
York Schools Forum**7th May 2026**

Report of Assistant Director, Education and Skills

Title: SEND Capital Strategy, 2026-28

Summary

This report provides the members of School Forum with information about the SEND Capital Strategy which will support the delivery of the local SEND reform plan. The SEND capital is designed to support the infrastructure change need to deliver national reform at local level.

Main Report

1. The government is investing **£860 million** in high needs provision capital allocations for the financial year 2026-27. This is in addition to the £738 million of high needs capital made available for the financial year 2025-26. In 2025-26, York received £1.7 million and this was allocated through an expressions of interest process which focused on small scale capital projects to improve accessibility and inclusion in mainstream. York will receive a further allocation **£2,312,280** of SEND capital funding for 2026-27.
2. As part of the local SEND Reform plans, local authorities are expected to set out how high needs capital funding will be used to invest in new places and adaptations to the physical environment. This investment is expected to be prioritised to ensure the needs of the majority of children and young people with SEND are met through inclusion mainstream settings and schools.
3. The conditions of grant for the high needs capital requires local authorities to demonstrate how high needs capital investment will support the following outcomes:
 - inclusion at the core of high needs sufficiency strategy, resulting in more children and young people with SEND accessing suitable places in mainstream (across all phases, including early years and post-16)
 - every child or young person who needs a place in an inclusion base can access one
 - fewer children and young people with SEND needing to travel a long way to access a suitable placement
 - improved suitability of the mainstream estate to support children and young people with SEND, with targeted adaptations made to improve inclusivity and accessibility of the physical environment

- sufficient special school and AP places for children and young people with the most complex needs, where these needs require a distinctive offer which only special or alternative provision settings can deliver
4. York's SEND Capital strategy is focused on the delivery of these outcomes with the majority of funding being used to create learning environments that promote inclusive practices and strengthen the confidence, skills, and capacity of mainstream schools. This also includes ensuring high-quality, sustainable, and diverse SEND provision, with sufficient specialist places available where necessary.
 5. The process for allocation of SEND capital during 2026-27 will be led by priorities identified in the local SEND Reform Plan. Grants will be offered in the following categories:

Small Projects (up to £10K)	Medium Projects (up to £50K)	Major Projects (Over £100K)
•Assistive technologies •Minor classroom adaptations •Specialist equipment or adapted furniture or lighting •Handrails, ramps, doors •Soundproofing	•Sensory rooms •Classroom modifications •Adaptations to outdoor learning areas to support regulation and address sensory needs	•Inclusion bases •Additional specialist places in mainstream

6. Priorities for York for SEND Capital investment over the next three years are projects that:
 - Improve access and inclusion and reduce severe absence in secondary schools
 - Capital investment in assistive technologies to support both accessible mainstream provision and reintegration for children and young people who have experienced periods of absence.
 - Developing inclusion bases on mainstream primary school sites which support children who are unable to successfully transition to secondary school due to their sensory or social, emotional, mental health needs.
 - Ensuring sufficient specialist places in mainstream settings.
7. The following criteria will be used to assess proposed capital projects:
 - Number of children with EHCPs
 - Attendance data
 - Suspension and exclusion data
 - Number of children identified as SEN support
 - Local Authority sufficiency data

- Deliverability and value for money
- Referrals to the Learning Hub

8. The allocation of 2025-26 capital was through expressions of interest. The allocation of 2026-27 capital will be more targeted and specifically linked to the delivery of the local SEND reform plan.

Recommendations

9. This paper is for information and discussion.

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