

Bristol SEND Education Capital Programme

2024 to 2030



Bristol City Council is expanding and enhancing provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)





Preface

As Chair of the Education and Skills Committee, I am proud to introduce this SEND Education Capital Programme 2024 to 2030, which marks a significant step towards delivering on Bristol's commitment to improving equity of outcomes in education and employment for all our children and young people. Our Corporate Strategy 2025–2030 places inclusive education at the heart of our ambitions for the city, recognising that every child deserves access to high-quality learning close to home, whatever their needs or circumstances.

This programme sets out a clear plan to invest over £50m to expand and enhance provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This commitment is driven by need, fairness, and the aspiration to break down barriers to opportunity. By increasing local capacity and focusing on inclusion, we are not only supporting individual aspirations but also strengthening our communities and future workforce.

I would like to thank all the families, schools, and partners whose voices have shaped this work. Together, we are building a more equitable Bristol where every child can thrive.



Cllr Christine Townsend



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Executive Summary

Bristol City Council's SEND Education Capital Programme sets out how the Council will expand high-quality, inclusive education locally for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Aligned to the [School Organisation Strategy \(2025–2028\)](#) and the [SEND & Inclusion Strategy \(2024–2028\)](#), the programme will deliver 569 additional places comprised of new build; expansion; refurbishment and commissioning activity by 2030 from an investment of £53.1m. A new free school, supported by the Department for Education, (DfE), is expected to add a further £35m to this programme.

A total of 392 of these spaces will be capital places. Of these, 84 have already been completed, with the remaining 308 to be delivered across Bristol. The remaining 177 will be commissioned from existing providers and the council's maintained schools.

By increasing local capacity, we will reduce long-distance travel, strengthen inclusion and fulfil our statutory duties under the Education Act 1996, Section 14.



1: Strategic Context

Bristol must plan sufficient school places across mainstream, special and alternative provision. The number of children and young people with an Education Health Care plan in Bristol has been increasing each year. Since 2018 it has increased by 164% rising from 2,193 to 5,795 in 2026. While overall pupil numbers are forecast to decline over the next five years, demand for specialist SEND places remains high through to 2030.

The capital programme is a cornerstone of delivering those places locally, ensuring children can access appropriate education closer to home. It aligns with the [Council's Corporate Strategy \(2025–2030\)](#) commitment to improve equity in education outcomes and supports our statutory duties to secure sufficient education provision.

Key drivers:

- **Sufficiency:** 569 new specialist places required by 2030
- **Inclusion:** More places in Bristol means fewer journeys and better access to local support
- **Affordability:** Expanding in-city provision supports financial sustainability
- **Resilience:** New place provision builds long-term resilience into education in the city
- **Geographical coverage to meet needs:** Investment is being made based on greatest need in local areas as far as is practical and possible

2: Programme Principles

Inclusion and equity

Every project is designed to support inclusive practice and equitable access to appropriate education.

Local access

Provision is distributed throughout Bristol to reduce travel and keep children connected to their communities where possible and appropriate.

Sustainability and good value

Schemes refurbish and repurpose existing assets where possible focused on value for money solutions, recognising market cost pressures. New buildings will replace assets that have become out of date and unsuitable to meet needs with high quality design and green credentials.

Deliverability and transparency

The programme establishes clear timelines, governance and reporting against milestones so progress can be tracked transparently and blocks to progress addressed if they arise.

3: Challenges and Priorities

- Bristol faces sustained demand for places serving Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC), Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)
- Delivery historically progressed slower than anticipated, this programme has been established to accelerate outcomes
- National construction market volatility and inflation present risks to costs and timelines, requiring contingencies and strong programme management
- The programme is subject to changing legislation and is wholly funded by the Department for Education, so the council is competing against hundreds of other organisations for funding

4. Programme Overview

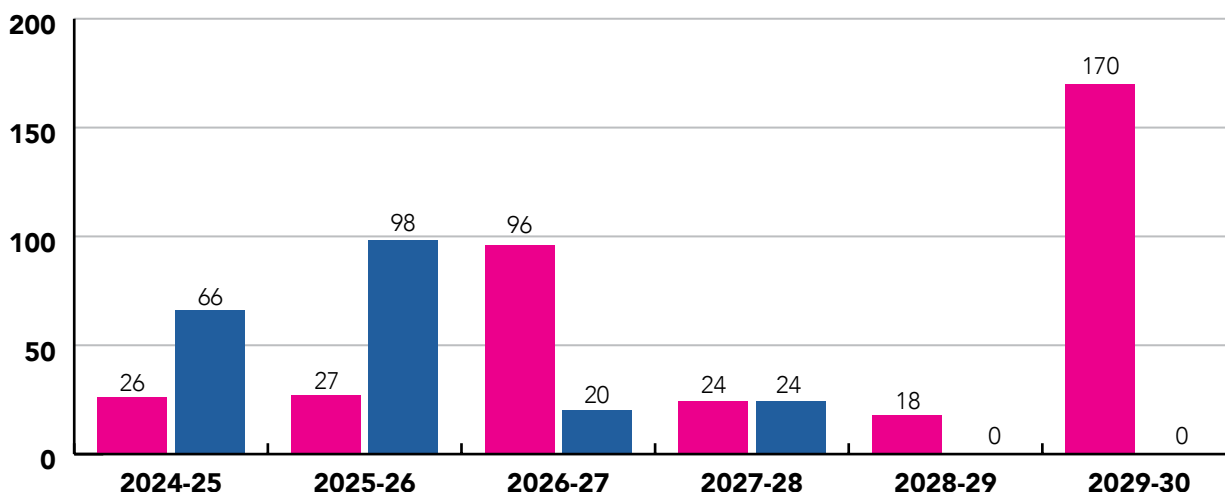
The programme adopts a blended approach: capital delivery complemented by commissioned places. This balances statutory sufficiency, affordability and flexibility.

- **Total need:** 569 specialist places to 2030.
- **Capital contribution:** 392 places (84 already delivered; 308 to be delivered via six projects).
- **Commissioned places:** Remainder achieved through commissioning where appropriate.
- **Status:** Programme reset with defined milestones and oversight.

The bar chart below shows the target combined commissioned and capital delivery of pupil places per year up to 2030.

Table 1: Target combined commissioned and capital delivery of pupil places per year up to 2030

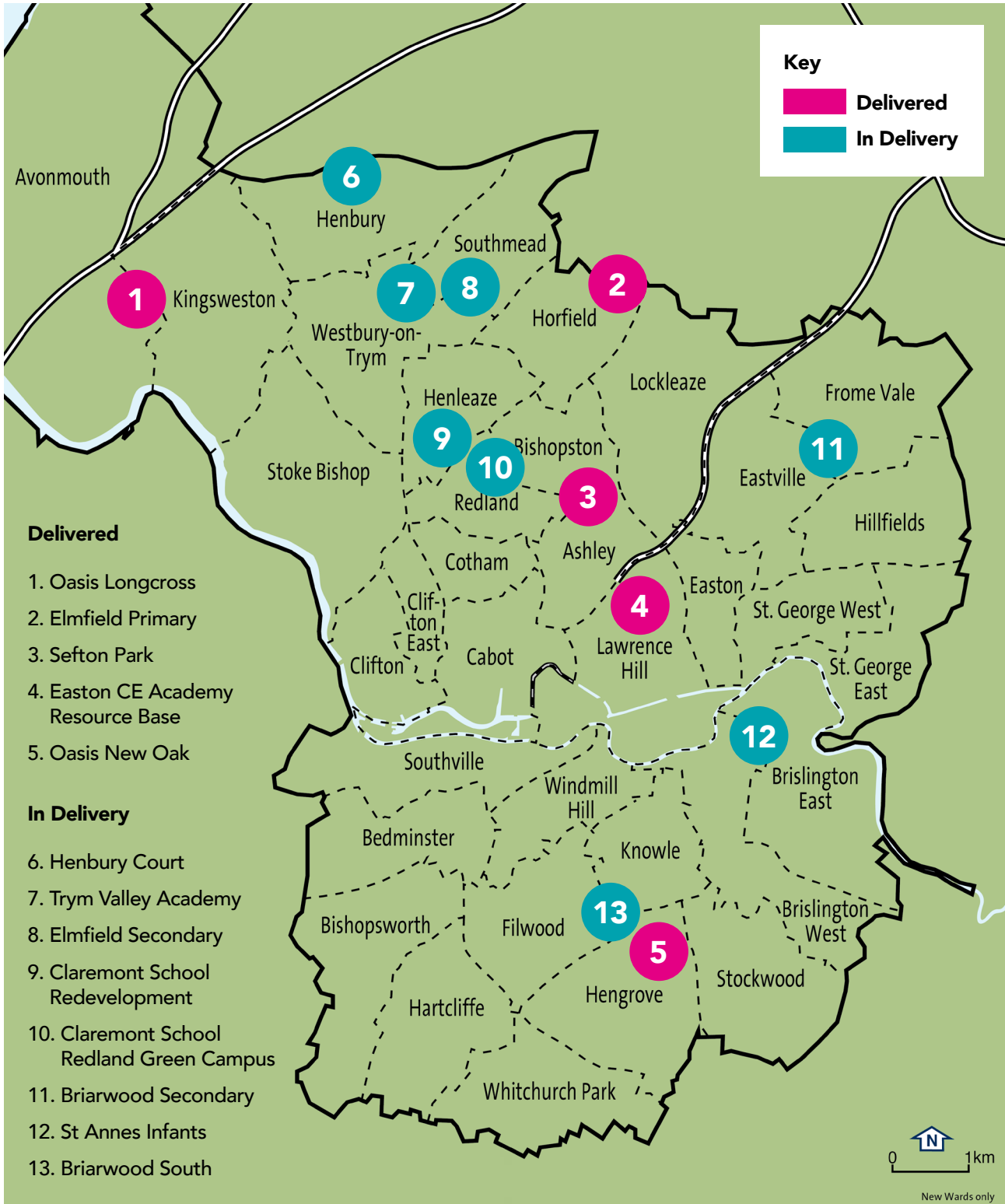
■ Commissioned
■ Capital Delivery



5. Projects in the programme

The map below illustrates where places have been delivered to date and where they will be delivered to complete the programme to 2030, followed by a short summary of each project that makes up the programme.

Figure 1: Delivering additional Special Educational Needs Capacity Citywide





Claremont & Kingsweston Schools Federation (including Redland Green) – Westbury-on-Trym & Henleaze

Claremont is a community special school supporting children aged 2-19 with physical disabilities, complex learning needs, sensory impairment and associated conditions. The existing Claremont Henleaze buildings will be demolished making way for the construction of a new school on the same site. The decant

of existing pupils will commence as soon as possible to Kingsweston and Redland Green schools with an estimated start on site for construction during 2027 for completion in 2029.

70 new pupil spaces across the estate will be delivered when this project is complete.



Briarwood South – Eastville & Filwood

Briarwood school is a multi-site special school for children aged 3-19 with severe and profound learning difficulties, complex needs, autism and sensory impairment. The school will expand into the recently completed Throgmorton House to provide 66 additional places which will be available from autumn 2026. This part of the Briarwood estate will be known as Briarwood South school.

An additional 24 places will be provided at Briarwood Secondary through the redevelopment of the vacant caretaker's house. The design work will progress during 2026, with construction scheduled to take place between 2027 and 2028. Completion is expected by summer 2028. In the interim, a temporary classroom is planned for installation within the main school grounds to meet immediate capacity needs.

24 new pupil spaces across the estate will be delivered when this project is complete.



Illustration showing the entrance to the new Trym Valley Academy special free school

Trym Valley Academy Special Free School – Southmead (former Elmfield site, Greystoke Avenue)

Trym Valley Academy special free school will provide 164 places for children aged 4-19 with complex needs, including autism, speech and language communication needs and mental health related barriers. The Department for Education (DfE)-funded special free school will provide 100 places by summer 2029 and 64 post-2030. The project is at feasibility/design stage under the Government’s Wave 3 programme, with an Enable Trust selected as the operator. The DfE have confirmed that the project can progress to a business case to agree the funding envelope that the DfE will commit. This is anticipated to be in the region of £35m and is over and above the £53.1m already committed and referred to in this document.

164 new pupil spaces across the estate will be delivered when this project is complete.

Henbury Court – Block C – Henbury & Brentry

Henbury Court Academy is a mainstream primary academy for children aged 2-11. The refurbishment of an existing under-utilised building at the Henbury Academy will create 30 new resource provision places with delivery expected in late autumn 2026.

30 new pupil spaces across the estate will be delivered when this project is complete.





St Anne's Infants School – Brislington West

St Anne's infants school is a mainstream foundation school for children aged 3-7 providing inclusive SEND support currently within a non-specialist environment. The refurbishment of classrooms and ancillary resource provision spaces provides 24 new places for children with complex ASC. Construction is underway, completion is expected in early 2027. The school will run the resource base as part of a new community hub that will support pupils in the main school, offer nursery places and opportunities for the local community to rent out rooms for events and functions.

A total of 24 new pupil spaces across the estate will be delivered when this project is complete.

Elmfield School for the Deaf – Southmead

Elmfield Secondary School for deaf children is a bi-lingual (English and British Sign Language) special school for deaf pupils aged 11-16. A total of 31 new places were created at Elmfield School for the Deaf for primary school aged children in 2024. This new project allows space for those children to be able to move into senior school to take their GCSE's. The new facility will bring secondary pupils together under one roof and give them a stable, high-quality setting in their local community. Works have started and are due to complete spring 2027.

31 new pupil spaces across the estate have already been delivered.



Pipeline projects

The programme includes 2 projects that will be reviewed mid-way to provide a contingency for sufficiency places if necessary.

Pipeline (from 2028, subject to funding and sufficiency updates):

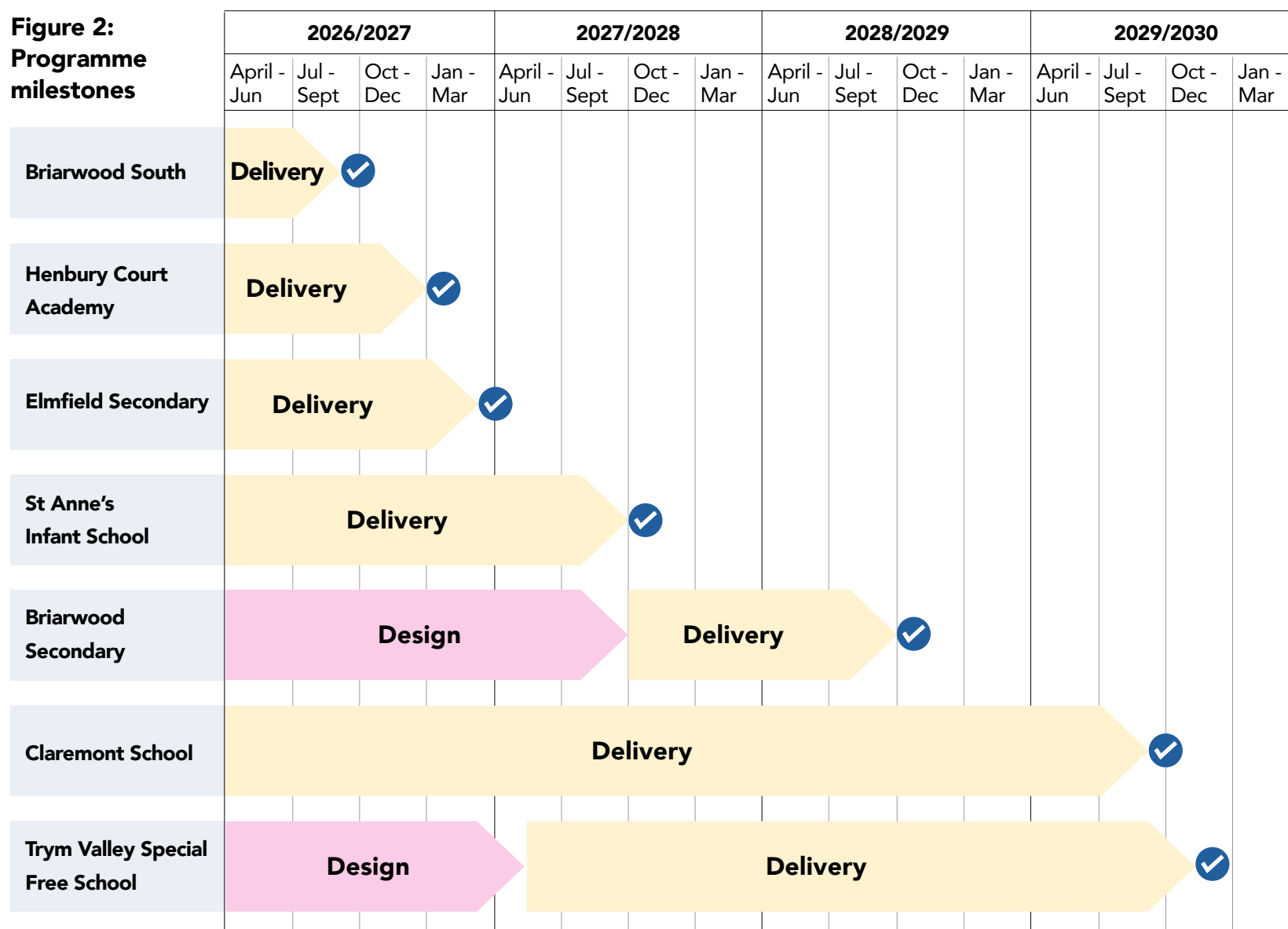
- A new building for resource provision at Broomfield Juniors (up to 24 places)
- Briarwood Middle School expansion of existing buildings (24 places)

6. Delivery Timeline (high-level)

There are a number of key programme milestones listed below and illustrated on the chart.

- 2026: Henbury Court Block C (30) and Briarwood South (Throgmorton, 66) complete.
- 2027: Elmfield works (spring) and St Anne’s refurbishment complete; Claremont construction begins.
- 2028: Briarwood Secondary redevelopment (18) complete.
- 2029: Claremont & Kingsweston (70) and Trym Valley Academy (first 100 places) complete.
- 2030+: Remaining 64 places at Trym Valley Academy delivered.

**Figure 2:
Programme milestones**



7. Working with education providers

The council will continue to welcome proposals from providers within the city who can offer commissioned places with minor capital improvements. Such proposals will be considered on their merits in relation to the following criteria; compatibility with the prevailing sufficiency strategy and needs of the SEND community; value for money; suitability of opportunity geographically; and the resilience of the provider.

8. Benefits and outcomes

The programme delivers the following benefits;

- more placements within Bristol enables children to be educated closer to home and for their families to maintain their connections to their local communities
- strengthened inclusion across mainstream and special settings underpinned by new and refurbished facilities that meet inclusive design standards, ensuring environments that support learning and well-being for children and young people with SEND
- financial resilience by providing suitable provision with Bristol to meet current and forecast demand ensuring sustainability of provision and reduced reliance on out-of-city placements
- improved experiences and outcomes for

children, young people and families as a result of greater choice and stability, alleviating stress associated with less suitable placements or long-distance travel

- holistic support facilitated by partnership working between education, health and special care services, improving overall support for children and families
- carbon neutral gains opportunities for new and refurbished buildings to increase climate resilience; improve site drainage and landscaping; and increase opportunities for biodiversity gains. The council has committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030

To track impact, the programme will monitor core measures such as places delivered, use of local provision, and high-level indicators of access and inclusion (aligned with existing strategy measures).

9. Engagement and consultation

Where planning permission is required, projects will undergo formal consultation. Throughout the duration of the programme, stakeholders—including families, school leaders, and staff—will continue to be engaged to demonstrate that the Council is listening, communicating progress clearly, and understanding needs. The programme builds on consultation undertaken for the School Organisation Strategy (June–September 2025) and the SEND & Inclusion Strategy (September–October 2024).



We experience many of the same challenges and struggles as other children and young people.



We want, and have the right to, the same opportunities in our lives.



give us a voice



We have the same hopes and aspirations for our future as all children and young people in Bristol.



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