West Berkshire Council

SEND Placement Sufficiency Analysis

30 August 2024

West Berkshire Council

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Preface

The report has set out wider implications of the data in text boxes for ease which is summarised in Appendix 1.

It is recommended that further work be undertaken to follow up on these within the contexts of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029.

Readers are asked to note the data sources which underpin the report in Appendix 2.

The teamwork and input by all stakeholders is greatly appreciated and acknowledged.

This report shall be refreshed and updated **annually**, in line with revised, updated data.

September 2024

Next revision: August 2025

1. Executive Summary

Key Points and Actions for Capital SEND Place Planning arising from West Berkshire's SEND Sufficiency Analysis.

West Berkshire has **1,559 pupils with an EHC Plan as of 30th June 2024.** Of these**,** 214 are 18-25 years of age and are in education or training. The number of children and young people with an EHC Plan is expected to continue to grow, increasing the demand for educational places across various settings.

SEN Support: There are 3,945 pupils in West Berkshire receiving SEN Support as of 30th June 2024. The statistical comparison data via LAIT[1] tool shows that West Berkshire's figure is higher than the national average and compared to statistical neighbours.

A breadth of specialist provision needs to be planned for and developed within the borough. There is a high reliance on Special Schools. There is also a particularly high use of non-maintained and independent special schools, which is higher than the national average.

Demand for special education places is expected to rise significantly. For example, the number of primary-aged pupils with EHC Plans is projected to increase by 29% by 2028, while secondary-aged pupils are expected to see a 31% increase by 2030.

Detailed implications for SEND Capital Place Planning suggest that Special schools, including independent and non-maintained schools, currently accommodate a significant number of pupils with EHC Plans.

A notable proportion of West Berkshire pupils with EHC Plans attend out-of-district schools, particularly in nearby authorities such as Reading, Wiltshire, and Hampshire. There are a number of reasons for this which include geography and parental preference. Expanding in-borough provision should help to reduce reliance on out-of-area placements, which will not only support better outcomes for pupils but also help manage costs more effectively.

The table below sets out key recommendations arising from the SEND Placement Sufficiency Analysis based on 30th June 2024 data point.

[1] Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT) - An interactive spreadsheet for comparing data about children and young people across all local authorities in England.

Table 1: Key recommendations arising from the SEND Placement Sufficiency Analysis

	Identified Area	Key Action	SEND & Inclusion Strategy reference and Outcome
A.	Demand for special school placements is projected to increase from 149 places in 2024/25 to 161 places by 2026/27 for primary-aged pupils, and from 278 places in 2024/25 to 383 places by 2030 for secondary-aged pupils. *N.B. These projections are for places and may include pupils with an EHC Plan from other boroughs.*	Invest in building new special schools and/or expanding existing ones to accommodate the increasing number of students, particularly focusing on provisions for autism spectrum disorder, (ASD), Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), and Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.	**Priority 4- Developing Local Specialist Provision & Support** Work with our local mainstream provision to identify opportunities to develop additional SEMH, Autism, MLD and SLD provision. Reduce the usage of Independent Non-Maintained placements by meeting need through local maintained specialist provision. This will build parental confidence in the system, by identifying and meeting need quickly, and reducing the pressure on the High Needs Block by controlling placements costs and delivering "value for money."
B.	Projected rise in demand to meet the SEND profile of needs for West Berkshire pupils in more specialised resource provisions and units within mainstream. *The absence of SEN units within many mainstream schools suggests a gap in provision which is being addressed with capacity coming online this year. The demand for SEN Units in both primary and secondary phases is expected to rise, with projections showing an increase from 66 places in 2024/25 to 71 places by 2026/27 in primary schools and from 84 places in 2024/25 to 90 places by 2026/27 in secondary schools*	Expand resource provisions in mainstream schools to cater to the rising number of pupils with EHC Plans who require additional support. This includes increasing the capacity for specialized support, particularly for pupils with ASD, MLD, and SEMH needs. As part of the work, current service level agreements for existing resource provisions will be reviewed to support the level of SEND need identified.	**Priority 4- Developing Local Specialist Provision & Support** Work with our local mainstream provision to identify opportunities to develop additional SEMH, Autism, MLD and SLD provision. Develop the range SEN Units and/or specialist resource provision to support more severe or complex SEND needs would enable students to stay within their communities while receiving the specialised education they need.

	Identified Area	Key Action	SEND & Inclusion Strategy reference and Outcome
C.	Among the 214 pupils aged 18-25 with an EHC Plan, a significant portion (95 pupils) are in general further education, while the data shows that there are 45 pupils not in education, training, or employment (NEET). Data as of 30th June 2024.	Undertake a review to ensure that transition planning is part of Preparation for Adulthood and supports these cohorts to appropriate destinations. Expanding and enhancing SEND support in further education colleges and develop specialised post-16 programs, including vocational training and supported employment opportunities, to better meet the needs of this cohort by exploring working in partnership with commissioners and SEND services in Reading and Wokingham.	**Priority 6: Preparation for Adulthood** Improved access to high quality information regarding preparation for adulthood for young people with SEND and their families. Increased opportunities for young people with SEND to secure employment, including the development of Supported Internships and Apprenticeships. Working with local mainstream and specialist FE providers to ensure improved provision for work-related learning.

	Identified Area	Key Action	SEND & Inclusion Strategy reference and Outcome
D.	The need for alternative provision in terms of differentiated pathways and expansion pupil referral units is likely to increase whilst recognising the need to support reintegration back into the originating education destinations where possible. The demand for alternative provision is expected to increase from 17 places in 2024/25 to 20 places by 2026/27 for primary-aged pupils, and from 34 places in 2024/25 to 37 places by 2026/27 for secondary-aged pupils.	Explore the development of alternative provision facilities, and various pathways to ensure that the varying needs of students requiring alternative education pathways are met within the borough. This work may include the need to review the support offer around reintegration back into the originating education settings as part of the work	**Priority 5: Strengthening Alternative Provision** • Deliver high quality Alternative Provision locally operating alongside mainstream and special schools to meet the needs of our pupils for some or all of their education. • Further develop short- and medium-term Alternative Provision to enable students to re-engage with education and return to mainstream schools. • Develop short- and medium-term emergency alternative provision for children and young people who have no educational setting

Next Steps

The SEND Education Sufficiency Analysis now provides evidence and informs the business case for the development of further SEND provision.

To ensure that there is sufficient capital funding to support proposed and future developments of additional resourced provision over the next 10 years, a single "SEND Strategy – Infrastructure Delivery revised Infrastructure Development" business case was submitted by the Director of Education for approval by the Council in August 2024, to facilitate draw down to deliver our priority SEND projects as they become defined. There is a detailed process for approval, including presentation at Capital Strategy Group (November) and then through our committee process from January to February/March, culminating in Full Council in late Feb/early March 2025.

1. Introduction

West Berkshire's SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029 sets out the ambition to ensure that "every child, regardless of their abilities or needs, deserves access to high quality education and support affording them the opportunity to reach their full potential''.

Our approach is underpinned by a set of core principles: collaboration, early intervention, person-centred planning, supporting children close to where they live and maximising independence. By working together across all sectors, we can identify and respond to needs more effectively, ensuring that children receive the right support at the right time. Early intervention is crucial in preventing difficulties from escalating and helping children achieve better long-term outcomes.

The SEND Education Sufficiency Analysis will inform our future capacity requirements to meet SEND needs locally, whenever possible. It will provide evidence and inform analysis to ensure that a range of measures are in place to ensure that there is sufficient and consistent capacity across the district to support children and young people with more complex special education needs in their local area wherever possible

Statutory Duties

- The SEND Code of Practice sets out the presumption that for most children with SEND, their education will be within a mainstream setting.
- The Council has a statutory duty 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 our authority. This includes the need to secure provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Section 315 of the Education Act 1996 requires that arrangements for children with SEND be kept under review.
- 'Special educational needs' is a legal definition and refers to children with learning problems or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn than most children of the same age. Those with more complex needs will have an integrated assessment and, where appropriate, a single Education, Health and Care plan for their support.

In recent years, in West Berkshire, there has been a heavy reliance on independent sector education providers to address statutory requirements for SEND placements as demand exceeds capacity, locally. A rapid increase in growth of EHC Plans nationally has also informed the local situation and has placed an increased pressure on the High Needs Block funding.

West Berkshire borders Hampshire to the south, Wiltshire to the west, Oxfordshire to the north and both Reading and Wokingham authorities to the east. This is important to note given the flow of pupils with SEN needs both coming in and out of West Berkshire district to these surrounding authorities.

The SEND Education Sufficiency Analysis will be updated annually to ensure it continues to inform changes in local demand and provision.

Aims of the SEND Education Sufficiency Plan

The aim is to inform and support West Berkshire local authority in its development of strategic place planning for SEND educational provision in the medium to long term. This encapsulates the following activities:

- Inform commissioning arrangements in terms of education places for children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan

- Inform capital investment planning and future bids to DfE Wave programmes.

- Inform high level discussions to meet current and future needs in terms of existing wrap around support and services such as speech and language need.

- Support the delivery of the Delivering Better Value programme objectives.

Data Used

The SEND Education Sufficiency Analysis sets out the local context in terms of demographics, education settings, and special education needs including where pupils with EHC Plan and SEN Support are likely to be educated. It also sets out benchmarking data on special education needs in terms of Local Authority profile of need and education destination, including placements made to independent, non-maintained special schools (INMSS).

- Each section has a text box which aims to summarise the data and the implications of the data including any recommendations for future action planning on sufficiency planning.

- The report uses two sets of data; from LG Inform comparing West Berkshire to all English Unitary Authorities covering the September to August academic year. The DfE Local Authority Interactive Tool also covers the academic year with some of the data coming from SEN2 Return which is the annual data collection which is typically the data as of January 18th this year. This date is referred to as census date for the SEN2 return. Other data in this report is provided by the SEN and Disabled Children's Service which is more current than the census data as of 18th January of this year as reports were run from weekly updates of Capita which is the system that holds the SEND data held by West Berkshire SEND. Data is reported as of 30th June this year.

- LG Inform and the Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT) both use school data, but have different focuses, scopes, and ways of presenting the data.

- LG Inform is useful for a comprehensive view of local authority performance. LAIT is tailored for benchmarking and comparison between local authorities in specific areas of children's services and education, with an emphasis on identifying trends and areas for improvement. LG Inform has more frequent updates for certain datasets, depending on the source, such as quarterly updates for some economic or health data. LAIT typically updates annually or according to the specific data collection cycles.

Key Demographical data

Statistical Neighbours

West Berkshire is grouped with the following regions as statistical neighbours:

Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Central Bedfordshire, Oxfordshire, Surrey, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire East, Bracknell Forest, and Rutland.

Statistical comparison in terms of attainment will be set out in the report using Department for Education (DfE) Local Authority Interactive tool (LAIT). The tool is provided by the UK's Department for Education (DfE) to enable users to access and analyse data on educational outcomes and performance at the local authority (LA) level. This data is held within West Berkshire's Performance, Research and Risk team

Children and young people population

According to the 2022 census data, West Berkshire has a total of 38,057 children and young people aged 0-19 years. This population is further divided as follows:

- Ages 10-14 years: 10,896
- Ages 5-9 years: 9,534
- Ages 15-19 years: 9,497
- Ages 0-4 years: 8,130

In terms of trend in population growth of this cohort, since 2017, the trend has remained flat with 38,834 0-19 reported in 2017.

Gender Distribution

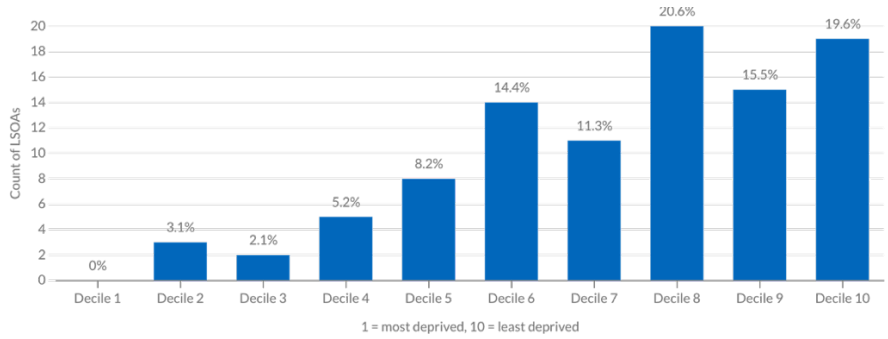
The data indicates a higher proportion of males than females among children under five years old, with males comprising 52% and females 48%. This slight predominance of males over females persists across the other age groups as well.

Deprivation

Data from the West Berkshire Observatory highlights the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI), where a score of 1 indicates the most deprived decile and a score of 10 indicates the least deprived decile. The IDACI is a subset of the Income Deprivation Domain, reflecting the proportion of children aged 0-15 in each Lower-layer Super Output Area who live in families experiencing income deprivation. This includes families receiving Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Pension Credit Guarantee, or Child Tax Credit below a specified threshold.

The data reveals that West Berkshire is generally not a highly deprived area. The majority of children (81.4%) reside in families within IDACI deciles 6 to 10, indicating they are in the less deprived 50% of the population.

Figure 1 Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) Decile - LSOAs by decile in West Berkshire (2019)



Key Implications:
The implications of having more males than females in the child and young person population have implications in terms of education as follows:

There may be a need to develop more gender-responsive teaching strategies that address the specific learning styles and behavioural needs often seen in boys. Schools may need to consider more male-specialised teaching staff or programs that cater to the interests and strengths of boys in SEN.

Boys may exhibit different behavioural challenges compared to girls, necessitating targeted behavioural interventions and support systems. The higher number of boys may affect classroom dynamics, requiring teachers to manage a potentially more active and physically expressive group.
Another implication is that the higher proportion of boys may be contributing towards the higher proportion of pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) given the higher prevalence among boys.

Children and Young People with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

As of 30th June 2024, West Berkshire Council has 1,559 pupils with an EHC Plan with most to be found in secondary phase. Of this cohort, there are 214 pupils with an EHC Plan in further education or training aged 18 to 25 years as of 30th June of which 95 pupils are in general further education and tertiary college, 25 pupils are in a maintained special school, 45 are not in education, training or employment, 11 pupils are in specialist post-16 institutions with a further 9 pupils as elective home educated, and 3 pupils are in other types of further education.

This number is in line with SCAP data projections which is the forecast for number of pupils at statutory school age (primary and secondary phase) with an EHC Plan and does NOT Include post-18 years.
As of September 2023, the SCAP forecast estimated that there were 1,488 pupils resident in West Berkshire of statutory school age with an EHC Plan. This figure is projected to rise to 1,555 pupils of statutory school age in September 2024. Remember the SEN2 cohort covers

all pupils including pre-school with an EHC Plan whereas SCAP is for pupils of statutory school age so the SEN cohorts will slightly differ.

Key implications:
There are 214 pupils with an EHC Plan post 18 up to 25 years with an EHC Plan. This cohort may need to be reviewed in order to support transition as part of Preparation for Adulthood.

In West Berkshire, 19.0% of pupils have a statutory EHC plan or are receiving SEN support compared to an average of 18.1% across All English unitary authorities based on data from latest LG Inform SEND report. These figures do not include children and young people for whom West Berkshire has placed out of borough.

West Berkshire has a higher proportion of pupils with an EHC Plan than the average unitary authority (August 2024 data shows 5.2%, compared to an average of 4.7% in All English unitary authorities) and the proportion of pupils on SEN Support is now higher than the average for all English unitary authorities.

This trend is mirrored when looking at statistical comparator data via the Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT) using the August 2024 update. West Berkshire has more pupils with an EHC Plan across all school phases compared to our statistical neighbours (5.3% compared to 4.89%). The trend is similar when reviewing the proportion of pupils with SEN Support; with 15.1% of pupils on SEN Support compared to 12.97% amongst statistical neighbours

In terms of primary phase, the proportion of pupils with an EHC Plan is 3% which is less than for statistical neighbours (3.54%). The same trend appears for secondary phase (2.90% compared to 3.42% among statistical neighbours). The discrepancy between the individual statistics for pupils at primary and secondary phase compared to all schools is explained by the inclusion of special schools and other settings such as Alternative Provision and independent schools in the latter statistic.

It is understood in the context of the Department for Education (DfE) Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT), "all schools" generally does **not** include independent non-maintained schools. The LAIT tool primarily focuses on state-funded schools, which encompass maintained schools, academies, free schools, special schools, and pupil referral units.

Key implications:
Understanding the specific reasons for the higher proportion of SEND pupils in West Berkshire requires a detailed analysis of local policies, practices, demographic factors, and support services compared to its statistical neighbours. Each of these factors can contribute to variations in SEN identification and support across different regions.

West Berkshire Schools

Primary schools:

Data from Schools Web Directory[2] updated as of 24 May 2024 shows that there are 70 primary schools in the district; of which two are independent (IND). See Appendix three for the full list.

In terms of capacity of our primary schools; current data by Education Place Planning suggest that of the 39 primary schools for whom we have data, the Published Admission Numbers (PAN) is 8,110 pupils with actual number of 7,513 pupils on roll giving additional 597 primary places available. Note that data is not yet available for all of the primary settings.

Secondary schools:

There are 15 secondary schools in West Berkshire of which five are independent schools:
Denefield School, Tilehurst, secondary info
John O'Gaunt School, Hungerford, secondary info
Kennet School, Thatcham, secondary info
Little Heath School, Tilehurst, secondary info
Park House School, Newbury, secondary info
St Bartholomew's School, Newbury, secondary info
The Downs School, Newbury, secondary info
The Willink School, Burghfield Common, secondary info
Theale Green School, Theale, secondary info
Trinity School, Newbury, secondary info

Independent secondary schools:

Bradfield College, Bradfield, secondary info IND

Downe House School, Thatcham, secondary info IND

Padworth College, Reading, secondary info IND
Pangbourne College, Pangbourne, secondary info IND

St Gabriel's School, Newbury, secondary info IND

In terms of capacity of our ten secondary schools, current data by Education Place Planning suggest that the secondary schools have a total of 12,840 pupils on roll (NOR data) with net capacity of 14,015 indicating that a further 1,175 secondary phase education places are available. Whilst there is capacity in secondary phase, this is spread out across different age cohorts and across different schools which may or may not address sufficiency of education provision.

[2] http://schoolswebdirectory.co.uk/leasearch.php?lea=west+berkshire&where=1&submit=Submit

Resource Provisions, Units and Language and Literacy Centres

The Department for Education (DfE) defines a "resource base" as a provision within a mainstream school where places are reserved for pupils with specific types of special educational needs (SEN), such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. Pupils in resource bases spend most of their time in mainstream classes with additional support.

A "SEN unit," on the other hand, is a more specialized setting within a mainstream school where pupils with similar needs spend more than half of their time in separate, specialized classes.

A Language and Literacy Centre is a specialised educational facility or resource within a school or community designed to support students who struggle with language development and literacy skills. These centres focus on helping children and sometimes adults develop essential skills in reading, writing, speaking, and understanding language. Targeted support, assessment and diagnosis and specialised instruction is offered.

There are 14 provisions outlined in the table below. This includes the new provision opening at Kennett Valley Primary school in September which is for SEMH/ASD and is a unit rather than a resource provision. The pupils will stay in the unit and will not have a place in the main school class. Most of the resource provisions are oversubscribed except the two hearing resource bases which vary in number.

Note that the Castle at Theale is managed by The Castle Special School and not overseen by SEN and Disabled Children's Service. This setting provides support for ASD learners as a specialist SEMH school. They take ASD learners with secondary SEMH. Whilst it has now closed, there are still seven pupils in Theale Green ASD Resource and the numbers will fall as the young people move on in their education.

Table 2: Resource Provision, Units and Language and Literacy Centres in West Berkshire by school phase and special education need including capacity.

Name of School	**School Phase**	**SEN Need**	**Number of planned places**	**Current number on roll**
Fir Tree known as Autism Resource	Primary	Autism (ASD)	10	9
Speenhamland known as Keevil	Primary	Physical Difficulties (PD)	10	9
Westwood Farm known as Hearing Resource Base	Primary	Hearing Impaired (HI)	10	6
Theale known as Autism Resource	Primary	Autism (ASD)	10	8

Name of School	School Phase	SEN Need	Number of planned places	Current number on roll
The Winchcombe School known as Speech and Language literacy centre	Primary	Speech, Language and Communication Need (SLCN)	15	16
Theale known as Language & Literacy Centre	Primary	Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)	24	24
The Winchcombe School known as Language & Literacy Centre	Primary	SpLD	24	24
Trinity	Secondary	ASD	15	15
Trinity known as ACE (Accelerated Education)	Secondary	SpLD	30	33
Kennet	Secondary	Hearing Impaired	10	7
Kennet	Secondary	Physical Difficulties (PD)	22	19
Kennet Valley Unit	Primary	Social, Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH)/ASD (September 2024) Unit	6 places coming online in September with maximum capacity of 12 being developed	Not yet offered
Westwood Farm known as Specialist Primary Resource Unit	Primary	Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)	12	12
The Castle at Theale	Secondary	SEMH (managed by the Castle School)	42 at maximum capacity	21 on roll including 6 starting in September

Special Schools

There are nine special schools, of which two are maintained (Brookfields and The Castle School) whilst the others are independent. Brookfields Special School has 218 places in total of which 94 are for primary and 124 are for secondary phase. The Castle School has 180 places in total of which 50 are primary phase and 130 are secondary phase.

The full list of special schools is as follows:

Brookfields Special School, Reading, special info
The Castle School, Donnington, special info

Independent special schools

Engaging Potential, Newbury, special info IND
Haywards Farm School, Theale, special info IND
Mary Hare School, Snelsmore Common, special info IND and non-maintained
Oaklands School, Hungerford, special info IND
Priors Court School, Hermitage, special info IND
The Grange School, Thatcham, special info IND
The Mile House Therapeutic School, Sulhamstead, special info IND

Pupil Referral Unit

West Berkshire has one Pupil Referral Unit at iCollege. The Medical Tuition Service is the nearest equivalent to a medical Pupil Referral Unit but has no physical base and is managed in-house by West Berkshire Council.

3. Attainment

Data from LG Inform SEND includes 2023/24 data published in August this year with comparison to all English Unitary Authorities as the wider backdrop to the local West Berkshire context.

The latest statistics published in August by LG Inform for 2023/24 year do not change the overall trends reported below. Key changes include slight increases in the percentage of pupils with SEN, pupils with EHC plans, and SEN support. **Notable trends include improvements in the expected level attainment at KS2 for pupils with SEN support and an increase in NEET rates for pupils with SEND and SEN support, although these rates remain below the unitary authority averages.**

In addition, further comparison of attainment for West Berkshire pupils is provided with statistical Local Authority comparators using Department for Education Local Authority Inspection Tool (LAIT) with the informed from March 2024 updated using the August 2024 release.

Attainment and Free School Meals Eligibility

The proportion of children eligible for free school meals achieving at least the expected level is lower than that of children not eligible for free school meals, highlighting a significant attainment gap that poses a challenge for West Berkshire. Data is taken from West Berkshire Observatory.

Attainment and Ethnicity

Data from West Berkshire Observatory indicates that children from ethnic minority backgrounds are as likely as their non ethnic minority counterparts to achieve at least the expected levels in West Berkshire.

Attainment and Gender

When we look at gender differences in terms of attainment, the average scores by gender based on 2021/22 data for Attainment 8 scores show that girls consistently achieve higher scores than boys; Girls: 51.4 and Boys: 46.3[3]

In terms of the proportion of males and females with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), there are more males with an EHC Plan (72%) of pupils[4] with the most common need being Autistic Spectrum Disorder for those with an EHC Plan.

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) is a teacher assessment of children's development at the end of the academic year in which the child turns five. Introduced in 2012/13 and significantly revised in 2021/22, the profile assesses children in seven areas of learning, encompassing 17 early learning goals (ELGs). Children are rated as either at the 'emerging' or 'expected' level, with the maximum possible attainment score being 17 points.

Pupils with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan in West Berkshire score higher than the average in all English Unitary Authorities (3.1 compared to 2.2). Pupils on SEN Support score the same as the average in all English Unitary Authorities, while pupils without SEN achieve an average score of 15.3, which is higher than the 15.1 average score in all English Unitary Authorities.

Phonic Screening Test

The phonics screening check assesses children's ability to decode words using phonics skills at the end of Year 1. In West Berkshire, 42% of pupils on SEN Support meet the expected standard of phonic decoding, compared to 48% across all English Unitary Authorities. Among pupils with an EHC Plan, 15% of this cohort in West Berkshire meet the standard, compared to 19% across all English Unitary Authorities.

Key Implications:

Implications of the Higher Performance in Early Years Learning Goals and Lower Performance in Phonic Decoding:

The higher performance in early learning goals indicates that children in West Berkshire, including those with SEN, are developing well across a broad range of areas. However, the lower performance in phonic decoding suggests that there may be specific challenges or gaps in literacy instruction, particularly in phonics, which need to be addressed. This discrepancy highlights the importance of targeted support for literacy skills alongside a broad and balanced early years curriculum.

[3] https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/education-skills-and-training/11-to-16-years-old/gcse-results-attainment-8-for-children-aged-14-to-16-key-stage-4/latest/

[4] https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england

Comparison of West Berkshire with statistical comparators on Foundation Stage Profile

The DfE Local Interactive Inspection Tool (LAIT) shows a lag behind our statistical neighbours in terms of proportion of children achieving a good level of development among pupils with SEN Support (17.8% compared to 24.36% among statistical neighbours based on 2023 data) and also for EHC Plans; 3.2% compared to 3.79% amongst statistical neighbours (data is only recorded for 2023 on LAIT).

Key Implications:

the data may be indicating a significant attainment gap at Early Years stage in West Berkshire where children from lower socio-economic backgrounds, including those eligible for free school meals (but not minority ethnic groups) may have a higher prevalence of unidentified SEND due to less access to early diagnosis and support services.

More early identification and intervention in Early Years which is targeting pupils with special education needs and those pupils who are eligible for free school meals may be needed to bridge the attainment gap.

KEY Stage 1

Key Stage 1 national curriculum assessment is no longer statutory from 2023 academic year. The Department for Education is no longer collecting this data**.**

Key Stage 2

Key Stage 2 encompasses Year 3 to Year 6 and includes pupils aged between 7 and 11. At the conclusion of Key Stage 2, pupils are evaluated through national curriculum tests in reading, mathematics, and grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Additionally, pupils receive teacher assessment outcomes in writing, science, reading, and mathematics, based on the standards outlined in the interim frameworks for teacher assessment. The combined performance measures incorporate the reading and mathematics test results along with the writing teacher assessment outcomes.

The Department for Education (DfE) in England defines disadvantaged pupils primarily by their eligibility for specific forms of support. The main criteria used by the DfE to identify disadvantaged pupils include Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM), Children in Care, and previously looked after children who have been adopted from care or have left care under a special guardianship order, child arrangements order, or a residence order.

Data from LG Inform SEND indicates that the attainment gap observed at the Early Years Foundation Stage profile persists into Key Stage 2 when compared to national and regional benchmarks in England and the South East. This gap is particularly significant for children deemed vulnerable (according to data from the West Berkshire Health Observatory), who are much less likely to achieve the expected standard in reading, writing, and mathematics at Key Stage 2.

Comparison of West Berkshire with statistical comparators on Key Stage 2

The LAIT tool shows that West Berkshire lags behind statistical neighbours for attainment of pupils with SEN Support at Key Stage 2 (RWM); 21% compared to 23.4%. The same finding is reported for pupils with an EHC Plan with the difference more pronounced; 5% of pupils with an EHC Plan are achieving the expected level compared to 10.2% amongst statistical neighbours.

Key Stage 4

Key Stage 4 encompasses Year 10 and Year 11, covering pupils aged between 14 and 16. During Year 11, most students take their GCSEs or other national qualifications. Attainment 8 is a metric that measures the average achievement of pupils across up to eight qualifications. This includes English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), mathematics (double weighted), three additional qualifications that count towards the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), and three further qualifications that can be either GCSEs (including EBacc subjects) or other non-GCSE qualifications approved by the Department for Education (DfE). A higher Attainment 8 score reflects a higher level of achievement.

The data shows that the attainment gap closes with pupils in West Berkshire more likely to achieve better outcomes at Key Stage 4 compared to those in South East and England among pupils with an EHC Plan (7.4% achieving 9-5 in English and Maths GCSEs compared to 6.7% among all English Unitary Authorities) and for pupils on SEN Support (33.1% of West Berkshire pupils compared to 19.4% among all English Unitary Authorities respectively).

Comparison of West Berkshire with statistical comparators on Key Stage 4

The LAIT data shows in comparison to our statistical neighbours, the attainment gap is closed, and we are doing better than our statistical comparator boroughs in terms of the average Attainment 8 score per pupil at end of Key Stage 4 for pupils with SEN Support being higher (41.10% compared to 34.04%). The picture is less positive for pupils with an EHC Plan where the average attainment score per pupil at the end of Key Stage 4 is a little lower than statistical neighbours (15.20% compared to 16.74% amongst statistical neighbours).

Key Implications:
The fact that the attainment gap closes at Key Stage 4 suggests that the educational interventions and support mechanisms in place between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 are effectively helping pupils to close the attainment gap, leading to improved outcomes by the end of their compulsory education but further work is needed for pupils with EHC Plan in order to ensure gains are maintained and in line with statistical neighbours.

Key Stage 5

Key stage 5 refers to the two years of education for students aged 16-18 sitting AS and A levels. During Key Stage 5, students can also pursue a variety of other qualifications, including:

- **A-levels (Advanced Level)**: Academic qualifications in specific subjects, typically taken over two years.
- **BTECs (Business and Technology Education Council qualifications)**: Vocational qualifications that provide practical skills and knowledge.

- **T-levels (Technical Levels)**: New technical qualifications introduced to provide a high-quality alternative to A-levels.
- **Apprenticeships**: Work-based learning programs that combine on-the-job training with study.
- **International Baccalaureate (IB)**: An internationally recognized qualification that offers a broader curriculum than A-levels.
- **Supported Internships**: typically aimed at those who want to move into employment but need additional support. These internships usually last about a year and include a combination of unpaid work placements (with support from a job coach) and continuing education.

Key Stage 5 is a crucial period for students as it helps shape their future educational and career paths. The performance and outcomes at this stage are often used to measure the effectiveness of schools and colleges in preparing students for their next steps.

There are two statistics provided; one from the Local Authority Interactive Tool comparing West Berkshire to statistical neighbours for average point score per A level entry for pupils with EHC Plan and SEN support whilst the other data is from LG inform for the 16–18-year cohort in terms of sustained education, employment or apprenticeship.

In terms of comparison with statistical neighbours; data shows the attainment gap in terms of average point score (APS) per A Level Entry has closed at Key Stage 5 among West Berkshire pupils with SEN Support and EHC Plans.

Figure 2: Statistical comparison of West Berkshire on average point score for pupils with SEN Support (2022/23) data compared to statistical neighbours.

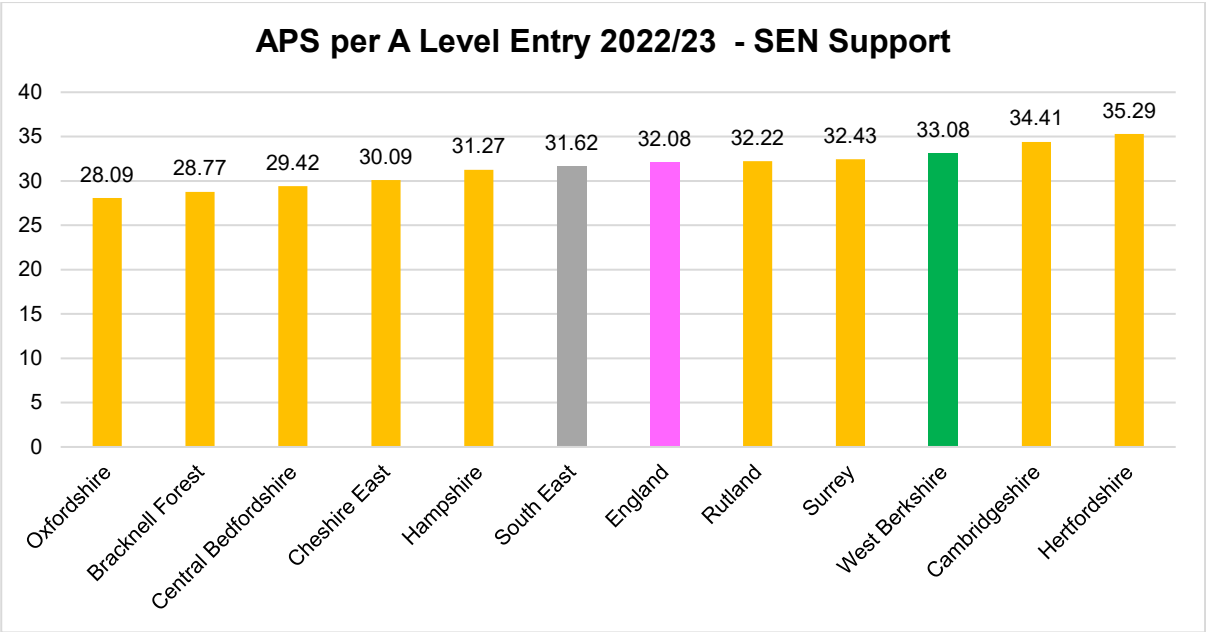
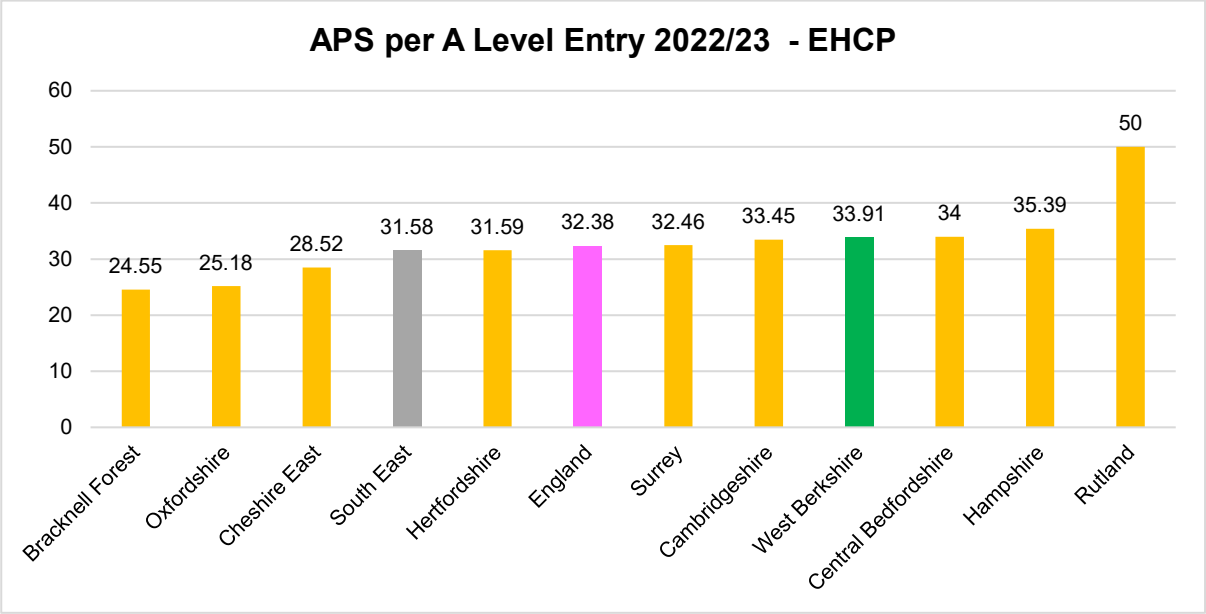


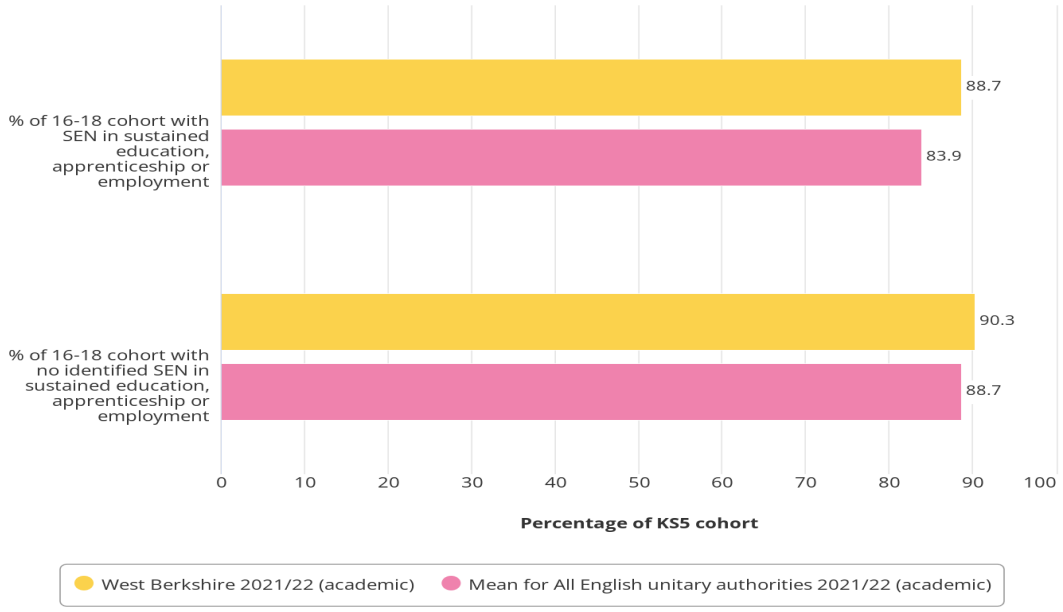
Figure 3: Statistical comparison of West Berkshire on average point score for pupils with EHC Plan (2022/23) data compared to statistical neighbours.



In terms of Key Stage 5 (KS5) covering pupils aged 16-18 in a sustained education, employment or training destination in the first two terms of the year after they completed A level or other level 3 qualifications; there are more pupils with SEN in education, apprenticeships or

employment compared to the average for all English unitary authorities (88.7 compared to 83.9) based on data from LG Inform for West Berkshire as shown.

Figure 4: Key Stage 4 covering pupils 16-18 years in sustained education, employment or training from LG Inform for West Berkshire (2021/22)



Key Implications:
The fact that pupils in West Berkshire lag at the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage 2 (KS2) but catch up with average attainment by Key Stages 4 (KS4) and 5 (KS5) has several implications:

The lag in EYFS and KS2 suggests that early identification and support for SEND pupils may not be as effective as it could be. There might be a need for improved screening processes and early intervention programs to address learning difficulties as soon as they are identified.

Enhanced focus on the early years' curriculum, targeted teaching strategies, and support mechanisms are crucial. This includes professional development for early years' educators to recognise and support SEND needs effectively.

As students' progress through different stages, ensuring smooth transitions with adequate support can help maintain and build on their progress. Transition plans and continuity in support services can help SEND pupils adapt better to new educational settings and can prevent the lag in attainment observed in the earlier stages.

More targeted intervention programs at KS2 can help bridge the attainment gap. These programs might target intervention programmes, specialized instructional strategies, and additional resources tailored to meet the needs of SEND pupils.

The improvement seen at KS4 and KS5 indicates that secondary schools may have effective catch-up programs and support strategies. These should be studied, and potentially extended to earlier stages.

The higher proportion of pupils with SEN Support and EHC Plans going to or remaining in education, training or employment (including special schools) compared to statistical neighbours consolidates the positive picture in terms of the attainment gap closing by the time of preparation for adulthood.

4. Comparison of pupils in West Berkshire in terms of special education needs with other authorities.

Data from LG Inform[5] reveals that **West Berkshire has a slightly higher number of pupils attending state schools in West Berkshire area with SEN need** (EHC Plan or SEN Support) compared to average across all English unitary authorities (19% compared to 18.1%) based on 2024 data.

Trend data (from 2018/19 to 22/23 academic years) shows that across English unitary authorities, the percentage of pupils with an EHC Plan ranges from 2.7% to 6.8%. West Berkshire has a value of 5.2%, compared to an average of 4.7% in All English unitary authorities.

For SEN support the proportion for All English unitary authorities ranges from 10.2% to 16.8%. West Berkshire has a value of 13.8%, compared to an average of 13.3% in All English unitary authorities. These figures are for pupils attending state schools in West Berkshire. They do not include children and young people for whom West Berkshire is responsible but has placed out of borough.

Looked after children are those cared for by the local authority for at least one day. **In West Berkshire,** 23.1% of looked after children are on SEN support, compared to 26.0% in All English unitary authorities. 48.7% of looked after children in West Berkshire have a statement of SEN or EHC Plan, compared to 32.1% in All English unitary authorities.

In West Berkshire, **6.2% of school-age children in need have a disability, which is lower than English unitary authorities where the percentage is 12.3%.**

[5] https://lginform.local.gov.uk/reports/view/send-research/local-area-send-report?mod-area=E06000037&mod-group=AllUnitaryLaInCountry_England&modify-report=Apply&mod-type=namedComparisonGroup

7. Special education needs of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan by school phase.

Data is taken from SEN2 provided by West Berkshire SEN and Disabled Children's Service with the most current data from List 1 broken down by National Curriculum Year (NCY as follows:

Early Years and Nursery (NCY -3 to -1)

- 36 pupils with an EHC Plan at pre-nursery and nursery age (-3,-2 and -1 on NCY coding); of which there are 29 pupils in nursery (NCY -1 code).
- At nursery level, the key special education needs among pupils with an EHC Plan are SLD (n=11), SLCN (n=8), ASD (n=4) and Physical Disability (n=2).

Primary phase (NCY years 0-6 inclusive) in terms of pupils with an EHC Plan

- Of the fifty-three pupils in reception with an EHC Plan, 6 are coded as other in terms of SEN need, while the majority pupils are likely to have Speech, Language & Communication needs (n=22) followed Severe Learning difficulty (N=12) and Autism Spectrum Disorder (n=9).
- 513 pupils with an EHC Plan are in primary school (NCY year groups 1-6 inclusive). Significant numbers of pupils with an EHC Plan have ASD as primary need (n=209), followed by SLCN (n=77), SEMH (n=95), SLD (n=39) and MLD (n=31).
- The other significant needs in order of prevalence are Other (n=15), Hearing Impairment (n=13), Physical disability (n=12), Visual impairment(n=4) and PLMD (n=2).

Key Implications for primary school place planning for pupils with EHC Plan by special education need:

There may be a need to review the coding of pupils with ASD as primary need given that the need appears to be higher than for other English unitary authorities.

There may be a need for more specialised resource provision or units within mainstream primary schools to support pupils on an EHC Plan with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), SEMH and SLCN as well as pupils with Learning Difficulties, given their higher proportions among primary aged pupils.

A clear offer of speech and language provision to primary age pupils is critical given the impact on learning and attainment. As part of the refresh of the Local Offer, the commissioned provider Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust is providing the speech and language offer mapped against the Balanced Model showing provision at universal, targeted and specialist level of need; where targeted refers to pupils on SEN Support and specialist refers to pupils with an EHC Plan.

Support schools with the infrastructure to accommodate pupils with physical disabilities and severe learning difficulties. An action could be to identify any accessibility issues in primary schools. This work will be picked up as part of the accessibility strategy currently being formulated.

West Berkshire has fewer pupils with an EHC plan who are deemed a child in need compared to the national average suggesting that there may be a need to improve early identification processes and ensure timely assessments for EHC plans. This is particularly the case for children who come into care.

Secondary phase (NCY years 7-11 inclusive)

- There are 613 pupils with an EHC Plan at Key Stages 3 and 4 in West Berkshire schools.
- Of these pupils with a plan; the primary needs are ASD (n=273), SEMH (n=130), MLD (n=57), SPLD (n=53) and SLCN (n=28). Other notable needs are SLD (n=22).

Post 16 and further education (National Curriculum Years 12 to 19)

- In the context of the UK educational system, NCY phases 12 through 19 typically refer to the National Curriculum Years that cover secondary education and the beginning of further education.
- There are currently 189 pupils in sixth form or college (NCY 12 and 13) with an EHC Plan across all placement types including those who are elective home educated. In terms of primary SEN need, these are ASD (n=78), SEMH (n=38), MLD (n=19), SPLD (n=15) and SLCN (n=9).
- **NCY 14 (Year 14)** is not a standard year in the traditional school system, but some students might stay on for an additional year in further education settings, such as to retake exams or to complete specific courses. Both of the special schools in West Berkshire; the Castle and Brookfields support pupils up to age 19 years and have Year 14 cohorts which account for some of the following numbers of pupils in this curriculum year group. West Berkshire has 56 pupils with primary need of ASD (n=22), MLD (n=11) and SEMH (n=11) followed by SLD (n=5).
- **NCY 15 to NCY 19** are generally referred to higher education or other post-secondary pathways. There are 97 West Berkshire pupils with an EHC Plan in this cohort with the primary needs being ASD (n=48) followed by MLD (n=23) followed by SEMH (n=10) and SLCN (n=4).
- A further 2 pupils are coded 98, and 99 respectively signifying data is unavailable or unknown. This is being picked up as part of the data cleaning going forward.

Key Implications for secondary and post 16 place planning for pupils with EHC Plan by special education need:

The data suggests the need to increase capacity of additional resource provision for pupils with ASD and SEMH at secondary phase.

The sizeable number of pupils with moderate learning difficulties, specific learning difficulties and speech language and communication needs raises the need to consider additional resource bases and whether more can be done with assistive technology to aid learning or increase the availability of learning support assistants trained in MLD, SLCN and/or SPLD.

Among pupils at sixth form or college, there may be a need to consider expansion of sixth form colleges or units for ASD students and continue to develop tailored pathways in terms of academic and vocational routes including work experience opportunities.

Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) is also significant need among this cohort which emphasises the importance of accessing comprehensive mental health support programs within colleges.

Post-Secondary Education (NCY 14-19) may need to ensure a focus on transition programs to support pupils moving from secondary to post-secondary education, tailored to be autism friendly given the number of pupils with ASD need.

8. Elective Home Education and Education otherwise than at school (EOTAS)

There are 53 pupils with an EHC Plan who are elective home educated pupils of which 9 are in primary phase, 20 are in secondary phase (Years 7-11) and the remaining 24 pupils in 16+ provision. An additional 124 pupils are elective home educated with SEN Support level of need.

There are 4 pupils deemed EOTAS with six from September 2024 and a further two pupils likely to be designated EOTAS. Several are post sixteen with one in primary.

9. SEN Support profile

Data is taken from SEN2 Data provided by SEN and Disabled Children's Service. There are 1,098 West Berkshire pupils with SEN Support up to NCY 14 who do not have a school name identified against their record. This is being investigated as part of the data cleansing.

West Berkshire has a higher number of pupils on SEN Support with 3,945 pupils when compared to the average across all English Unitary Authorities with 2023/24 data and when compared to statistical comparators using DfE LAIT data. The latest LAIT data shows that the proportion of pupils on SEN Support in primary phase is higher than the statistical comparator group; 14.5% compared to 12.97% respectively based on 2024 figures. At secondary phase, the proportion of pupils on SEN Support is also higher than among statistical neighbours; 13.6% and 11.61%, respectively.

Among pupils who are in care, there is a higher proportion of pupils on SEN Support compared to the average across all English Unitary Authorities (23.6% and 21.7% respectively) but less pupils in care have an EHC Plan compared to the average across all English Unitary Authorities from LG Inform data with the proportions being 21.6% and 27.4% respectively. The trend slightly differs when we look at LAIT data showing comparison to statistical neighbours with West Berkshire reporting less pupils in care on SEN Support (23.10% and 23.54% respectively) but a lot more pupils in care with an EHC Plan; 48.70% compared to 37.87% among statistical neighbours.

10. Special Education Needs of pupils with SEN Support by school phase

Whilst place planning is concerned mainly with pupils who have higher levels of special education needs resulting in an EHC Plan, there is still a need to understand the profile of pupils with special education needs at the level of SEN support.

LG Inform data suggests that the trend for West Berkshire suggests rising numbers of pupils on SEN Support compared to the average across all English Unitary Authorities since 2022/23 reported data. In terms of LAIT data, this trend is echoed which shows that since 2022, the proportion of pupils on SEN Support (All schools) has been rising faster than statistical neighbours; 15.10% compared to 12.97% based on 2024 data.

In terms of primary special education needs, more pupils in West Berkshire on SEN Support are likely to have a primary need of Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) with 1,043 pupils identified, followed by SEMH (n=675), SLCN (n=660) and ASD (n=643). There are a significant number of pupils with MLD (n=339).
There are 158 pupils who have no coding of SEN Need and 122 pupils coded as Other Difficult/Disability.

Interestingly, there are sizeable numbers of pupils from other boroughs with SEN Support needs attending education provision in West Berkshire as follows in terms of funding Local Authority:
Reading –397 pupils
Hampshire – 109 pupils
Oxfordshire – 47 pupils
Wiltshire – 20 pupils
Wokingham -19 pupils

In total there are 4,542 pupils with SEN Support of which 3,945 are West Berkshire pupils and the remaining 597 pupils coming from other boroughs.

SEN Support needs of pupils in nursery, primary and secondary education phases (whether from West Berkshire or elsewhere)

Early Years Nursery and SEN Support:

There are 222 pupils in infant, toddlers, nursery and pre-nursery (NCY -3 to NCY 0) with SEN Support needs with mainly SLCN need (n=114), SEMH need (n=35) and ASD need (n=22).

Primary Years and SEN Support:

There are 1,950 pupils with SEN Support in primary phase (NCY 1-6 inclusive). The key SEN needs are as follows; SLCN (n=393), SPLD (n=375), SEMH (n=358), ASD (n=317) and MLD (n=257).

Secondary Years and SEN Support

2,017 pupils with SEN Support in secondary phase (NCY 7-11 inclusive). The main SEN needs are as follows: SPLD (n=662), SEMH (n=333), ASD (n=337), SLCN (n=215), and MLD (n=131).

Post 16 and SEN Support:

There are 353 pupils in this cohort (NCY 12-14 inclusive) on SEN Support with the primary SEN needs being SPLD (n=161), ASD (n=77) and SEMH (n=49).

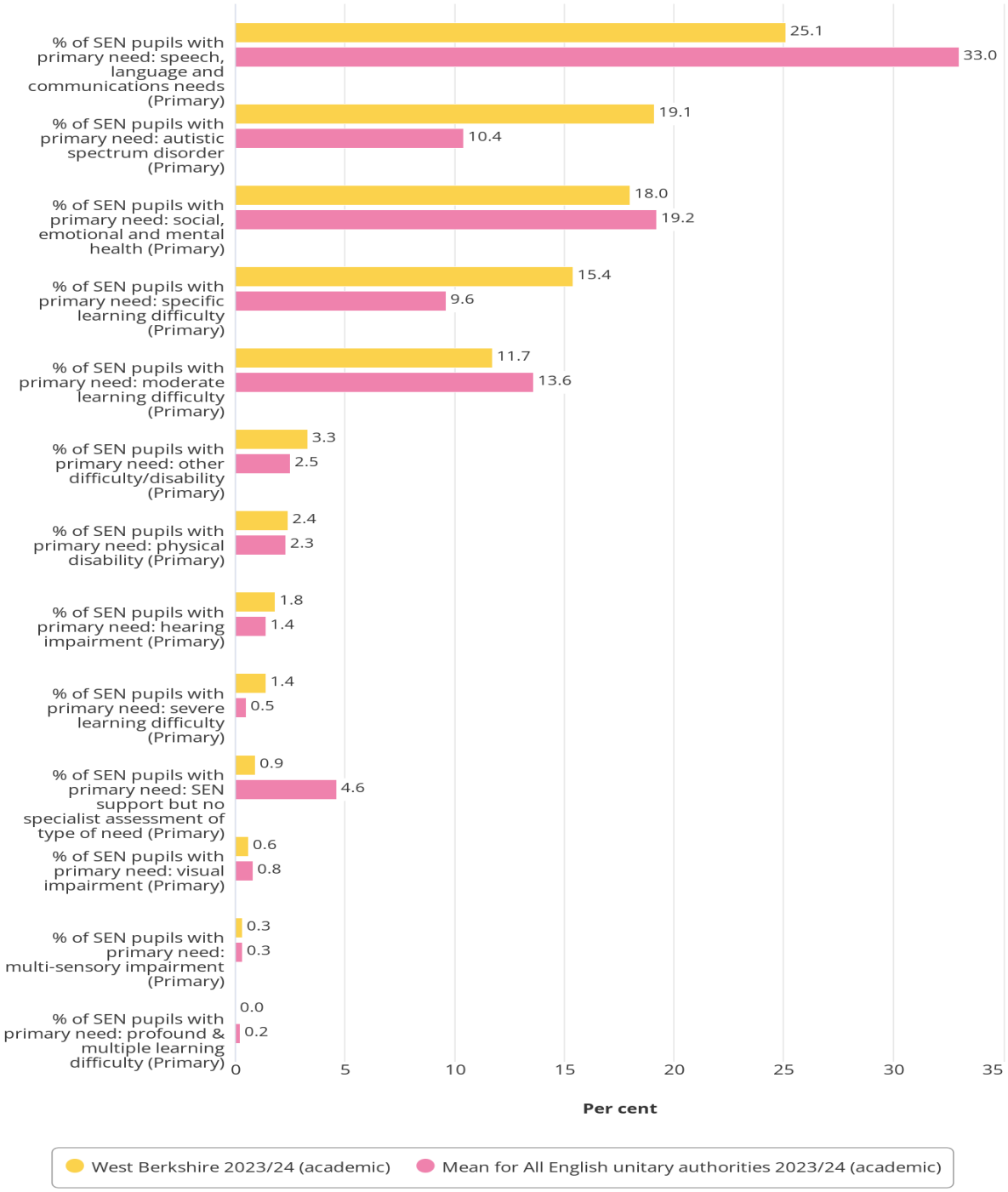
In summary, the data shows that most pupils with SEN Support are likely to be in secondary phase followed by primary phase, post 16 and Early Years.

10 How does West Berkshire District compare in terms of special education needs in school phases?

LG inform data indicates that SEN pupils (EHC Plan and SEN Support) in West Berkshire primary schools have different primary needs compared to the average for all English unitary authorities:

- 25.1%% have Speech, Language, and Communication Needs (SLCN), which is below average.
- 19.1% have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), which is higher than the 10.4%% average.
- 15.4% have Specific Learning Difficulty, higher than the 9.6% average.
- 18% have Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, below the 19.2% average.
- 11.7% have Moderate Learning Difficulty, less than the 13.6% average.
- The proportion of pupils with other difficulties/disabilities is higher than average.
- 2.4% have a primary need for physical disability, slightly above the 2.3% average.
- 1.4% have Severe Learning Difficulty, higher than the 0.5% average.
- 1.8% have Hearing Impairment, above the 1.4% average.

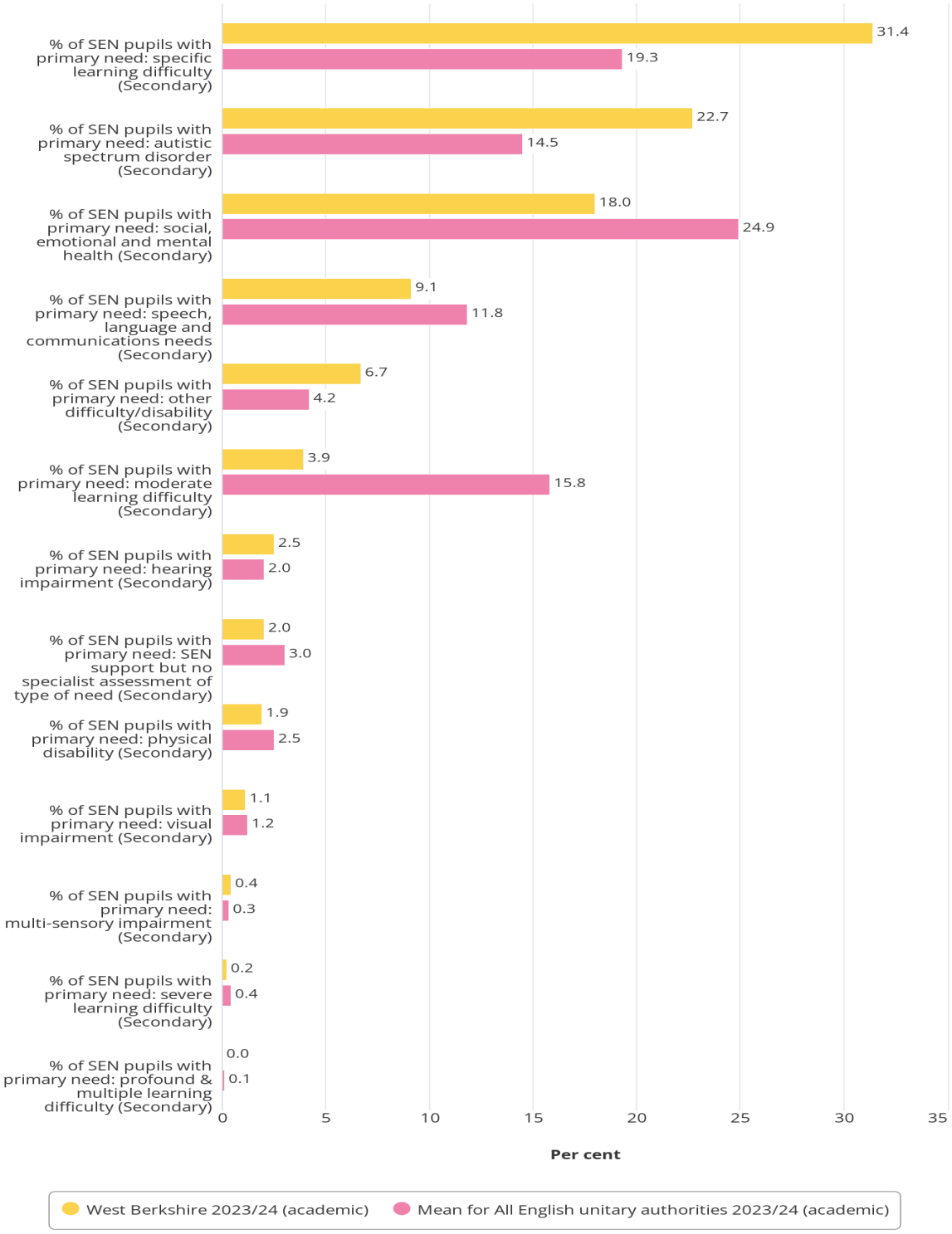
Figure 5: Primary need in primary schools (2023/24 (academic) from LG Inform West Berkshire 2023/24



SEN Pupils (EHC Plan and SEN Support) in West Berkshire secondary schools have different primary special education needs compared to the average for all English unitary authorities:

- 9.1% have Speech, Language, and Communication Needs (SLCN), which is below the 11.8% average.
- 22.7% have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), higher than the 14.5% average.
- 31.4% have Specific Learning Difficulty, much higher than the 19.3% average.
- 18% have Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, below the 24.9% average.
- 3.9% have Moderate Learning Difficulty, far less than the 15.8% average.
- The proportion of pupils with other difficulties/disabilities exceeds the average (6.2% compared to 4.2% respectively)
- 1.9% have a primary need for physical disability, below the 2.5% average.
- 0.2% have Severe Learning Difficulty, lower than the 0.4% average.
- 2.5% have Hearing Impairment, above the 2% average whilst 1.1% have visual impairment slightly below the average of 1.2%

Figure 6: Primary need in secondary schools (2023/24 (academic) from LG Inform West Berkshire 2023/24

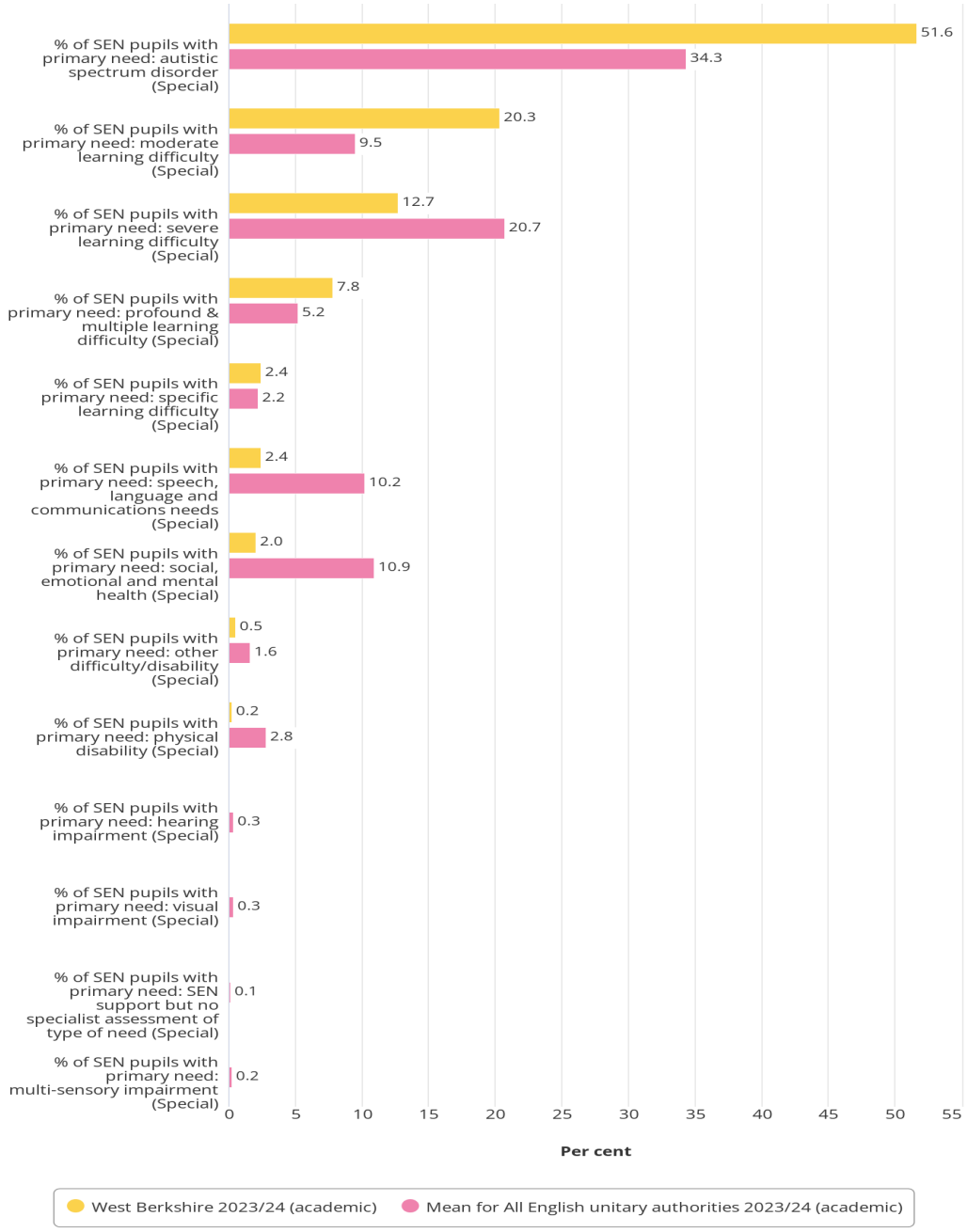


SEN Pupils in West Berkshire special schools have different primary special education needs compared to the average for all English unitary authorities:

- 51.6% have primary need of ASD which is considerably above the average of 34.3% across all English Unitary authorities.

- 20.3% of pupils in special schools have primary need of moderate learning difficulty which is also above the average across all English unitary authorities (of 9.5%).
- There are also more pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulty in special schools than average; 7.8 compared to 5.2 across all English unitary authorities.

Figure 7: Primary need in special schools (2023/24 (academic) from LG Inform West Berkshire



Key Implications on primary needs among pupils in West Berkshire schools:

The comparison of special educational needs (SEN) profile of West Berkshire District reveals significant differences to other English unitary authorities. There may be a need to do a deep dive in order to identify if the differences are attributed to under identification of need, misclassification of SEN need or a result of effective earlier intervention.

The proportion of pupils with ASD, moderate learning difficulty and profound and multiple learning difficulties in special schools may point to a need to enhance specialist provision for these areas of need in terms of units and/or more specialist resource provision given the much higher proportion of pupils with these needs in special schools compared to other areas.

The significant variation in diagnosis of ASD is not unique to West Berkshire. ASD could be used as a "catch-all" category to ensure that children receive the necessary support, even if their primary challenges may stem from other issues. The criteria for diagnosing ASD can vary among professionals, leading to inconsistencies in diagnosis. This variation can contribute to the perception that ASD is being overused as a category of need. Another factor is that teachers and clinicians may feel pressured to label students with ASD to provide them with the support they need, especially in under-resourced educational settings. This pressure can sometimes lead to an over-reliance on ASD as a diagnostic label.

12. Where are pupils in West Berkshire district with an EHC Plan likely to be educated?

The data is based on 2023/24 academic year in the LG Inform report which compares West Berkshire against the average for all English Unitary Authorities.

Pupils in West Berkshire with an EHC Plan are MORE LIKELY TO:

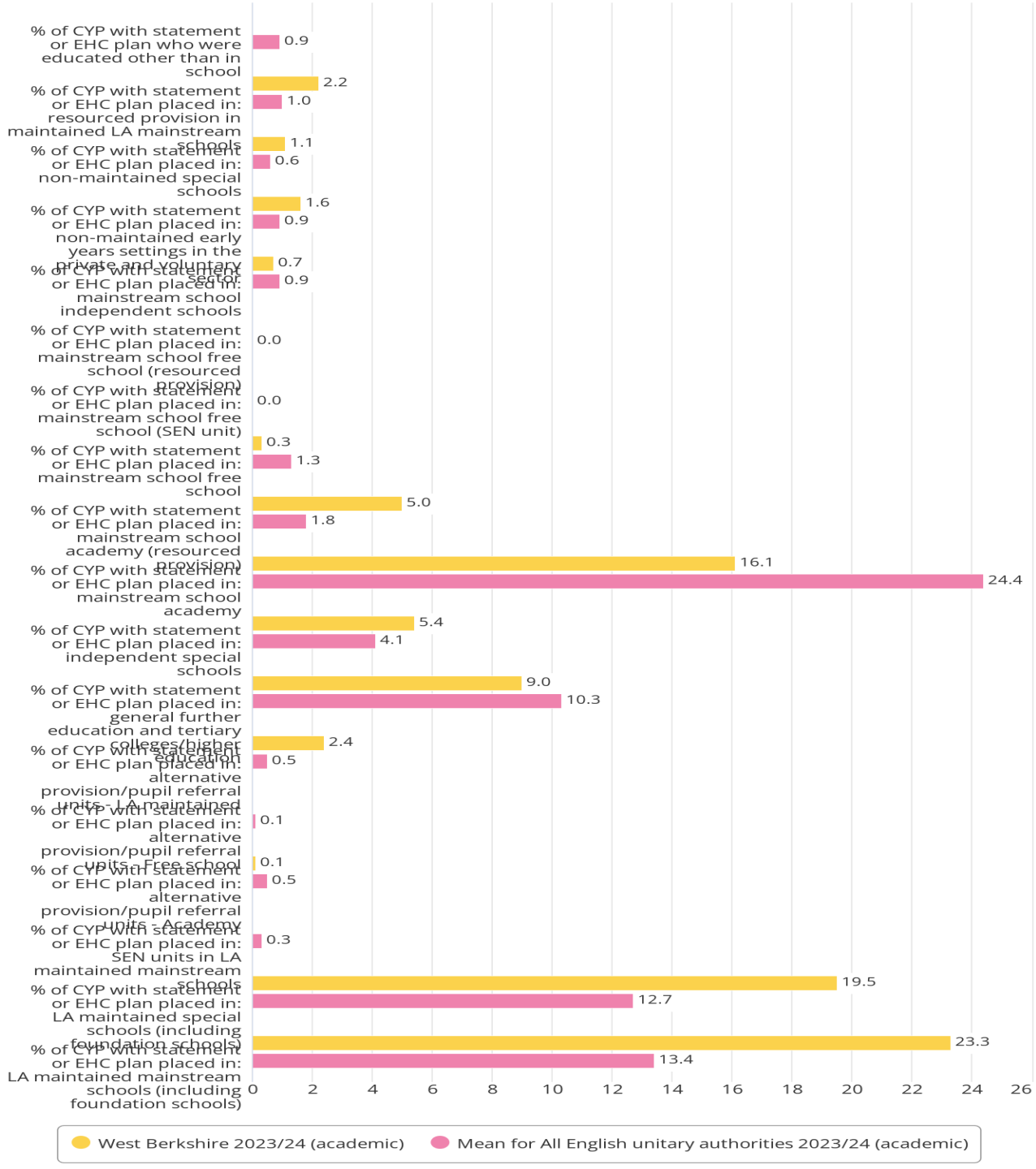
- **be placed in mainstream school academy resource provision** than average (5.0% compared to 1.8%).
- **be educated in maintained special schools** than average (19.5% compared to 12.7% respectively).
- **be placed in independent special school** than average (5.4% compared to 4.1%).
- **be placed in alternative provision/pupil referral unit** than average (2.4% compared to 0.5%).
- **to be placed in local authority maintained mainstream schools** than average (23.3% compared to 13.4% respectively).

Pupils in West Berkshire with an EHC Plan are LESS LIKELY TO:

- **be placed in mainstream school academy** (16.1% compared to 24.4%).
- **be placed in general further education and tertiary colleges/higher education** (9% compared to 10.3%).
- **be placed in mainstream free school** than average (0.3% compared to 1.3%).
- **be placed in mainstream independent school** than average (0.7% compared to 0.9%).
- **be placed in SEN Unit in mainstream school** than average (0% compared to 0.3%).

- **be placed in alternative provision/pupil referral unit in academy school** than average (0.1% compared to 0.5%).

Figure 8: Placement of children and young people with a LA statement or EHC plan (2023/24 (academic) from LG inform compared to the average across all English unitary authorities



Key Implications:

The statistics provided for pupils in West Berkshire with an Education, Health, and Care (EHC) Plan offer important insights for planning capital expansion in various types of educational settings.
A balanced approach is needed, ensuring that the full spectrum of educational settings—from mainstream schools to specialized institutions—are equipped to meet the needs of students with EHC plans.

1. Expand Special Education provision
- A significant proportion of students are placed in non-maintained (19.5%) and independent special schools (5.4%). To reduce this reliance, West Berkshire could invest in developing or expanding special schools within the borough. This could involve building new special schools or enhancing the capabilities of existing ones to accommodate more students with diverse needs.

2. Enhance Resource Provisions in Mainstream Schools
- With 5.0% of students placed in mainstream school academy resource provisions, there's clear demand for specialized support within mainstream settings. Expanding and enhancing these resource provisions across more academies and local authority-maintained schools could provide more in-borough options for students with EHC plans.

3. Increase Capacity in Local Authority Maintained Schools
- The higher placement rate (23.3%) in these schools underscores their importance in the local SEND landscape. Investing in these schools by providing additional support staff, specialized training, and resources could help accommodate the growing number of students, reducing the need for out-of-borough placements.

4. Develop Alternative Provision In-Borough
- With a higher-than-average placement in alternative provision (2.4%), West Berkshire should consider expanding its in-borough alternative provision facilities as well as different pathways and support reintegration back to the originating school where appropriate. The alternative provision offer might include creating new pupil referral units or enhancing existing ones, supporting reintegration as well as differentiation of alternative education pathways.

5. Support Transition to Further Education
- To better support students with EHC plans transitioning to further education, West Berkshire could focus on enhancing SEND support within local colleges. This might involve specialized programs or partnerships with higher education institutions to ensure these students are well-supported within the borough.

6. Develop SEN Units in Mainstream Schools
- The absence of SEN units within mainstream schools suggests a gap in provision which is being addressed by the units being developed at Kennett Valley and Westwood Farm. SEN units could provide more localized support, allowing students to stay within their communities while receiving the specialized education they need.

7. Review the level of support that schools can access to support pupils with SEN Needs

- Pupils with an EHC Plan in West Berkshire are less likely to attend mainstream schools or academies. This could suggest that these schools may not have sufficient resources or support, to accommodate these pupils, leading to their lower placement in mainstream settings.

In terms of key destinations of pupils with an EHC Plan across primary and secondary phases; the following education settings support considerable numbers of West Berkshire pupils:

- The Castle (n=173)- all through school (4-19 years)
- Brookfields (n=108)- all through school (3-19 years)
- Newbury College of Further education (n=70)- FE school for 16 years and over
- Trinity School (n=69)- co-educational secondary school with academy status. for pupils aged 11 to 19, including a sixth form for older students.
- Kennet School (n=57)- a secondary school that caters to students aged 11 to 18. It operates as an academy and includes a sixth form for older students.
- Reading College (n=40)- FE school for 16 years and over.
- St Bartholomew's School (n=38)- a secondary school that caters to students aged 11 to 18 with academy status.
- The Willink School (n=31)- secondary school for pupils aged 11 to 18 and is a comprehensive community school.
- The Winchcombe School (n=30)- primary school for students aged 4 to 11 years and has academy status.
- Park House School (n=19)- secondary school for pupils aged 11 to 18, including a sixth form for older students and has academy status.
- Denefield School (n=16)- secondary school for students aged 11 to 18, including a sixth form and has academy status.
- Engaging Potential (n=14)- an independent special school for young people aged 13 to 19 years.

13. Where are pupils in West Berkshire district with SEN Support likely to be educated?

In terms of key destinations of pupils with SEN Support across primary and secondary phases (NCY 14); the following education settings support considerable numbers of West Berkshire pupils:

- St Bartholomew's School (n=419)
- Kennet School (n=298)
- Little Heath School (n=248)
- Denefield School (n=220)
- Trinity School (n=199)
- The Willink School (n=206)
- The Downs Foundation School (n=199)
- Park House School (n=182)
- Theale Green School (n=179)

Schools which support sizeable numbers of pupils with EHC Plans and SEN Support

- The schools that support considerable numbers of pupils with EHC Plans and SEN Support, are as follows: St Bartholomew's School, Kennet School, Trinity School, The Willink School, Park House School and Denefield School.

Key Implications:
These statistics indicate several implications for school place planning in West Berkshire regarding pupils with a special education need.

The schools that appear on both lists, indicating that they support both pupils with EHC Plans and SEN Support are St Bartholomew's School, Kennet School, Trinity School, The Willink School, Park House School and Denefield School.

These schools serve significant numbers of special education need pupils, indicating that they play a crucial role in the education of students with special education needs in West Berkshire. Further work to develop provision at these schools may be useful in helping to address capacity in borough for pupils with either an EHC Plan or SEN Support.

14 School capacity survey (SCAP) - a Forecast for pupils with EHC Plan in primary and secondary phase.

What is SCAP and the two methodologies used

The Department for Education (DfE) conducts the annual School Capacity Survey (SCAP) every June and July. This survey collects data on the capacity of primary, secondary, and specialist education provisions for the current academic year.

The Department for Education (DfE) in the UK typically publishes the School Capacity (SCAP) data in the autumn, usually around November. This publication follows the annual submission of SCAP data by local authorities, which occurs in July. Note that only two years of data has been provided as it is still a new methodology. As more annual data is collated over time, this will help to improve the accuracy and reliability of the data.

SCAP covers mainstream primary and secondary pupils and special school provision. It does not cover Early Years, Post-18 Education and pupils on SEN Support. SCAP primarily addresses pupils from Reception (age 4-5) to Year 13 (age 17-18), within the National Curriculum Year (NCY) system.

In terms of horizon scanning, the forecasting data gives Primary Schools pupil numbers for the next **five academic years and** Secondary Schools forecasts pupil numbers and specialist placements for the next **seven academic years**.

An important point to note in relation to the trends mentioned below is the fact that they are based on what we know now. Declining birth rates are likely to lead to a decrease in the pre-school age population, which will impact the trends identified for primary and secondary education. We have not yet determined when this slowdown in growth will occur, where the demand for primary and secondary places for pupils with an EHC Plan will begin to stabilize.

In recent years, the number of live births in England and Wales has decreased, and this pattern is expected to continue. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reports a general decline in live births, with 605,479 live births in 2022, a 3.1% decrease from 2021.

There are two methodologies used; one that was created for the DfE SCAP submission and the one that was created for West Berkshire SEN and Disabled Children's Service.

So, the tables set out below show:

1) **SCAP forecasts predicts the level of demand for various types of provision for West Berkshire pupils with an EHC Plan. This may include out of borough provision.** This methodology is set out by DfE in their School Capacity Survey Guidance on Specialist Place Forecasting[6].
2) **The second forecast predicts the level of demand for school places in West Berkshire district by type of provision based on the needs of our West Berkshire pupils as well as pupils with an EHC Plan who reside in other boroughs. This forecast was created based on the requirements of the local SEN and Disabled Children's Service.**

Therefore, in terms of forecasting need for capital place planning, the figures are set out in terms of an upper and lower range with the upper range figure being used for capital place planning. The only exception is the figure for INMSS placements which uses only West Berkshire figures.

Primary Phase-demand for WBC pupils with an EHC Plan by provision type and demand for All pupils with an EHC Plan by provision type

Table (3) shows the demand for primary places among West Berkshire pupils with an EHC Plan which could include demand for provision that is out of borough. Table (4) shows the demand for primary places by type of education setting in the locality whether pupils are from West Berkshire or from other localities. These two figures provide an and upper and lower range in terms of forecasting of need.

Table 3: SCAP projections for WBC pupils with an EHC Plan in primary phase by provision type

6 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6631ff2abf854794db6e18b7/School_capacity_survey_guidance_on_specialist_place_forecasting_2024.pdf

Forecast year	SEN Units and Resource Provision	Independent Special Schools	Special Schools	Alternative Provision	SEND provision in mainstream
2024/25	59	20	152	14	372
2025/26	60	24	157	15	391
2026/27	62	27	164	16	404
2027/28	66	27	174	17	427
2028/29	71	29	186	18	456
% Difference across the forecast period	16%	31%	18%	22%	18%

Table 4: Place projections for any pupil with an EHC Plan in primary phase by provision type within the district of West Berkshire

Forecast Year	SEN Units and Resourced Provision	Independent Special Schools	Special Schools - maintained and non-maintained	Alternative Provision	SEND Provision in Mainstream
2024/25	66	58	149	17	385
2025/26	69	60	156	18	403
2026/27	71	63	161	19	417
2027/28	75	66	170	20	439
2028/29	80	70	180	21	466
% Difference - across forecast period	17%	17%	17%	17%	17%

In terms of prediction of need, the range of values from the above two tables is used with the higher figure in bold being used for capital place planning. The exception is independent special schools which focuses on West Berkshire pupil numbers only. Table 5 sets out the summary of predicted places noting this is based on past data in order to inform future predictions. As more SCAP data is reported year on year, the reliability of the forecasting will improve.

Table 5: Predicted Demand for primary phase by provision type in terms of upper and lower number of places with the figure in bold to be used in capital place planning

Academic Year	SEN Units Resource Provisions	Independent Special Schools	Special Schools (maintained and non-maintained)	Alternative Provision	SEND provision in mainstream school
2024/25	59-**66**	**20**-58	149-**152**	14-**17**	372-**385**
2025/26	60-**69** places	**24**-60	156-**157**	15-**18**	391-**403**
2026/27	62-**71**	**27**-63	161-**164**	16-**19**	404-**417**

Primary Phase-demand by year group

Across the forecast horizon period (2024-2028) numbers of primary age pupils with an EHC Plan are projected to increase by around 29%. Of these around 7% seek a place outside the district, either by choice or necessity.

These primary age pupils that attend out of district schools are more likely to be attending a maintained mainstream school (n=25), independent special school (n=5) and mainstream academy (n=4).

In terms of location, most pupils go to Reading (n=21), followed by Wiltshire (n=9) and Hampshire (n=8), Wokingham (n=4), Swindon and Buckinghamshire (n=3 respectively).

Growth of West Berkshire pupils with an EHC Plan is most significant in Year 6, followed by Years 2, 5 and 4.

This may be due to the factors mentioned such as place availability in other year groups, waiting to have a place available or reflecting differing points of diagnosed need and thus having an EHC Plan issued. Therefore, these year groups, and in particular Year 6, could be deemed pressure points for the system in terms of West Berkshire pupils.

Across the forecast horizon period, it is anticipated that demand for specialist school places will increase by around 28%. This represents an increase from around 670 to 930 pupils in 2028. This projected demand takes account of movement into and out of the district and assumes that these trends will broadly continue.

Demand for places is anticipated to be most significant in Year 6, followed by Years 5 and 1. This may be affected by the availability of places in other year groups and pupils having to wait for a place to be made available or reflecting differing points of diagnosed need and thus having an EHC Plan issued.

Demand for places is exacerbated by movement into the district, particularly near to the Reading border. This demand is projected to remain at a similar level in the future, assuming that the uptake proportions remain the same. If more out of district children are able to secure places in West Berkshire, and the number in the district continues to increase, then this could create additional pressure for district provision.

Overall, when movement of pupils is adjusted for this inward and outward movement, demand is expected to grow significantly at primary phase for ALL pupils with an EHC Plan (whether WBC or other boroughs) in:

- mainstream schools (from 385 to 466 places between 2024 and 2028)
- followed by special schools-maintained and non-maintained (from 149 to 180 places between 2024 and 2028)
- SEN Units/Resource provision (from 66 places to 80 places between 2024 and 2028).
- independent special schools (from 58 places to 70 places between 2024 and 2028).
- and Alternative Provision (from 17 places to 21 places between 2024 and 2028).

Secondary Phase-demand for WBC pupils with EHC by provision type and demand for All pupils with an EHC Plan by provision type

Across the forecast horizon period (2024-2030), it is anticipated that demand for WBC pupils in secondary phase by provision type is predicted to show the greatest need for SEND Provision in mainstream schools (growth of 32% over the forecast period), followed by Special Schools and Alternative Provision respectively (growth of 30% respectively over the forecast period), Independent Special Schools Units, SEN Units and Resource Provisions (by 29% respectively over the horizon period).

Table (6) shows the demand for secondary places among West Berkshire pupils with an EHC Plan which could include demand for provision that is out of borough. Table (7) shows the demand for secondary places by type of education setting in the district of West Berkshire whether pupils are from West Berkshire or from other localities. These two figures provide an and upper and lower range in terms of forecasting of need.

Table 6: SCAP projections for WBC pupils with an EHC Plan in secondary phase by provision type

Forecast year	SEN Units and Resource Provision	Independent Special Schools	Special Schools	Alternative Provision	SEND provision in mainstream
2024/25	82	94	201	33	528
2025/26	86	102	213	36	566
2026/27	90	108	225	37	599
2027/28	94	111	235	39	628
2028/29	100	118	250	41	667
2029/30	107	128	267	44	713
2030/31	115	136	288	47	769
% Difference across the forecast period	29%	31%	30%	30%	31%

Table 7: Place projections for any pupil with an EHC Plan in secondary phase by provision type within the district of West Berkshire

Forecast Year	SEN Units and Resourced Provision	Independent Special Schools	Special Schools- maintained and non-maintained	Alternative Provision	SEND Provision in Mainstream
2024/25	74	301	278	34	414
2025/26	78	318	294	36	437
2026/27	82	332	307	37	457
2027/28	85	346	320	39	476
2028/29	90	365	337	41	502
2029/30	95	388	358	43	533
2030/31	102	414	383	46	570
% Difference - across forecast period	27%	27%	27%	27%	27%

In terms of prediction of need, the range of values from the above two tables is used with the higher figure in bold being used for capital place planning. The exception is independent special schools which focuses on West Berkshire pupil numbers only. Table (8) sets out the summary of predicted places noting this is based on past data in order to inform future predictions. As more SCAP data is reported year on year, the reliability of the forecasting will improve. Note that the above two tables are derived by slightly different methodologies as per the DfE guidance which is why that the figures may be lower than expected when looking at SCAP projections for any pupil with an EHC Plan by provision type.

Table 8: Predicted Demand for secondary phase by provision type in terms of upper and lower number of places with the figure in bold to be used in capital place planning

Academic Year	SEN Units Resource Provisions	Independent Special Schools	Special Schools- maintained and non-maintained	Alternative Provision	SEND provision in mainstream school
2024/25	74-**82**	**94**-301	201-**278**	33-**34**	414-**528**
2025/26	78-**86**	**102**-318	213-**294**	36-**36**	437-**566**
2026/27	82-**90**	**108-**332	225-**307**	37-**37**	457-**599**
2027/28	85-**94**	**111**-346	235-**320**	39-**39**	476-**628**

Secondary Phase-demand by year group

Similarly, numbers of West Berkshire secondary age pupils with an EHC Plan are expected to increase by around 31% across the forecast horizon. Around 16% of these pupils will seek places outside the district, again either by choice or based on need.

Across the forecast horizon period (2024-2030), it is anticipated that demand for specialist school places will increase by around 27%. This represents an increase from around 1100 to 1500 pupils. This projected demand takes account of movement into and out of the district and assumes that these trends will broadly continue.

Demand for places is expected to be most significant in Years 7, 8 and 9, as with West Berkshire only pupils. There is also predicted to be relatively significant demand expected for Years 11 - 14.

Around 26% of demand for secondary age places comes from outside the district. This figure is decreasing across the forecast horizon due to increases in West Berkshire demand and based on inward movement trends across the last 3 years. Should the balance change – i.e. more pupils from outside the district secure places than is usual, then provision in the district could face even greater pressure.
Overall, when movement of pupils is adjusted for inflow and outflow, demand is expected to grow significantly at secondary phase in the following settings for ALL pupils with an EHC Plan (whether WBC or other boroughs):

- mainstream schools (from 414 to 570 places between 2024 and 2030)
- independent special schools (from 301 places to 414 places between 2024 and 2030)
- special schools -maintained and non-maintained (from 278 places to 383 places between 2024 and 2030).
- alternative provision (from 34 to 46 places between 2024 and 2030)
- resource provisions (from 74 to 102 places between 2024 and 2030)

In terms of outflow at secondary phase, pupils from West Berkshire district who have an EHC Plan are most likely to attend Further Education (n=33), followed by Independent school (n=25), maintained special school (n=20), maintained mainstream school (n=11) and special school which is an academy or free school (n=11).

Key Implications:
The implications of the DfE SCAP data for pupil place planning across primary and secondary phases in terms of WBC pupils suggest need to focus on **enhancing primary phase capacity in mainstream primary followed by special schools, SEN Units and Resource Provision and Independent special schools**.

In terms of enhancing secondary phase capacity based on our WBC pupil with EHC Plan forecast, the need is for more places in mainstream settings followed by Special school provision, SEN Units and Resource Provisions, followed by independent special schools and Alternative Provision in that order.

In terms of actual planned numbers of primary places in mainstream schools, the data suggests the need to have 389 places in the 2024/25 academic year and increase to 415 places by 2025/26.

For special schools catering to primary-aged children, the projected need is 149 places in 2024/25, rising to 156 places in 2025/26, and further increasing to 161 places by 2026/27.

Regarding SEN Units/Resource Provisions at the primary phase, the estimated demand is for 66 places in 2024/25, increasing to 69 places in 2025/26, and then to 71 places by 2026/27.

Independent school places for primary age pupils are estimated to be for 19 places in 2024/25 rising to 23 places in 2025/26 and to 25 places in 2026/27.

The estimated demand for primary phase Alternative Provision is estimated to be 17 places in 2024/25 rising to 18 places in 2025/26 and to 20 places in 2026/27.

In terms of actual planned numbers of secondary places in mainstream schools, the data suggests the need to have 551 places in the 2024/25 academic year and increase to 592 places by 2025/26.

For special schools in secondary phase, the projected need is 278 places in 2024/25, rising to 294 places in 2025/26, and further increasing to 307 places by 2026/27.

Regarding SEN Units/Resource Provisions at secondary phase, the estimated demand is for 84 places in 2024/25, increasing to 86 places in 2025/26, and then to 90 places by 2026/27.

Independent school places for secondary phase pupils are estimated to be for 71 places in 2024/25 rising to 75 places in 2025/26 and to 78 places in 2026/27.
The estimated demand for secondary phase Alternative Provision is estimated to be 34 places in 2024/25 rising to 36 places in 2025/26 and to 37places in 2026/27.

The data sets out the following implications in terms of demand by provision type whether pupils are coming from West Berkshire or reside in other boroughs:
Rising demand in Primary Phase with a forecasted 29% rise in primary-aged pupils with EHCPs by 2028, considering both inflows and outflows, leading to a net increase of 28%. Significant growth is anticipated in mainstream schools, with places expected to increase from 385 to 533, followed by special schools, resource provisions, and independent schools. The most growth is expected in Year 6, followed by Year 5 and Year 1. **For pupils from West Berkshire, the highest growth is in Year 6, followed by Year 2, Year 5, and Year 4.**

Allocation of primary places to out of district pupils is not expected to increase significantly up to 2028 provided that the proportion securing places does not change. Should this change then West Berkshire provision would be under even greater pressure.

Whilst allocations to out of district pupils have remained constant at the special schools, Mary Hare and New Barn have seen increased demand from out-of-borough pupils. This reflects the lack of availability of places at these schools for West Berkshire pupils and also the specific nature of provision at Mary Hare which relies on out of district allocations.

Around 7% of West Berkshire pupils seek places outside the district and most of these places are in Reading. A number of these pupils could remain in the district if there was

sufficient special school provision. The forecasts do not reflect this demand, as some of this movement will be based on choice and this is not necessarily apparent from the source data. Demand for West Berkshire provision could therefore be higher as a result – although further analysis would be required to determine if this would actually constitute additional demand over the forecast figures.

Secondary:
Secondary age pupils with an EHC Plan are expected to increase by 31% by 2030. Demand for West Berkshire provision, when adjusted for inward and outward movement, is forecast to increase by 27%. Significant growth in demand is expected in mainstream schools, although all provision types will experience growth.

Year Group Trends show that the key areas of growth are in Years 7, 8, and 9, indicating a need for more places in these year groups. **For West Berkshire residents, the growth is similarly highest in Years 7, 8, and 9.**

Allocations from out of district pupils are anticipated to remain constant across the forecast horizon. As with primary provision the caveat is that should more out of district pupils secure a place than historically then the pressure for places may increase.

School-specific trends show that Mary Hare has seen a significant increase in demand from out of district, although the specific nature of the provision does mean that the school relies on this inward movement. There could be a pressure for places in the future though if demand continues to increase. Brookfields Special School and The Castle Special School have seen fairly constant levels of allocations from out of district pupils but as noted above this is likely to be due to availability of places and high levels of local demand.

General Implications for Place Planning:
1. Capacity Expansion:
- Significant capacity expansions will be necessary in both primary and secondary phases, particularly in mainstream and special schools.
- The council will need to plan for the construction of new facilities or the expansion of existing ones to meet the rising demand.

2. Resource Allocation:
- Increased funding will be required to support the additional places, including hiring more specialized staff and providing necessary resources and support structures
- Special attention should be given to ensuring that resource provisions and independent schools can meet the specialized needs of pupils.

3. Strategic Planning:
- Collaborations with neighbouring boroughs could be beneficial to manage cross-border demand effectively.

In summary, the DfE SCAP data indicates a substantial increase in the demand for EHCP placements in West Berkshire assuming that all current trends continue. This is set against a backdrop of declining pre-school population and an increase in demand for specialist

provision. It is not clear how the declining population will affect this future demand beyond the forecast horizon and whether the demand for specialist provision can and will continue to increase at the current rate.

Taking all these factors into account and based on current trends and information; proactive planning and investment will be required to ensure adequate provision across mainstream, special, and independent school settings.

Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) and Education, Employment and Training (EET)

The Department for Education reports young people aged 16 and 17 years of age known to the Local Authority who are not in education, training or employment. West Berkshire has 38 pupils with an EHC Plan who are not in education, training or employment. Of these 12 pupils have significant illness or health issues, 2 pupils are teenage parents, 2 pupils are not ready for work or learning, 16 are actively seeking education, training or employment and five other pupils are awaiting a placement at college. One pupil is not coded, and data is awaited at time of writing. Within this group, 30 of the pupils come from maintained special schools which support pupils up to 19 years of age and are registered to include Year 14 which not all special schools are.

Note previous statistics in the report that indicates that there are 45 pupils 18-25 years with an EHC Plan that are also NEET.

Comparison to LG Inform data on all English Unitary Authorities shows that there are less pupils with SEN Support and pupils with an EHC Plan recorded as NEET compared to all English Unitary Authority statistics. LAIT data on NEET is not available.

At Key Stage 4, the proportion of pupils with SEN Support who are going to or remaining in education, employment or training (including from special schools) is 93.3% which is higher than among statistical comparator proportion of 90.92%. The same trend is shown for pupils with an EHC Plan who are more likely to be going to or remaining in education, employment or training compared to statistical comparator boroughs; 97.1% compared to 91.52% based on 2022 figures in current LAIT forecast.

At Key Stage 5-post 16 Education, the number of pupils who are not in education, training or employment (NEET) continues to increase from 6.2% to 8.8% in 2023 but remains lower than the All-English Unitary Authorities average of 9.8%. When compared to statistical neighbours; West Berkshire performs better than statistical neighbours based on 2022 data from LAIT which shows that 94.50% of Key Stage 4 SEN cohort are in education, employment or training at 17 years of age (including special schools) compared to 91.08% amongst statistical comparator boroughs.

In terms of actual numbers, there are 305 pupils with an EHC Plan who are recorded as in education, training or employment and 111 pupils in year 11 which is their final year of compulsory education and will include destinations that relate to continuing in further education such as sixth form (Year 12 and 13), further education colleges, or other academic or vocational courses, training (apprenticeships, traineeships or other work based

training) and employment (either full-time or part-time employment, the latter may be sometimes alongside part-time study or training).

Independent and non-maintained provision (INMSS)

Data from SEN and Disabled Children's Service shows that the spend on placements in independent and non-maintained provision which does not include academies or free schools is £7.491.33 (data as of 8th August 2024).

A significant amount of spend on independent day provision is for pupils with ASD as primary SEND Need (£1.9M) followed by SEMH (£1.9M), Hearing Impairment (£538K), SLCN (£404K), SPLD (£186K), MLD (£181K) and physical disability (£230K).
In terms of residential spend in terms of SEND need, most spend is on ASD (£505K0, followed by Physical disability (£124K), SLD (£85K) and MLD (£32K).

This spend is for 114 pupils with an EHC Plan of which 106 are day pupils and the remaining 8 are in residential placements. Among the pupils attending day placements, the primary need is ASD (n=41) followed by SEMH (n=34), SLCN (n=7) and SPLD (n=5). Those in residential placements tend to have ASD as SEND need.

In terms of key providers, we are placing children with, these are as follows:

- Hillcrest New Barn School – an independent special school with twenty-six pupils placed.
- The Mile House Therapeutic School – an independent special school with twelve pupils placed.
- The Grange-an independent special school with ten pupils placed.
- Oaklands school- an independent special school with thirteen pupils placed.
- Mary Hare School – a non-maintained special school with nine pupils placed
- The Unicorn School- an independent special school with five pupils placed.
- Treloar School – a non-maintained special school with four pupils placed
- Chilworth House School – an independent special school with six pupils placed
- Tadley Court Priory – an independent special school with three pupils placed
- Hurst Lodge school – an independent special school with three pupils placed

In terms of education setting, the majority are independent special provision which are privately owned and operated and often leading to higher cost placements for Local Authorities (n=98 pupils) with the remaining 16 in non-maintained special provision which tend to be not for profit and typically managed by charitable organisations and tend to be at a lower cost compared to independent special schools.

The data shows below that the age of pupils in INMSS shows that there more pupils in secondary phase being educated in these settings than primary phase. Pupil in residential provision tend to be in secondary phase of school.

Table 9: Numbers of West Berkshire pupils in independent and non-maintained provision (which does not include academies or free schools) by day and residential and by age

Age of student	Day	Residential	Grand Total
5	1		1
6	1		1
7	4		4
8	7		7
9	6		6
10	9		9
11	3	1	4
12	10		10
13	13		13
14	16		16
15	16	1	17
16	10	2	12
17	7	2	9
18	2	1	3
19	1	1	2
Grand Total	**106**	**8**	**114**

The other area of spend is on maintained special school, academies and free schools and the top up costs is £796,990. There are 36 pupils with an EHC Plan in total in this cohort. In terms of numbers of pupils by type of SEN Need, the table below summarises the proportions. In terms of SEND need, most pupils have ASD (14/36) followed by SEMH (11/36) and MLD (2/36).

Table 10: Numbers of pupils in mainstream special school, academy and free school by number of pupils with EHC Plan by type of SEN Need

Key Placement Destinations	Placement Type	Number of Pupils
Tulip Academy	Mainstream Academy	2
Cranbury College	Maintained PRU (Reading)	2
The Avenue (5 pupils), Hamilton School (3 pupils), Addington Special School, Glyne Gap School, Holy Brook School, Woodeaton Manor School (one pupil each)	Maintained Special School	15
St Dominic's School	Non-maintained special school	1
Forest Bridge School	Special Free school	1

Chiltern Way (10 pupils), Coppice Spring School, Fitzwaryn School (1 pupil each), Thames Valley School (2 pupils)	Special School Academy/Free	15
Total		**36**

Additional challenges in terms of the INMSS cohorts – Emotional Based School Avoiders

The INMSS data shows ASD and SEMH are key special education needs for pupils requiring an independent placement, but within these classifications, there are cohorts of children with autism who are in the mainstream range of ability whose anxiety/sensory issues are so severe and may have a pathological demand avoidance profile, that they present with very highly dysregulated behaviours including aggression or violence. This cohort are beyond the scope of autism resources at Fir Tree and Theale Primaries and Trinity Secondary. It was for this cohort, that the Castle at Theale and Kennet Valley resource provisions were established. Whilst building up capacity in these provisions, there remains a need to commission independent non-maintained provision to address their needs.

The other cohort of pupils sent to INMSS provision are those pupils with ASD with co-morbid anxiety and mental health need which is severe that they have become emotional based school avoiders (EBSA). Often by the time, the EHC assessment is requested, the emotional based school avoidance has become very entrenched, and it is not possible to get them back into a mainstream school thus necessitating the need to place them in INMSS provision which is recognised not to be the answer always. In order to avoid INMSS placements, there needs to be better cross-agency response to EBSA as soon as it is identified and before it becomes entrenched.

West Berkshire Council has a small EBSA team which includes SEN specialists, an Educational Psychologist who has recently left, and other mental health professionals who work in a multidisciplinary manner to support this cohort. The team collaborates closely with schools and families to provide targeted interventions and strategies to help students return to regular school attendance.

Emotional-Based School Avoidance (EBSA) or school refusal occurs when a child experiences intense emotional distress related to attending school. Triggers for EBSA can vary widely depending on the individual, but common factors include:

1. Anxiety and Mental Health Issues with pupils experiencing anxiety and fear of being away from parents or home, especially in younger children.
2. Social anxiety in relation to social interactions, fear of bullying, social judgment, or peer relationships, can make school seem overwhelming.
3. Pupils may also experience generalised anxiety in which worries about their attainment, fear of failing or concern over specific aspects of school life (such as exams or public speaking) can lead to avoidance.
4. Negative School Experiences may also trigger EBSA as a result of bullying or unresolved conflicts with peers are significant triggers.
5. Traumatic events such as a recent loss, family disruption, or an event that occurred at school (e.g., a violent incident) can lead to avoidance.

6. Academic Pressure in terms of struggling with learning difficulties or the perception of high academic expectations from teachers or parents can contribute to EBSA.
7. Overcrowded or Overstimulating Environments can be difficult for pupils particularly with sensory processing issues, the school environment may be overwhelming.
8. Parental Anxiety or overprotectiveness could see pupils mirror these emotions, leading to school avoidance.
9. Issues such as parental divorce, illness in the family, or financial instability can contribute to a child's reluctance to attend school.
10. Chronic illnesses, undiagnosed conditions, or even frequent minor illnesses can lead to school avoidance due to fear of symptoms worsening or embarrassment.
11. Another trigger may be transitions when starting a new school or academic year, especially if the child has to adjust to a new environment, peers, or teachers, can trigger EBSA.

The other issue is the lack of commissioning capacity to coordinate alternative provision packages for pupils which would be designed to get them back into school. This is a key area of need.

A more recent issue in relation to policy changes will impact on this cohort. From 19th August 2024, schools must inform the Local Authority following 15 school days of illness absence in order for the local authority to assess who is currently best placed to meet the duty of providing suitable and effective education. Given the link between school attendance and avoidance, data from the Attendance Audit undertaken by the Children's Commissioner (February 2023) suggested that in 2018/19 academic year, one in nine pupils were persistently absent from school rising to one in four children in Autumn 2021. These figures are suggesting that this trend will continue to rise.

The Attendance Audit highlighted that children who are emotionally based school avoiders (EBSA) often struggle with anxiety, mental health issues, or trauma, which #makes regular school attendance challenging. These students are not disengaged from learning but face significant emotional barriers. The report emphasizes the need for targeted support, including mental health services, personalized learning plans, and greater collaboration between schools, families, and healthcare providers to help these children re-engage with education and improve their attendance.

The Children's Commissioner's report "Attendance is Everybody's Business", February 2023 highlighted several key points around barriers to attendance such as mental health issues, lack of support for young carers, and more support needed for identification and support of pupils with SEND which echoes the local perspective. The report flagged the need to support schools in the holistic approach to attendance, which includes understanding and addressing the root causes of absenteeism rather than merely enforcing attendance. The report stressed that exclusions should be a trigger for intervention rather than punishment.

Key Implications of the INMSS spend indicates a significant reliance on independent special schools, which are typically more expensive.

The high number of ASD and SEMH pupils indicates a need for more specialised local resources, such as dedicated ASD and SEMH units within mainstream schools or academies (check where pupils with an EHC Plan are likely to attend). This includes specialised support for the Emotional Based School Avoiders hidden within INMSS cohort, as early as possible.

There is a substantial number of SEMH pupils and increasing the breadth of SEMH-specific resources, such as therapeutic support and specialized teaching staff in local schools, can help accommodate these pupils better within the borough with a particular focus on secondary schools given the year group distribution shows a skew towards more secondary school independent placements.

West Berkshire has sufficient hearing impairment units with one for primary phase and one for secondary phase but demand at Mary Hare is driven by parental preference and Tribunal ruling in favour of parents who go to appeal.

In terms of Year Group Distribution; the majority of pupils are in secondary school phase and post 16. This suggests a need to focus on expanding secondary special education provisions within the borough. Building new facilities or expanding existing ones to cater to secondary-aged pupils with special needs is essential. This could offer space and provision which would enable specialist services and support to work across the secondary schools.

Given the concentration of pupils in specific settings such as New Barn School, The Mile House Therapeutic School and The Grange; partnerships with these institutions could be explored to agree cost and volume arrangements rather than ad hoc spot purchasing. SEND are exploring the addition of these providers who are independent special schools the Bristol INMSS flexible framework. This is now underway.

Greater usage of independent non-maintained special schools and colleges may need to be an area of focus given the difficulties in growing sufficiency in-borough. DfE have created a map of special schools & colleges includes LA maintained schools, non-maintained special schools and Section 41 independent schools, all of whom receive £10,000 pa per placement from Government devolved funding: https://educationadvocacy.co.uk/sen-schools-map/

These schools are therefore cheaper and may be a focus for commissioning out of borough provision rather than using non-Section 41 independent schools who do not receive this additional funding and can therefore be more expensive in comparison. This would be advisable for pupils with primary needs of ASD. The map shows that Section 41 provision for SEMH need tends to be too far away for West Berkshire to use.
Non-section 41 independent schools include Tadley Court School, Mary Hare School and The Unicorn school which are used by West Berkshire district.

15 Alternative Provision

Alternative provision refers to education and support arranged for children who, for various reasons, cannot attend mainstream schools. This can include children who have been excluded, those with behavioural issues, mental health needs, or other special educational needs that cannot be met within a traditional school environment. It also covers young people who are at risk of exclusion or have medical conditions preventing them from attending school regularly.

Alternative provision aims to provide a tailored education that meets the individual needs of each student, helping them to re-engage with learning and progress academically. This can be delivered through various means, including Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), Specialist Schools which support students with specific needs, such as behavioural, emotional, or social difficulties, Tutoring Services, Vocational Training, Online Learning, and Work based learning.

The goal of alternative provision is to ensure that every child receives an education that is appropriate for their needs, enabling them to achieve their potential and prepare for their future, whether that involves returning to mainstream education, pursuing further education, or entering the workforce.

In trying to present a picture of sufficiency around alternative provision, there have been issues identified in coding of provision as AP on Capita and this needs to be reviewed in order to ensure a more accurate picture of demand and capacity to inform future place planning.

iCollege Pupil Referral Unit

This is West Berkshire's dedicated alternative provision for students who are unable to access mainstream education. It operates across several units providing education for learners from Key Stage 1 to Post-16. The provision has long-term placements, short-term proactive placements, and bespoke packages tailored to individual needs, including those with Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs). In effect, iCollege operates both as a school and as alternative provision.

As of 18th July 2024, there were 101 pupils on roll at iCollege which is West Berkshire's Alternative Provision of which 44 pupils have an EHC Plan, 28 pupils are on SEN Support and 21 pupils with no coding of SEND needs. The total number of pupils placed with the provision has steadily climbed from 71 pupils in 2021/22 to 109 in 2022/23 to the current figure of 101 pupils.

Note that the numbers fluctuate regularly due to pupils coming on and off the roll whether being re-integrated or moving to other programs hence the variation from the 101 pupils cited where the data was taken from Capita.

The seven different provisions are as follows:
Inspiration – Primary Pupil Referral Unit which provides post Permanent Exclusion (PEX) provision, short term in-reach and outreach support.

Integration – Secondary Pupil Referral Unit which provides post PEX provision, short term in-reach support and outreach support.
Pod – Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2- SEN School which is accessed through EHC Plan placements only
Pod Plus – Year 7 and Year8 SEN School which is accessed through EHC Plan Placements only
Intervention – Alternative provision providing education for Years 9 and 10
Independence – Alternative provision providing education for Year 11 and some post 16 learners
Impact – in reach intervention for Year 7 and 8.

Primary Pupil Referral Unit- Inspiration
To date, this year there are 36 pupils on the primary Pupil Referral Unit roll of which 27 pupils received in-reach, six pupils receiving PEX provision and three pupils without a code. Note the data is incomplete as it has to be finalised by iCollege.

Secondary Pupil Referral Unit – Integration
The increasing number of permanent exclusions has caused Integration to reach capacity since 2023 however schools greatly value the six week in-reach behaviour intervention programme offered. As a consequence, the provision was amended on a temporary basis to provide three 2-hour sessions daily for both in reach and PEX students and schools would be responsible for topping up the timetable of their in-reach students.

The data from iCollege shows that the numbers of pupils receiving in reach has fluctuated from 37 in 2021/22 to 51 in 2022/23 and 38 in 2023/24.

There are 50 pupils on roll with outreach; some of whom had received a period of in-reach. Of the 50 pupils, 35 pupils have had no exclusions since the intervention according to iCollege data. Twenty pupils are discharged from the service and no longer need support with 15 pupils not discharged from iCollege support.

In terms of outcomes of pupils; a considerable number of pupils return to mainstream whether the original or new mainstream school. The numbers show:

- 39 out of 72 pupils returned to mainstream provision in 2021/22 and 24 pupils moved to iCollege.
- 70/109 pupils returned to mainstream in 2022/23 and 14 moved to iCollege.
- 66/97 pupils returned to mainstream in 2023/24 to date with 13 pupils moved to iCollege.
- The pupils that stay at iCollege have an EHC Plan or an EHC Plan pending. The pupils that return to mainstream are generally on SEN Support.

There are a number of pupils who receive off-site provision as part of the iCollege offer. The providers are Kickboxing (Ian Whitehouse), Burley Lodge Equestrian Centre, Outdoor Academy, RAW Mentoring, Upper Lodge Farm, Manor Lodge Farm, Autoskills, Reading Football Club, Path Hill Outdoors, Lighthouse Project, 4 Kingdoms, Mannings Tutors, Forest School at iCollege and work experience. Learners would be attending these provisions as part of a bespoke programme fitted around the needs of the learner comprising academic curriculum and social and emotional support.

Examples of the alternative education offer at primary and secondary phase could be a primary age learner having 3 days at iCollege including accessing physical activity at 4 Kingdoms and Forest Schol and two days at their referring school. In terms of secondary phase, a year 11 learner may have access to 5 GCSEs plus iCollege counselling, work experience, physical activity via Outdoor Academy and child development.

WBC SEN and Disabled Children's service has historically used Cranbury College which is Reading's Pupil Referral Unit and Alternative Education Provision but do not have many students there.

Challenges in meeting sufficiency

It is recognised that there are capacity issues at iCollege Inspiration and Integration provisions with 21 pupils needing additional alternative provision to top up their curriculum offer. SEN and Disabled Children's Service have provided iCollege with information on other alternative providers in order to support them to ensure a full curriculum for these pupils. Further details on the challenges around the current provision are set out in a separate report.

Absences, Suspensions and Exclusions

West Berkshire had higher authorised absences from primary school (4.49% compared to 4.28% among statistical neighbours) and lower unauthorised absences (1.13% compared to 1.14% among statistical neighbours based on August 2024 data.

In secondary schools, the trend continues for equivalent authorised absences compared to statistical neighbours (6.12%) and unauthorised absences (2.34%). This data is from the LAIT report update in August 2024. Note this data is for all pupils not just pupils with SEND need.

The LAIT statistics show that the proportion of special school pupils with one or more suspensions from school as a proportion of the school population is higher in West Berkshire compared to statistical neighbours; 8.13% compared to 4.73% among statistical neighbours (2022/23 data). The figure jumped significantly from 2019/20 and has continued to outpace statistical neighbours.

Among Children in Care, the proportion of unauthorised absence from school is much higher when compared to statistical neighbours; 2.6% of West Berkshire Children in Care (2022 data) compared to 1.57% of Children in Care from statistical neighbours. For children in need, the proportion of authorised absences is slightly higher when compared to statistical neighbours (10.8% compared to 10.76%) and the same trend for unauthorised absences; 6.2% compared to 6.02%, respectively.

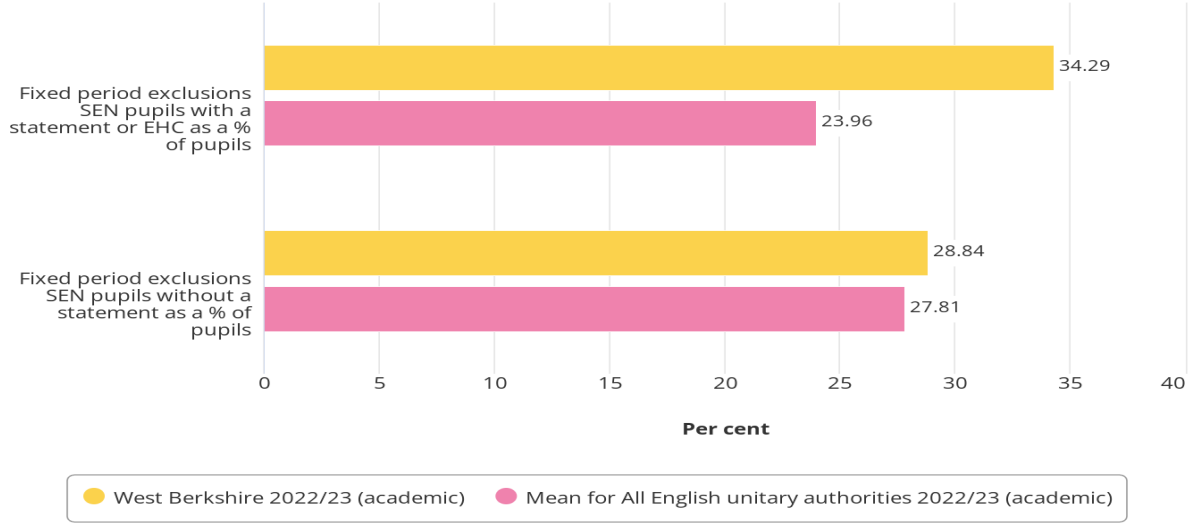
The proportion of state funded secondary persistent absences show that West Berkshire has lower rates based on 2022 data compared to statistical neighbours; 24.10% and 25.72% respectively but data is not able to be parsed into SEN and non-SEN pupils.

Since 2013/14 the number of suspensions for pupils in special provision has lagged behind statistical neighbours but 2021/22 data published shows that West Berkshire has slightly higher number of suspension than statistical neighbours; 13.1% compared to 10.42%. There are a

higher number of pupils in special schools with one or more suspensions compared to statistical neighbours; 8.13 compared to 4.73 based on 2022/23 data. The trend remains the same for permanent exclusions among pupils in any special school compared to statistical neighbours; 0.33 compared to 0.10 based on published 2022/23 data on the LAIT dataset.

When we look at data from LG Inform comparing West Berkshire with all English Unitary Authorities, the 2023/24 updated information below shows that pupils with an Education, Health, and Care (EHC) Plan had a higher risk of fixed-term exclusion compared to the average for all English unitary authorities based on 2022/23 data. Specifically, 34.29% of pupils with an EHC Plan in West Berkshire faced fixed-term exclusions, whereas the mean for all English unitary authorities was 28.84%.

Figure 9: Fixed period exclusions for SEN pupils as a % of the school population (2022/23 (academic)- LG Inform for West Berkshire

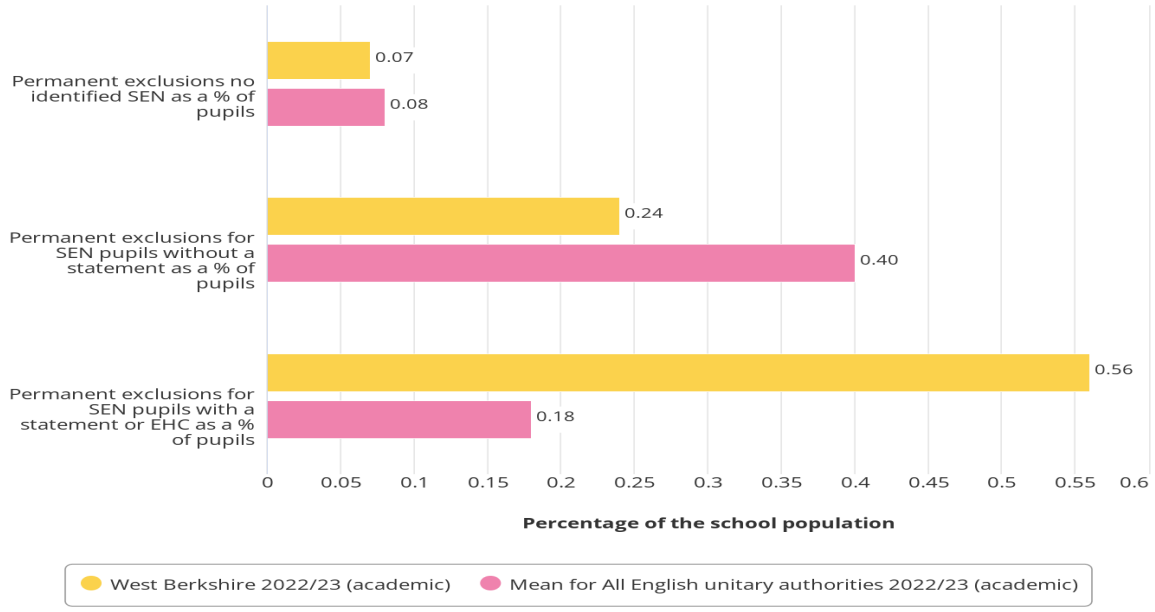


The trend is mirrored among pupils receiving SEN Support in West Berkshire who were more likely to receive fixed-term exclusions, with a rate of 28.84% compared to the national average of 27.81 amongst all English Unitary Authorities.

A better picture emerges when the trends for permanent exclusion rate for SEN pupils on SEN Support who are less likely to be permanently excluded compared to the average among all English Unitary Authorities; 0.24 compared to 0.40.

Among pupils with an EHC Plan however, the trend is reversed among pupils who have an EHC Plan who are more at risk of permanent exclusion compared to the average for all English Unitary Authorities; 0.56 compared to 0.18 based on 2022/23 data.

Figure 10: Permanent exclusions from school as a % of the school population (2022/23 (academic) from LG Inform -West Berkshire



Key Implications:
The data on exclusion rates and suspensions for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in West Berkshire has several implications for education place planning:

Increased Need for Alternative Provision:
The higher fixed-term exclusion rate for pupils with an Education, Health, and Care (EHC) Plan indicates a need for more alternative provision places. Schools may require additional support units or specialist settings to cater to these pupils and prevent exclusions. There is a need to increase capacity given the rising number of emotional based school avoiders and children otherwise than at school. The policy changes in reporting of school attendance will flag up more of these pupils requiring support.

Enhanced Support in Mainstream Schools:
The lower exclusion rate for pupils receiving SEN Support suggests that current interventions are somewhat effective. However, there is still a need to enhance support within mainstream schools to maintain and further reduce exclusion rates.

Review the support for pupils in special schools:
The significant jump in suspensions in special schools may indicate that the needs of pupils are diverse and complex, and this can negatively affect students' self-esteem, mental health and sense of belonging. Among pupils in special schools, who already face challenges related to their disabilities or learning difficulties, this can exacerbate feelings of alienation or frustration.

Monitoring and Early Intervention:
There is a need for improved monitoring systems to identify at-risk pupils early and provide timely interventions. This can help in reducing the rates of both fixed-term and permanent exclusions.

Where are West Berkshire pupils receiving alternative education provision?

There are 108 pupils who are attending alternative provision settings other than iCollege which caters for 101 pupils (iCollege reports 104 pupils as of July but data changes daily as pupils move in and out of the provision). Of this number, there are less than half with SEN Support need (n=44) with the remainder of pupils having an EHC Plan. In terms of year group, most of the pupils are in year groups 6 to 12 inclusive.

A significant number attend New Barn School (n=28) followed by Mary Hare School (n=9), Oaklands School (n=6), Tadley Court School (n=5), The Mile House Therapeutic School (n=4) and the Unicorn School (n=4), and Chilworth House School (n=6).

West Berkshire pupils receiving alternative education provision attend a variety of specialized settings designed to cater to different educational needs.

Here is an overview of the mentioned alternative provision settings:

New Barn School provides tailored educational programs for children and young people who may not thrive in mainstream settings. The school focuses on students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), offering a supportive environment that helps them achieve their potential.

Mary Hare School specializes in educating deaf children and young people. The school provides a unique setting where students can access a full curriculum while receiving the necessary support for their hearing impairments.

Oaklands School caters to pupils with a range of special educational needs. The school emphasizes individualized learning plans and therapeutic interventions to support students' academic and personal development.

Tadley Court School offers education and care for children and young people with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and other complex needs. The school provides a structured environment where students can learn and develop essential life skills.

The Mile House Therapeutic School integrates therapeutic approaches into its educational programs, aiming to support students with emotional, social, and behavioural difficulties. The school focuses on creating a safe and nurturing environment to promote healing and learning.

The Unicorn School is dedicated to students with dyslexia, dyspraxia, and other specific learning difficulties. The school offers specialized teaching methods and small class sizes to help students overcome their challenges and succeed academically.

Chilworth House School serves students with social, emotional, and mental health needs. The school provides a supportive and structured setting, focusing on both academic progress and emotional well-being.

Key Implications:

The placement of pupils at the various alternative education settings suggests several insights about gaps in alternative provision in West Berkshire:

- The high number of pupils at New Barn School (28) could indicate a significant need for specialised support for students with behavioural, emotional, and social difficulties (BESD). This suggests a gap in mainstream schools' ability to adequately support these students, necessitating placements in specialized settings.

- The presence of 9 pupils at Mary Hare School, which caters specifically to deaf children, may highlight a gap in local provision for students with hearing impairments. It suggests that mainstream schools may lack the resources or expertise to support these students effectively.

- Placements at Tadley Court School (5) and The Mile House Therapeutic School (4) indicate a need for more local provisions that can cater to students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and other complex needs. The reliance on these specialized schools suggests mainstream settings might not be equipped to manage such complexities.

- The Unicorn School (4), which supports students with dyslexia, dyspraxia, and other specific learning difficulties, suggests that there might be insufficient support for these students within mainstream schools. This points to a gap in specialized teaching methods and resources within the regular school system.

- Chilworth House School (6), focusing on social, emotional, and mental health needs, indicates a gap in provisions for students requiring significant emotional and mental health support. Mainstream schools may struggle to provide the intensive support these students need.

- The presence of pupils at The Mile House Therapeutic School (4) shows a need for therapeutic interventions integrated into the educational experience. This suggests a lack of such integrated support in mainstream schools.

- With 108 pupils placed in alternative settings other than iCollege, it may reflect the fact that mainstream schools do not have the capacity or resources to support students with behavioural and emotional difficulties, hearing impairments, autism, specific learning difficulties, and mental health challenges.

In West Berkshire, there is a noticeable trend of parents seeking independent placements for their children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), especially when they feel that local maintained provisions may not adequately meet their child's needs. This is a part of a broader issue observed across various regions in the UK, where parents increasingly turn to independent schools for specialized support, particularly for complex needs such as autism, severe learning difficulties, and social, emotional, and mental health challenges.

17 Education Capital Place Planning Programme

The capital programme cycle is annual with proposals and projects reviewed in summer and planning and implementation following (noting the lag of a number of years given the complexities involved). Capital business cases are being developed to take account of the SCAP forecasts and predicted demand for primary and secondary phases across the various types of education provision.

The immediate plans for expansion of Kennet Valley for SEMH need goes live in September 2024.Additional capacity at iCollege is being reviewed in terms of remodelling and refurbishing existing premises. There is planned expansion of the Castle special school with 4 additional classes to create 32 places by September 2025.

Pipeline projects include primary SEMH/ASD in west primary with MLD/SLD resource provision at primary phase and secondary phase also being planned

In terms of next steps, the key messages from this Sufficiency Strategy have been shared and used to inform the Business Case and Funding Bid for the single submission SEND Strategy led by Neil Goddard and Mark Lewis. This was submitted by the 23 August deadline. All submissions now go through Corporate Leadership Team, a number of Budget Board meetings, Capital Strategy Group (November) and then through the committee process from January to February/March, culminating in Full Council in late February/early March 2025.

Once sites have been identified, the Council can progress with the individual Business Cases, Project Briefs, and move forward with the projects.

Appendix 1

Summary of Key Implications from the report

The implications of having more males than females in the child and young person population have implications in terms of education as follows:

There may be a need to develop more gender-responsive teaching strategies that address the specific learning styles and behavioural needs often seen in boys. Schools may need to consider more male-specialised teaching staff or programs that cater to the interests and strengths of boys in SEN.

Boys may exhibit different behavioural challenges compared to girls, necessitating targeted behavioural interventions and support systems. The higher number of boys may affect classroom dynamics, requiring teachers to manage a potentially more active and physically expressive group.
Another implication is that the higher proportion of boys may be contributing towards the higher proportion of pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) given the higher prevalence among boys.

There are 214 pupils with an EHC Plan post 18 up to 25 years with an EHC Plan. This cohort may need to be reviewed in order to support transition as part of Preparation for Adulthood.

Understanding the specific reasons for the higher proportion of SEND pupils in West Berkshire requires a detailed analysis of local policies, practices, demographic factors, and support services compared to its statistical neighbours. Each of these factors can contribute to variations in SEN identification and support across different regions.

Implications of the Higher Performance in Early Years Learning Goals and Lower Performance in Phonic Decoding:

The higher performance in early learning goals indicates that children in West Berkshire, including those with SEN, are developing well across a broad range of areas. However, the lower performance in phonic decoding suggests that there may be specific challenges or gaps in literacy instruction, particularly in phonics, which need to be addressed. This discrepancy highlights the importance of targeted support for literacy skills alongside a broad and balanced early years curriculum.

the data may be indicating a significant attainment gap at Early Years stage in West Berkshire where children from lower socio-economic backgrounds, including those eligible for free school meals (but not minority ethnic groups) may have a higher prevalence of unidentified SEND due to less access to early diagnosis and support services.

More early identification and intervention in Early Years which is targeting pupils with special education needs and those pupils who are eligible for free school meals may be needed to bridge the attainment gap.

The fact that the attainment gap closes at Key Stage 4 suggests that the educational interventions and support mechanisms in place between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 are effectively helping pupils to close the attainment gap, leading to improved outcomes by the end of their compulsory education but further work is needed for pupils with EHC Plan in order to ensure gains are maintained and in line with statistical neighbours.

The fact that pupils in West Berkshire lag at the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage 2 (KS2) but catch up with average attainment by Key Stages 4 (KS4) and 5 (KS5) has several implications:

The lag in EYFS and KS2 suggests that early identification and support for SEND pupils may not be as effective as it could be. There might be a need for improved screening processes and early intervention programs to address learning difficulties as soon as they are identified.

Enhanced focus on the early years' curriculum, targeted teaching strategies, and support mechanisms are crucial. This includes professional development for early years' educators to recognise and support SEND needs effectively.

As students' progress through different stages, ensuring smooth transitions with adequate support can help maintain and build on their progress. Transition plans and continuity in support services can help SEND pupils adapt better to new educational settings and can prevent the lag in attainment observed in the earlier stages.

More targeted intervention programs at KS2 can help bridge the attainment gap. These programs might target intervention programmes, specialized instructional strategies, and additional resources tailored to meet the needs of SEND pupils.

The improvement seen at KS4 and KS5 indicates that secondary schools may have effective catch-up programs and support strategies. These should be studied, and potentially extended to earlier stages.

The higher proportion of pupils with SEN Support and EHC Plans going to or remaining in education, training or employment (including special schools) compared to statistical

neighbours consolidates the positive picture in terms of the attainment gap closing by the time of preparation for adulthood.

Key Implications for primary school place planning for pupils with EHC Plan by special education need:

There may be a need to review the coding of pupils with ASD as primary need given that the need appears to be higher than for other English unitary authorities.

There may be a need for more specialised resource provision or units within mainstream primary schools to support pupils on an EHC Plan with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), SEMH and SLCN as well as pupils with Learning Difficulties, given their higher proportions among primary aged pupils.

A clear offer of speech and language provision to primary age pupils is critical given the impact on learning and attainment. As part of the refresh of the Local Offer, the commissioned provider Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust is providing the speech and language offer mapped against the Balanced Model showing provision at universal, targeted and specialist level of need; where targeted refers to pupils on SEN Support and specialist refers to pupils with an EHC Plan.

Support schools with the infrastructure to accommodate pupils with physical disabilities and severe learning difficulties. An action could be to identify any accessibility issues in primary schools. This work will be picked up as part of the accessibility strategy currently being formulated.

West Berkshire has fewer pupils with an EHC plan who are deemed a child in need compared to the national average suggesting that there may be a need to improve early identification processes and ensure timely assessments for EHC plans. This is particularly the case for children who come into care.

Key Implications for secondary and post 16 place planning for pupils with EHC Plan by special education need:
The data suggests the need to increase capacity of additional resource provision for pupils with ASD and SEMH at secondary phase.

The sizeable number of pupils with moderate learning difficulties, specific learning difficulties and speech language and communication needs raises the need to consider additional resource bases and whether more can be done with assistive technology to aid learning or increase the availability of learning support assistants trained in MLD, SLCN and/or SPLD.

Among pupils at sixth form or college, there may be a need to consider expansion of sixth form colleges or units for ASD students and continue to develop tailored pathways in terms of academic and vocational routes including work experience opportunities.

Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) is also significant need among this cohort which emphasises the importance of accessing comprehensive mental health support programs within colleges.

Post-Secondary Education (NCY 14-19) may need to ensure a focus on transition programs to support pupils moving from secondary to post-secondary education, tailored to be autism friendly given the number of pupils with ASD need.

Key Implications on primary needs among pupils in West Berkshire schools

The comparison of special educational needs (SEN) profile of West Berkshire District reveals significant differences to other English unitary authorities. There may be a need to do a deep dive in order to identify if the differences are attributed to under identification of need, misclassification of SEN need or a result of effective earlier intervention.

The proportion of pupils with ASD, moderate learning difficulty and profound and multiple learning difficulties in special schools may point to a need to enhance specialist provision for these areas of need in terms of units and/or more specialist resource provision given the much higher proportion of pupils with these needs in special schools compared to other areas.

The significant variation in diagnosis of ASD is not unique to West Berkshire. ASD could be used as a "catch-all" category to ensure that children receive the necessary support, even if their primary challenges may stem from other issues. The criteria for diagnosing ASD can vary among professionals, leading to inconsistencies in diagnosis. This variation can contribute to the perception that ASD is being overused as a category of need. Another factor is that teachers and clinicians may feel pressured to label students with ASD to provide them with the support they need, especially in under-resourced educational settings. This pressure can sometimes lead to an over-reliance on ASD as a diagnostic label.

The statistics provided for pupils in West Berkshire with an Education, Health, and Care (EHC) Plan offer important insights for planning capital expansion in various types of educational settings.
A balanced approach is needed, ensuring that the full spectrum of educational settings—from mainstream schools to specialized institutions—are equipped to meet the needs of students with EHC plans.

1. Expand Special Education provision
   - A significant proportion of students are placed in non-maintained (19.5%) and independent special schools (5.4%). To reduce this reliance, West Berkshire could invest in developing or expanding special schools within the borough. This could involve building new special schools or enhancing the capabilities of existing ones to accommodate more students with diverse needs.

2. Enhance Resource Provisions in Mainstream Schools

- With 5.0% of students placed in mainstream school academy resource provisions, there's clear demand for specialized support within mainstream settings. Expanding and enhancing these resource provisions across more academies and local authority-maintained schools could provide more in-borough options for students with EHC plans.

3. Increase Capacity in Local Authority Maintained Schools
- The higher placement rate (23.3%) in these schools underscores their importance in the local SEND landscape. Investing in these schools by providing additional support staff, specialized training, and resources could help accommodate the growing number of students, reducing the need for out-of-borough placements.

4. Develop Alternative Provision In-Borough
- With a higher-than-average placement in alternative provision (2.4%), West Berkshire should consider expanding its in-borough alternative provision facilities as well as different pathways and support reintegration back to the originating school where appropriate. The alternative provision offer might include creating new pupil referral units or enhancing existing ones, supporting reintegration as well as differentiation of alternative education pathways.

5. Support Transition to Further Education
- To better support students with EHC plans transitioning to further education, West Berkshire could focus on enhancing SEND support within local colleges. This might involve specialized programs or partnerships with higher education institutions to ensure these students are well-supported within the borough.

6. Develop SEN Units in Mainstream Schools
- The absence of SEN units within mainstream schools suggests a gap in provision which is being addressed by the units being developed at Kennett Valley and Westwood Farm. SEN units could provide more localized support, allowing students to stay within their communities while receiving the specialized education they need.

7. Review the level of support that schools can access to support pupils with SEN Needs
- Pupils with an EHC Plan in West Berkshire are less likely to attend mainstream schools or academies. This could suggest that these schools may not have sufficient resources or support, to accommodate these pupils, leading to their lower placement in mainstream settings.

These statistics indicate several implications for school place planning in West Berkshire regarding pupils with a special education need.

The schools that appear on both lists, indicating that they support both pupils with EHC Plans and SEN Support are St Bartholomew's School, Kennet School, Trinity School, The Willink School, Park House School and Denefield School.

These schools serve significant numbers of special education need pupils, indicating that they play a crucial role in the education of students with special education needs in West Berkshire. Further work to develop provision at these schools may be useful in helping to address capacity in borough for pupils with either an EHC Plan or SEN Support.

The implications of the DfE SCAP data for pupil place planning across primary and secondary phases in terms of WBC pupils suggest need to focus on **enhancing primary phase capacity in mainstream primary followed by special schools, SEN Units and Resource Provision and Independent special schools**.

In terms of enhancing secondary phase capacity based on our WBC pupil with EHC Plan forecast, the need is for more places in mainstream settings followed by Special school provision, SEN Units and Resource Provisions, followed by independent special schools and Alternative Provision in that order.

In terms of actual planned numbers of primary places in mainstream schools, the data suggests the need to have 389 places in the 2024/25 academic year and increase to 415 places by 2025/26.
For special schools catering to primary-aged children, the projected need is 149 places in 2024/25, rising to 156 places in 2025/26, and further increasing to 161 places by 2026/27.

Regarding SEN Units/Resource Provisions at the primary phase, the estimated demand is for 66 places in 2024/25, increasing to 69 places in 2025/26, and then to 71 places by 2026/27.
Independent school places for primary age pupils are estimated to be for 19 places in 2024/25 rising to 23 places in 2025/26 and to 25 places in 2026/27.

The estimated demand for primary phase Alternative Provision is estimated to be 17 places in 2024/25 rising to 18 places in 2025/26 and to 20 places in 2026/27.

In terms of actual planned numbers of secondary places in mainstream schools, the data suggests the need to have 551 places in the 2024/25 academic year and increase to 592 places by 2025/26.

For special schools in secondary phase, the projected need is 278 places in 2024/25, rising to 294 places in 2025/26, and further increasing to 307 places by 2026/27.

Regarding SEN Units/Resource Provisions at secondary phase, the estimated demand is for 84 places in 2024/25, increasing to 86 places in 2025/26, and then to 90 places by 2026/27.

Independent school places for secondary phase pupils are estimated to be for 71 places in 2024/25 rising to 75 places in 2025/26 and to 78 places in 2026/27.

The estimated demand for secondary phase Alternative Provision is estimated to be 34 places in 2024/25 rising to 36 places in 2025/26 and to 37places in 2026/27.

The data sets out the following implications in terms of demand by provision type whether pupils are coming from West Berkshire or reside in other boroughs:
Rising demand in Primary Phase with a forecasted 29% rise in primary-aged pupils with EHCPs by 2028, considering both inflows and outflows, leading to a net increase of 28%. Significant growth is anticipated in mainstream schools, with places expected to increase from 385 to 533, followed by special schools, resource provisions, and independent schools. The most growth is expected in Year 6, followed by Year 5 and Year 1. **For pupils from West Berkshire, the highest growth is in Year 6, followed by Year 2, Year 5, and Year 4.**

Allocation of primary places to out of district pupils is not expected to increase significantly up to 2028 provided that the proportion securing places does not change. Should this change then West Berkshire provision would be under even greater pressure.

Whilst allocations to out of district pupils have remained constant at the special schools, Mary Hare and New Barn have seen increased demand from out-of-borough pupils. This reflects the lack of availability of places at these schools for West Berkshire pupils and also the specific nature of provision at Mary Hare which relies on out of district allocations.

Around 7% of West Berkshire pupils seek places outside the district and most of these places are in Reading. A number of these pupils could remain in the district if there was sufficient special school provision. The forecasts do not reflect this demand, as some of this movement will be based on choice and this is not necessarily apparent from the source data. Demand for West Berkshire provision could therefore be higher as a result – although further analysis would be required to determine if this would actually constitute additional demand over the forecast figures.

Secondary:
Secondary age pupils with an EHC Plan are expected to increase by 31% by 2030. Demand for West Berkshire provision, when adjusted for inward and outward movement, is forecast to increase by 27%. Significant growth in demand is expected in mainstream schools, although all provision types will experience growth.

Year Group Trends show that the key areas of growth are in Years 7, 8, and 9, indicating a need for more places in these year groups. **For West Berkshire residents, the growth is similarly highest in Years 7, 8, and 9.**

Allocations from out of district pupils are anticipated to remain constant across the forecast horizon. As with primary provision the caveat is that should more out of district pupils secure a place than historically then the pressure for places may increase.

School-specific trends show that Mary Hare has seen a significant increase in demand from out of district, although the specific nature of the provision does mean that the school relies on this inward movement. There could be a pressure for places in the future though if demand continues to increase. Brookfields Special School and The Castle Special School have seen fairly constant levels of allocations from out of district pupils but as noted above this is likely to be due to availability of places and high levels of local demand.

General Implications for Place Planning:

1. Capacity Expansion:
   - Significant capacity expansions will be necessary in both primary and secondary phases, particularly in mainstream and special schools.
   - The council will need to plan for the construction of new facilities or the expansion of existing ones to meet the rising demand.

2. Resource Allocation:
   - Increased funding will be required to support the additional places, including hiring more specialized staff and providing necessary resources and support structures.
   - Special attention should be given to ensuring that resource provisions and independent schools can meet the specialized needs of pupils.

3. Strategic Planning:
   - Collaborations with neighbouring boroughs could be beneficial to manage cross-border demand effectively.

In summary, the DfE SCAP data indicates a substantial increase in the demand for EHCP placements in West Berkshire assuming that all current trends continue. This is set against a backdrop of declining pre-school population and an increase in demand for specialist provision. It is not clear how the declining population will affect this future demand beyond the forecast horizon and whether the demand for specialist provision can and will continue to increase at the current rate.

Taking all these factors into account and based on current trends and information; proactive planning and investment will be required to ensure adequate provision across mainstream, special, and independent school settings.

Appendix 2

Explanation of data references used in this report

The following documents the type of data used in the report in order to explain any variations when reading the report.

The document uses a number of data references:

- LG Inform SEND report (August 2024) comparing West Berkshire to all English Unitary Authorities covering the September to August academic year.
- The other data is derived from the DfE Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT) which also covers the academic year and enables comparison with statistical comparator boroughs.
- The final source of data is from SEN2, which holds data on EHC Plans and SEN Support which is updated weekly by the SEN and Disabled Children's Service. Note that the annual data collection is typically around the middle of January each year. This year, the census date was 18th January 2024.

Appendix 3

Full list of primary schools in West Berkshire district which includes independent provision

Aldermaston CofE Primary School, Aldermaston, primary info
Basildon CofE Primary School, Upper Basildon, primary info
Beedon CofE Primary School, Beedon, primary info
Beenham Primary School, Beenham, primary info
Birch Copse Primary School, Tilehurst, primary info
Bradfield CofE Primary School, Bradfield Southend, primary info
Brightwalton CofE Primary School, Brightwalton, primary info
Brimpton CofE Primary School, Brimpton, primary info
Bucklebury CofE Primary School, Upper Bucklebury, primary info
Burghfield St Mary's CofE Primary School, Burghfield, primary info
Calcot Infant School and Nursery, Calcot, primary info
Calcot Junior School, Calcot, primary info
Chaddleworth St Andrews CofE Primary School, Chaddleworth, primary info
Chieveley Primary School, Chieveley, primary info
Cold Ash St Marks CofE Primary School, Cold Ash, primary info
Compton CofE Primary School, Compton, primary info
Curridge Primary School, Curridge, primary info
Downsway Primary School, Tilehurst, primary info
Enborne CofE Primary School, Enborne, primary info
Englefield CofE Primary School, Englefield, primary info
Falkland Primary School, Wash Common, primary info
Fir Tree Primary School and Nursery, Newbury, primary info
Francis Baily Primary School, Thatcham, primary info
Garland Junior School, Burghfield Common, primary info
Hampstead Norreys CofE Primary School, Thatcham, primary info
Hermitage Primary School, Hermitage, primary info
Highwood Copse Primary School, Newbury, primary info
Hungerford Primary School, Hungerford, primary info
Inkpen Primary School, Inkpen, primary info
John Rankin Infant and Nursery School, Newbury, primary info
John Rankin Junior School, Newbury, primary info
Kennet Valley Primary School, Calcot, primary info
Kintbury St Mary's CofE Primary School, Kintbury, primary info
Lambourn CofE Primary School, Lambourn, primary info
Long Lane Primary School, Tilehurst, primary info
Mortimer St John's CofE Infant School, Mortimer, primary info
Mortimer St Marys CofE Junior School, Mortimer, primary info
Mrs Bland's Infant School, Burghfield Common, primary info
Pangbourne Primary School, Pangbourne, primary info
Parsons Down Infant School, Thatcham, primary info
Parsons Down Junior School, Thatcham, primary info
Purley CofE Primary School, Purley on Thames, primary info
Robert Sandilands Primary School and Nursery, Speen, primary info

Shaw-cum-Donnington CofE Primary School, Donnington, primary info
Shefford CofE Primary School, Great Shefford, primary info
Speenhamland Primary School, Newbury, primary info
Springfield Primary School, Tilehurst, primary info
Spurcroft Primary School, Thatcham, primary info
St Andrew's School, Pangbourne, primary info IND
St Finians Catholic Primary School, Thatcham, primary info
St John the Evangelist CofE Infant and Nursery School, Newbury, primary info
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Newbury, primary info
St Nicolas CofE Junior School, Newbury, primary info
St Pauls Catholic Primary School, Tilehurst, primary info
Stockcross CofE Primary School, Stockcross, primary info
Streatley CofE Primary School, Streatley, primary info
Sulhamstead and Ufton Nervet School, Ufton Nervet, primary info
Thatcham Park CofE Primary School, Thatcham, primary info
The Ilsleys Primary School, East Ilsley, primary info
The Willows Primary School, Newbury, primary info
The Winchcombe School, Newbury, primary info
Theale CofE Primary School, Theale, primary info
Welford and Wickham CofE Primary School, Newbury, primary info
Westwood Farm Infant School, Tilehurst, primary info
Westwood Farm Junior School, Tilehurst, primary info
Whitelands Park Primary School, Thatcham, primary info
Woolhampton CofE Primary School, Upper Woolhampton, primary info
Yattendon CofE Primary School, Yattendon, primary info

Independent primary schools:
Brockhurst and Marlston House Schools, Hermitage, primary info IND
Elstree School, Woolhampton, primary info IND

Data used in the report
Data from the SEN and Disabled Children's Service uses List 1 (pupils with an EHC Plan) and List 2 (pupils on SEN Support) both of which are updated weekly and covers pupils up to 25 years with an EHC plan and those pupils up to 18 years on SEN Support. ***Thus, the figures are based on the most current statistics as of 30th June this year and thus figures may vary from the SEN2 returns as of 18th January 2024 and any other recent updates.***

The SCAP forecasts are projections for pupils of statutory school age (primary and secondary phase) and thus will differ to the List 1 and 2 data.

All data in this report has undergone validation by the data owners who have checked the figures against the datasets they have produced for the analyses. These are available on request. In addition, the report was shared with other key service stakeholders with their feedback incorporated into this final version.

We are committed to being accessible to everyone. If you require this document in an alternative format or translation, please call the SEN and Disabled Children's Team on Telephone 01635 551111.

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