

## 14. Education

### Early years education

- 14.1 Over the last 2 years, the Government funded hours scheme has significantly expanded and is now available for children from the age of 9 months (up to 30 funded hours per week for eligible working parents with a child from 9-months-old up to school age). This has been introduced over a staggered timetable, with the last step in September 2025 seeing this fulfilled. This, along with changes restricting additional charging, continue to place considerable pressure on existing early years infrastructure. There is demand for new provision, whilst at the same time, the district has experienced the closure of some settings.
- 14.2 The update to the NPPF in December 2024 put early years education on the same footing as school years education in terms of the policy weight to be attributed. Whilst the previous NPPF had been taken to mean this, the change in 2024 makes clear the importance of early years provision. The NPPF (2024) says:
- 14.3 *"It is important that a sufficient choice of early years, school and post-16 places are available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education.*
- They should: a) give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter early years, schools and post-16 facilities through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications; and*
- b) work with early years, school and post-16 promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted." (Para 100)*
- "Significant weight should be placed on the importance of new, expanded or upgraded public service infrastructure when considering proposals for development." (Para 101)*
- 14.4 Not only is early years provision hugely important to the economy to enable parents/carers to go back to work, the social benefits have also been highlighted by evidence, with a very public campaign fronted by the Princess of Wales. (Neil Leitch, chief executive of the Early Years Alliance, welcomed Catherine's engagement with this issue. "For far too long, the early years has been deprioritised, disregarded and ignored when it comes to sector funding, despite a wealth of research showing that the first five years of a child's life are absolutely critical in shaping their long-term learning and development," he said.)
- 14.5 Early years provision is an education facility, whether in the form of full-time nurseries or preschools who offer term time only provision. Some facilities are stand alone, others are located alongside schools on school sites, or within/ adjoining other community uses. Many early years providers operate from scout halls, community centres and village halls. Some early years providers are looking to increase capacity

where possible. Early years education offer is also in part met by child minders, who are often in rural areas the main option for families.

- 14.6 In addition to capacity, many providers are seeking to make updates to facilities, to improve outside garden areas, and more allotment/forest based style activities. Gardens, and outdoor space are increasingly important, alongside ensuring accessibility for disabilities. Ensuring quiet nurturing spaces are available for reassurance and forming relationships is equally as important for early years as later years. Any early year's setting providing baby rooms must meet specific requirements for separate sleep areas and areas for play. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the statutory guidance for all early year's providers. This sets out clear requirements for safeguarding for all children, in terms of safer environments, outdoors, baby changing facilities and toilets.
- 14.7 There is a reasonable distribution of provision across the area, with the largest settlements having the greatest provision. The issue often is the disparity between term time only, and full time providers. It can be more challenging to find local fulltime day-care provision in rural areas, but equally challenging to hold a sustainable model of full time day care provision for the provider, particularly in rural areas. This is often where the offer of child minders plays an important role.
- 14.8 The closure of two settings in Alton, and one in Four Marks has added pressure to existing provision. In 2024, Alton school closed, and along with it the onsite nursery. The nursery was open 8am-6pm for 50 weeks a year. In 2025, Alton College onsite nursery closed with little notice. The preschool in Four Marks Village Hall has also closed. However, in contrast additional capacity has been created at First Friends Nursery in Alton (details further on), and another First Friends Nursery is proposed in Alton (details further on).
- 14.9 Two early years settings were allocated CIL funding in 2023 (the Ark Pre-school at Liphook and Dimensions Childcare in Horndean) – of which both projects have been completed. £66,780 CIL funding was allocated to First Friends Day Nursery in partnership with Wootey Infant School Alton in 2024, to increase capacity. This project has also completed. In 2025, £71,280 CIL funding was allocated to a new First Friends Day Nursery in Alton.
- 14.10 With regards to some information about specific nurseries;

#### First Friends Nurseries, Alton

- 14.1 Additional capacity has been provided at the First Friends Nursery at Wootey Infant School. This project was allocated CIL funding in 2024. The project has increased the number of early years education spaces available from 39 to 53. The additional 14 spaces are for the under twos, specifically babies 9-18 months.
- 14.12 A new nursery is proposed at the former Queens Head Pub in Alton, to be open 51 weeks of the year for up to 55 full time equivalent children (approx. 100 children making up that full time equivalent). This project has been allocated CIL funding (2025) and has secured planning permission. The project was categorised as essential education infrastructure in the assessment of the CIL application.

#### Enchanted Nursery, Alton

- 14.13 Enchanted Nursery in Alton is one of the largest providers and has aspirations to increase capacity with a small scale first floor balcony extension. An application for CIL was submitted in 2023, but unsuccessful at the time. There are constraints to development, which it needs to be shown can be suitably overcome to progress this project.
- 14.14 There has been a long-standing need for a pedestrian crossing at Anstey Road linking the parking at Anstey Park to the nursery. The nursery is concerned about pedestrian safety for children being dropped off and picked up. A CIL application was made by HCC in 2024 for funding for the crossing, using some already held developer contributions by HCC as well. The application was successful. Further CIL funding was allocated in this project in 2025 to ensure the project is fully funded. This is a priority project, with HCC aiming to deliver it as soon as possible in 2026.
- 14.15 Enchanted Nursery is providing much needed full time early years provision to Alton.

#### The Ark Pre-school, Liphook

- 14.16 The Ark Preschool is positioned within a central and accessible part of the town for families to access their early years education funding. The Ark currently has a good Ofsted grade received in July 2025. The Ark Pre-School Nursery registered in 2017. The pre-school provides funded early years education. It opens Monday to Friday during term time, from 8.15am to 3.30pm with the option of an afterschool club for parents wishing to collect their child a little later. There are seven staff employed, 5 of whom hold appropriate qualifications, including 1 who holds a qualified teacher status. We also have a SENCo and additional 2 QTS teachers who work on a part time basis.
- 14.17 The Ark was allocated CIL and S106 funding in 2023 (totalling £6,528) for improvements to the outside area, which has been completed. The Ark is located at the Liphook Church Centre. Further work to the reception and church office could increase early years capacity and improve significantly the work that we do here with local communities. Currently we have more than 5 SEN children who need more space and specialist teaching and would benefit from a sensory area for their development.

#### Clanfield Community Pre School

- 14.18 Clanfield Community Pre-School is in the grounds of Petersgate Infant School in the heart of Clanfield. It is a charity, and a committee run pre-school. The building is rented from Hampshire County Council. Children attend from 2 years old. Whilst the preschool is in the grounds of the school, everything within the fence of the preschool is the pre-school's responsibility.
- 14.19 As the building is of a prefab nature, solar panels are needed to help control temperature. Also need sunshade, an outside woodwork area, and roofing.
- 14.20 Any future potential to increase capacity would need to be done in collaboration with the school, as extension is not possible at present, as would lose the much needed outside area.

### Muddy Boots, Horndean

- 14.21 This nursery opened in September 2024, using Merchistoun Hall in Horndean, operating all year round. Although the nursery is upstairs in the hall, it is keen to make fuller use of the outside area. The children are outside whatever the weather, and have the benefit of big tree canopies as shelter, however some supporting facilities outside would enable the nursery to do more, particularly for those children with additional needs who thrive outside. More shelter, a shed, a wooden toilet facility, more forest school tools and outdoor clothing would make a big difference. Improved storage for coats would make it easier to get in and out of the building and possibly changing the banister on the stairs to make it easier for smaller children to manoeuvre. All these improvements would enable children to stay outside longer, and for more teaching possibilities. The nursery would also like to get the children out into the community more, and is considering the possibility of a mini bus.

### The Beehive Montessori, Shalden

- 14.22 The Beehive Montessori uses Shalden Village Hall. The acoustics of the building have been problematic but acoustic panels have been installed over summer 2024 and are an improvement. This will particularly assist children with special needs. The floor is cold in winter, which could be improved with insulation. This project is being looked into as it would benefit young children who crawl and help with energy saving.
- 14.23 There is a wider project to increase energy efficiency which is currently not viable due to the high costs of the work.

### PK Pre-school, Grayshott

- 14.24 This is the only early years setting in Grayshott. It uses the Jubilee Hall, which also accommodates the Scouts. It is highly valued, and at capacity supporting over 110 local families. The Scouts and PK are responsible for the maintenance of the building, which is a wood building, recent work has repaired/replaced elements of the timber frame, replaced old metal windows, repaired the floor in PK, replaced the children's toilets and installed new energy efficient LED lighting throughout the building. In addition, older windows and doors are in need of replacement.
- 14.25 Acknowledging the demand for provision, primarily created from the increase in funded hours, the preschool is considering a project that would fully enclose an existing outdoor covered space at the pre-school to create additional floor area which may, subject to approvals, qualify as educational space and in turn increase the maximum number of children that PK can accommodate.

### Hidden Valley, Grayshott

- 14.26 A new outdoor nursery is opening in January 2026 at Hidden Valley in Grayshott. This is an outdoor nursery setting, with pick up and drop off from Grayshott Village Hall. Planning permission has been granted for the new setting. This will be open from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM, 51 weeks per year for 2-5 year olds. The Village Hall itself is within East Hampshire, and the actual outside facility is within Waverley borough. The new nursery will likely draw from Grayshott, Liphook, Bordon and Haslemere. Funding is being sought to assist with the set up. New provision in this area is

supported by Hampshire County Council Childcare Development Officer, in response to growing population and demand, particularly following recent closures in the area including provision at the Royal School, Haslemere.

#### Medstead Pre School

- 14.27 Medstead Pre-school and Nursery is a committee run setting and has been operating since September 1989 when it started in Medstead Village Hall as Medstead Playgroup. The pre-school building is owned by the pre-school, which is located on the Medstead Primary School site. The windows in the building have been replaced using S106 developer contributions (£12,867.00). There are considerations with regards to the Government funding now available for provision for younger children (from 9 months) and scope to increase capacity to accommodate younger children. The pre-school is considering a project to increase capacity to enable children under 2 to be able to attend – which would help lessen journeys for parents/cares to other facilities and help retain children from an early age.

#### Single Steps Nursery, Medstead

- 14.28 Single Steps Nursery provides early years education for children from 3 months to 5 years. It is open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm and only closes for Christmas and Bank Holidays. This is the only full time provision in the Four Marks/Medstead area. There is extensive outdoor space, with aspirations to develop the area for the Forest School, both to benefit the space environmentally and further the children's education in keeping with the curriculum. There is also scope within the building for alterations to increase capacity in the future.

#### Ropley

- 14.29 There used to be Ropley Pre-School that ran from the Parish hall but it closed. There is no alternative provision in Ropley. The nearest preschools are Busy Bees in Bishops Sutton, provision in Four Marks and in Bramdean. Children attending Ropley Primary School come from various nurseries and pre-schools across the area.

#### Specialist Education

- 14.30 In Hampshire, 5.3% of school age pupils had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), that equates to over 10,000 pupils. Of those with an EHCP, approximately 40% will require a specialist place either in a special school or a resourced provision in a mainstream school. More specialist places are required to educate the growing number of children with EHCPs and preferably in their local area as appropriate to their needs.
- 14.31 Pupils who have additional needs and have an EHCP are either catered for within mainstream primary and secondary provision or in specialist provisions such as special schools or a resourced provision unit at a mainstream school.
- 14.32 In East Hampshire, Hollywater School in Bordon caters for 153 pupils with moderate and severe learning difficulties (SLD), aged 4-19 and will increase to 163 in September 2026. In April 2025, it was announced that £2.4m will be invested in Special education needs (SEN) places across Hampshire. Hampshire County Council was given the funding to expand its in-house SEN provision due to the high

demand across the county. Work will focus on refurbishment, new buildings and conversion of county council offices into SEN classes. £1m of this funding has been spent at Hollywater School, to create a new building and adapting existing accommodation to provide two additional classrooms. The expansion has enabled the school to accommodate 10 additional pupils in 2025/26 and an additional 10 pupils in 2026/27 academic years (offering 163 places). The school was successful in applying for the Council's Supporting Communities Funding towards an accessible minibus in 2023 (£10k).

- 14.33 Pupils requiring other specialist provision will travel outside of the District to the nearest appropriate school or may be placed in independent provision.
- 14.34 Independent provision is available at the Green Room in Kingsley and Treloar College and School in Alton, each catering for specific designations. Early years specialist education is provided at Bushy Leaze nursery in Alton although all nurseries are inclusive. Alton College also has a 40-place independence hub for post-16 pupils with SLD. Whilst outside our area, in Hindhead, Undershaw (independent) provides specialist provision for some East Hampshire residents. In addition, sometimes other schools outside of East Hampshire provide places for students from East Hampshire, including More House School in Frensham, The Waterloo School, Riverside Community Special School, Rachel Maddocks School and Prospect School – all in Havant.
- 14.35 Treloar College provides for pupils with significant complex needs and is one of the biggest employers in East Hampshire. Pupils are placed by Hampshire County Council and other neighbouring counties. Some pupils attending Treloars are from East Hampshire district, but many are from other areas. Improvements were made to the swimming pool following allocation of £190,000 of CIL in 2022. CIL funding also contributed to a new electric minibus. In 2024, £25,000 of Supporting Communities Funding was allocated to Building an Interactive Learning Zone for students. Future projects include residential accommodation for disabled students and installation of solar panels, for which CIL was sought in 2025. On this occasion the CIL application was not successful due to other priorities and limited available funding.
- 14.36 The Green Room in Kingsley (GRK) is an independent special school in East Hampshire, providing education for children specifically with EHCPs. GRK was allocated CIL funding to refurbish its bushcraft area in 2023, and this work has been completed. Further CIL funding was allocated by EHDC and the SDNPA to a multipurpose pod in 2024, which is also completed. GRK was successful in applying for CIL funding in 2025 for Recreational, Play and Sensory Equipment (£19,045).
- 14.37 A new specialist SEN & SEMH school is due to open in Alton in September 2026, on the site of the former Alton School. The school will cater for children and young people aged 7–16 years and is part of the Cavendish Education family of schools.

#### Mainstream education

- 14.38 CIL funding has been allocated to schools for small scale improvements, generally low cost high value projects, particularly supporting students post covid with more outside learning and nurture/reflective spaces. In addition, available S106 money

held by HCC has been spent on such like projects. Whilst not increasing pupil capacity, they do enhance the learning environment and expand the offering, picking up on the increasing additional needs that schools are catering for, and dealing with challenges students face post covid. Many schools need improvements such as these, and in some cases changing facilities to support pupils who, due to their additional needs, are not fully toilet trained and require adult support. It is recognised that some low costs projects in schools can be highly valuable to the school and students, making a real difference day to day. Ropley Primary School quickly completed the two projects it was allocated CIL funding towards.

- 14.39 Higher amounts of CIL funding have also been allocated to schools for sports projects, such as community tennis at Horndean Technology College (approx. £200k), 3G Artificial Grass Pitch at Bohunt School (over £700k), shelter and changing rooms at Clanfield Junior School (over £100k).
- 14.40 HCC held S106 is being used towards the Safer Routes to School Project in Four Marks. There is also S106 money held by HCC to expand Four Marks Primary School in the future due to development.

#### Wraparound

- 14.41 The government's ambition is that all parents and carers of primary school-aged children who need it should be able to access term time childcare in their local area from 8am until 6pm Monday to Friday.
- 14.42 Wraparound childcare is childcare that 'wraps around' the conventional school day. It can also refer to provision in the school holidays.
- 14.43 This provision can be offered by schools and private, voluntary and independent (PVI) providers (including childminders and early years settings) and can be run on a school site or at another setting in the area. It should not require parents to pick their children up from school and drop them off at another location.
- 14.44 To support this ambition, the government announced that from 2024 to 2026 it will provide up to £289 million of start-up funding over two academic years to support local authorities and providers in England to introduce or expand childcare provision on either side of the school day, which parents of primary school-aged children will be able to pay to access.
- 14.45 East Hampshire district has benefitted from this funding and currently there are 19 Primary Schools that have been funded from this funding stream. This has equated to over 400 new full wraparound places for the district.

#### Liphook Infant and Liphook Junior Schools

- 14.46 CIL funding was allocated in 2024 to Liphook Infant School to install a new drainage system for the playground, which has been completed. The infant school is now considering a refurbishment of the student and staff toilets.
- 14.47 Liphook Junior School has installed a new dance/drama space.

#### Selbourne Primary School

- 14.48 Whilst Selbourne Primary School is within the South Downs National Park, children attend from within East Hampshire CIL area. £200k has been allocated from EHDC CIL, and £100k from South Downs National Park CIL towards an extension at Selbourne Primary School to provide space for wrap around care and early years. Further funding may be needed to progress this project.

#### Anstey Junior School, Alton

- 14.49 In 2023, £35k of CIL was allocated to a Nurture Group Facility at Anstey Junior School which is now complete. The school applied for CIL funding in 2025 for a sensory garden and allotment – the proposal received a partial award of CIL of £20k. Further work is required to progress this project and source the gap funding.

#### Ropley Primary School

- 14.50 Ropley Primary School has delivered two projects that it received CIL funding towards (outside canopies, and a wildlife garden). The school applied for CIL funding in 2025 for Early Years Outdoor Nature/ Forest School Learning Area – the proposal received a partial award of CIL of £20k. Further work is required to progress this project and source the gap funding.
- 14.51 Of note, the school has an outdoor swimming pool, which is run and funded by the PTA through fundraising. It's open for the second half of the summer term and two weeks into the summer holidays. All the children have a formal swim lesson every summer so by the time they leave in year 6 they can swim 25m.

#### Andrews' Endowed CE Primary School, Holybourne

- 14.52 Andrews' Endowed CE Primary School in Holybourne, Alton was allocated £5,000 of Supporting Communities Funding (2024) to improve its special educational needs provision. In 2025, the school applied for CIL funding for external storage and courtyard development, but was unsuccessful.

#### Holme Primary School, Headley

- 14.53 There is aspiration for an additional standalone Special Educational Needs Building. An application for this project was made for CIL in 2024 but was unsuccessful. The school also applied in 2025 for funding for a forest classroom but was also unsuccessful. The application was not successful this time, but with further evidence, is encouraged to apply again.

#### Bentley CE Primary School

- 14.54 In 2025, Bentley CE Primary School applied for CIL funding for an indoor multipurpose space and outdoor classroom. The application was not successful this time, but with further evidence, is encouraged to apply again.

#### St Mary's CE Primary School, Bentworth

- 14.55 £60k of CIL was allocated to create an outdoor area at the school in 2023, which has been completed. Further aspirations remain for improvements to the outdoor provision.



### Rowledge Primary School

- 14.56 The school is fundraising for a new external classroom, to assist with the increase in SEND pupils. The school is located within East Hampshire, on the border of Surrey. There is a split in terms of which local planning authority pupils are from, with around 30% coming from East Hampshire. Binsted Parish Council has allocated some Neighbourhood CIL to the project, and applications for CIL are expected to be submitted to Waverley Borough Council and EHDC in the next funding round.

### New provision

- 14.57 A new primary school is planned as part of the new development at Hazelton Farm, known as Land East of Horndean. The overall cost of the new school is expected to be over £15m, with an application for CIL funding for a proportion of the cost made in 2025. The CIL generated from the development itself would partially cover some of the cost. £250,000 of CIL in 2025 was allocated towards this project.
- 14.58 Oakmoor School is a new, state of the art secondary school in Bordon, on the edge of the South Downs National Park. The school was delivered as part of the redevelopment of Whitehill & Bordon. Hampshire County Council has completed a £9,250,000 extension to Oakmoor School, enabling a further 300 children to attend the school from September 2025. The extension to the school will meet the anticipated ongoing demand for secondary school places arising from the redevelopment of Whitehill & Bordon. Oakmoor School is run by the University of Chichester Academy Trust (UNICAT) and currently provides education for up to 900 children aged between 11 and 16 years old. The extension has increased the school's capacity to 1,200 places. The works were the development of a two storey extension to the school's northern teaching block, allowing the creation of 16 new classrooms, offices and toilets. The scheme also included internal remodelling of the existing accommodation to provide additional suited ICT, science and art classrooms.
- 14.59 Bordon Infant and Junior Schools have undergone an expansion from 2-form entry schools to 3-form entry schools. The project has increased teaching space, Learning Resource Centre space and expands some non-teaching spaces. An enlarged staff car park and relocated pedestrian access has also been provided. The spaces were completed in time for the start of the new academic year in September 2025.
- 14.60 A new primary school is also planned at Whitehill & Bordon, population and housing data indicates this will need to be open for September 2028.

### Alton College

- 14.61 In 2024, Alton College was allocated £242,293.32 of CIL funds for improvements and alterations to the Sports Hall to improve accessibility to the facilities and overall user experience and useability for both students studying at Alton College and the wider community. Alton College also received funds from Alton Neighbourhood CIL for Boccia court lines, which have recently been installed.

#### Closure of education facilities

- 14.62 Last year saw the closure of Alton School (fee paying catholic independent day school), and Bordon Future Skills Centre. Alton School site is becoming a new special needs school.
- 14.63 Work continues with HCC to consider the future use of Bordon Future Skills Centre, after Basingstoke College of Technology (BCoT) relocated their construction courses from Bordon in 2024 due to a drop in student enrolment and rising costs. A new education and skills provider was identified through an expression of interest process in autumn 2024 but subsequently withdrew their interest due to concerns about affordability and sustainability of the proposed provision. HCC is proposing to undertake a further expression of interest process to find a suitable tenant in the near future.