

SEND Whitepaper
Our commitments going forward

**MORGAN
SINDALL**
CONSTRUCTION

Building Better Futures:

Facilitating Special Educational
Needs and Disabilities
(SEND)





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Foreword



Enriching lives as we create the places where people learn, play and create sits at the heart of our business purpose.

- Morgan Sindall Construction



We have a duty to ensure the built environment shapes and improves lives during, but also way beyond, the construction process. This is especially key when it comes to special education needs or disabilities (SEND) school design and delivery; creating places where individuals can truly thrive and fulfil their potential is something we care deeply about.

We believe we need to work collaboratively as an industry and sector to challenge the status quo and transform the design and delivery of SEND campuses going forward. This requires a level of trust that enables the candid conversations which will allow true innovation to take place, and start us on the journey to secure improved outcomes for every SEND young person.



15%

Around 15 per cent of the pupil population, around 1.3 million school-age students in England, are classed as having special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). Future-proofing and equipping our SEND school estate to enable this growing cohort of young people to thrive, develop and fulfil their potential, is a complex challenge.

In 2019, the government announced an additional investment of £700 million into special needs education in order to ensure that children and young people are provided with the buildings and facilities that are right for them.

However, while an important part of the puzzle, investment alone is not the silver bullet we need to future-proof provision and councils continue to face immense pressures in providing care and support and educational provision for children and young people with special needs and disabilities.

Against this backdrop, the need for open innovation, knowledge sharing, and a combined commitment to delivering the very best solution possible for future generations, is critical.

Having recently constructed six SEND schools in the East of England alone, we care about creating environments that enable children and young people to thrive. With this in mind, we are committed to exploring how the process involved in creating buildings and estates that enable children and young people to truly thrive and reach their potential can be optimised. We wanted to delve into the sector and explore all angles of delivery – from concept to colour scheme.

Bringing together knowledge, experience and expertise from across the public and private sector to explore opportunities to build on experience and improve the provision of purpose-built SEND schools across the UK is at the heart of this white paper.

Our objective for this research is to work collaboratively to enhance the pathway for SEND school design and delivery so that it improves the lives of the young people, teachers, carers and families. We want to start a conversation which shares insights, sparks innovations, and encourages collaborations. Our thanks to everyone who has taken part in our exploration of this topic – your names are hero-checked at the end of this document.



We look forward to continuing the conversation with you as we look to the future and we deeply value your contribution to this discussion, which we hope will effect positive change across our communities – but most importantly, in the lives of our children and young people.







Introduction

Along with our customers, we want to create outstanding SEND schools.

In the build up to the projects we have delivered, we frequently come up against the question:
What makes a great SEND school?

In order to unpack and explore this question, which sits at the heart of SEND delivery, we brought together experts, partners, clients, collaborators, and influencers from the public and private sectors to look at the factors that make up a truly great SEND school and examine how the delivery pathway could be enhanced for all stakeholders.

From July to September 2019, we commissioned an independent market research company to conduct 16 in-depth interviews with key stakeholders in the SEND sector. In-depth interviews were largely unstructured with participants being encouraged to talk about key issues and themes, which they felt were important and had shaped their experience of SEND school delivery.

Our participants included representatives from local authorities in Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire; head teachers

from leading SEND schools across the region; architects, designers, and consultants with extensive SEND school delivery experience; representatives from national bodies including the National Autistic Society; and parental support groups including Sensational Families.

We also facilitated a focus group with our in-house specialist SEND delivery team to explore their learnings, insights, and experiences and reflect back on what we have learnt from our decades working in the heart of the sector – delivering high-quality SEND schools across the region and nationally.

The results of these conversations form the body of this paper, and bring to light key themes and insights exploring best practice and suggestions for shaping future delivery of SEND schools.

The current position

Supporting and enabling young people with special education needs or disabilities (SEND) has become a critical issue, as both the public and private sector seeks solutions to address this complex and emotive challenge.

The Commons Education Select Committee published its report on SEND in autumn 2019. This report was published post the completion of our research, and its assessment of the SEND landscape makes for sombre reading.

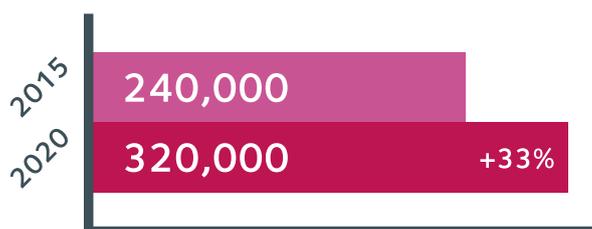
The aspirational 2014 Children and Families Act aimed to transform the educational experiences of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in Britain. Its joined-up approach promised to revolutionise the care and support and opportunities in place for young people – placing them at the heart of the system and offering a new multi-disciplinary health, care and education pathway.

However, the implementation of the 2014 reforms has not been without its challenges and a difficult funding environment in which local authorities and schools have lacked the ability to make transformative change, which has had a deep impact on provision.

With tension between children's needs and the provision available, a significant funding shortfall is a serious contributory factor to the failure to deliver on the SEND reforms and meet children's needs.

Research by The National Education Union found SEND funding granted to local authorities from central government since 2015 has failed to keep up with rapidly increasing demand for special educational needs and disabilities provision.

The number of children and young people granted an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP – a legal document stating a child's legal entitlement to funding for further support for severe and complex educational needs), has risen from 240,000 to 320,000 since 2015 – an increase of 33 per cent.



Children entitled to support funding for severe and complex educational needs

However, funding for the high needs block (the budget reserved to fund such additional provision) has only increased by 6 per cent over the same period, from £5.6 billion to £6 billion in today's prices.

Nonetheless, the Department for Education recently announced a £780 million increase to local authorities' high needs funding, boosting the budget by 12 per cent and bringing the total spent on supporting those with the most complex needs to over £7 billion for 2020-21. They also have a programme of investment that includes 39 new special schools and alternate provision being delivered.



A growing need:

According to recent government data, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) has risen for the third year in a row and it is generally accepted that this trend will continue.

More than 250,000 pupils with the most complex needs are on Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) since the government's 2014 SEND reforms. Of these children, 120,000 continue in the mainstream system.

250,000

Pupils with the most complex needs on Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

120,000

continue in the mainstream system

However, various pressures are influencing demand for specialist SEND schools, including growing pressure on mainstream schools, rising numbers of children with complex needs, and increased incidence and diagnosis of autism.

Parents of children with autism are increasingly looking to place their children in SEND schools as they are perceived to offer a better educational environment – pushing up demand for specialist schools. Our panel highlighted that this in itself could cause an increase in diagnosis as parents push for a diagnosis to get their children into an SEND school.

Young people with autism are also more likely to be excluded from mainstream schools and thus enter specialist education that way. SEND schools expanding their remit to cover a wide range of needs and incorporating Children and Adolescent Mental Health services (CAMHs) is also prompting an increased requirement.

As local authorities struggle to accommodate these young people, they are increasingly being pushed toward the private sector. The proportion of SEND pupils being educated in private schools has gradually increased, with 7.1 per cent of all SEND pupils now attending independent schools compared to 4 per cent in 2010.

These factors are all fuelling an increase in demand for high-quality SEND provision which is able to facilitate the requirement from parents and provide the facilities to enable children to reach their educational potential.



BB104: Is it flexible enough?

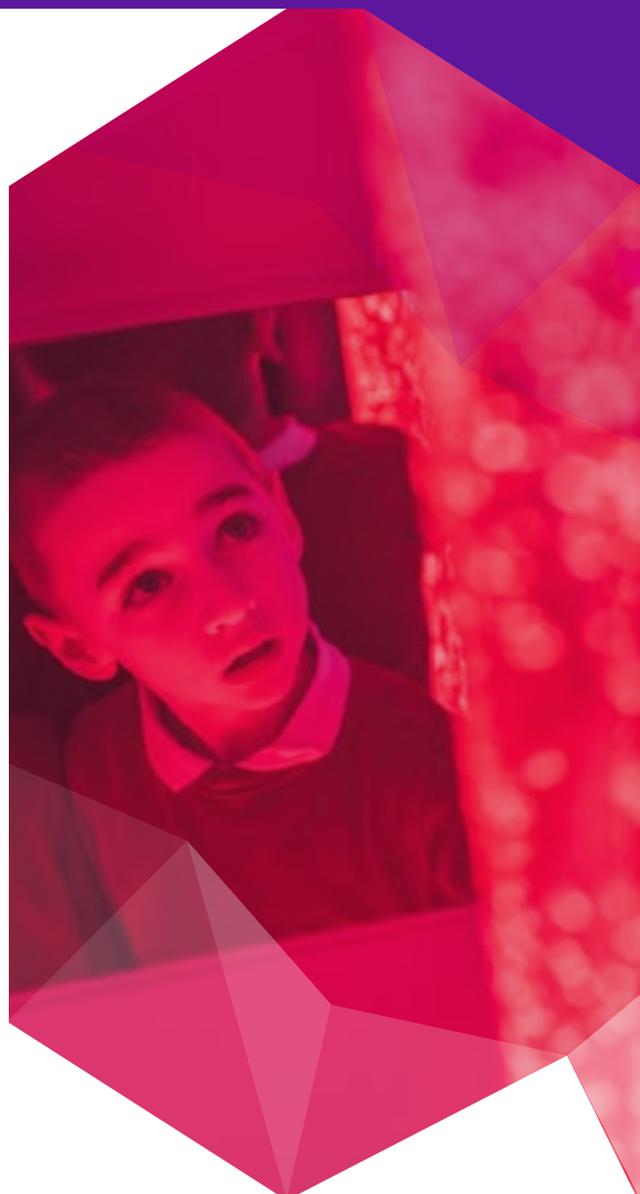
BB104 is a Department for Education (DfE) document that sets out non-statutory area guidelines for buildings for ages 3-19 at the following education settings: special schools, alternative provision, specially resourced provision and units. It aims to assist those involved in briefing for and designing new buildings, refurbishment or conservation projects.

The Building Bulletins were designed to create a framework for all local authorities (LAs), diocesan boards of education, governing bodies of schools and all other education providers responsible for commissioning schools, including those for disabled children and those with special needs.

Building Bulletin (BB102) was developed by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. BB104, published in 2015, is now the current standard for area guidance for SEND and alternative provision.

Although BB104 was identified as a useful tool, many of the stakeholders we spoke to mentioned that they would like to see increased flexibility and a greater focus on the importance of a bespoke solution, which responds to children's very varied SEND requirements.

Where BB102 contained four classifications for children with SEND, BB104 divides children into 'ambulant' and 'non-ambulant'. However, whilst our participants mentioned the lack of flexibility in the classification systems, the DfE does provide guidance on flexibility within the subdivisions of their guidance, such as in the non-ambulant section which outlines various specialist needs and promotes inclusive environments.



Our panel suggested that it would be helpful to see an improved level of flexibility introduced into the guidelines, which included more classifications. Many felt more classifications which considered the needs of a wider variety of identified SEND might help to ensure that the space provided was appropriate for specific cohorts. BB104 does however address all the SEND designations and a broad range of SEND schools.

The lack of a detailed schedule of accommodation within BB104 was also highlighted as a challenge by our participants, this was particularly true for users who had not used the system before, and/or those who did not have much experience working in the construction sector. One aspect that the DfE is working on is a more detailed schedule of accommodation tool, which will draw on a large pool of projects currently testing their tool. They also advised that their current schedule of accommodation and area data sheet tool includes the flexibility required to address the needs of a school.



The DfE has undertaken post occupancy evaluations in 25 SEND schools and alternative provision across England, with an aim for specific detail to feed into their published public guidance documentation, generic design brief and output specification.

However, it is key that there is an understanding the cohort is ever changing and there needs to be a standardised approach or baseline guidance that is adaptable. The DfE agree that standardising spaces as much as possible is key, but in such a way that the spaces can be customised. In this respect, mass customisation is vital.



Our panel agreed that a lack of shared insights and experience in working with architects and construction partners to build outstanding schools was one of the primary barriers facing stakeholders – particularly end users, looking to commission or design the best possible school.

Local government pressures:



As might be expected, cost and funding were highlighted as key challenges for procurement and our panel highlighted significant tension between the urgent demand for new SEND schools to be built and the time and budgets available.

A lack of previous experience delivering these specialist schools also creates a challenge for procurement teams – creating a lack of data to inform feasibility studies, which resulted in associated challenges for cost forecasts and budgeting.

Government procurement departments also faced significant time pressures due to burgeoning need for provision of specialist school places, which conflicted with the extensive time required to determine capital borrowing, land acquisition, and the time required to ensure appropriate levels of engagement and collaboration with all relevant stakeholders.





The knowledge gap:

Investment in SEND schools has been cyclical, with a new tranche of investment coming after many years of relatively low investment. As such, many local authorities have had to develop knowledge and an SEND strategy from scratch.

This sporadic approach has not allowed for a depth of shared insight and expertise to develop and has created a knowledge gap – with a lack of repeatable experience available to benchmark or indeed, the existence of platforms on which to share knowledge gained through the delivery of new SEND schools.

While procurement specialists did have access to knowledge sharing networks, this option to collaborate and learn from past projects was not available to headteachers and other stakeholders.

Learnings from previous builds were not shared to provide a blueprint for success that stakeholders without built environment experience could learn from – creating a lack of shared knowledge about the design and construction process.



As the requirement from the SEND cohort continues to grow, knowledge sharing is starting to take place across local authorities and headteachers from different SEND schools. However, much of this activity is delivered via personal networks or through individual impetus, and no formalised knowledge sharing platforms were in place, as far as our panel was aware.

This lack of a formal platform focused on the sharing of knowledge and experience of delivering new SEND schools, was identified as a particular area of unmet need. While the headteachers who took part in our research appreciated the challenge of sharing commercially sensitive information, many specifically identified this lack of knowledge and insight as being a barrier to ensuring a best in class result.

“I think that there should be a process whereby successes in previous builds are shared as a blueprint for the future.”

- **Simon Bainbridge**, Headteacher



Moving towards best practice:

Early engagement

Collaboration and early engagement sit at the heart of successful delivery. Decades working alongside our project partners on large-scale design and build projects has shown us the value of frank and honest conversations at the very earliest point of a project.

SEND schools are no different and creating open and collaborative dialogue that provides the opportunity to share insights and learning, puts the project on the right trajectory from the get go.

This approach was backed up universally by the stakeholders - during our research, respondents came back to the importance of collaboration and engagement to a great SEND build again and again. However, while important, some agreed that this can skew the final design to end users' desires rather than what is best for the long term.

By engaging all parties at an early stage and ensuring that adequate time was allocated to the design stage, many potential issues can be negated and this enables a fertile ground for innovative solutions to be worked into the planning and design process when issues do crop up.



Allowing for more time to be allocated to the start of the process and enabling a collaborative approach during the planning and design phase, creates additional cost and timing benefits which are then often felt throughout the project lifecycle.

“With design, it is about education, health and social care coming together early, and not just thinking about revenue, but how organisations work together. Collaboration is the most important thing.”

- **Ralph Holloway**,
Local authority SEND strategist

Understanding the cohort:

Having a deep understanding of the cohort is essential for the overarching success of the project; this applies to those commissioning and the entire delivery team.

The people we spoke to agreed that this included the need to understand the demographic universe of SEND needs in specific areas and take the time to develop an appreciation of the bespoke nature of the specific challenges that each area might face.

It's essential that both current and future need is clearly and carefully assessed and that a long-term view takes into account potential future shifts in care requirements and the changing needs of the cohort.

With multiple additional factors at play, including a population that is living for much longer with highly complex needs, provision needs to be future-proofed in order to ensure that strategy is robust and flexible enough to cater to future generations in an SEND landscape that may be significantly altered to the one we face today.

However, this is not just a role for the end user. Contractors and architects should also take every possible step to develop a deep understanding of the emotional and functional needs of the children they are designing and building for.

This would provide the contractors and designers with a greater awareness and sensibility of the facilities, spaces, and amenities required and enable a more productive, collaborative process between end users and the project team.

One identified step which could be taken to address this challenge, was for architects and contractors to revisit schools that they had delivered – taking a visit back every five or so years to assess how the cohort had changed and explore how the school building was responding to and meeting children's needs.



“If businesses want to specialise in this work, they should spend time in the school with young people. They would understand why and wouldn't forget it.”

– Judith Salter CBE,
Retired Headteacher

Bringing end users on the journey



One criticism of current SEND school build and design processes is that often not enough time is provided up-front at the design stage. This results in undue pressure being placed on architects, teachers and other parties to make key design decisions.

One outcome of this lack of focus on the importance of conversations between project stakeholders at the initial design and planning stage meant that headteachers often felt isolated and removed from the initial planning and design decisions.

Respondents mentioned that headteachers often weren't involved in the planning process early enough, even though they often had opinions and insights which needed to be factored into the design process.

One key learning from the research conducted was that headteachers must be invited to comment on school design early on in the process in order to shape the resulting outcome. Our participants felt overwhelmingly that early engagement with headteachers was essential to the success of any build – their views are vital in terms of designing a school that meets the needs of the children.



Conversely, if headteachers were not involved in the early stages of planning, this can cause significant disruption at a later date, and require designs to be reworked – with associated cost implications – or result in a school design which isn't optimised to fully meet requirements.

The value of bringing all school users along on the journey cannot be overstated. While relevant in mainstream schools, this is particularly true for SEND projects – where change can be harmful to children and young people if not introduced carefully.

Involving young people in the design and planning process of new schools and enabling them to share their feedback and thoughts can be an incredibly powerful way of helping them to feel more comfortable with the transition to a new building or space and enabling them to deal with the change positively. However, while end users are key, costs and programme will still need to be managed.

Early engagement on all fronts helps to make the design and construction process a positive one for all stakeholders. We have seen this to great effect on a number of the SEND schools we have delivered, and believe it is essential to creating positive, collaborative working relationships.

From the end user perspective, it provides head teachers, parents, young people and the local community with the opportunity to shape the scheme and bring their insights and experience to the process.

Commissioning and delivery colleagues should be working to create an environment where open innovation, and collaborative knowledge sharing is encouraged and delivered – driving forward best practice by ensuring that past learnings and insights are brought to bear on future schemes.



“I have definitely noticed that we have less issues when there is engagement and communication between the school and the contractor, and it is important for both to have a realistic idea about how long the process will take.”

- Isabel Horner, procurement



One size doesn't fit all

Creating great learning spaces for those with special educational needs and disabilities requires creativity and imagination. Effective building and classroom design is a crucial element in learning and schools need to consider a wide range of issues when it comes to creating any SEND classroom.

Children with cognitive and learning difficulties require, for example, sensory and physical stimulation. Those with behavioural and emotional issues will need more space than perhaps you find in a traditional classroom while those with sensory impairment may require specialist equipment and teaching aids.

A common thread that ran throughout our conversations was the importance of flexibility and a bespoke offer that provided children with buildings which would meet their needs and enable them to fulfil their

potential. However, within this, there need to be standard elements so that the cost is achievable.

While standardisation works for mainstream primary and secondary schools, this approach was largely seen as inappropriate for SEND buildings which need to be flexible and meet the needs of specific cohorts which may have vastly differing and complex needs.

In addition, SEND schools may require even more flexibility because the cohort may change over time, meaning buildings may need to be adapted to reflect this. Stakeholders highlighted that this flexibility needed to take a long-term view and reflect potential changes that might impact the cohort's makeup and needs over the longer-term.

“There is not one school fits all, I think that a lot of these schools need to be designed with as much information as possible on the end user, but equally they still have to be flexible spaces as the cohort may change.”

- **Darren Fellowes**, architect





What lies ahead for SEND?

An older cohort: 19–25

Local authorities now have an obligation to look after young people up to the age of 25 under the Children and Families Act. This change, which took place in 2014, has the potential to impact pupil numbers and the shape and feel of the student cohort over the long-term. It also significantly increases the scope and scale of provision that local authorities now need to provide and will require the introduction of new services and facilities for skills training and development.

The inclusion of young adults into the SEND mix could prompt schools to begin to forge deeper links with industry and explore opportunities for enterprise and skills training on site. This in turn, will have substantial implications for the requirements for SEND schools, with possible need for additional facilities and spaces that echo and reflect a real-world working environment.

Offsite construction:

In the fast-changing SEND sector, offsite construction is a delivery option which holds significant potential for the construction and delivery of new and expanding SEND schools.

As offsite construction advances and becomes increasingly sophisticated, significant cost and time savings can be delivered via this method. With a growing cohort and ever tighter budgets, this may be an approach which schools increasingly favour as it offers a relatively flexible, affordable alternative to a traditional build approach, so long as they are multi-functional and easily adaptable.

Offsite offers particular benefits for mainstream schools looking to include an SEND element, however – many mainstream schools are challenged by tight site locations



or other complications which mean they are not able to house a offsite addition.

Although offsite developments do increasingly have the opportunity to be highly-specified, the stakeholders we spoke to referenced concerns around the lack of flexibility and the limitations an offsite method could place on the creation of a truly bespoke solution.

Concerns over offsite's ability to truly meet the needs of the cohort remain – particularly as these change over the next few decades. However, as this model develops we expect that it may provide a viable solution and address some of the challenges that the sector faces.

Changing needs and advancing technologies:

The changing requirement of the SEND cohort is an essential part of the conversation around provision. As such, enabling inter-disciplinary conversations which explore the cross-over between meeting health needs and educational needs is key.

Examining how buildings can be designed and delivered to accommodate the multi-faceted needs of this cohort and that of other young people is vital to future-proof the sector and ensure plans for appropriate provision are in place.

Potential solutions to this challenge, include the provision of multi-functional buildings within the school estate that could be used for varying purposes and would provide enhanced flexibility for school users.

Children with profound needs naturally have increased requirement for equipment, and as school and health provision become increasingly aligned, school buildings need to reflect this and feature the space and facilities to enable optimum usability.

The range of equipment for young people with complex physical needs, such as wheelchairs and standing frames, is increasing, with more space required to house it. This will increase the size allocation needed and will need to be built into future plans and budgets.

Positively, advancing technologies in the built environment should help to make this planning and allocation process more straightforward and flexible for end users and SEND school commissioners.

Building Information Modelling (BIM) and other design and planning technologies, such as mixed-reality tech, are increasingly making the planning and design phase more flexible and user-friendly – drawing all project stakeholders into the conversation in a meaningful way and providing a richer experience, which enhances each party's decision making capability.

Building Information Modelling (BIM) and mixed-reality technologies are incredibly valuable tools for bringing schemes to life and facilitating decision making with stakeholders through 3D models and virtual reality, rather than traditional 2D line drawings.

End users are able to see and 'experience' each space, which significantly strengthens their ability to feed into and shape the process. These features help to communicate the reality of the space and share this vision with young people, teachers, and school users. This is an invaluable tool in helping to prepare cohorts and staff for the change – which is key for all users, but especially important for children and young people.

From a delivery perspective, BIM and Hololens also help to address the complexities of the site and generally enable a shorter construction period on site, which is hugely beneficial to any school but particularly to children with special needs and disabilities.

What our research shows: five key take-aways

1 Flexibility is key

Creating great learning spaces for young people with SEND requires creativity and imagination. Effective building and classroom design is a crucial element in learning and schools and delivery teams need to consider a wide range of issues when it comes to creating any SEND classroom or school building.

2 Bringing end users on the journey

It's essential to bring end users on the journey from the outset. A lack of focus on the importance of conversations between project stakeholders at the initial design and planning stage meant that headteachers often felt isolated and removed from the early stage of the process even though they often had opinions and insights which needed to be factored into the design process.

Young people with SEND can experience disruption and trauma if change is not carefully handled and communicated. Delivery teams need to engage with teachers and young people and equip teachers with the tools to communicate the development process to their cohorts – creating a positive and collaborative experience for everyone.

3 Prioritising the design stage

Current SEND school build and design processes mean that there is a shortfall in the amount of time dedicated to the design stage at the start of the process. This results in undue pressure being placed on architects, teachers and other parties to make key design decisions during this phase of work.

4 Understanding the cohort

Commissioners and the entire delivery team need to develop a deep understanding of the cohort in order to ensure successful delivery. This will enable an in-depth appreciation of SEND needs in individual areas and the bespoke nature of the specific challenges that each area might face. Both current and future need should be clearly and carefully assessed and a long-term view should be taken, which considers potential future shifts in care requirements and the changing needs of the cohort.

5 The knowledge gap

New platforms are needed to share knowledge gained through the delivery of SEND schools. Due to cyclical cycles of investment in SEND schools, a knowledge gap has formed and there is a lack of repeatable experience available to benchmark best practice. The sector also lacks a platform where insights and experience can be shared.



Moving forward: future commitments

The establishment of a Knowledge Forum

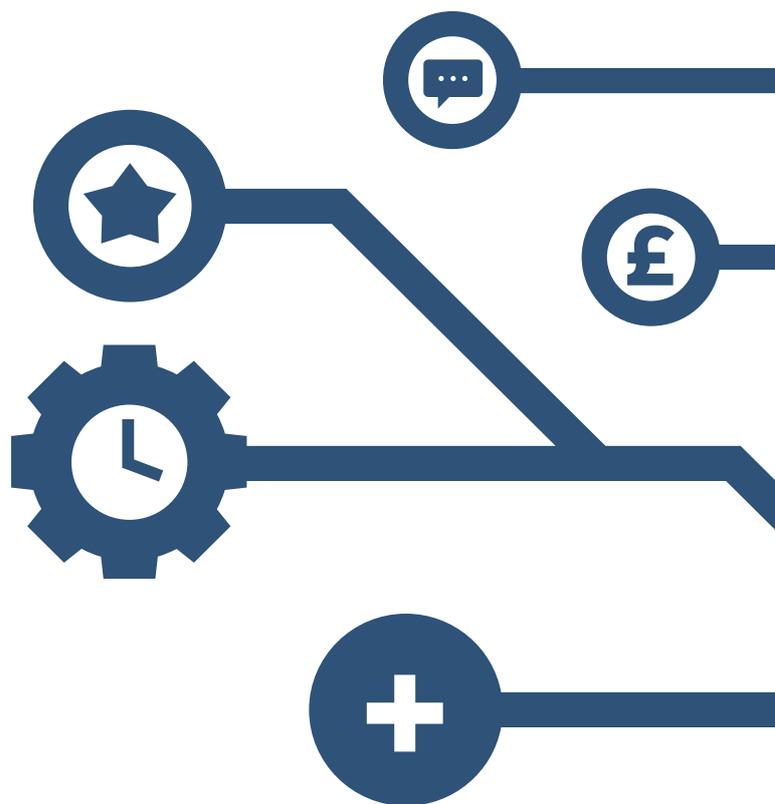
Our objective for this research was to work collaboratively to enhance the pathway for SEND school design and delivery to improve the lives of young people, teachers, carers and families.

Our qualitative research has helped to identify where we are now, but also enabled us to envision what the future might hold for the sector.

The conversations we have facilitated across stakeholder groups have been an exploration of the key issues facing SEND stakeholders and have shed light on specific challenges and opportunities facing those looking to commission SEND schools.

One clear theme which emerged from these conversations, was a universal acknowledgement of the need for formalised platforms to enable knowledge sharing and insights-led learning.

In order to respond to this finding and work toward our objective to create positive change, we have committed to establishing a Knowledge Forum, which will bring together key SEND end users and stakeholders to share thoughts, insights and experiences.



This forum would highlight best practice, facilitate learning, and assist with benchmarking – creating an open collaborative platform between users to support best practice.

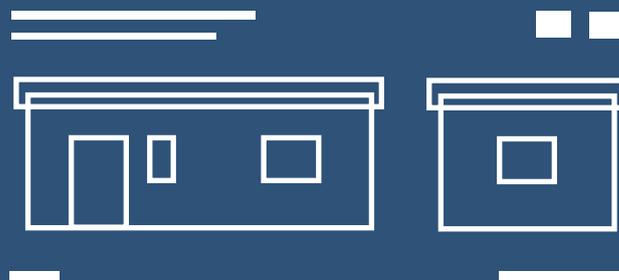
This would provide opportunities for end users in particular to come together and share their experiences, creating a blueprint for success that could be replicated by similar schools and help to support outstanding delivery for every single SEND project.



The SEND headteacher's handbook

The creation of a Headteacher's Handbook, will bring together insights and feedback from headteachers, procurers, commissioners, and school designers and contractors into a single, easy-read guide.

This document will outline best practice in commissioning school buildings and will contain tips and insights from headteachers who have experience commissioning and overseeing the design and construction of SEND schools, enabling fellow headteachers a running start on schemes upon which they are about to embark. The handbook will also feature insights from experts in the built environment, procurement professionals, and commissioning experts.



Creating a blueprint for success document

Having delivered a number of SEND projects in the East of England alone, we believe it is our duty to support the users beyond the build.

We plan to take this one step further, by revisiting the schools to analyse user experience, design effectiveness and lessons learned.

Our teams will explore how it is performing for school users, and look at factors including what teachers, young people and users would change about the school. We will also assess how their experience can help inform future design considerations.

In addition to achieving this through Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE) by returning to the school to explore how the school is performing, we will also host dedicated 'lessons learned' workshops immediately following handover to capture initial feedback.

This commitment will see our team create a best practice guide developed from user experience intelligence that informs how buildings are performing as the cohort changes. We hope that these can then be applied to future projects, making sure we continue to improve the pathway for SEND school design and delivery.

CASE STUDIES:

Highfield Littleport Academy

An all-inclusive campus of mainstream and SEND

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Chapel Green School

A local authority-led solution to meet the growing demand

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Highfield Littleport Academy

An all-inclusive campus of mainstream and SEND schools

Completed: April 2018

Value: £40 million

Location: Littleport, Cambridgeshire

Highfield Littleport Academy is an area special school for pupils aged two to 19 who have an Education, Health and Care Plan. The new school was part of a major new all-through campus development including an SEND school, early years school, secondary school and leisure centre.

The £40 million scheme was delivered in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council as part of meeting the school places challenge locally. The SEND school includes a host of state-of-the-art facilities for its 110-capacity cohort, including a hydrotherapy pool for swimming and therapy programmes.

Additional sensory facilities and carefully crafted rooms enable the teachers to provide a stimulating environment across the whole curriculum with a pathway to suit individual needs. Their motto of 'preparing for the next step' runs through all the provision at Highfield.

A close and collaborative relationship with both Cambridgeshire County Council and the Academy ensured the project was delivered on time, in budget and scored 10/10 for customer experience.

"As far as what we have here, it's unique – I'd challenge anyone in the country to have anywhere as good as this. It is somewhere the whole town will gravitate to and it will be the hub of the community. It blew us away really – it's about the pupils and here we're able to give them a great learning experience in a fantastic school."

– **Scott Gaskins**, Head of School,
Highfield Littleport Academy



Watch video



Chapel Green School

A local authority-led solution to meet the growing demand

Completed: July 2018

Value: £13 million

Location: Old Buckenham, Norfolk

In order to double the existing Chapel Road School's capacity, Norfolk County Council embarked upon a journey to create an incredible new facility in Attleborough. Chapel Green School is a 110-place SEND school built on a greenfield site, delivered under the Norfolk County Council partnering framework.

The two-storey facility includes a specialist hydrotherapy pool, sensory rooms and a large external play area designed especially for the needs of the school. Its 14 classrooms are carefully crafted to enable flexible teaching and learning enabling them to meet their motto of 'ensuring the best for every child that comes through the door.'



"The transition of our children into the new school was completely seamless. The building allowed this to happen. It was well planned and well organised and the children feel at home here. When our new pupils came they settled in extremely quickly and got on to the learning tasks straight away. The building allows the children to get into their learner areas smoothly and get on with the job of learning. They feel safe here and they have enough space to play and relax and be in the right frame for learning."

- Karin Heap,
Headteacher, Chapel Green School

Glenwood School

A user-led journey from concept to completion

Completed: August 2018

Value: £15.4 million

Location: Benfleet, Essex

“Morgan Sindall Construction was fabulous in becoming part of Glenwood – you could feel they had a real passion – they became part of Glenwood as they worked. They really listened to our feedback but also got to know our young people, understanding the importance of the building and how much difference it would make to their lives and the opportunities it would give them.”

– **Sally Waddingham,**
Deputy Headteacher, Glenwood School

Glenwood School is a wonderful new SEND school in Benfleet. Delivered in partnership with Essex County Council, the project was hugely inclusive of the end user from concept to completion.

The 210-place school for three to 19-year-olds is a two-storey timber framed building with 26 spacious classrooms, a hydrotherapy pool and specialist facilities to help meet the young people’s sensory needs. The team also created independent living areas within the school that helps older students prepare for adulthood and an immersive room that uses projection imagery to provide a range of environments for young people to become accustomed to.

Latterly, the team has returned to demolish the old school and construct a brand new 20-bedroom accommodation facility next to the new school, which will further support some of the young people and their families. (See next page.)



Watch video

Glenwood Residences

Going beyond to create a full campus solution

Completed: October 2019

Value: £4.4 million

Location: Benfleet, Essex

After completing Glenwood School, our team returned to the campus to demolish the old school and create a brand-new set of boarding residences to accommodate up to 20 pupils at any one time.

The new 'home-from-home' has been constructed for the school learners at Glenwood school and provides comfortable accommodation for children and young adults with severe and multiple learning difficulties.

The residential facilities will enable Glenwood School to provide 24-hour curriculum, Monday to Thursday during term time.

While staying at the residential accommodation, pupils will be able to learn valuable life skills and how to share social and residential spaces with others, whilst getting support in developing positive behaviours and relationships.

"I am incredibly pleased that we've been able to create so many more school places in Essex, particularly for SEN pupils. Every child in Essex should be able to access the education they want and deserve and being able to expand some of our great schools helps make this possible."

- Councillor Ray Gooding,
Cabinet Member for Education and Skills,
Essex County Council



Lexden Springs

Lexden Springs School

A fully integrated SEND school and residential campus

Completed: August 2019

Value: £18.8 million

Location: Colchester, Essex

Lexden Springs School is a £19 million state-of-the-art SEND school and boarding campus in Colchester. Delivered in partnership with Essex County Council, this major relocation scheme has increased the old school's capacity from 120 to 200 young people.

The school includes specialist classrooms, sensory rooms and a hydrotherapy pool as well as a new 30-place residential accommodation village. During the project the team worked closely with the teachers and pupils as they watched the building grow. Using 360 degree cameras and virtual reality headsets, they were able to take pupils into the building as it grew, creating an immersive experience ahead of the school moving in.

“Working with Morgan Sindall Construction has been wonderful for the pupils who are welcomed onto the building site every week with enthusiasm and shown the progress that has been made since their last visit. The builders and site managers have put on practical demonstrations, which our pupils have enjoyed. Morgan Sindall Construction is clearly committed and passionate about building the best infrastructure for our very deserving special pupils.”

– **Simon Wall**, Headteacher,
Lexden Springs School



Watch video

Lexden Springs

The Bridge School

Ensuring a smooth transition from primary to secondary

Completed: January 2021

Value: £9.3 million

Location: Ipswich, Suffolk

“We are thrilled to be working with Morgan Sindall Construction and Suffolk County Council to help deliver this great project for Unity Schools Partnership and the local community. Although the construction hasn't completed just yet, we are confident that the new school building will be a great benefit to the children studying at The Bridge and look forward to being able to hand it over for them to enjoy.”

– **Charles Coulson**,
Associate, Concertus

The major redevelopment programme for The Bridge School in Ipswich is being undertaken on behalf of Suffolk County Council and will comprise a brand new state-of-the-art secondary school building with six classrooms.

The building will also house a hydrotherapy pool and two sensory needs rooms, as well as music, food tech and art teaching rooms.

In addition to the new build, the team will also under demolition and refurbishment activities on the original school site. The new secondary school is on the same site as The Bridges' primary school, which was built in 2014, with the aim to provide the students with a smooth transition between primary and secondary education.

Regular visits from teachers and learners have been a huge success factor in the project, enabling everyone to get regular and interactive look behind the hoardings. The team has also hosted 'build it in a day' fun challenges for the pupils with scale wooden models.



Our thanks to:

Alison Revell	Cambridgeshire County Council
Claire Barton	Haverstocks
Darren Fellowes	Concertus
Edward Maxfield	Norfolk County Council
Isabel Horner	Norfolk County Council
James Montgomery	NPS Property Consultants
Jo Fellowes	Suffolk County Council
John Jenkins	Haverstocks (Retired)
Judith Salter CBE	Retired Headteacher, Glenwood School
Karin Heap	Headteacher, Chapel Green School
Melanie Foster	National Autistic Society
Nicki Price	Sensational Families
Pauline Morgan	The Hamlet Centre
Ralph Holloway	Head of SEND Strategy and Innovation (Essex)
Simon Bainbridge	Headteacher, Littleport Academy
Simon Wall	Headteacher, Lexden Springs School



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