



Northamptonshire County Council

**Free school presumption  
specification for a  
new Primary School  
at:**

**Towcester South SUE**

**Redcar Road**

**Towcester**

**Northamptonshire**

**NN12 6LZ**

## Section A – Introduction

Under section 6A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the ‘free school presumption’) where a local authority identifies the need to establish a new school it must, in the first instance, seek proposals to establish an academy.

Northamptonshire County Council has identified the need to establish a new primary school on the new SUE development at Towcester (Towcester South), to open in September 2021.

### Reason a new school is required

A Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) is underway in Towcester. Once complete there will be circa 2750 homes. As part of the infrastructure and Section 106 (S106) terms, a two form entry (2FE) primary school is to be built to serve the local community and is scheduled to open in September 2021. A further primary school is provided for within the S106, to be procured in the later stages of the SUE.

The school will have a capacity of 420 pupils, once fully open, and will be funded through S106 contributions. It will open in a phased manner, allowing it to grow to accommodate new pupils as the housing comes on line. A review of the build out rate indicates that circa 500 houses are expected by early/mid 2021, though the impact of Covid-19 on this is unknown at this time. The predicted primary pupil yield from 500 houses is approximately 150 pupils.

### Pupil profile – Towcester

Number of primary schools	2
Number of infant schools	0
Number of junior schools	0
Current surplus primary capacity available in Towcester	35 places

	Nicholas Hawksmoor	Towcester C of E
% pupils with SEND	9.5%	14.7%
% pupils entitled to and receiving FSM	4.3%	8.8%
% of BAME pupils	10.0%	12.9%

## KS2 Outcomes

	Nicholas Hawksmoor	Towcester C of E
Reading	83%	71%
Writing	91%	83%
Maths	92%	85%
Science	93%	83%

### Timelines

Opening date for submission of proposal	16 <sup>th</sup> July 2020
Closing date for submission of proposal	18 <sup>th</sup> September 2020 at 5pm
Interviews	W/C 19 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
Recommendation sent to RSC for final decision	23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2020

### Process the LA will follow when assessing proposals

All bids will be assessed by Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) School Improvement Team and shortlisted candidates will be invited to present to NCC New School's Subcommittee prior to a final decision being made. This comprises of Councillors advised by NCC's Strategic Manager for Schools and supported by School Improvement Team.

As per the DfE guidance on the commissioning of new Free Schools, the Council will provide a report to the DfE with the recommended sponsor(s) and the reasons for their recommendation.

The Regional School Commissioner (RSC) for North-West London and South-Central England on behalf of the Secretary of State, will consider the local authority assessments and recommendations before deciding which proposer is in the best position to take forward the new school. The RSC will inform the local authority and the successful proposer of its decision, and the local authority will inform any unsuccessful proposers. The final decision rests with the RSC.

### Contact details and where to send your completed application

The authority is seeking proposals from appropriate sponsors to open this new primary school through the Free School Presumption process. Proposers must be DfE approved sponsors. New proposers, who are not already an approved academy sponsor, will need to be assessed by the DfE through the normal sponsor approval route before submitting a formal application.

Bids must be submitted using the Free School Presumption application form (Annex B) available using the link below.

<https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/schools-and-education/Pages/proposed-new-primary-school-at-towcester.aspx>

All guidance, criteria and forms can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/establishing-a-new-school-free-school-presumption>

Completed application form must be returned to:

Chris Wickens  
Capital Programme Manager  
[CWickens@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:CWickens@northamptonshire.gov.uk)

Postal Address - Northamptonshire County Council  
One Angel Square  
Angel Street  
Northampton  
NN1 1ED

If you would like further information or wish to discuss your application, please contact Chris, via email in the first instance.

Email: [CWickens@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:CWickens@northamptonshire.gov.uk)

**NB:** the local authority led free school presumption is a different route to the DfE's free school programme. Further information about how to establish a new school via the DfE's free school programme route can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/opening-a-free-school>

## Section B - The School

- The school will be located on the SUE at Towcester South. Postal address is Redcare Road, Towcester, NN12 6LZ.
- It is being built to ensure sufficiency of school places in Towcester, due to the significant housing development in the town. Funding and the school site are provided through the terms of the Section 106 agreement for the SUE.
- The school is expected to be ready for opening in September 2021.
- It will be built in line with current DfE guidance and will be leased from Northamptonshire County Council to the successful sponsor on a 125 year lease.
- It will be a co-educational mainstream sponsored academy primary school for children aged 4 to 11 years, with a total capacity of 420 pupils, once fully open. There is no nursery provision on site. This facility is provided elsewhere on the development, in line with the S106.
- The school will be built as a 2 FE school and opened in a phased manner, from the lower year groups up. It is expected to have variable numbers in each year group during the first few years of operation, which may affect class organisation and mixed age classes may be required.
- The school is expected to open with one class (30 pupils) for Reception Year in 2021 and then grow organically in a phased manner on a yearly basis.
- The sports pitch on the Primary School Site will be made available for public use at times to be determined. A scheme must be presented to South Northamptonshire Council, in conjunction with the sponsor and Northamptonshire County Council, and approved before the school can open. The sponsor will run/manage both the school and the community pitch use.
- The sponsor will be required to conform to the Admissions and Admissions Appeals Codes of Practice and participate in the Authority's co-ordinated scheme for admissions and In Year Fair Access Protocol.
- Once a sponsor is appointed, an Admissions Policy will be determined by the academy, in discussion with the local authority. The academy sponsor will be responsible for preparing and submitting this to the DfE. All proposals need to ensure they take account of the need to serve the local community on Towcester South and take into consideration the criteria in operation for other schools in the area. The sponsor will also be responsible for ensuring all school information is entered onto Get Information about Schools (GIAS).
- The school will be expected to make appropriate educational provision for all learners for whom a mainstream placement is considered appropriate, including those with additional needs (SEND). The school will be DDA compliant.
- It will be expected to promote sustainable methods of transport for attending school, for both pupils and staff. It will need to complete and maintain a school travel plan which promotes walking/cycling/scootering to school where appropriate.
- The school is expected to be fully inclusive and address the needs of all pupils and parents.

- It will be for the school to determine any community/shared use facilities, other than the formal sport pitches mentioned above.

## **Section C - Vision**

Applicants should take account of the relevant criteria in Annex C of the free school presumption guidance.

As a minimum, please ensure you include the following:

- A strong educational vision and a curriculum delivery based on high standards of attainment for each key stage
- Plans for appropriate engagement with the local community and parents during the pre-opening period and any on-going engagement
- Excellent support facilities to meet the needs of all children, including looked after children, those with Special Educational Needs, etc
- A commitment to excellent outcomes and high quality of teaching and learning

## **Section D - Education Plan**

Applicants should take account of the relevant criteria in Annex C of the free school presumption guidance.

As a minimum please ensure you include the following:

- An ambitious, broad and balanced, deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and pupil intake. This could include a curriculum table and pupil build up chart
- Strategies for measuring pupil performance effectively and setting challenging targets
- A staffing structure that will deliver the planned curriculum within the expected income levels; with a focus on outstanding teaching (including strategies for effective performance management). This could also include an organogram and staff build up chart
- The needs of all children are fully provided for and how the school will be fully inclusive
- Details of enrichment and extended services, for example, breakfast clubs, sports clubs, homework clubs and music/art clubs
- The school's approach to: PHSE; the Prevent Duty; safeguarding and welfare; and promoting fundamental British values (democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs)

## **Section E - Capacity and Capability**

Applicants should take account of the relevant criteria in Annex C of the free school presumption guidance.

As a minimum please ensure you include the following:

- The resources you would draw on and/or deploy to support the development of the new free school by the opening date
- Clear evidence that you have the range of skills and abilities necessary to set up and then run a school effectively, including: managing school finances; leadership; project management; marketing; human resources; safeguarding; and health and safety
- How the school would be organised and what the governance arrangements would look like, including a diagram of the proposed structures

## **Section F - Funding and Costs**

- The school is expected to cost in the region of £7.7 million to build and furnish. This is funded through Section 106 funds.
- The new school building will be built to current DfE Building Bulletin guidelines and will be of sufficient size for a 420 place school.
- The school will be leased from Northamptonshire County Council to the successful sponsor on a 125 year lease.
- The DfE currently provides £25,000 for legal expenses to the successful sponsor.
- Northamptonshire County Council will provide a one of lump sum for start up costs, prior to a school opening, of £90,000. This is to be used towards costs for:
  - Funding salary costs prior to opening e.g. head teacher and finance support;
  - Recruitment and interview related costs;
  - Any other incidental costs

No further funding will be available over and above this amount prior to the school opening on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021.

- Pupil growth funding is available after the first year of operation.

## **Section G - Impact and Equalities Assessments**

As prescribed by section 9 of the Academies Act 2010 and section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the local authority must assess the potential impact of any new school on existing educational provision in the area. The local authority must also consider whether the new school would impact on any groups with protected characteristics.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and identifies positive implications for age and disability, with a neutral impact on the other identified protected characteristics.

These are set out in more detail in the Equality Impact Assessment which can be found on the Northamptonshire County Council Website using the link below:

[https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/council-and-democracy/equalities/equality-impact-assessments-eqias/Pages/children,-families-and-education-equality-impact-assessments-\(eqias\).aspx](https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/council-and-democracy/equalities/equality-impact-assessments-eqias/Pages/children,-families-and-education-equality-impact-assessments-(eqias).aspx)

The table below shows capacity available in Towcester primary schools and their expected intake in September 2020. This data shows there will be insufficient primary school capacity within Towcester for children moving into the new housing. The 35 places at Towcester Primary are expected to be taken by children moving into the first phases of housing.

School	PAN	Capacity – based on PAN	Number On Roll	Places unallocated for Reception 2020
Nicholas Hawksmoor Primary	60	420	425	0
Towcester C of E Primary	60	420	385	0

Details on how to apply can be found in the **Contact details and where to send your completed application** section of this document (page 4).