



Department  
for Education



# **A Proposed New Primary Free School North of Nuneaton**

**Information for Academy Proposers**

**November 2024**

Deadline for Applications: **5pm on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

This document references and should be read in conjunction with 'Establishing a new academy: the free school presumption route - Guidance for local authorities and new school proposers (May 2024)'

## Section A - Introduction

Under section 6A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the 'free school presumption') where a local authority identifies the need to establish a new school it must, in the first instance, seek proposals to establish an academy.

Warwickshire County Council (WCC) has identified the need to establish a new primary School (4 to 11) in the North of Nuneaton area with a proposed opening date of September 2026. The authority is seeking proposals from appropriate sponsors to open this new school. Proposers should complete the accompanying Free School Presumption application form and return it to [schoolorganisation@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorganisation@warwickshire.gov.uk) by **5pm on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2025**.

## Background/Context

Warwickshire is undergoing a period of significant growth, with large scale housing development continuing across the county over the next 15 years and beyond. As development progresses across the county there will be the need for the delivery of new provision during the next 5 years and effective planning for further new provision beyond that period.

There are approximately 125,858 children and young people aged 0-18 living in Warwickshire, this figure represents just over 1 in five residents (21%), slightly lower than the figure for England (22%). There are over 90,000 pupils being educated in 251 state-funded schools in Warwickshire, of which 36 are mainstream secondary schools, 196 are mainstream primary schools, two are an all-through mainstream school, 11 are special schools and six are nursery schools. The current picture indicates that 89% of schools in Warwickshire are rated by Ofsted as good or better which means 91% of pupils in Warwickshire are being educated in a good or outstanding school. This is in line with the national figure of 89% of schools in England rated good or better by Ofsted.

The [Warwickshire Education Strategy](#) (2024-2029) sets out an overarching vision for education in Warwickshire. The main aim of the strategy is to improve educational outcomes, and therefore the life chances, of learners of all ages in Warwickshire.

## Evidence of need

The new school will be located on the new Callendar Farm housing development. This development is part of the larger 4,419 home urban extension that is currently building out to the North of Nuneaton. The school will be required to provide education to pupils moving into the area as a result of this housing development.

This is the second of three primary schools proposed to meet the need for school places as a result of the large scale housing development in the area. The first new primary school, Lower Farm Academy, opened in September 2019 and has been expanded to accommodate 2FE entry. The third new primary school, on the Top Farm development, is likely to be beyond the 5 year forecast period.

Developer contributions and land secured via s106 agreements will be used to deliver the necessary provision.

The new school will be located within the Nuneaton North East Primary Planning Area, the latest pupil forecasts for this area are shown below.

### Nuneaton North East Primary Planning Area – Forecast

Academic Year	Reception Capacity (PAN)	Reception Forecast Pupil Numbers	Available Capacity (4% target)
2024	240	256	-7%
2025	240	284	-18%
2026	240	273	-14%
2027	240	272	-13%
2028	240	300	-25%

*There is likely to be a 1FE temporary YR bulge class in a local school in 2025*

### Profile of the Area

Within 2 miles radius of the Callendar Farm school site, there are currently:

- 1 Secondary School, Higham Lane School – an additional secondary school will open in September 2025, Higham Lane North Academy
- 2 Primary Schools, St Nicolas CofE Academy and Milby Primary School.

### Free School Meals

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough has a higher than average percentage of pupils who are eligible for or claiming free school meals (FSM) compared to national and Warwickshire statistics.

Area	Number eligible and claiming a FSM	% eligible and claiming a FSM
England	2092928	24.6%
Warwickshire	19135	21.2%
Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough	5558	28.2%

January Census 2024

## Outcomes in Warwickshire

The table below shows the overall attainment and progress scores at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2023/24 for all Warwickshire schools and Nuneaton and Bedworth schools.

### Key Stage 2 2023/24 Results (provisional)

Area	% Achieving expected standard RWM
England	61%
Warwickshire	59.3%
Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough	59.2%

The 2023/24 Key Stage 2 results indicate 59.3% of pupils in Warwickshire had met the expected standard at the end of Key Stage 2, just below the national average for state funded schools in England of 61%. Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough was close to the average of the five Warwickshire districts and boroughs with 59.2% of pupils at the end of key stage 2 achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths.

Across the headline Key Stage measures, Warwickshire's pupils generally perform in line with the national average. However, the gaps between education outcomes for disadvantaged cohorts and their peers in Warwickshire are larger than national, and outcomes are lower than national for these groups. Therefore, in Warwickshire it is a priority that disadvantaged pupils continue to be given the extra support needed to achieve their potential.

### Warwickshire vision for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

In May 2024 there were 16,883 children with special education needs attending a school in Warwickshire, making up 19% of the school population. Of these, 4,039 (4.5% of the school population) had an EHCP and 12,844 (14.1%) were receiving lower level SEN support in school.

In Warwickshire, all children and young people have the right to lead a fulfilling life and be part of their community. Every child and young person have a right to have their health, social care and education needs met within their local community. Every child has the right to attend a good local school that is appropriate for their level of need or disability, usually a mainstream school.

Every early years setting, state-funded school, further educational college and training provider will;

- Make good provision (as determined by Ofsted) for children and young people with SEND;
- ensure all pupils make good progress in their education and development;
- ensure that they transition smoothly into the next stage of their education and;
- as appropriate, they are helped to secure independent living and opportunities for employment.

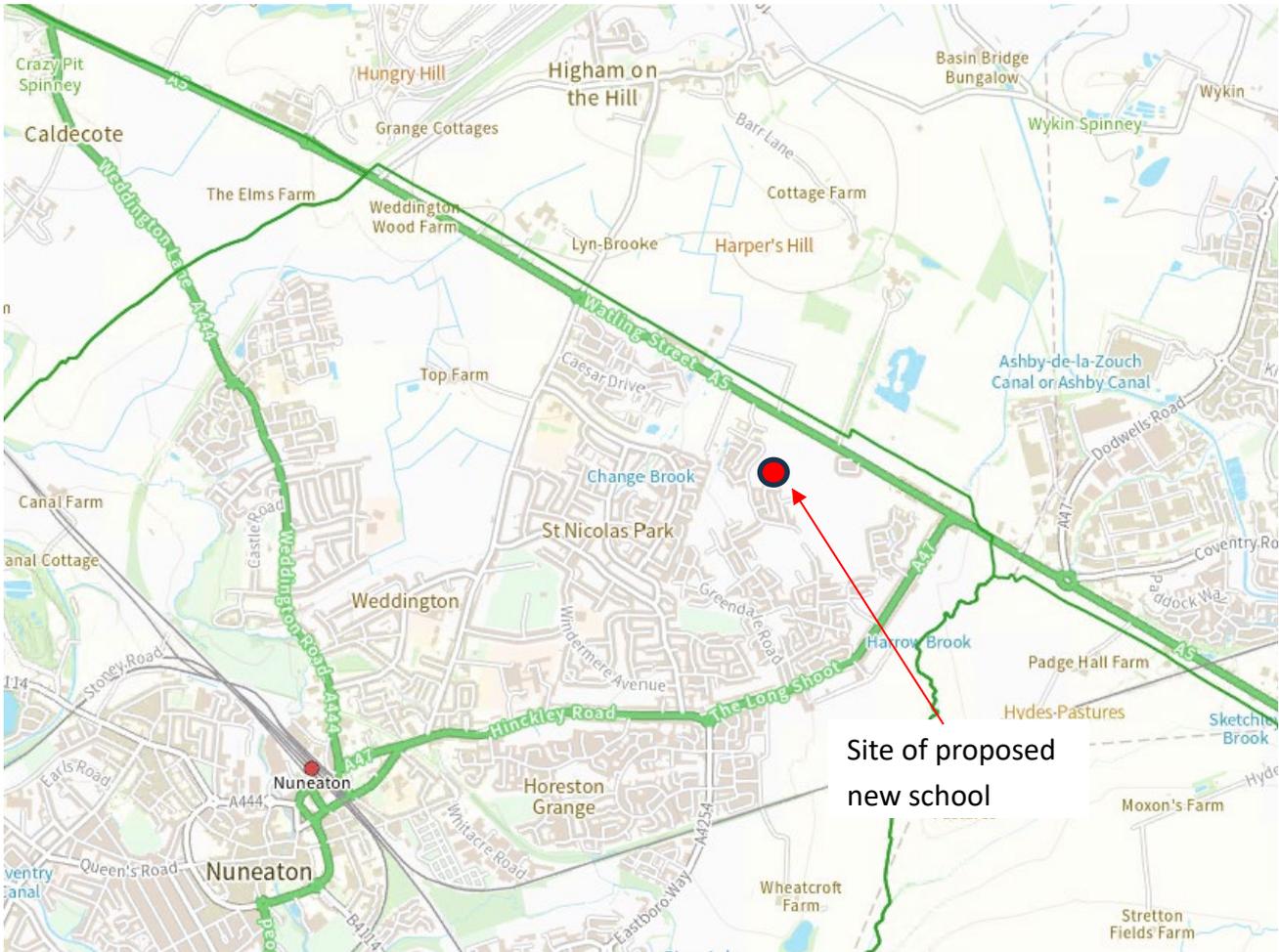
The [Warwickshire Education Strategy](#) (2024-2029) includes SEND and Inclusion as one of its four priorities with the aim to encourage ambition, create opportunity and support all learners to be the best they can be. With a focus to increase the number of children with an EHC Plan attending

mainstream school provision Warwickshire is committed to establishing more resourced provisions and/or specialist partnerships in mainstream settings, providing a bridge between mainstream and specialist provision.

## Section B - The School

### Site Location

The site secured to construct the new primary school is located at Watling Street, St Nicholas Park, Nuneaton & Bedworth, Warwickshire. Approximate postcode CV11 7AD



The site is close to the Warwickshire county boundary with Leicestershire.

## An indicative masterplan of school site



## About the school

<b>Opening date</b>	September 2026
<b>Pupil capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Years provision (32 FTE) 0-4 years</li> <li>• 2 FE (420 place) Primary School</li> <li>• Special Resourced Provision 8-14 places</li> </ul>
<b>Planned initial PANs, number of forms of entry on opening and expected rate of growth</b>	It is anticipated that there will be an initial PAN of 30 from Reception. Expansion to 2FE will be in line with the demand for school places. It is possible that the school will be required to open as 2FE with a PAN of 60.

<b>Proposed admission arrangements, including catchment area if applicable</b>	<p>Admission arrangements will be determined by the school, in accordance with the School Admissions Code. The school's priority area will be determined as part of their admissions arrangements and is likely to encompass the new housing development sites in the surrounding area.</p> <p>Admission to the primary resourced provision will be through the WCC High Needs Provision Panel.</p>
<b>Type of school</b>	Mainstream Free School
<b>Phase of education and age range</b>	Primary: 4-11 years
<b>Gender (boys/girls/mixed)</b>	Mixed
<b>Nursery provision</b>	<p>Early years provision, 32 FTE 0-4 full day care, will be delivered as part of the development of the school site. It is not proposed for this provision to form part of the free school bid and will be subject to a separate tender process. The successful Academy provider would be invited to participate in this process alongside other interested providers if they so wish. Admission to the nursery provision may be from a wider area than the catchment area of the school.</p>
<b>SEND provision</b>	<p>WCC is ambitious in its plans for meeting the needs of children with SEND across a wide range of settings including mainstream schools, specially resourced provisions (SRP), Alternative Provision and Special Schools. The Local Authority is interested in schools and trusts who demonstrate a commitment to meeting the educational, social and emotional needs of children with SEND and a willingness to work in partnership with the LA, local schools and stakeholders.</p> <p>The new school will include an integrated SRP - 8-14 places dependent on identified local area need. The SRP will cater primarily for learners with social and emotional mental health (SEMH) or communication and interaction (C&amp;I) needs with an emphasis on integration into mainstream classes together with the provision of specialist and targeted support for each learner.</p>

	<p>The SRP should be led by a specialist SEND lead teacher. This means they have or are studying to a postgraduate degree level qualification in the specialism of the SRP. The support staff working as part of the SRP will also have enhanced and specialist levels of training. The aim of SRP is to ensure pupils make good progress in their learning, communication, and social skills; to reduce any anxieties and inappropriate behaviour which act as a barrier to learning.</p>
<p><b>Out of hours and ‘wrap around’ provision</b></p>	<p>To provide sufficient support for working parents, out of hours provision is a key priority for Warwickshire County Council. Whilst there will not be dedicated accommodation provided for these facilities, it would be anticipated that there will be the potential for these to be provided within the main school building and we would expect the school to secure opportunities for before-school and after-school provision where practical to do so.</p> <p>Warwickshire County Council wishes to make best use of all assets. Therefore, it is expected that where possible, and where it is appropriate to do so, use of the site will be available for the benefit of the wider community.</p>
<p><b>Transport arrangements</b></p>	<p>School transport is covered by the <a href="#">WCC Home to School Transport Policy</a></p> <p>The development of the school will require a Travel Plan to be implemented.</p>
<p><b>Character/Ethos of school</b></p>	<p>It is important that the ethos of the school recognises diversity and celebrates inclusion – we are looking for schools with the highest aspirations for its pupils so that even more children in Warwickshire are happy, healthy and achieving.</p>
<p><b>Details of the site/ building, including details of ownership</b></p>	<p>The site for the school of has been secured through a Section 106 agreement.</p> <p>To meet the opening date of September 2026, the school planning, design and tendering for the build is already underway, so MAT input on design will be limited. Under the free school presumption route, it is expected that the design and build costs will be met by WCC. Capital funding has been approved by Elected Members to this effect.</p>

## Section C - Vision

Applicants should take account of the relevant criteria in Section C - Annex C of the free school presumption guidance.

As a minimum, please ensure you include the following:

- A strong educational vision and a curriculum delivery based on high standards of attainment for each key stage
- Plans for appropriate engagement with the local community and parents during the preopening period and any on-going engagement
- A commitment to excellent outcomes and high quality of teaching and learning
- Excellent support facilities to meet the needs of all children, including looked after children, those with Special Educational Needs, etc
- Evidence of how the school will work in partnership with the LA to ensure that, wherever possible and appropriate, children with SEND will be supported to access their local mainstream school and achieve good outcomes
- Information on how the personal, social and emotional wellbeing of children will be supported and how the voice of children will help shape the future of the school
- Evidence of success in removing barriers for disadvantaged learners
- A commitment to working collaboratively with all other local schools and ongoing engagement with stakeholders across the locality
- How alternatives to exclusion will be developed and how regular school attendance will be promoted
- A vision for how the school will make a positive contribution to education across the locality
- A strong focus on ensuring an inclusive learning environment for all children, their families and carers.

## Section D - Education Plan

Applicants should take account of the relevant criteria in Section D - Annex C of the free school presumption guidance.

As a minimum please ensure you include the following:

- An ambitious, broad and balanced, deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and pupil intake. This could include a curriculum table and pupil build up chart
- Strategies for measuring pupil performance effectively and setting challenging targets
- A staffing structure that will deliver the planned curriculum within the expected income levels; with a focus on outstanding teaching (including strategies for effective performance management). This could also include an organogram and staff build up chart
- The needs of all children are fully provided for and how the school will be fully inclusive
- Details of enrichment and extended services, for example, breakfast clubs, sports clubs, homework clubs and music/art clubs
- The school's approach to: PHSE; the Prevent Duty; safeguarding and welfare; and promoting fundamental British values (democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs)

## Section E - Capacity and Capability

Applicants should take account of the relevant criteria in Annex C of the free school presumption guidance.

As a minimum please ensure you include the following:

- The resources you would draw on and/or deploy to support the development of the new free school by the opening date
- Clear evidence that you have the range of skills and abilities necessary to set up and then run a school effectively, including: managing school finances; leadership; project management; marketing; human resources; safeguarding; and health and safety
- How the school would be organised and what the governance arrangements would look like, including a diagram of the proposed structures
- A thorough explanation of the training, skills, knowledge and expertise of staff so that children with SEND are able to access a broad curriculum and their holistic needs are met through the Resourced Provision and otherwise.
- **Please provide a financial plan for the pre and post opening periods of the school using the standard ESFA template provided**

## Section F - Funding Arrangements

### Ownership of the school land

Ownership of the school land is with WCC. The County Council will provide the site and buildings on a 125 year lease to the Academy Trust (excluding the nursery accommodation).

### Capital Costs

The capital cost to build the school will be met by Warwickshire County Council.

The capital building scheme is currently being designed and developed, with a construction budget of £16.5 million approved by County Council members in September 2024.

### Revenue funding

Local authorities are also required to meet the revenue costs of the new provision. Warwickshire County Council will meet pre and post opening costs associated with establishing the new school, in line with the growth criteria agreed by Warwickshire Schools Forum. All proposed growth funding figures within this document are based upon the current criteria agreed by the local Schools Forum. Should there be any changes to this in the future prior to the signing of a funding agreement these figures will need to be revised. As part of the available start-up costs the DfE currently provides £25,000 for legal expenses to the successful sponsor. Further details of the pre-opening revenue funding are provided below, followed by details of post-opening revenue.

#### 1. Pre-Opening Funding (Project Development Grant)

The pre-opening funding is intended to cover revenue costs up to the opening of the school. This can include project management, staff recruitment, salary costs and office and administration costs. The grant is paid in three instalments during the year prior to opening.

The current pre-opening funding grant follows a similar funding level to the project development grant given to new schools opened through the Central Government Free School Programme.

The new free school via the LA presumption route will be paid a pre-opening grant £195,000 (£125,000 if the trust is opening more than one school in an academic year).

An ICT grant will also be provided to fund the ICT equipment and expenditure not covered by the Capital Build.

The Trust will need to follow the conditions as part of the receipt of the Project Development Grant.

## 2. Post-Opening Funding

There are two elements to the post-opening grant: non-staffing resources paid on a per pupil basis and a leadership grant.

The Resources element: Paid each year that the school builds up to capacity for each new pupil expected to be on roll. It is paid at the following rates:

- £250 for each new mainstream pupil in the primary phase (R to 6)

The Leadership element: Paid annually based on the number of year groups that the school will ultimately have that do not yet have pupils. The amount paid to mainstream schools depends on how many year groups are empty.

Table 1: Leadership element of post opening grant

Number of empty year groups						
6+	5	4	3	2	1	Max
£80,500	£67,500	£54,000	£40,500	£27,000	£13,500	£283,000

\*leadership element not affected by school size.

Table 2: Total Funding\*

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Max. Total
Primary 4-11 (1FE)	£88,000	£75,000	£61,500	£48,000	£34,500	£21,000	£7,500	£335,500

\*Maximum funding assuming school growing 1 year group at a time

Pupil places in the specialist resourced provisions (SRP) are funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block at a rate of £10,000 place funding per pupil plus top up funding of £12,700 for filled places and £8,415 for unfilled places, so that a pupil's additional learning needs can be met. A service level agreement between WCC and the school will confirm the exact arrangements and expectations.

## Section G - Impact and Equalities Assessments

As prescribed by section 9 of the Academies Act 2010 and section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the local authority must assess the potential impact of any new school on existing educational provision in the area. The local authority must also consider whether the new school would impact on any groups with protected characteristics.

Pupil forecasts demonstrate that as a result of large scale housing development in North of Nuneaton area additional primary provision will be required over the next 5 years and continue to be part of the provision of education in the area in the short, medium and long term. As a result, the addition of this school to the family of Warwickshire schools is unlikely to impact adversely on mainstream schools in the area.

The proposal would have a positive impact on promoting choice and diversity for local families who are applying for a school place. We are looking for sponsors that will provide excellent support facilities to meet the needs of all children, including Looked After Children, those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, those with pupil premium funding and any other disadvantaged group. We also want a sponsor that has a drive for excellent outcomes in attendance, attainment and achievement for all children and a clear commitment to closing the gaps between pupil groups, both within the school and against their national counterparts.

## Section H - Application Process

Academy proposers wishing to express an interest in the new specialist school should do so by completing the application form available online. Only applications received by the published deadline of **5pm on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2025** will be considered for evaluation. Completed application forms should be returned electronically to [schoolorganisation@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorganisation@warwickshire.gov.uk)

Proposers must ensure that they are on the DfE's approved sponsor list. Any proposers submitting bids, who are not on the approved list, must contact the DfE before submitting an application. New proposers will need to be assessed by the department through the normal sponsor approval route. See the [department's sponsor approval process](#) for more information.

## Filling in the Application Form

Each section of the application form has a **word count limit** to ensure the information provided is concise and relevant to the section

The use of **sub headings** within each section is encouraged to help identify and address the criteria laid out in this specification and the [DfE Annex C](#)

All criteria within each section should be covered within the application form.

The use of appendices should be limited. If appendices need to be used they should be referenced within the relevant section and restricted to the following:

- Organogram/s,
- example timetable and curriculum plans,
- pre-opening team CV or pen portraits,
- current and proposed governance structures,
- pre and post opening financial plans (please use the standard ESFA template provided).

## Proposed Timeline

The following indicative timetable sets out the process to be followed which would lead to recommendations on the proposed sponsors being made to the Regional Director (RD) for the West Midlands:

Process	Timescale
Presumption Competition	Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> November 2024– Friday 24 <sup>th</sup> January 2025 (5pm)
Virtual Information Event	26 <sup>th</sup> November 2024 – 11am (confirm attendance by emailing <a href="mailto:schoolorganisation@warwickshire.gov.uk">schoolorganisation@warwickshire.gov.uk</a> )
Initial assessment of applications and shortlisting	w/c 3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2025
Shortlisted applicants for interview notified	w/c 3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2025
Interview/presentation of shortlisted proposers	w/c 7 <sup>th</sup> April 2025
Submit assessments and recommendation to DfE	April 2025

Notification of successful sponsor received from RD	Estimated June 2025
Warwickshire County Council notify unsuccessful bidders	Estimated June 2025

## Assessment

All applications received will be evaluated against the criteria set out in this specification and the key criteria set out by the DfE [here](#).

Each criterion will be scored using the following 4-point scale:

0 = The evidence and argument contained in the application is 'inadequate'.

1 = The evidence and argument contained in the application is 'adequate'.

2 = The evidence and argument contained in the application is 'good'.

3 = The evidence and argument contained in the application is 'excellent'

Each section and criterion will be scored equally, no weighting applies.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an interview, with a panel arranged by Warwickshire County Council.

After the panel interview, Warwickshire County Council will send details of its preferred applicant, along with details of all bids, to the DfE for consideration.

The Regional Director (RD) for the West Midlands, on behalf of the Secretary of State, will consider the local authority assessments and recommendations before deciding which proposer is in the best position to take forward the new school. The RD will inform the local authority and the successful proposer of its decision, and the local authority will inform any unsuccessful proposers.

If you would like further information or wish to discuss your application, please contact:

Emma Basden-Smith - Strategy and Commissioning Manager, Education Capital & Sufficiency  
[emmabasdensmith@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:emmabasdensmith@warwickshire.gov.uk)

It is the proposer's responsibility to monitor <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/open-competitions> for any further or updated information which is released after initial publication of this specification.

**NB:** the local authority led free school presumption is a different route to the DfE's free school programme. Further information about how to establish a new school via the DfE's free school programme route can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/opening-a-free-school>