.
- iii. Schools should use their internal SEND processes – with support from CBC – to identify pupils where they may meet the threshold for an EHCP.
- iv. CBC will work with schools to improve practice in relation to meeting the needs of pupils with SEND, and through Schools for the Future will seek to include space to enable multi-agency support of pupils and enable more needs to be met locally.

In respect of principle (b) school organisation principles for future establishment or adaptation of Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs):

- i. ARPs should enable progression with peers within a cluster where needed.
- ii. For those primary needs with higher incidence there should be appropriate geographic spread of ARP provision across localities/clusters.
- iii. Diversifying the offer to include Cognition and Learning in both Primary and Secondary Phases and expanding SEMH into Secondary phase and making provision for students with social anxiety.
- iv. ARPs should be of sufficient size and revenue funding to enable effective specialist staffing and reflect the size and age-range of the school they are situated in; and
- v. ARP development will include expansion and / or redesignation of current ARPs as well as the establishment of new ARPs.

In respect of principle (c) above

- i. We have developed a robust Service Level Agreement that is agreed for three years and annually reviewed.
- ii. We have implemented a quality assurance framework including an annual QA visit from a SEND Advisory Teacher (SENDAT).

Regarding principle (d) above: school organisation principles for future establishment or adaptation of special school provision CBC:

- i. Anticipates over 40% of pupils with an EHCP would be placed within a specialist provision (ARP or Special School), this is an increase of an average of 38% previously forecast in Central Bedfordshire and used as the basis for the previous Plan.
- ii. Will commission places at special schools inside and beyond Central Bedfordshire as appropriate to the needs of individual pupils but anticipates that capacity at special schools within Central Bedfordshire or other schools within a collaborative approach with neighbouring authorities.
- iii. Will work with families and schools through the EHCP Annual Reviews, and any re-assessment processes, to ensure that placements continue to be appropriate for the current needs of pupils, including through transition points as pupils near the upper age limit of their current provision.
- iv. Anticipates continuing with a school organisation structure of area special schools (Chiltern and Ivel Valley currently) which each meet a range of special educational needs for their geographic areas and of schools that have a particular specialism(s) and serve a broader specialist provision in the future.
- v. Will consider any school organisation changes CBC would wish to maintain or improve pupil progression options. Currently, all four special schools have a lower age limit in Key Stage 2 or below, and all progress to 16 or above. Any changes to provision would need to coherently form part of the overall pattern of provision.
- vi. Will assume any new provision (either whole schools or satellite provisions of existing schools) need to be of sufficient size to be educationally and financially viable.

In respect of point (e)

We have developed a SEND Strategic plan aligned to our shared values [SEND Strategy Local Offer](#) The values and six priority areas in our SEND Strategy are:

Values:

- Children and young people will be at the centre of all that we do
- Transparency
- We will be reflective
- We will work together effectively

Priorities:

- Ensuring suitable educational provision
- A local area that is working together - 'Together is Better'
- A knowledgeable workforce and community empowered to support families
- Clear pathways with seamless transfers and transitions

- Children and young people receive the right support at the right time
- Opportunities in the community for children, young people and their families

Current provision (for children and young people from Reception to Y14)

From the SEN2 data in January 2023:

- CBC maintained 2695 EHCPs of pupils within Reception to Year 14;
- Within Central Bedfordshire there were 16 ARPs (Manshead and Ardley due for closure between 2024 and 2026), collectively providing 161 places (equivalent to 6% of CBC EHCPs). Almost all of these places provide for CBC maintained EHCPs; and
- Within Central Bedfordshire there were 4 special schools, collectively providing 908 places (equivalent to 34% of CBC EHCPs from reception to Y14). It should be noted that not all places are occupied by CBC children and that we receive children from other LAs as well as placing in schools out of borough.
- Annex 1 provides more detailed information about the ARP and special school provision as of September 2023.

Current identified pressures and/or gaps in provision are:

- We still have insufficient provision to meet demand, both in ARPs and special schools, despite increases in places in recent years and again for 2023. There is pressure for placements for pupils is now in three primary needs of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Cognitive & Learning and Social, Emotional and Mental health (SEMH);
- Progression options for pupils attending an ARP are inconsistent meaning that pupils may not be able to progress with their peers – for example ASD provision in the north of the authority has primary provision in Sandy, middle school in Biggleswade, and upper school in Shefford and Stotfold.
- ARP provision is geographically uneven compared to pupil distribution – for example there is no provision in Ampthill and Flitwick or Cranfield and only lower/primary in Sandy.
- Special school accommodation, although this has increased, still requires further capital investment and the incremental increases in pupil numbers is now more closely matched through a review of the single value top-up in 2022.

Forecast demand and headline implications

From September 2017 to September 2023 CBC has experienced an almost 94% increase in EHC plans. This compares to 65% nationally. Between 2014 and 2017, the percentage rate of EHCPs was lower than our statistical neighbours and the national average.

The tables below set out a forecast from January 2023 based on data from the January 2022 School Census and SEN2 returns. Table 1 sets out the forecast number of children living in CBC with EHCPs in Reception to Year 14.

Table 2 sets out the same data for specialist provision required for pupils with EHCPs maintained by CBC.

Table 1: Forecast number of CBC maintained EHCPs, YR to Y14			
	YR to Y11	Y12 to Y14	Total YR to Y14
Jan-22	1960 (Actual)	340 (Actual)	2300 (Actual)
Jan-23	2300 (Actual)	390 (Actual)	2700 (Actual)
Jan-24	2580	340	2920
Jan-25	2850	370	3220
Jan-26	3070	390	3470
Jan-27	3260	430	3680
Jan-28	3400	470	3870

Note: numbers are rounded to the nearest 10.

Data based on school census data

Forecast based on DfE Guidance: "Forecasting demand for SEND Provision – Guidance for Local Authorities"

The number of CBC maintained EHCPs for pupils in Reception to Year 14 at the start of 2023 was 2700 (SEN2 data for January 2023). The latest forecast is for an additional 520 EHCPs by January 2025, and a further 650 EHCPs by January 2028.

By September 2027 this plan aims to grow ARP provision from 161 places to over 350. This plan will be reviewed annually to achieve this target up to 2030 and beyond.

Table 2 outlines the forecast number of places required based upon different percentages of pupils with EHCPs who require specialist provision. This indicates an increase in the number of places required through the 2020s. If, 40% of pupils with EHCPs require specialist provision, the total number of places required will increase to approximately 1290 by January 2025 and up to around 1550 places by January 2028 based on the average percentage of pupils with EHCPs attending special schools nationally.

Table 2

	38% of 2021 EHCP Forecast (original prediction)	40% of 2021	40% of 2022	40% of 2023
		EHCP Forecast	EHCP Forecast	ECHP Forecast
Jan-22	890	940	770 (Actual)	920 (Actual)
Jan-23	1020	1080	1010	1080 (Actual)
Jan-24	1100	1150	1060	1170
Jan-25	1150	1210	1090	1290
Jan-26	1190	1250	1130	1390
Jan-27	1220	1280	1140	1470
Jan-28	N/A	N/A	1210	1550

Note: numbers are rounded to the nearest 10.

The figures represent projected figures based on the delivery of proposals set out in this plan and will be reviewed annually as forecast need is adjusted based on the numbers and types of places required.

Where a child or young person lives cannot be used as a reason by special schools to refuse admission to their schools so some places in CBC special schools will cater for children from other local authorities.

CBC works closely with neighbouring Local Authorities to plan for need and we will always need to commission places outside of CBC both for parental preference and complex needs that will need specialist residential provision. Equally some places in CBC special schools will cater for children from other LAs.

Table 3 details the forecast indicative needs of pupils with EHCPs. These are derived from the core projection for number of pupils with EHCPs detailed in Table 1. Table 3 assumes that the current proportions of EHCPs for each area of need continue; future annual refreshes of this plan can include consideration of the area of need of new EHCPs to provide potential trend information.

Table 3: Indicative areas of need for pupils with EHCPs maintained by CBC in Reception to Y14													
	Communication and Interaction			Cognition and Learning			Social, Emotional, and Mental Health			Sensory and / or physical needs			Other
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	2023
Jan-22	1220	1340	N/A	440	360	N/A	520	540	N/A	140	150	N/A	N/A
Jan-23	1420	1400	1410	510	410	430	610	560	640	170	150	160	62
Jan-24	1520	1450	1500	540	410	480	650	590	690	180	190	180	80
Jan-25	1590	1490	1650	570	430	530	680	600	760	190	190	200	90
Jan-26	1640	1560	1780	590	450	570	700	630	820	190	190	210	90
Jan-27	1690	1570	1880	600	450	610	720	670	860	190	190	220	100
Jan-28	N/A	1680	1980	N/A	480	640	N/A	670	910	N/A	200	230	100

Note – the totals do not always match the core projection totals due to rounding to the nearest 10 for each area of need.

Meeting need

To meet the forecast need, we plan to implement the following.

For ARP provision our options are to expand existing provision and / or create new provision.

- i. The age of transfer process for mainstream schools (as clusters move from a three-tier system with middle schools to a primary/secondary school model) may provide opportunities to establish/expand ARP provision as part of the age-of-transfer process and capital projects.
- ii. The forecast population growth in Central Bedfordshire because of housing developments will result in additional new mainstream schools being established (on land provided by developers), which could include new ARP provision.

For special schools the options are the same as ARPs (i.e., expansion or new schools), with the potential for expansion of existing schools onto satellite sites or a completely new school. CBC will consider the following:

- i. If any mainstream sites are no longer required, either as a result of age-of-transfer and / or reconfiguration to respond to housing developments, these may be suitable for adaptation into special school provision, whether for a relocation, new school, or satellite;
- ii. Where co-location is appropriate, mainstream sites may be able to be utilised for satellite provision;
- iii. New schools, or whole school relocations (potentially with expansion) would require either redeployment of an existing site or the securing of a new site.

SEND changes to maintained schools (community, foundation or voluntary-aided schools) would require formal school organisation processes in accordance with legislation and DfE guidance, while changes to academies would require applications to the DfE/Regional School Commissioners in accordance with their guidance. New schools would need to be established in accordance with legislation, which currently has a presumption that a new school commissioned by the local authority would be established through an academy competition.

It is important to note that not all places at expanded or new provision becomes available immediately, since these are places across the age-range of the ARP/special school. If they are to be filled from the point of entry to the school, the places may be filled over several years.

Increasing places available in Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs)

ARP Phase 1 September 2022 to August 2024

1. The following tables set out proposals.
2. From September 2022 to August 2024 the following changes are proposed:

School	Proposal	Net impact on places	Update July 2023
Arnold**	Expansion by 4 places of ASD ARP (middle)	+ 4	Complete 12 places
Ramsey Manor	Expansion by 4 places of ASD ARP (lower)	+ 4	Due January 2024
<i>Leighton Buzzard Upper Provision*</i>	<i>New ASD ARP for 24 places (upper)</i>		<i>Moved to phase 2</i>
<i>Shefford/Stotfold secondary provision*</i>	<i>New SEMH ARP for 12 places (secondary)</i>		<i>Moved to phase 2</i>
Samuel Whitbread	Expansion by 6 places of ASD ARP (upper/sec)	+ 6	Complete 27 places
The Vale	New ASD ARP for 10 places (primary)	+ 10	Complete 10 places
Rushmere Park	New ASD ARP for 10 places (lower)	+ 10	Complete 10 places
Sandy/Biggleswade secondary provision*	New ASD ARP for 24 places (upper/sec)	+ 24	In planning for summer 2024
Brooklands	New ASD ARP for 12 places (middle)	+ 12	In planning for summer 2024
Biggleswade Academy	Expansion by 4 places of ASD ARP primary Expansion to 14 place primary age ARP. Some places already available, final 2 places require the completion of the capital works.	+ 4	In planning for summer 2024
Total		74	

*Yet to be confirmed but early discussions have taken place

**Please see Annex 1 for cluster information

In total, these projects will have by the academic year 23/24:

- Provided 34 additional ARP places from September 2023 with 161 places available in the 23/24 academic year. A further 40 by September 2024 giving a total of 201 places across all ARPs if all these projects proceed.
- One ARP Ardley will close in the summer of 2024 (provision now through The Vale).

- iii. ASD provision established at a lower school within the Leighton and Linslade cluster (Rushmere Park).
- iv. Planned for middle provision at Brooklands.
- v. Increased ASD places available in the Harlington cluster through extensions at Arnold and Ramsey Manor.

ARP Phase 2 September 2024 to August 2027

The criteria for the development of ARPs includes data on projected needs and service data and areas of need.

For the 2024 to 2026 academic years the following changes are proposed:

- 1) ARP Phase 2 highlighted **green** as Priority 1 – proposed for September 2024/25 academic year opening
- 2) ARP Phase 2 highlighted **amber** as Priority 2 – proposed for September 2025/26 academic year opening
- 3) ARP Phase 2 highlighted **blue** as Priority 3 – proposed for September 2026/27 academic year opening

School	Proposal	Net impact on places	Update summer 2023
D&HR cluster *	New secondary-phase ASD ARP for 12 places	+ 12	Site to be identified -
D&HR cluster *	New secondary-phase SEMH ARP for 12 places	+ 12	Site to be identified - if progressing
Leighton and Linslade Cluster	New secondary-phase ASD ARP for 24 places	+24	Site to be identified* moved from phase 1
Leighton and Linslade Cluster*	New secondary-phase SEMH ARP for 12 places (to provide progression from Lancot)	+ 12	Site to be identified - if progressing
Harlington cluster *	New upper school ASD ARP provision for 12 places (to provide progression from Arnold)	+ 12	Site to be identified –
Shefford and Stotfold cluster *	New primary-phase SEMH provision for 12 places	+ 12	In planning at Shefford Lower for Sept 2024
Shefford and Stotfold cluster *	New secondary-phase SEMH provision for 12 places	+ 12	Site to be identified if progressing
Sandy Cluster *	New primary-phase Cognitive & Learning ARP provision for 12 places	+12	Site to be identified
Sandy Cluster *	New secondary-phase Cognitive & Learning (C&L) ARP provision for 24 places -	+ 24	Site to be identified
Shefford and Stotfold cluster *	New primary-phase C&L ARP provision for 12 places -	+12	Site to be identified -

Shefford and Stotfold cluster *	New secondary-phase C&L ARP provision for 24 places	+24	Site to be identified -
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Dunstable and HR cluster/Rural Beds	New primary-phase C&L ARP provision for 12 places -	+12	Site to be identified –
Dunstable and HR cluster	New secondary-phase C & L ARP provision for 24 places	+24	Site to be identified -
Total		204	

**Individual schools have yet to be identified for proposed new provisions marked with an asterisk.*

In total, these projects would:

- i. Provide 204 additional ARP places. If all these projects proceed, by September 2027 there would be a further 13 ARPs. This would bring the total to 27 ARPs, collectively providing over 350 places, this is an increase of around 110% from the 161 that are available in 2023/24.
- ii. Establish ASD ARP progression within Sandy/Biggleswade cluster (with the secondary provision complementing the primary provision at Biggleswade Academy)
- iii. Establish ASD ARP progression within Leighton and Linslade cluster (with the middle school ASD provision complementing Rushmere Park).
- iv. Establish ASD ARP progression within the Harlington cluster (to follow on from the middle school ASD provision at Arnold).
- v. Establish SEMH ARP progression within Leighton and Linslade cluster (with secondary phase provision to provide progression from Lancot).
- vi. Establish ASD ARP progression within Dunstable and HR cluster (with the middle school ASD provision complementing The Vale Academy).
- vii. Establish SEMH progression within Shefford and Stotfold cluster with the new primary-phase SEMH provision.
- viii. Establish SEMH ARP for secondary phase ages across Dunstable/HR cluster
- ix. Establish Cognition and Learning ARP for primary and secondary phase ages across Shefford/Stotfold cluster
- x. Establish Cognition and Learning ARP for primary and secondary phase ages across Sandy/Biggleswade cluster
- xi. Establish Cognition and Learning ARP for primary and secondary phase ages across Dunstable/HR cluster

Future geographical need will be assessed through the review of the data and the annual refresh of the plan.

Providing additional places in Special Schools

In the Have Your Say Consultation stated *Chiltern Special School*



There was strong support for the proposals for Chiltern Special School. Within the comments, respondents demonstrated support for the school, but highlighted that the increase in the number of places wasn't enough. There were also comments agreeing with the need for a new site, along with questions about where the new site would be. Within this, there were concerns about the impact of moving the school site on the students.

Ivel Valley Special School

There was strong support for the proposals for Ivel Valley Special School. Comments were strongly in support of the school and the work it does for the children there. Comments also identified that the current school site isn't fit for purpose, so to be able to accommodate further numbers it would need a new building. There were also comments stating that the increase in the number of places wasn't enough.

Oak Bank Special School

There was strong support for the proposals for Oak Bank Special School. Comments were supportive of the school and felt that even more places were needed. Questions and concerns were raised about the location of the second site, detailing potential issues around the sharing of resources over such large distances, and that children would be expected to travel large distances to the second site.

Weatherfield Academy Special School

There was strong support for the proposals for Weatherfield Academy Special School. The comments received were supportive of the school, but identified that the amount of proposed places isn't enough, and that the school needs more places now. Other types of provision were identified in the answers to this question. Coming through strongly was the need for specialist teaching and ensuring that teachers received the right training. There was also a call for the need to support home schooling/education or flexi schooling, as many felt as a result of the pandemic that home schooling could work (and it's important to note that for some children with SEND it really suited them), as was shown throughout periods of lockdown.

Special School Phase 1 September 2021 to August 2023

The following tables set out the proposals.

From the 2020/21 to 2022/23 academic years the following changes have been achieved

School	Proposal	Net impact on places	Update summer 2023
Ivel Valley	New purpose build classroom and additional dining space. Refurbish the post-16 provision	+ 22	Completed
Chiltern	Renovate the onsite building to a multi- purpose post-16 provision to release space in the main building	+ 65 places	Completed
Weatherfield	Erect a purpose-built additional classrooms and associated staff facilities	+ 20	Completed
		107	

In total, these projects have provided 107 additional special school places, resulting in a total of 822 special school places within Central Bedfordshire.

Phase 2 September 2023 to August 2026

From the 2023/24 to 2025/26 academic years the following changes are proposed:

School	Proposal	Net impact on places	Update Summer 2023
Chiltern	Refurbish the UTC on the Kingsland site for satellite provision for ASD with complex needs	+ 115 places (50 of these additional places have already been accommodated)	In school development to accommodate pupils until UTC is completed
Ivel Valley	Refurbish a teaching space to accommodate KS1 learners	+10 places	Completed
Ivel Valley	Erect purpose-built classrooms to accommodate relocation of children from Biggleswade Academy (23 students)	0 places	Not yet started
Total		125	

In total, these projects would provide 125 additional special school places, resulting in a total of 947 special school places by September 2026 within Central Bedfordshire

Phase 3 September 2026 to August 2030

For the period 2026/27 to 2029/30, the following projects are proposed with places available by September 2027. To achieve this, school organisation processes and capital feasibility studies for larger projects will commence during 2023/24.

School/Cluster/ Need	Proposal	Net impac t on places	Update Summer 2023
Ivel Valley	New build to expand to 330 places (expansion of 85 places from the 2022/23 capacity). Rationale: Address shortage and quality of current accommodation and provide additional places	+ 85	Capital agreed plans being developed for opening 2026
Weatherfield	Establish satellite provision at the former Brewers Hill Middle School site for 150 pupils. This would provide additional places, including post 16, as first stage for potential relocation of whole school into appropriate accommodation.	+ 150	Early discussions taking place
SEMH provision Submission of Free School	Establish additional special school places for SEMH in the north of the authority so that there are 130 places in SEMH schools in total. Rationale: Forecast increasing demand for SEMH provision, creation of places in the north of the authority area, current Oak Bank site unable to accommodate more pupils	+ 130	Successful Free school bid to the DfE
Total		365	

In total, these projects would provide 365 additional special school places. The plan for special school places is to have secured approximately 1312 within the academic year September 2026/27 within Central Bedfordshire. **As this plan will be reviewed annually these parameters will be revised to give an updated forecast.**

Conclusion

This plan will allow us to ensure that over 42% of children with EHCPs will be able to access appropriate provision as close to home as possible. This will include at least 42% of children being placed in CBC schools and settings and will allow us to work with parents/carers to identify suitable provision effectively and in an appropriate time frame. As the plans are brought to fruition, work will continue with parents and carers to secure the best possible educational placements to meet the needs of their children.

We will continue to work with all stakeholders to review this plan on annual basis to ensure that the longer-term plans will meet the required need.

Annex 1: Specialist provision within Central Bedfordshire, September 2023
Annex 2: Glossary

Annex 1: Specialist provision in Central Bedfordshire, September 2023

Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs) September 2023

Done

Cluster	Need	Phase	School	Status	Places (Sept 23)	ARP Progression
D&HR	ASD	Primary	Ardley Hill (see point 2 below)	Academy - MAT	4	
D&HR	ASD	Secondary	Manshead (see point 2 below)	Academy - MAT	8	
Harlington	ASD	Lower	Ramsey Manor	Comm	9	Arnold
Harlington	ASD	Middle	Arnold	Academy - SAT	12	Samuel Whitbread
Sandy	ASD	Primary	St Swithun's	VC	8	Biggleswade Academy into Y7
Biggleswade	ASD	Middle phase	Biggleswade Academy	Academy - MAT	14	Samuel Whitbread
S&S	ASD	Upper	Samuel Whitbread	Academy - MAT	27	
D&HR	SEMH	Primary	Lancot	Academy - MAT	12	Mainstream or Oak Bank
Harlington	SEMH	Lower	Silsoe	VC	8	
Harlington	HI	Lower	Toddington St George	Academy - SAT	8	Parkfields
Harlington	HI	Middle	Parkfields	Foundation	8	Harlington
Harlington	HI	Upper	Harlington	Academy – SAT	7	
L&L	SLCN	Lower	Heathwood	Comm	8	Varied
Biggleswade	SLCN	Lower	St Andrew's	VC	8	Varied
Leighton Buzzard	ASD	Primary	Rushmere Park Academy	Academy	10	Brooklands Middle
D&HR	ASD	Primary	The Vale Academy	Academy	10	Brooklands Middle
Total					161	

ARPs update:

- 1) Increased capacity in two new ARPs (The Vale & Rushmere Park) and extended places at three others (Arnold, Ramsey Manor and Biggleswade)
- 2) Ardley Hill will be closing in the summer of 2024 and Manshead in the summer of 2027
- 3) Needs being met: Nearly two-thirds of the current places are for ASD; there is then an all-through progression route for Hearing Impairments (HI) and lower / primary only provisions for SLCN and SEMH.
- 4) The geography of provision: There is currently no designated provision in Ampthill & Flitwick or Cranfield, and only lower / primary in Sandy.
- 5) Progression routes:
 - a) For pupils in ASD provision – progression is not established in any cluster

- b) SLCN provision in Leighton and Linslade and Biggleswade is only in the Lower phase with no ARP provision for older pupils. This is also true of SEMH provision in Leighton and Linslade (although some progress to Oak Bank).
- c) Some progression routes may be affected by clusters moving to a primary / secondary model.

Special school provision, September 2023

The following table details the current provision:

School	Cluster	Age range	Status	Needs	Sept 2021	Sept 2022	Sept 2023	Site	Site usage	Site places
Ivel Valley	Biggleswade	3 – 19	Community	MLD / SLD / PMLD	230	241	252	Hitchmead Road, SG18 0NL	Early Years to KS4	C140
								Biggleswade Academy	To end Y8	C30
								The Baulk, SG18 OPT	KS5	C30
Chiltern	D&HR	3 – 19	Community	ASD / MLD / SLD /	268	289	354	Kingsland, LU5 5PX	Complex SEND (SLD / PMLD pathways)	
Weatherfield	D&HR	7 – 19	Academy (SAT)	MLD	155	165	175	Brewers Hill Road, LU6 1AF	Whole school	
Oak Bank	L&L	9 – 19	Academy (SAT)	SEMH	127	127	127	Sandy Lane, LU7 3BE	Whole school	
Total					780	822	908			

- Chiltern and Ivel Valley are 'area special schools' and meet a range of complex needs. Broadly speaking, Chiltern takes most of its pupils from the west of Central Bedfordshire, while Ivel Valley takes nearly 90% of pupils from the east. Pupils from Ampthill and Flitwick and Cranfield attend Chiltern and Ivel Valley. Chiltern and Ivel Valley are both 95+% CBC residents.
- Oak Bank serves the whole of Central Bedfordshire, but takes over half of its pupils from D&HR and L&L.
- Weatherfield predominately serves the west of Central Bedfordshire, with 75% of pupils from Dunstable and Houghton Regis and Leighton and Linslade and 10% from Ampthill and Flitwick. Very few attend from Biggleswade, Sandy, or Shefford and Stotfold.

All four schools have increased pupil numbers over the last 5 years:

Total pupils in CBC special schools					
	Chiltern	Ivel Valley	Oak Bank	Weatherfield	Total
2023/24	354	252	127	175	908
2022/23	289	241	127	165	822
2021/22	260	220	127	155	762
2020/21	247	200	115	155	717
2019/20	223	192	111	154	680

- There has been an increase in places at CBC special schools by 228 since 2020. The majority of these places are in the two CBC area schools, Chiltern and Ivel Valley with 191 additional places provided.

Annex 2: Glossary

Academy	A school that has a Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State for its operation in accordance with the Academies Act 2010. Both mainstream and special schools can be academies, and mainstream academy schools can have Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs)
ARP	Additionally Resourced Provision. This means that the mainstream school has a designated provision within the school for a certain number of pupils who have the primary need that the ARP is designated for (such as ASD). ARPs can be provided in all phases of mainstream provision (lower, primary, middle, secondary, upper). The school receives place funding (£10k) for each funded place within the ARP as well as ‘top-up’ funding from the local authority who maintains the EHCP of each child within the ARP. Children attending an ARP would have an EHCP or, exceptionally, be in the assessment process for an EHCP.
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
DfE	Department for Education, a Government department
EHCP	Education, Health, and Care Plan issued in accordance with the Children and Family Act 2014 following a needs assessment led by the relevant local authority.
Independent special school	A special school that is not a maintained school or an academy or a non-maintained special school. These are run by an organisation that may be a charity or may be profit-making. Some independent special schools are known as ‘section 41 schools’ because they have been approved under section 41 of the Children and Family Act 2014 and so must admit a pupil if they are named on the EHCP.
Maintained school	A school that is maintained by a local authority (almost always the one in whose area it is situated). Maintained schools include community, foundation, and voluntary-aided schools whether they are mainstream or special schools.
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulties
MSI	Multi-sensory Impairment
NMSS	Non-maintained special school, which are schools that have been approved by the DfE under section 342 of the Education Act 1996. These have contracts with the DfE through which they receive some funding, and also receive funding from the commissioning local authority.
PMLD	Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties
RSC	Regional Schools Commissioner, an office within the DfE who exercises some of the powers of the Secretary of State with regard to academies in particular.
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
SEN Code of Practice	This is the DfE’s statutory guidance for organisations who work with children with SEND, including schools, colleges, and local authorities
SLD	Severe Learning Difficulties
Special school	A school that makes provision for pupils with identified SEND who have an EHCP or, exceptionally, are in the assessment process for an EHCP. Within this document, special school is shorthand for those special schools that are maintained schools or academies.
SpLD	Specific Learning Difficulties

