Inclusive Settings: Inclusive Place Sufficiency Strategy 2026-36

Delivering the Right Place, at the Right Time for Every Child

Foreword: Inclusive Place Sufficiency Strategy 2026-36

Cllr Richard Burton

Portfolio Lead Children's Services

Every child and young person in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole deserves to feel that they belong, to be supported to thrive, and to have access to the right help in the right place at the right time.

This Inclusive Place Sufficiency Strategy sets out a clear and ambitious approach to planning provision across our area, so that children, young people and families can access high-quality education and support as close to home as possible. It reflects our commitment to inclusion, early intervention and stronger local pathways from cradle to career.

This is an important strategy for BCP. It recognises that place sufficiency is not only about numbers and buildings but about creating an education system that is inclusive by design, responsive to need, and sustainable for the future. It has been shaped by a strong understanding of local need and by our ambition to work in partnership with schools, settings, families and wider services to build capacity in our communities.

I welcome this strategy and the direction it sets for the next decade as we work together to improve outcomes, strengthen belonging and ensure that children and young people can succeed within their local communities.

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BCP's Inclusive Place Sufficiency Strategy 2026-36

Introduction

In BCP we recognise that inclusive practice must start at the point of planning. Therefore, we have developed an Inclusive Place Planning approach that intends to do just that.

Traditionally in England planning for school places has been fragmented with mainstream school places, SEND provision and alternative provision all planned separately. Local Authorities have only been required to include information for special school places alongside mainstream places in the annual School Capacity AP (SCAP) report to the DfE since 2023, and so for BCP as with the majority of the country this combined approach to planning place sufficiency across education is still in its infancy.

1. Developing an inclusive system

To respond to the expectations set out in the new SEND Reform plans for a more inclusive, pathway-driven education system, Local Authorities will need to develop a new approach to pupil place planning.

Within BCP we have developed our Inclusive Place Sufficiency Strategy to provide a framework for this approach. This strategy will seek to develop local pathways from cradle to career, from 0-25, ensuring that every child and young person has a place within the community that they live, and that the Council fulfils:

- Duties under the Childcare Act 2006, as amended by the Childcare Act 2016, to secure sufficient, high-quality **early education and childcare** for working parents and eligible families.
- Statutory duties under the Education Act 1996 to secure sufficient and **suitable education provision for children and young people of compulsory school age (5–16),** including arranging suitable education and alternative provision for those unable to attend school.
- Responsibilities under Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 to keep **education and training provision for children and young people aged 0–25 with SEND** under review, securing the special educational provision set out in Education, Health and Care Plans in line with the SEND Code of Practice (0–25).
- Strategic oversight for **post-16 education and training**, supporting the Raising the Participation Age duty and shaping a coherent local offer through forecasting, commissioning and partnership working. This includes particularly strong and enforceable duties for learners with SEND up to age 25.

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2. Key priorities

The Inclusive Place Sufficiency ties into the wider strategies for BCP in regard to ensuring all children and young people have a strong sense of belonging. They also mirror the priorities outlined in the SEND and AP strategy.

The Inclusive Place Sufficiency Strategy will focus on the following priorities:

- **Strong mainstream capacity** - Inclusive practice and belonging in every setting
- **Right Place, Right Provision** – Delivering provision where evidence shows there is need
- **Inclusion by Design** – Supporting diverse needs from the outset, using a locally agreed Inclusive Design Charter
- **Sufficiency as a shared system responsibility** – Working with local education and childcare settings to meet the needs of children and young people
- **Specialist and AP Provision that is local and integrated** - Where required, specialist provision is as local as possible, integrated with local services, and avoids isolating pupils from mainstream opportunities
- **Evidence, Accountability and Continuous Review** – Transparent decisions aligned with need, capital investment and regular review of outcomes against strategies.

3. Ensuring effective and efficient use of resources

The Inclusive Place Sufficiency Strategy will link to the wider BCP's Families First Partnership (FFP) programme and our Experts at Hand partnership with schools, to ensure that Council and Education Assets and capital budgets are aligned with wider service delivery resources.

4. Delivering change

In order to deliver the change required across the childcare and education place sufficiency the Inclusive Place Sufficiency Strategy will be underpinned by plans for the following areas:

- **Wraparound Childcare and Early Years Education**, including free early education offer and wraparound childcare for children aged 0-14
- **Mainstream compulsory education**, including Primary and Secondary phase place sufficiency
- **SEND and AP,** including Post 14, Post 16 planning and Post 19 provision

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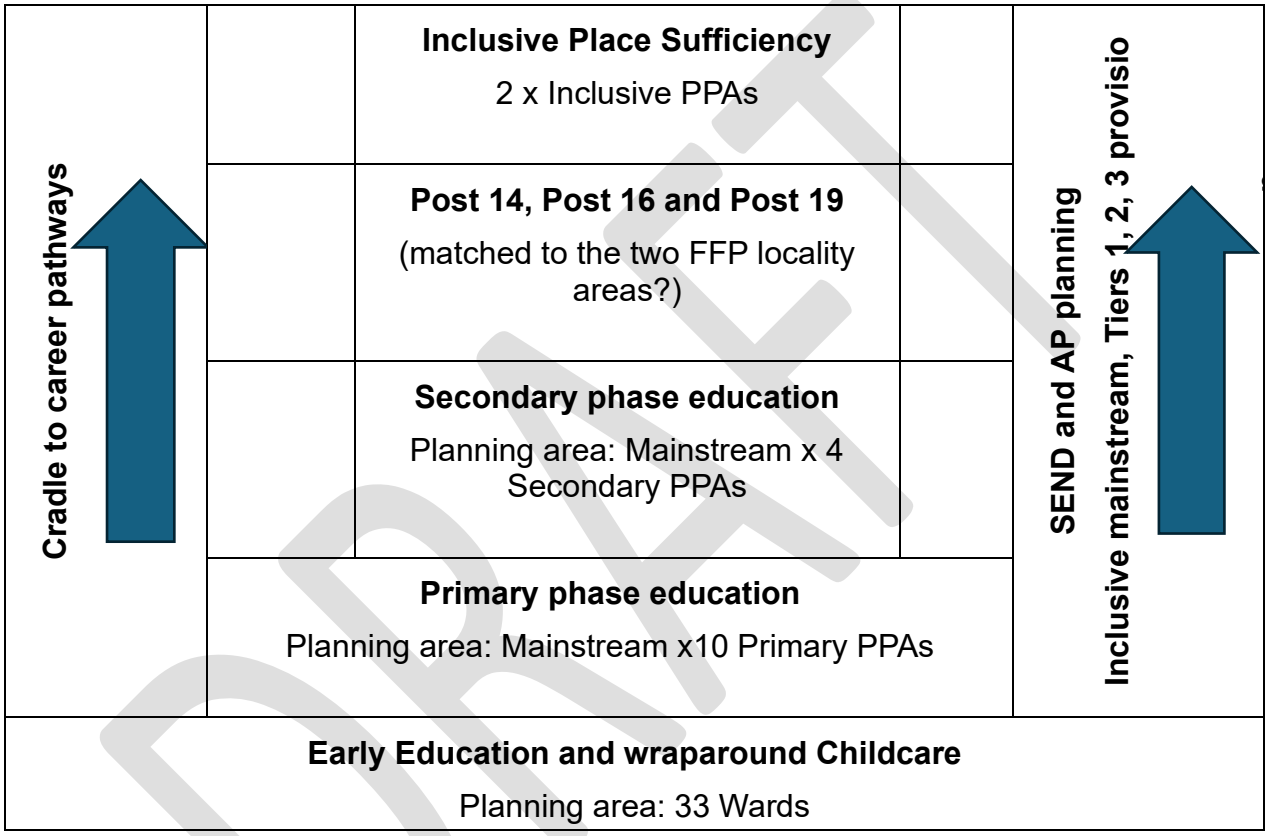
These plans will be built into a planning framework that aims to promote and assess pathways across BCP. This will build up from:

- 33 local wards upon which wraparound childcare and Early Education sufficiency is planned
- 10 Primary PPAs upon which primary phase sufficiency is planned
- 4 Secondary PPAs upon which secondary phase sufficiency is planned
- 2 Inclusive PPAs across which pathways and provision for SEND, AP and Post 16 and Post 19 will be planned



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5. Three-tiered Inclusive Capital Programme

BCP's capital strategy will underpin delivery of our Inclusive Place Sufficiency Strategy, translating identified need across the 0–25 system into targeted investment in inclusive mainstream provision, specialist bases, estate adaptation and, where evidenced, special capacity.

The following plans sit under the Inclusive Place Sufficiency Strategy:

- **Wraparound Childcare and Early Years Education**, including free early education offer and wraparound childcare for children aged 0-14
- **Mainstream compulsory education**, including Primary and Secondary phase place sufficiency

- **SEND and AP,** including Post 14, Post 16 planning and Post 19 provision

These plans will each set out:

- forecast demand and required place capacity
- highlight priorities for expansion or reduction
- consider travel distances and access
- be co-produced with system partners to secure ownership

By taking a tiered approach, the Inclusive Sufficiency Capital Programme will support strong governance and outcome focused approach. The tiers will focus on the following:

- **Tier 1 – Inclusion as Default:** Capital investment will prioritise programmes that bring universal inclusion through adapted mainstream environments.

- **Tier 2 – Targeted Inclusion Bases:** Priority will be given to expanding inclusion bases across primary, secondary and post-16 settings (including FE). These bases will target cohorts (e.g. autism, SEMH, communication needs) within mainstream to promote inclusive provision within local communities.

- **Tier 3 – Specialist Provision:** For children and young people whose needs cannot be met safely or cost-effectively in mainstream or bases, investment will support specialist provision in schools and post-16/19 provision, to meet the needs of the most complex cohorts improving sufficiency, placement stability, and reducing reliance on high-cost independent placements.

Cross-cutting outcome: Increased local capacity reduces travel demand and transport costs, aligning with BCP's Home to School Transport Transformation Programme.

Capital programme 2026-29

The capital programme for 2026-29 focuses on the current phases:

- **Phase 1 (Stabilisation)** stabilising system pressures by addressing significant historic capacity deficits through expansion of special school places, reflecting pre-reform commitments and DfE funding.

- **Phase 2 (Rebalancing)** delivering significant growth in specialist bases within mainstream settings, increasing capacity for priority cohorts (autism, SEMH and communication) and enabling more children to be supported locally.

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- **Phase 3 (Inclusion at scale)** embedding a rebalanced system, with a greater proportion of need met through mainstream and specialist base provision, reducing reliance on out-of-area and independent placements.

This phased approach supports financial sustainability across the system by improving placement mix, reducing reliance on high-cost provision and enabling more efficient use of High Needs Block resources, while recognising continued short-term cost pressures driven by complexity of need. Increased local capacity across all tiers will directly reduce average travel distances and associated transport expenditure. This aligns with BCP's Home to School Transport Transformation Programme, which supports both improved experiences and cost containment.

Please see Appendix A Three-tiered Inclusive Capital Programme budget 2026-29.

6. Governance

Strategic scrutiny and oversight of the Inclusive Place Sufficiency Strategy and Inclusive Education Capital Delivery Plan is crucial to ensure short-term needs are met and future demand is anticipated across mainstream, specialist, alternative provision and post-16 education.

The key governance boards will be: (TBC)

- *BCP's Strategic Education and Asset Management Board (SEAM)*
- *SEND Improvement Board*
- *Children's Service SLT*
- *Scrutiny*

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