



Dorset
Council



DORSET COUNCIL
SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND
DISABILITIES CAPITAL STRATEGY
2020 – 2025
Executive Summary

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of this document

The purpose of this strategy is threefold;

- to outline the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) landscape in Dorset Council (the “Council”) alongside national trends to provide a greater understanding of the demographic of the SEND cohort;
- to describe the position of the Council’s existing SEND provision; and
- to provide evidence that can support the Council’s decision making as it seeks to fulfil its sufficiency duty investing in and maintaining its educational estate.

This strategy is a dynamic document that responds to change, and the Council will continue to work with its schools, partners and stakeholders to ensure financial resilience, and long-term planning, providing the best education for all in line with the Children and Young People’s plan 2020-2023.

This Strategy will be updated annually, to reflect any changes in the education and pupil place landscape, incorporating any lessons from the current period, and reflecting on any more significant changes that may have taken place.

The council are in the process of redesigning services to meet the needs of the population in a time of significant financial challenges. The Children and Young People’s Strategy and associated transformation plans will focus on intervening early in the lives of children and families, to reduce the long-term impact on children’s lives, and the way services are delivered will evolve over the coming years to support an Inclusion Strategy.

1.2 Limitations of this strategy

This strategy is limited to the SEND cohort of children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP), of which there are approximately 2,800 as at August 2020, for which the Council has specific statutory obligations to secure educational provision.

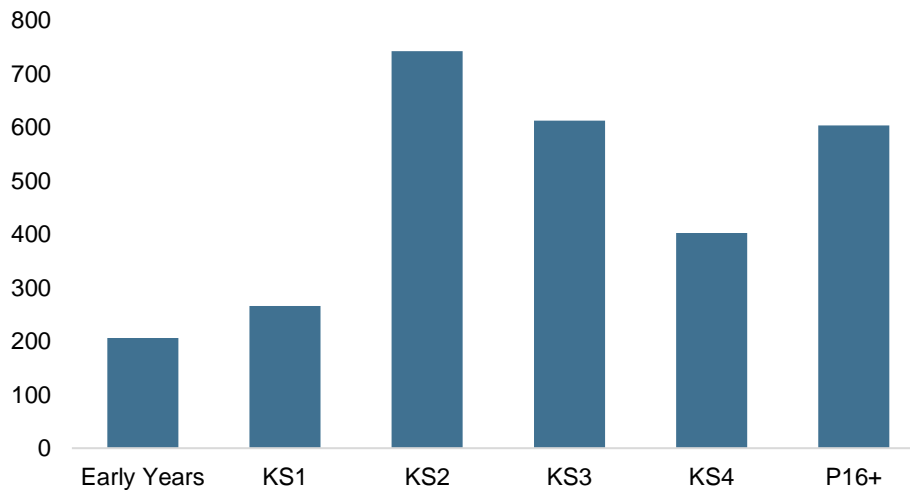
Apart from recent detailed feasibility studies, the analysis provided in this strategy has been conducted as a desk-based activity as a result of the restrictions in visiting educational settings during the Covid-19 pandemic. Further work may therefore be required to validate the information relating to the position of the Council’s existing SEND provision when it is feasible to do so.

2. DORSET SEND EHCP COHORT

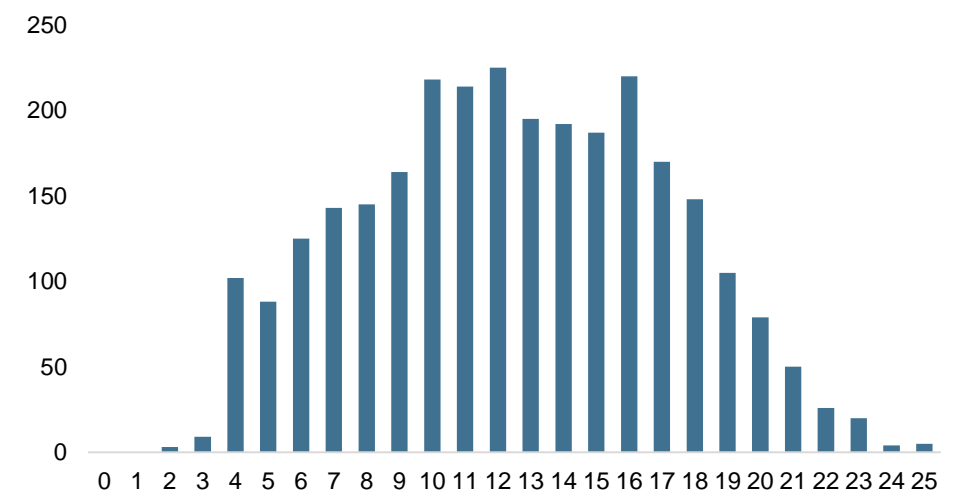
2.1 Current SEND EHCP Cohort

The SEND cohort includes 2,800 children and young people who are supported through an EHCP¹. The majority of children with EHCPs across the cohort are in Key Stage 2 (743 pupils – 26% of the cohort), which presents a rising pressure as this cohort move into Key Stage 3 (613 pupils – 22% of the cohort) and Key Stage 4 (403 pupils – 14% of the cohort).

Dorset SEND EHCP cohort by phase of education



Dorset SEND EHCP cohort by age



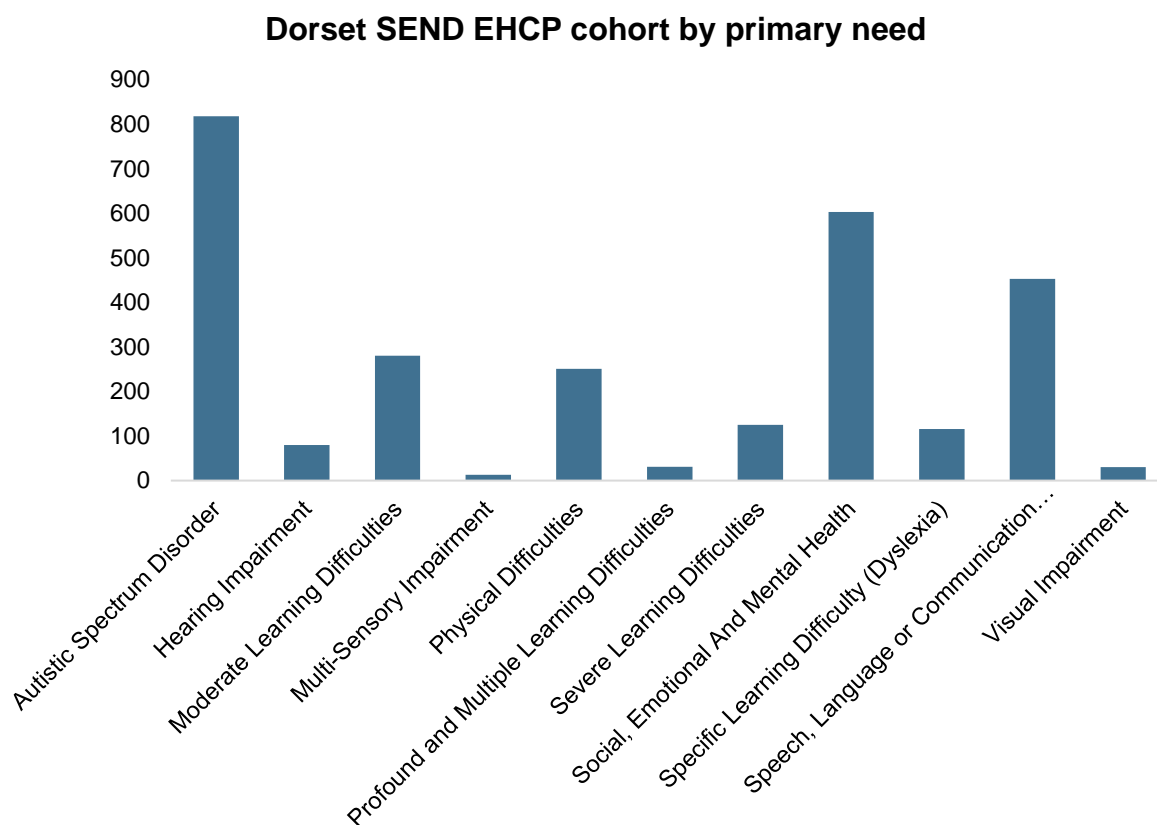
¹ As at August 2020.

16% of children and young people with EHCPs are placed out of the County. With the majority of children placed in either Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, Hampshire County Council and Somerset County Council Areas.

2.2 Primary Needs

The first most common primary need in Dorset is Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) (28% of the EHCP cohort); the national average is 30%. The second most common primary need is Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) - 21% of the EHCP cohort; the national average is 14%. The third most common primary need is Speech, Language and Communications needs (SLCN) - 16% of the EHCP cohort; the national average is 15%. Together these primary needs make up 65% of the cohort.

The data demonstrates that the Council’s SEMH cohort is significantly out of step with the national average. Whilst no immediate conclusions can be drawn, this may warrant further research to understand the demographic of this cohort.



2.2.1 Mainstream schools' pupil numbers on roll by primary need (as at August 2020)

KEY TO DESIGNATED EHCP CATEGORY	Mountjoy School	Beaucroft School	Westfield Arts College	Wyvern Academy	Yewstock School & College	TOTAL NOR DORSET SEN2 Data
	Pupil Numbers On Roll					
ASC	17	36	78	31	43	205
SLCN	16	14	33	7	27	97
PD	5	11	16	13	8	53
MLD	9	19	47	1	27	103
SLD	13	5	3	26	21	68
SpLD	1	2	2	0	2	7
PMLD	2		1	8	4	15
MSI	1		2	1		4
SEMH	4	3	18	1	8	34
Unclassified	1			1	1	3
Other	0				1	1
VI	1		3	0	2	6
HI	4	2	5	2	4	17
SCHOOL TOTAL NOR	74	92	208	91	148	613

2.2.2 Dorset Special Schools calculated pupil places by year groups / NOR (as at August 2020)

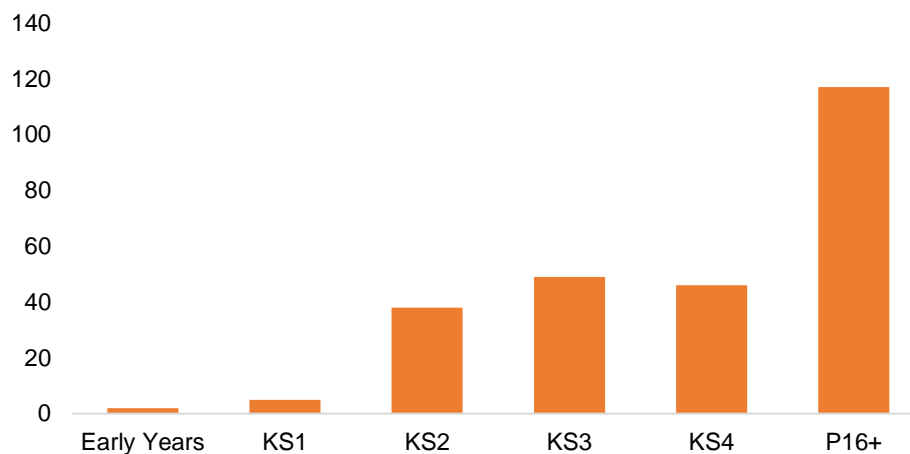
EXISTING DORSET SPECIAL SCHOOLS		Nursery	Pre-Sch P/T 3	Pre-Sch F/T 3	R P/T 4	R F/T 4	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6	Yr 7	Yr 8	Yr 9	Yr 10	Yr 11	Yr 12	Yr 13	Yr 14	TOTAL NOR (Jan 2020)	In-County	Out of county
NOR Teaching Groups		EARLY YEARS				KS1			KS2				KS3			KS4		POST 16					
4-19	Beaucroft				4	4	9	10	9	16	12	17	12	16	14	17	7	10	9	166	92	74	
4-19	Westfield				1	6	8	6	13	17	15	30	23	20	14	18	16	16	6	209	208	1	
10-14	The Harbour									2	4	8	2	5						21	21	0	
3-19	Mountjoy				1	9	8	3	7	11	7	6	6	4	5	10	3	2	5	93	74	19	
2-19	Wyvern					7	8	6	7	11	7	3	7		5	2	3	9	3	87	91	0	
2-19	Yewstock				1	2	8	9	15	6	8	19	18	13	14	17	10	9	4	160	148	12	
Total Pupils attending Dorset Special Schools		0	0	0	2	23	32	41	34	51	63	53	83	68	58	52	64	39	46	27	736	634	106
NOR Based on Two Tier System		PRE - SCHOOL			PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE PUPILS							SECONDARY SCHOOL					POST 16			NUMBER ON ROLL (NOR) WITHIN EXISTING DORSET SPECIAL SCHOOL SETTINGS (JAN 2020 CENSUS DATA)			
Existing Numbers on Roll (NOR)		0			299							325					112						
NOR Based on Teaching Groups		EARLY YEARS				KS1			KS2				KS3			KS4		POST 16					
Existing Numbers on Roll (NOR)		25				73			201				209			116		112					

2.3 Current SEND EHCP Cohort in Independent Specialist Placements and Non-Maintained Special Schools

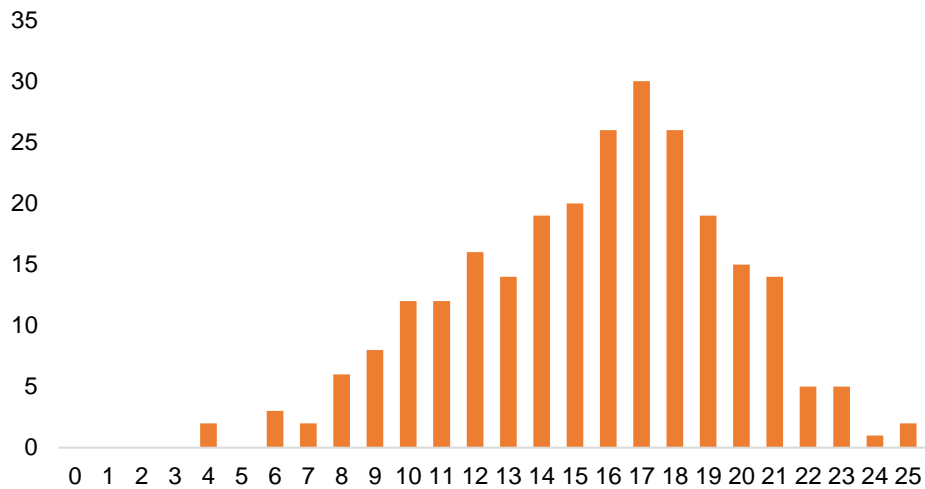
Where the Council is unable to meet needs within state school provision (such as maintained schools, academies or Free Schools), children and young people may be placed in Independent Specialist Placements (ISP) and Independent or Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMSS). These are typically expensive placements and would otherwise be supported through state provision, had there been sufficient provision and as a result place pressure on the High Needs Block Grant. In some extremely complex cases, the Council is not always best placed to be an efficient provider of education and ISP and INMSS settings are necessary to meet particular needs.

There are 257 children and young people in ISP and INMSS settings (with a mix of non-residential and residential placed) which creates an overall budget pressure of c£14m.

Dorset SEND EHCP ISP & INMSS cohort by phase of education



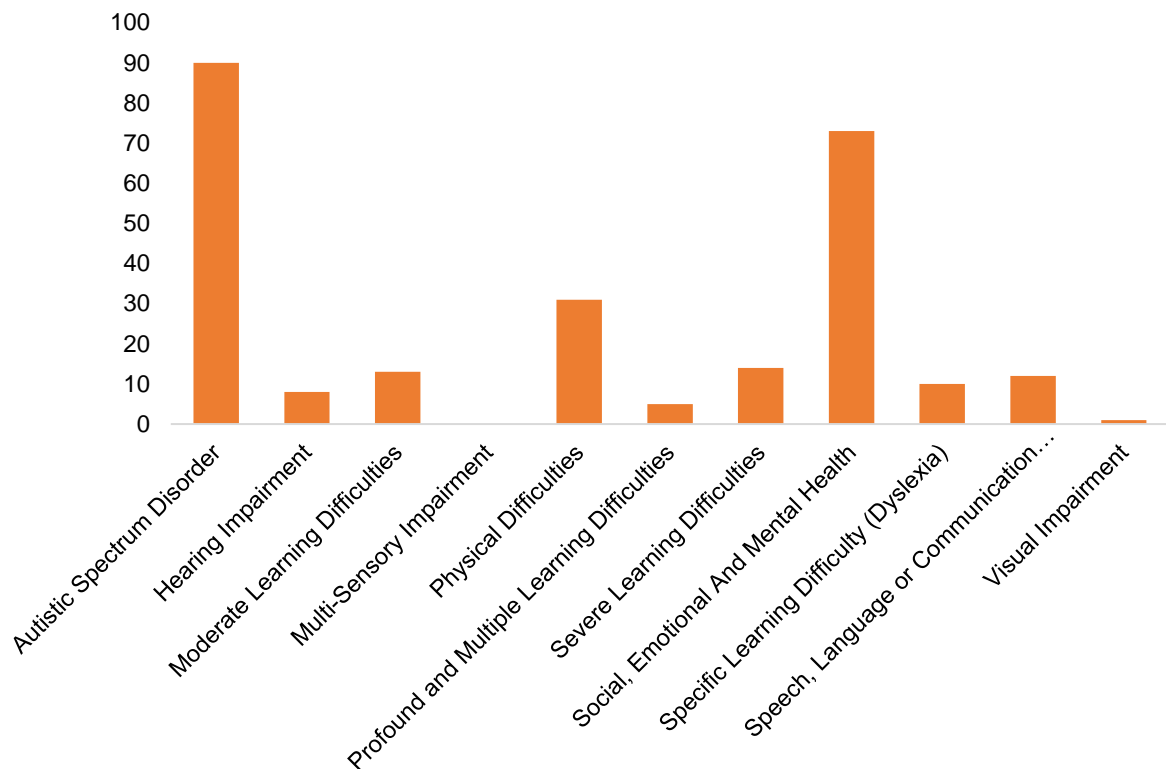
Dorset SEND ISP & INMSS EHCP cohort by age



The most common primary need in the ISP and INMSS cohort is ASD (35% of all cases). The second most common primary need is Social, Emotional and Mental Health (28% of all cases). The third most common primary need is Physical Disability (12% of all cases).

54% of children and young people with EHCPs in ISP and INMSS are placed out of the Council. With the majority of children placed in either Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, Hampshire County Council and Somerset County Council.

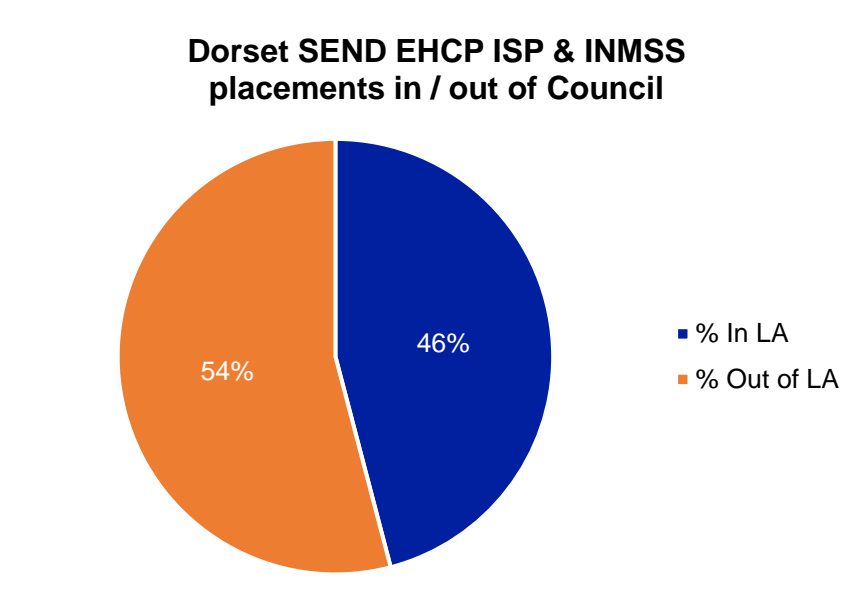
Dorset SEND EHCP ISP & INMSS cohort by primary need



Whilst most children and young people with special education needs supported by an EHCP can have their needs met from within mainstream settings, there are insufficient specialist provision places for those with the most complex needs.

ISPs and INMSS placements can meet the needs of our children and young people, it is not typically the most cost-efficient method of delivering provision and puts financial pressure on the High Needs Block, reducing the overall amount of funding available for the wider cohort.

This means our children and young people in ISP and INMSS are often educated out of the Council area.



2.4 Locality SEND populations

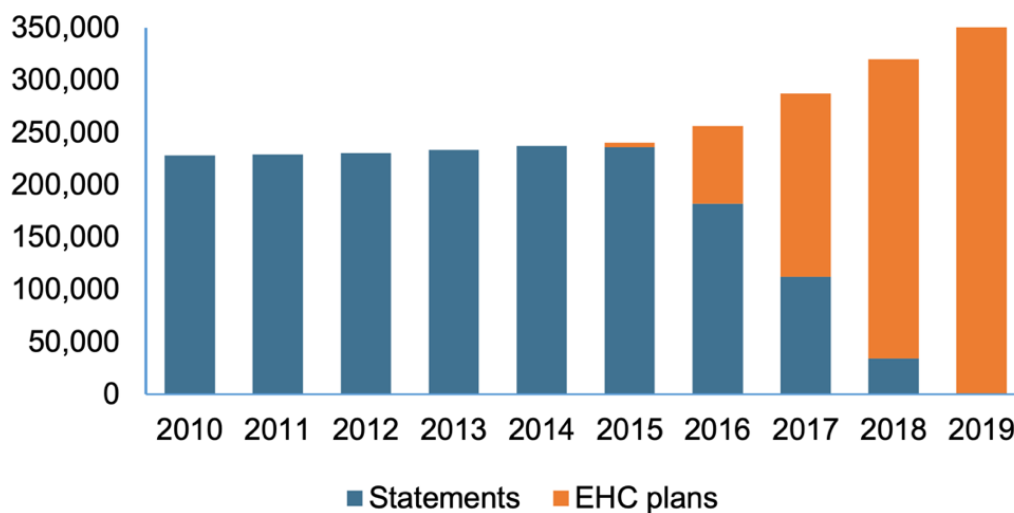
Locality	Approximate number of children and young people supported by an EHCP
Chesil	750
Dorchester	350
East	500
North	600
Purbeck	300
West	300
Total	2,800

2.5 National picture

At a time of significant pressure for local government, the SEND cohort of children with Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans has continued to increase year on year since 2010. Nationally there were 354,000 children and young people with EHC plans maintained by local authorities as at January 2019.

This is an increase of 34,200 (11%) from 2018. This is driven by increases across all age groups, with largest percentage increases in the 0-5 (13%) and 20-25 age groups (32%).

Statements and EHC plans, January 2019



The growing SEND cohort nationally and locally within Dorset brings financial pressure to the Council's revenue budget. With adequate long-term evidence-based planning, the Council can mitigate the impact on its revenue budget through invest to save capital investments that develop the SEND estate and create capacity within our education system to continue to meet children and young people's needs.

The council will work in partnership with all education providers and develop relationships to support every child across Dorset. The aim is to allow children to access appropriate education in their local area, whilst at the same time providing best value for any investment. This will include work with Academies, Federations, Learning Centres, Maintained schools, Special Schools and schools in the independent sector.

The council has a duty to provide best value for its residents and aims to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy (costs), efficiency (throughputs) and effectiveness (outcomes). This is particularly relevant during the current time, where we are facing significant financial challenges.

2.6 Key trends and variable to factor into the forecasting of the SEND cohort

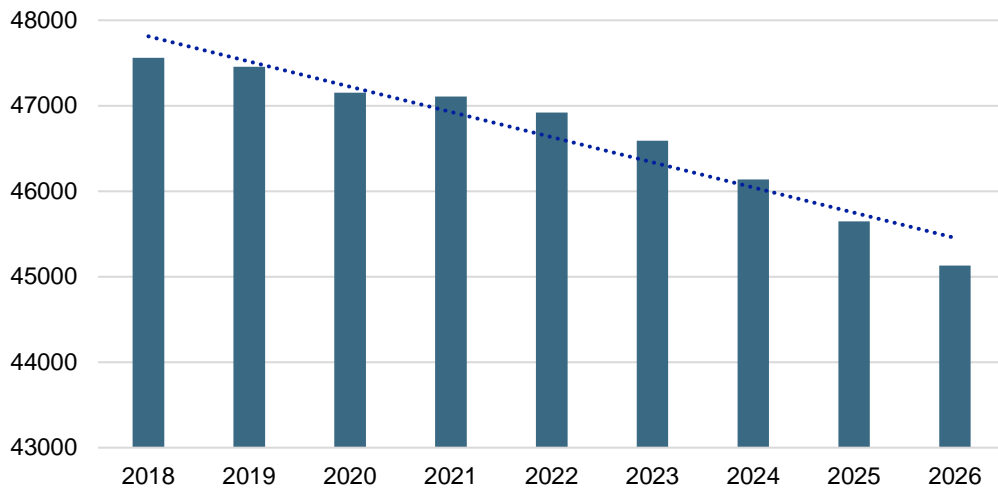
Predictive modelling of the size of the cohort in the field of SEND is limited for a number of reasons. Whilst the forecasting of the wider education cohort can be informed by data such as birth rates, early years trends and housing development, to name a few variables, there are not similar data available for the entire SEND cohort.

Furthermore, since the introduction of the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND EHCP cohort has grown rapidly each year meaning that any trends are difficult to extrapolate.

Despite this, there are several assumptions and trends where assertions can be made which should be factored into the forecasting of the SEND cohort. These are:

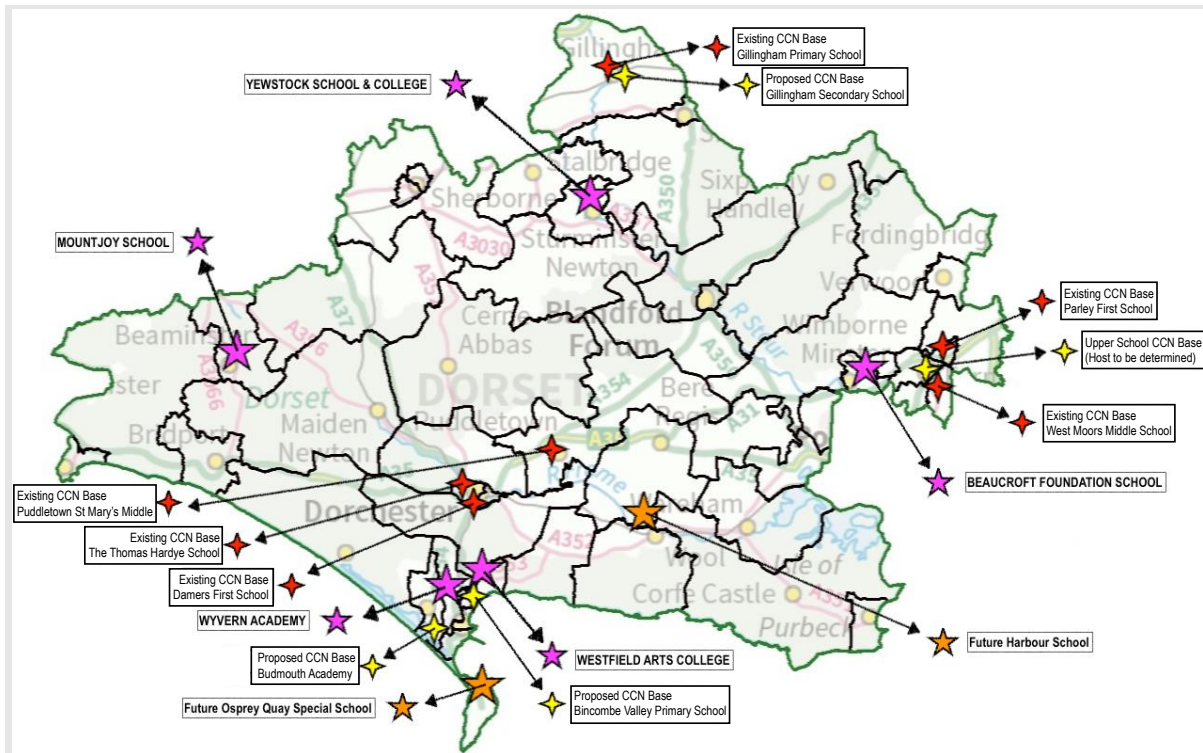
- Whilst the size of the SEND cohort continues to rise rapidly, it is expected that number of children with an EHCP is reaching a saturation point (over the next 5 years) whereby the number of children that require an EHCP will be broadly equal to those no longer requiring one.
- The number of children diagnosed with ASD as the primary need has continued to rise at a greater pace than the wider cohort, as medical professionals, educational settings and parents improve identification and the impact on learning.
- Stronger early identification may result in a rise in the identification of SEND in the early years, KS1 and KS2.
- Whilst the impact of Covid-19 on the learning of children and young people is still not fully known, we can anticipate that it may give rise to an increase in requests for EHCPs with primary needs in Social, Emotional and Mental Health, Speech, Language or Communication Difficulty and Moderate Learning Difficulties. Whilst schools will be expected to support children and young people to reintegrate and transition back to their educational environment when they reopen, it is possible that some students will require further support through SEN support or an EHCP.
- General pupil numbers in Dorset are forecast to decrease between 3% - 4% from 2020 to 2025 (not taking into consideration any substantial house building programmes).

Dorset pupil number forecasts



3. SEND PROVISION CAPACITY

3.1 Mainstream Special Schools – desk-based capacity analysis



The Department for Education Building Bulletin 104 (BB104) sets out non-statutory area guidelines for SEND buildings and alternative provision and specially resourced provision and units.

To establish the capacity of the existing mainstream special schools, a desk-based exercise, as set out in section 1.2, was undertaken to validate the capacity of the SEND estate and identify any available capacity or significant pressures.

When the Council received its Local Area SEND inspection in 2017, many parents who gave their views during the inspection cited delays in assessments and lack of provision to meet the needs of their child. This inspection required the Local Authority to produce a Written Statement of Action. Since then, the expansion of special school provision has had only a limited impact on meeting the demand of the existing and growing cohort of children and young people.

3.2 Special Schools – summary of capacity

3.2.1 Wyvern Academy (NOR 91)

- Operates on a relatively constrained site
- Limited opportunities for expansion
- Calculated Capacity based on teaching accommodation:
- Non-ambulant PAC 60
- Ambulant PAC 84 (no nursery)
- No separate dining facility provided – recommended to meet BB104 guidelines

3.2.2 Westfield Arts College (NOR 209)

- Formal PE facilities have been provided
- Constrained sloping site
- Calculated capacity based on teaching accommodation: PAC 182
- No separate dining facility provided – recommended to meet BB104 guidelines
- Off-site post-16 provision previously located at Weymouth College is no longer available to the school, creating a shortfall in teaching accommodation and associated ancillary areas.
- Additional general teaching spaces required to maintained current NOR within BB104 guidelines

3.2.3 Mountjoy School (NOR 90)

- Constrained Site
- No separate indoor PE facilities provided
- Limited opportunities for expansion
- Calculated capacity based on teaching accommodation: PAC 60
- No specialist teaching areas identified – required to meet BB104
- Current teaching facilities do not adequately meet BB104 min requirements for secondary and post 16 pupils
- No separate dining facility provided – recommended to meet BB104 guidelines

3.2.4 Yewstock School & College (NOR 160)

- Site accommodation split over two sites
- Limited formal PE facilities provided on both sites
- Calculated capacity based on current teaching accommodation: PAC 165
- No separate dining facility provided – required to meet BB104 guidelines. Note: main school hall has recently been extended to provide additional dining space
- Limited opportunities to expand on the main school site only

3.2.5 Beaucroft Foundation School (NOR 166)

- No separate indoor PE facilities provided
- Constrained site
- Limited opportunities for expansion
- Calculated capacity based on teaching accommodation: PAC 182
- No separate dining facility provided – recommended to meet BB104

3.3 Mainstream Special Schools – calculation of capacity against NOR

With the exception of Beaucroft Foundation school, all of the special schools are operating at capacity (based on a desk-based analysis). In practice, BB104 is advisory guidance and not a statutory requirement and therefore the existing schools have used their professional judgement, with support from the property team to maximise the use of their buildings.

Future capacity in the Harbour School and the unnamed new SEN School project will focus heavily on the preparation for adulthood agenda as create provision for children and young people aged 10 and above.

Capacity has been based on a pupil/class base ratio of 1:8, however some schools will be operating a high ratio of teachers to pupils to widen their admissions, where this has been conducive to children and young people achieving their outcomes.

Age Range (years)	School Name	Published Admission Capacity	Existing NOR (Jan 2020 Census)	Future Pupil Places	BB104 Calculated Pupil Capacity	Difference in Capacity data '+ / - (BB104)
2 to 19	Wyvern Academy	PAC: 85	87	91	60	-31

4 to 19	Westfield Arts College		209	209	182	-27
3 to 19	Mountjoy School	PAC: 86	93	93	60	-33
2 to 19	Yewstock School	PAC: 149	160	160	160	0
4 to 19	Beaucroft Foundation		166	166	182	16
EXISTING Pupil Places (Jan 2020 Census Data)			715			
FUTURE Pupil Places				719		
Pupil Place Capacity Data - capacity data calculated using BB104 guidance					644	
Difference NOR / calculated capacity utilising BB104 guidance						-75
PLANNED FUTURE SPECIAL SCHOOLS						
10 to 14	The Harbour School (DfE – Under construction)		21	160	160	0
14 to 19	Future SEN School (Proposed DfE development)		0	75	75	0
PUPIL CAPACITY TOTALS:			736	954	879	-75

3.4 Complex Communication Needs (CCN) units existing capacity

A review was carried out in 2018 to assess the pressure and demand for places in specialist provision across the county for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) including all types of education, from mainstream schools, who cater for children of all levels of need, to Resourced Provision and special schools where our most complex children are educated.

Part of this work identified the need to expand Resourced Provision in mainstream, helping to reduce demand for as many external and internal special school places in the future and Special Schools in Dorset, which cater for children with complex needs. This work led to 82 additional Resourced Provision places, and an additional 194 places in Special Schools in Dorset, which ensured more children could continue to be educated close to their family, home and community.

At present, CCN bases have provision for 63 places for children and young people that are experiencing significant communication difficulties impacting on social interaction and social inclusion.

There will be evidence of:

- Complex difficulties with social communication skills
- Complex difficulties in social interaction
- Significant functional difficulties in communication (e.g. the individual may have good verbal skills/vocabulary but is not able to use these effectively to communicate due to their significant social communication difficulties)

The child/young person is able to access a mainstream curriculum (suitably differentiated appropriate)

Existing CCN bases cost approximately £1.2m and are funded from the High Needs Block. CCN bases are part of the wider strategy for keeping children in mainstream schools. Increasing provision on mainstream sites for a whole range of provision is desirable as this helps to sustain children in long term sustainable places. Therefore, an ongoing strategy of working closely with schools to identify where we can support this is key to ensuring that progression opportunities are available.

RESOURCED UNITS WITHIN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS EXISTING AND PROPOSED CCN BASES				
EXISTING CCN Bases - On Site & Operational		Existing	Future	Age Range
WEST (Dorchester)	Damers First	10	10	4 to 9
WEST (Dorchester)	Puddletown Middle	5	10	9 to 13
WEST (Dorchester)	Thomas Hardye - Upper	9	9	13 to 18
EAST (Ferndown)	Parley First	10	10	4 to 9
EAST (Ferndown)	West Moors Middle	10	10	9 to 13
NORTH (Gillingham)	Gillingham Primary	9	14	4 to 11
Current CCN Base Totals:		53	63	

3.5 Dorset Alternative Provision (AP) Schools – capacity analysis

Dorset AP schools support children and young people with behaviour and learning difficulty, including those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) primary needs.

Dorset Alternative Provision (AP) Schools Published Admission Capacity Data (including dual registered pupil numbers)				
School Name	Published Admission Capacity	Existing NOR including dual registered pupils (Jan 2020 Census)	Spare AP Capacity IN Dorset against PAC(s)	Age Range (years)
AP (Behaviour) Pupil Totals	193	188	5	
The Forum Centre (Behaviour)	30			
The Forum Centre SRP for Pupils with Social, emotional and Mental Health Needs	16	57	-11	5 to 16
DLC - Dorchester Learning Centre (Behaviour)	43			
DLC - SRP for Pupils with Social, emotional and Mental Health Needs	24	58	9	5 to 16

Dorset Alternative Provision (AP) Schools Published Admission Capacity Data (excluding dual registered pupil numbers)						
Pupils with EHC Plan		Pupils with NO EHC Plan but with SEN		Pupils with No Special Provision		Pupil TOTALS excluding dual registered pupils (Jan 2020 Census)
with EHC Plan	% all Pupils	with SEN Support	% all Pupils	No special provision	% all Pupils	
64	43%	69	46%	16	11%	149
1						
14	33%	31	67%	0	0%	46
2						
19	33%	14	67%	7	0%	42

The Compass (Behaviour)	40			
The Compass SRP for Pupils with Social, emotional and Mental Health Needs	24	52	12	11 to 16
Harbour Vale School (Behaviour)	32	21	11	11 to 16
AP (Health) Pupil Numbers				
KLC - Kingfisher Ward at Dorset County Hospital (Health)	8			4 to 18

8						
18	59%	17	39%	1	2%	44
2	12%	7	41%	8	47%	17
<p><i>Note: Kingfisher Ward - located within Dorset County Hospital. The centre is linked to Dorchester Learning Centre and helps children with complex medical and health needs whilst in hospital.</i></p>						

3.6 Physical Disability (PD) units existing capacity

Pupils with physical disabilities should be educated at their local school. However, for some pupils with mainstream ability but with complex physical disabilities often associated with additional medical needs there are 3 PD Bases in mainstream schools in the Dorchester area. All three bases are commissioned for up to 10 places each and are in the Dorchester area due to close proximity of the 3 schools to Dorset County Hospital.

**SPECIALIST RESOURCED UNITS WITHIN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS
EXISTING PD BASES**

EXISTING PD Bases - On Site & Operational		Existing	Future	Age Range
DORSET	Prince of Wales First	10	10	4 to 9
DORSET	Dorchester Middle	10	10	9 to 13
DORSET	Thomas Hardy - Upper	10	10	13 to 18
Current PD Base Totals:		30	30	

4. APPROVED AND PROSPECTIVE SCHEMES

4.1 Background and context

To ensure there is appropriate capacity in the system in the relevant areas, Dorset Council regularly engages in consultation and discussion with a range of local stakeholders and will look to use the existing capacity within the system to address the basic need of providing enough school places.

Dorset Council will regularly undertake options appraisals, to establish the viability of any projects, and works with local councillors, community groups, and others to ensure there is the most appropriate and cost-effective solution to providing local education for children.

The Council have increased local specialist places and provision over the past three years by 227 places:

- New Bases opened for CCN at West Moors and Parley schools in September 2018 with 20 places.
- Dorchester Learning Centre relocated and opened in September 2018
- SEMH Bases opened in 3 Learning Centres in Sept 2018 with a total of 64 places
- Capacity increased at Mountjoy and Yewstock special schools in 2018 by 24 places
- Capacity increase at Beaucroft by 10 places in September 2019
- New special school opened in Bovington September 2019 (temporary accommodation 2019 – 25 places, growing to 160 places by 2023 / 24).
- Base provision for complex communication needs: 2019; 54 CCN places, 2020; 64 CCN places, 2021; 106 CCN places planned across the county.
- We are part of a SW regional consortium developing a shared ISP Framework (Bristol leading). Amongst other positives this will ensure more robust quality assurance of the independent schools used, focus on value for money and keep price increases down.

4.2 Department for Education approved schemes

There are two schemes which have been approved by the Department for Education and will add capacity to Dorset's special school provision over the next 2-3 years.

4.2.1 The Harbour School

The Harbour School on completion will be a 160-place ambulant Special School catering predominately for pupils with ASC and SEMH between the ages of 10 to 14 years. The project is currently under construction and operating from a smaller temporary building.

4.2.2 New Dorset Special School

This school is intended to be a 75-place ambulant Special School catering for a wide range of needs such as MLD / SLD & ASC for young people aged 14 to 19 years.

An existing building has been identified and the Department for Education have initiated feasibility study to assess scheme.

4.3 Possible schemes to expand existing special school provision

There are several of schemes ranging from high level proposals which have been presented by our schools, to more detailed projects where a feasibility study has been undertaken and indicative schemes and costs are available.

4.3.1 Beaucroft School (Wimborne)

Current position

Beaucroft School is currently 166 place Outstanding 4 – 19 Foundation Special School serving children and young people with EHCPs with a range of needs, primarily:

- ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder; and
- MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty primary needs

Summary of proposal

The proposal is to increase their capacity by up to 75 additional places.

Feasibility study complete?	No
Timescale to complete a feasibility study	3 months (subject to resourcing)
Cost of delivery	Subject to feasibility study
Complexity of delivery	Medium

4.3.2 Mountjoy School (Beaminster)

Current position

Mountjoy School 93 place Good 3 – 19 Community Special School serving children and young people with EHCPs with a range of needs, primarily:

- MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty;

- SLD - Severe Learning Difficulty; and
- PMLD - Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty

Summary of proposal

The proposal is to increase the capacity of the school; however, the additional places would need to be determined through the feasibility study.

Feasibility study complete?	No
Timescale to complete a feasibility study	3 months (subject to resourcing)
Cost of delivery	Subject to feasibility study
Complexity of delivery	High (site not owned by Dorset Council)

4.3.3 Westfield Arts College (Weymouth)

Current position

Westfield Arts College is a 209 place Outstanding 4 – 19 Foundation Special School serving children and young people with EHCPs with a range of needs, primarily:

- ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder; and
- MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty

Summary of proposal

The proposal is to increase the capacity of the site by moving sixth form provision off site and expanding the other year groups. The additional places would need to be determined through the feasibility study.

Feasibility study complete?	No
Timescale to complete a feasibility study	3 months (subject to resourcing)
Cost of delivery	Subject to feasibility study
Complexity of delivery	Medium

4.3.4 Wyvern School (Weymouth)

Current position

Wyvern School is an 87 place Good 2 – 19 Special Academy serving children and young people with EHCPs with a range of needs, primarily:

- SLD - Severe Learning Difficulty

Summary of proposal

The proposed extension to the school would have increased capacity in the Early Years provision by an additional 16 places.

Feasibility study complete?	Yes
Timescale to complete a feasibility study	n/a
Cost of delivery	£1.7m - £2m
Complexity of delivery	High (potential planning issues and consideration of shared land)

4.3.5 Yewstock School (Sturminster Newton)

Current position

Yewstock School is a 160 place Outstanding 2 – 19 Community Special School serving children and young people with EHCPs with a range of needs, primarily:

- SLCN - Speech, language and Communication;
- ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty
- SLD - Severe Learning Difficulty

Summary of proposal

The proposal is to increase the capacity of the site by moving sixth form provision off site and expanding the other year groups. The additional places would need to be determined through the feasibility study.

Feasibility study complete?	No
Timescale to complete a feasibility study	3 months (subject to resourcing)
Cost of delivery	Subject to feasibility study
Complexity of delivery	High

4.4 Possible expansion of existing CCN bases

When the recommendation was agreed in April 2018 by Dorset County Council to establish CCN bases an initial capital allocation of £2.094m was set aside to create 8 bases. However, as the programme has progressed it has become evident that that sum was insufficient to deliver all the proposed projects. Of the 8 referred to in the 2018 report only 4 have been delivered, with 2 more being provided through repurposing existing specialist base provision with minimal capital investment at two additional sites. To complete the initial provision of the 8 bases identified additional capital funding would be required.

The cost for the provision at Gillingham School is estimated to be in the region of £■■■■■, as is the cost for the provision at Bincombe Valley Primary School in Weymouth. Similar costs could be expected for the Secondary provision in the East as well as the Secondary provision in Weymouth. Funding for the Bincombe Valley scheme was part of an approved capital bid in 2020, so funding has already been identified to support this project, so additional funding of approximately £■■■m would be required to complete the original planned schemes.

The potential need for additional bases has subsequently been identified in the West of the County as well as the Purbeck area. Schools would need to be identified to host this additional provision but a further capital allocation of approximately c. £■■m depending on the complexity of each scheme, may be required to provide those facilities.

Without completing the provision in the Gillingham and East Dorset school pyramids there is a gap in provision for those pupils who currently benefit from the CCN provision in the Primary phase of their education.

4.5 New capital investment

Once the expansion of existing provision has been exhausted and other means of meeting need have been considered the only way to continue to meet increasing demand would be to provide additional new capacity. This could through new provision on potentially new sites or existing authority owned sites.

In terms of capital investment required for new provision, benchmarking data is available in the National School Delivery Cost Benchmarking report (June 2019), which is a study undertaken by Hampshire CC in conjunction with East Riding of Yorkshire Council and the Department for Education. Dorset County Council were also a participant in the survey.

The benchmark data shows that the average gross cost m² for SEND provision, either through new build or extensions to existing buildings is £2,821 (exc VAT), with the average cost per pupil place being £65,739. Therefore, an indicative cost for a 280 place all through SEN provision, with a floor area of approx 5251m² (based on BB104 guidelines) could cost between £14.8m based on the benchmark figure of £2,821/m² and £18.4m based on the average cost per pupil place benchmarking figure. Individual project costs will vary depending on size and complexity of school to be provided, in terms of need. They would need to be determined through the completion of a feasibility study to take such matters into

account along with site costs and site development issues, such as sloping or constrained sites.

5. FUTURE DIRECTION

5.1 Sufficiency strategy

The Council has a need for more SEND provision to meet the needs of the existing SEND cohort, which is demonstrated by the significant in-year deficit in the High Needs Block and cohort analysis.

Much of this demand can be delivered through the expansion of existing provision through capital investment or identification of alternative sites from which provision can be delivered (such as sixth form provision). However, the Council may choose to expand provision through the creation of a new specialist provision.

The future growth of the cohort, which is unlikely to slow in line with both regional and national trends may further increase the demand for provision through an EHCP in Dorset.

The Council strategy should be informed by three key conditions:

1. The urgency of the need to act to create capacity to alleviate the pressure on the High Needs Block in the short term;
2. the targeting of increased provision in key areas where the pressures exist, taking into consideration the age profile and primary special needs of children and young people; and
3. the need to work closely with our schools to promote inclusion and ensure more children and young people can have their needs met in mainstream schools either through specialist units or provision.