Warwickshire County Council



Warwickshire Education Strategy 2024 - 2029











Forward

I am delighted to introduce our Warwickshire Education Strategy 2024 – 2029 and excited for the foundations it will lay over the next five years.

Our Council's role in education is both complex and diverse and, in recent years, it has changed significantly. Despite this, we still have a crucial role to play, ensuring that every child in Warwickshire has the opportunity to benefit from high quality, inclusive, accessible education, and learning, to enable them to thrive and fulfil their individual potential.

Education settings remain at the heart of, and play an important part in, their communities and have an essential role to play in delivering our multi-agency safeguarding arrangements which ensure that children and young people are safe in Warwickshire.

This Strategy outlines our education priorities and aims to strengthen our position as a strong leader across the wider Education system and beyond. We are committed to working with schools, children and young people, health and social care partners, whilst at the same time maintaining a firm focus on achieving our four priorities. By doing this, we will ensure that we work collaboratively, in line with our countywide approach to levelling up, to improve the life opportunities for all children and young people, particularly those who are most disadvantaged and have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.





Councillor Kam Kaur Portfolio Holder for Education

Why do we need a Warwickshire Education Strategy



The education landscape within Warwickshire is both varied and diverse. The county is host to some 250 schools ranging from those that are maintained, selective, single, or multi academy trusts. Accountability for these settings is complex, with our Council retaining the responsibility for maintained schools, and academy trusts accountable to the Department for Education (DfE). Irrespective of the governance structures and accountability, when it comes to the provision of Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND), School Admissions and Attendance, Children in Care (CiC) and Early Years the Council has a range of statutory responsibilities and a leading role.

Our Council's role

Our role in education has changed significantly over the years, and we perform a myriad of different functions within an increasingly complex system. We operate as a key delivery partner, facilitator, and system leader; seeking to do this within the realms of continued challenges regarding internal and external financial constraints and the continuing requirement to pursue both value for money and positive, inclusive outcomes for all children.

In terms of headlines, Warwickshire has:

A population of approximately



with around

125,858 children and young people between the ages of 0-18

and

171,010 0-25 year olds resident in the County

339 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs)

of which 18 (5%) fall into the 20% most deprived in England and 8 into the top 10% most deprived nationally

on the overall Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019

248

state-funded schools in Warwickshire



6 nursery



194 primary phase



36 secondary 1 all-through phase



11 special schools

89,106 pupils being educated in Warwickshire's state-funded schools of which 1,723 are in Special Schools

3,497 children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan

and 11,596 children with SEN support being educated in Warwickshire's state-funded schools

5,510 children and young people with an EHC Plan supported across the 0-25 age range

The following proportion of children and young people entitled to free school meals:

21%

in Nursery and Primary Schools (the national average is 24%)

18%

in Secondary Schools (the national average is 23%)

in Special
Schools (the national

average is 46%)

Warwickshire also has a diverse local education provision offer, which is outlined below:

593

Early Years (Private, Voluntary, or Independent) providers (96% of which have a good, or better Ofsted rating)

265

Active Childminders (96% Good or better Ofsted rating)

286

Providers of Childcare on non-domestic site (95% Good or better Ofsted rating)

6

Maintained nurseries (100% Good or better Ofsted Rating)

192

Primary Schools/Academies (89% Good or Better Ofsted rating)

19

Primary Schools with maintained nursery classes

76

Primary Schools that have childcare on site

36

Maintained Secondary Schools/Academies (81% Good or better Ofsted rating)

11

Special Schools/Academies (80% Good or better Ofsted rating)





There are many strengths in our education system which we will continue to build on:

Warwickshire has a high number of children reaching a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of their reception year. The number of children meeting the expected standard of reading, writing and Mathematics at Key Stage 2 is higher than the national level.

At Key Stage 4, the number of children achieving a grade 5 or above in English and Maths at is higher than the national level.

Warwickshire has a higher number of Children in Care (CiC) achieving a strong pass in English and Maths compared to the national figure.

A greater proportion of young people in Warwickshire (95%) aged 16 – 17, participate in either education or training, which is higher than both the national and regional averages.

Less than 2% of Warwickshire's young people aged 16 – 17 are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) which is better than the national and regional averages.

10 % of young people aged 16 – 17 with SEND are NEET which is better than the national average. 3.5% of young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan in Warwickshire are NEET; compared to around 10% at a national and regional level.

The majority of Warwickshire's Early Years providers (96%) are graded either Good or Outstanding.

Many of Warwickshire's maintained primary schools (92%) are graded as Good or Outstanding. Overall 89% of schools in Warwickshire are graded as either Good or Outstanding All of Warwickshire's Further Education Colleges (100%) have a Good or better Ofsted Rating.

A high number of eligible parents/ carers (97%) access their entitlement to 3and 4-year-old Early Years provision. The majority of families (97%) were awarded one of their first three choice preferences of reception primary school place; and 94% were offered one of their top three choices of secondary school – above the national average.

In the past year, 535 additional school places have been delivered as part of our Capital Programme.

However, whilst we perform well in many areas, more must be done to address the disparities in attainment for disadvantaged children, where inconsistencies in attainment exist and a lower proportion of children with Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans are enrolled at a mainstream school in Warwickshire when compared to other Local Authority areas.

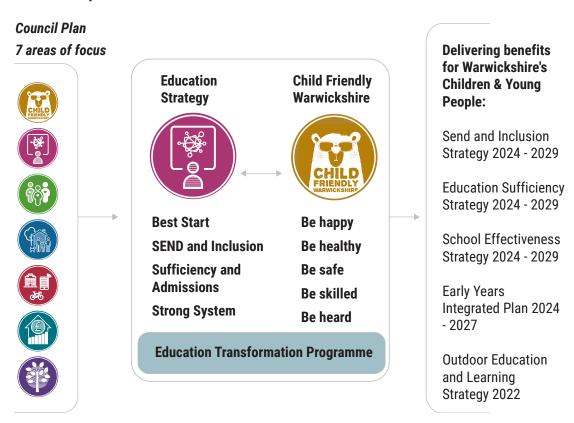
It is within this context that our Education Strategy 2024 – 2029 seeks to strengthen our role as a system leader, against a backdrop of supporting all children and young people, to overcome educational barriers, succeed and be happy, healthy and safe in their lives. We will do this through a sharp focus on the priorities and issues that are most important and joint, effective working across the breadth of Health, Wellbeing, Social Care and Education partnerships that operate across the county.



Our focus

This Strategy provides the foundation on which all current and future work within the Education Service will be predicated over the next three years as it aims to deliver one of the seven key areas of focus outlined within the Warwickshire County Council Plan 2022 – 2025. Underpinned by an emerging Education Transformation Programme and aligned to the Child Friendly Warwickshire's outcomes, it will be a pivotal mechanism to move our four strategic priorities forward, galvanising measurable delivery, so that

'Through education, (we will) improve life opportunities for children, young people and those with special educational needs and disabilities'.



Our priorities:



Priority 1 - Best Start We will secure the very best start for all children in the county



Priority 2- SEND & Inclusion
We will encourage ambition, create opportunity and support all learners to be the very best they can be



Priority 3 - Sufficiency & Admissions We will ensure Early Years and school places are provided in the right place at the right time



Priority 4 - Strong

System
We will operate as
a systems leader to
influence, facilitate and
develop high quality
education provision
that is inclusive and
accessible to all



Priority one - Best Start:

All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances particularly those who are disadvantaged*.

Our Council is committed to providing the highest quality provision for every child in Warwickshire and has a fundamental role to provide the following:

- Free Early Years entitlements for two-, three- and four-year-olds
- Sufficient childcare for working parents.
- Information, advice, and assistance to parents.
- Information, advice, and training to childcare providers

In 2017, the Department for Education (DfE) launched 'Unlocking Talent, Fulfilling Potential: A plan for improving social mobility through education'. A key strand within this is a focus on sector led improvement across Early Years provision, driven through peer challenge and support. As a result, in 2023, Warwickshire engaged in a Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review into Warwickshire's Early Years provision. Eleven recommendations were made for consideration by the Council alongside their partner agencies. These included a focus on collaboration, using data more effectively and coproducing services with parents and providers.

- *The Department for Education defines 'disadvantaged' pupils as those who have been:
- Eligible for Free School Meals at any point in the last 6 years
- · Children in Care
- Children who have been adopted from care or via a Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements Order

The responses to these recommendations will be considered within the context of our 'Child Friendly Warwickshire' approach and will now lay the foundations for an Early Years Integrated Delivery Plan. This Plan will aim to ensure that children have the very best start in their education journey and will link multi-disciplinary partners together and facilitate the provision of effective support to parents at the earliest opportunity, particularly given that the entitlements for Early Years provision will change during 2024.

Early years providers must guide the development of children's capabilities to help ensure that children in their care will fully benefit from future opportunities. They should promote the learning and development of all children in their care and ensure their entire early years' experience contributes positively to their development and school readiness. The associated learning and development requirements of the Early Years and Foundation Stage Statutory Framework are informed by the best available evidence on how children learn, and reflect the broad range of skills, knowledge and attitudes children need as foundations for life now and in the future.

In the final term of the year in which a child reaches age 5, an Early Years Foundation Stage Profile must be completed to assess the child's development against the Early Learning Goals. If a child has reached a Good Level of Development (GLD), they are deemed to be 'ready' for school in Key Stage 1.

Children who do not reach a Good Level of Development (GLD) are less likely to achieve throughout their educational journey and beyond.

In 2022, our Council conducted a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for 0 – 5-yearolds. It identified that children who do less well at the age of five are:

- Five times as likely to end up being excluded by the end of primary school.
- Over twice as likely to have had contact with children's social care at age eleven.
- Almost three times more likely to be struggling with reading at age eleven.
- Four times more likely to be struggling with writing at age eleven.

Whilst the percentage of Warwickshire pupils achieving a GLD at age 5 improved from 66% in 2022 to 69% in 2023 and is better than regional and national levels, pupils in Nuneaton and Bedworth continue to have a lower GLD compared to their countywide peers, as do those who pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals.

These disparities highlight the link to disadvantage and the requirement for us to closely align our Early Years work to that of our Public Health and Children's Social Care, Early Help Teams to enable the identification of need and provision of support at the earliest opportunity, most particularly before children enter Reception.





We will secure the best start for all children in the county so that:

- Parents can access the Early Years and childcare provision they need to work.
- Parents and carers know about and can access the funding and support they are entitled to for Early Years provision.
- Early Year providers are supported to be able to offer a sufficient level of quality provision.
- Early help and support are provided to children and families at the earliest opportunity.





Priority two – SEND and Inclusion:

In recent years, at a local and national level, there has been a rise in both the numbers of children with SEND, and an increase in the complexity of need of some children. This has placed a demand on the Council to continue to meet our statutory responsibilities and resulted in an unprecedented financial pressure emerging. Our ability to deliver the level of provision required within the budget allocated via the High Needs Block** is challenging and the need to manage expectations, source appropriate and available provision to respond to the rising levels of demand for support in a timely manner is essential.

In 2021, a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) was issued by Ofsted to the Council which outlined areas for improvement. This has resulted in the implementation of a SEND change programme, which has facilitated positive change including the sharing of new guidance to mainstream school settings, the opening a new special school, the introduction of eight new Resourced Provisions (Resourced Provision refers to additional provision for those with SEND in mainstream schools) and reformed funding for children with EHC Plans.

As part of the Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme of work, the Council is seeking to significantly increase the number of Resourced Provision places commissioned over the next 5 years. The required growth is from a current position of just under 200 places, to over 500 places by 2028. This will require partnership working with schools, upskilling of the workforce and capital investment. The current map of Resourced Provisions across the county is uneven in terms of geography and primary and secondary schools. The highest priority is to establish secondary school Resourced Provisions in Nuneaton & Bedworth and Stratford where there is currently no provision.

** The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) allocated the High needs Block funding to support provision for pupils with SEND who require additional resources to participate in education and learning. As a Council, we have sought to increase the number of children with EHC Plans attending mainstream school provision and experienced positive increases over the past two years, from 1,430 to 1,828; and the number of children within specialist settings has also increased from 1,797 to 1,851. The number of children in independent provision has however decreased. Requests for EHC needs assessments continue to be above the national average and the challenge that we must plan for relates to the forecast in growth regarding the number of children and young people with EHC Plans and the financial impact that this will have on the Council to meet our statutory duties. Growth here is predicted to rise to approximately 7,500 by 2027/28.





We will encourage ambition, create opportunity, and support all learners to be the best they can be so that:

- SEND provision is commissioned in accordance with children's needs, professional advice, and best practice.
- There is an increase in the level of Resourced Provision available for those who need it.
- The process and time it takes for Education Health Care (EHC) Plan assessments, appeals and reviews meets statutory requirements.



Priority three – Sufficiency and Admissions:

Our Council has a statutory duty to ensure that sufficient education provision and a viable supply of provision exists to meet local need and demand, from childcare and early years, to mainstream school years, for children with special education needs and 16-19 years. Over the past 10 years there has been a 7% increase in the number of children and young people living in Warwickshire. This, coupled with the duty to expand Early Years provision and a substantial increase in housing development, places a significant and sustained demand on our Council to ensure that there are enough Early Years, childcare, primary, secondary and post-16 education places available in the right places, at the right time, both now and in the future.

Since 2010, to accommodate this growth, we have worked with schools to deliver over 10,000 new permanent school places via numerous school expansions, along with opening 11 new schools. Over the next 15 years we must be robust in how we plan local school places and forecast future pupil demand. We anticipate a further increase in the total school age population due to the housing developments that have received full planning permission or are currently being built. Therefore, we must continue to deliver our Council's Capital Programme to expand existing schools, build new ones and provide adequate home to school transport to meet this growth.

Alongside this, we are working to streamline our approach towards our School Admissions process. As a Council we perform various roles which include coordinating the:

- Statutory Transfer process for Reception and Secondary age groups and Year 3 entry where appropriate
- 'In-year' placements for most Warwickshire's schools
- Statutory Fair Access Protocol to ensure prompt placements for vulnerable children.
- Standardised examination process for Grammar Schools
- Presentation of school appeals

We are committed to ensuring we fulfil the above functions in a timely manner, offering support to families who may need assistance to navigate the processes, providing the right information and the right time. In recent years we have implemented improvements to the School Admissions process and will continue to rationalise the overall application process for parents applying for school places, school meals and home to school transport, so that by 2025/26 there will be one streamlined end-to-end approach.



We will ensure that school places are provided in the right place at the right time so that:

- Early Years, school and post 16 places are offered in the right place at the right time to meet demand.
- Capital programmes are in place that new schools are built, and existing schools are expanded.
- Parents can access information and support to determine their preference for the right school for their child.
- The School Admissions process is streamlined.



Priority four – Strong System:



Our Council performs a pivotal role within the wider local education system, from ensuring that every child has a school place, to supporting schools who are underperforming. Whilst there have been considerable changes in national education policy affecting the way schools are organised and managed and how education can be provided, we still have a central role to champion educational excellence across the county and at a local place-based level. By working with our partners we want to demonstrate a clear and compelling strategic direction for the future that will enable us to deliver on the priorities outlined in this Strategy and address the wider disparities linked to key headlines outlined below:

• Attainment: We are committed to ensuring that all children in Warwickshire enjoy better health, living standards and educational opportunities and recognise that a good education can provide children and young people with a strong foundation to overcome any barriers they face and support them to go on to have successful futures. Whilst we have a role to ensure that schools operate effectively and provide high quality education and standards, we are not directly responsible for the outcomes in schools (whether they are maintained or an academy) in terms of the levels of attainment achieved. We know that overall, Warwickshire educational attainment is better in some areas than regional or national averages, however disparities do exist across the county, with children who are disadvantaged experiencing lower levels of attainment, than that of their peers.

As part of our 'Levelling Up' approach, in addition to the 22 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) which have high proportions of disadvantaged pupils, we have also identified that there are pupils in primary school not meeting the expected standard in Writing and Maths; pupils in secondary school not achieving GCSEs in English and Maths by age 19; a large proportion of children who are missing 10% or more of the possible school sessions and pupils with an EHC Plan who make less progress at the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 when compared to national and statistical neighbours.

Attainment amongst pupils in Nuneaton and Bedworth and North Warwickshire is lower than in other districts and boroughs. However, the biggest gap in attainment between disadvantaged children and their peers is experienced in the districts of Stratford and Warwick; for example, at Key Stage 4 (young people aged 14 - 16) there is a 37% gap in educational attainment between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils.

 School Attendance: All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full-time education which is suitable for their age, aptitude, ability, and any special educational needs they may have.

We have a crucial role in supporting pupils to overcome barriers to school attendance ensuring all children can access the full-time education which they are entitled to. We aim to work collaboratively with schools, academies, and partner agencies to overcome any barriers and reduce absence, with a focus on pupils who are persistently, or severely absent and those at risk of being so.

Whilst overall rates of absence are falling, the rates of severe absence continue to increase, particularly in the boroughs of Nuneaton and Bedworth and North Warwickshire, requiring local, targeted interventions to be implemented. The persistent and severe absence rates in both Boroughs are above both Warwickshire and national levels and those pupils who are disadvantaged are disproportionately absent from school when compared to all Warwickshire and national absences.

Children Missing Education (CME): Children Missing Education are those of
compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not
receiving a suitable education. We have a duty to make arrangements to establish
the identities of children in Warwickshire who are not registered pupils at schools
and are not receiving suitable education. Prompt action, joint working and early
intervention are crucial in ensuring children are safe and receiving a suitable
education.

Whilst schools are tasked with monitoring their pupils' attendance and will have systems in place to deal with persistent absences, our Council performs several roles regarding the safeguarding of children and determining what early intervention and preventative support might be appropriate to encourage improved attendance and provide assurance that any vulnerabilities are identified, such as the risk of neglect or criminal or sexual exploitation.

 Exclusions: Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable education for permanently excluded pupils, and for other pupils who, because of illness or other reasons would not receive suitable education without such arrangements being made.

Between September and November 2023 the number of Permanent Exclusions (Pex) in Warwickshire increased by 68% when compared to the same time, the previous year, with the highest number of exclusions occurring in the boroughs of North Warwickshire and Nuneaton and Bedworth. The main reasons for Pex included physical assault against an adult or child, threatening behaviour or persistent disruptive behaviour. This increase correlates with the upward trend in the use of Alternative Provision (AP)***.



*** The Department for Education (DfE) defines AP as "education arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; education arranged by schools for pupils on a fixed period exclusion; and pupils being directed by schools to off-site provision to improve their behaviour".

In 2023, an independent review of AP was commissioned which highlighted the growing dependency on AP as a solution for some schools to manage pupil behaviour. It emphasised the importance of working across the Education, Social Care and Youth Justice systems, to understand the root causes of exclusions, and develop earlier interventions and more inclusive models of managing pupil behaviour to reduce the overall reliance on AP.

 Elective Home Education (EHE): The majority of children and young people in Warwickshire are educated in schools. A small proportion are Electively Home Educated (EHE). This is where parents choose to provide education for their children at home or in some other way, instead of sending them to school full-time.

Over the past five years there has been a substantial increase in the number of children who are EHE, reflecting national trends. In 2023, our data highlighted that 1,190 children were EHE; an increase of over 50% when compared to 2019 with some parents/ carers making this decision based on the emotional and mental needs of their child, and others citing cultural reasons. A small number of Warwickshire children who are EHE either have a Child in Need, or Child Protection Plan and whilst there is certainly no direct correlation between EHE and safeguarding concerns, we must be satisfied that a child is being educated in a manner that satisfies legal requirements and that arrangements are in place to support any child who may be at risk of significant harm.

- Health and Wellbeing: Good health and mental wellbeing are crucial for children and young people to develop, thrive and achieve in an academic context, along with enabling them to develop effective social relationships and emotional resilience at all stages of their life course. As a Council, alongside our education duties, we also have wider Public Health and social care responsibilities that are reflected within a range of partnership and commissioning activities, for example the provision of children's mental health interventions, Health Visiting and School Nursing. We will continue to maximise the connections that exist between these activities and strengthen the opportunities to align our collective strategic approaches.
- Post 16: We have a statutory duty to encourage, enable and assist young people to
 participate in education or training beyond the age of 16. Generally, Warwickshire
 performs positively in relation to post 16 destinations with the proportion of young
 people who participate in education and training beyond this age, remaining higher
 than both regional and national levels.

Warwickshire also has a lower number of young people Not in Education, Employment, and Training (NEET) and a higher percentage of 16–17-year-olds with an EHC Plan participating in education or training. In recent years there has also been an increase in level of participation in apprenticeships, with more Warwickshire young people participating in an apprenticeship than at a regional or national level.



Whilst this is positive, we acknowledge that there are variations across the county that will require us to target our focus and engagement more directly. For example, there are a higher proportion of young people who are NEET living in Rugby and Nuneaton and Bedworth compared to the rest of the county, and a disproportionate number of vulnerable**** young people who are NEET.





We will operate as a systems leader to strengthen, influence and develop high quality, inclusive education provision that is accessible to all, so that:

- Strong relationships and joint working across the Education and Health and Social Care System and beyond are in place.
- Children are safe from harm.
- School effectiveness and educational attainment for Warwickshire children is high irrespective of where they live and their individual circumstances.
- Targeted, localised interventions are implemented, with a specific focus on geographies and communities of interest.
- More children attend school and there are reductions in absences, exclusions, and the use of Alternative Provision.
- Children leave school with strong links to post 16 opportunities.

****The DfE defines a young person in a vulnerable group if they have any of the following characteristics: Looked after/In care (referred to as Children in Care CiC in Warwickshire); Refugee/Asylum seeker; Carer-not own child; Disclosed substance misuse; Care leaver; Supervised by Youth Offending Team (YOT); Parent-not caring for own child; Alternative

Our Delivery:

The Warwickshire Education Strategy 2024 – 2029 provides the high-level strategic direction for all future work across the Education Service. It will be underpinned by a comprehensive, cross cutting Education Transformation Programme and supported via several new and emerging strategies, plans and approaches which are outlined in our Strategic Pipeline.

Warwickshire Education Strategy - Strategic Pipeline

Through education, improve life opportunities for children, young people and those with special educational needs



Best Start

Early Years Integrated Delivery Plan 2024 - 2027



SEND & Inclusion

SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024 -2029



Sufficiency & Admissions

Education Sufficiency Strategy 2024 -2029



Strong System

School Effectiveness Strategy 2024 - 2029

Place Based activity and approaches within Districts and Boroughs.

Outdoor Education Strategy 2022

Education Transformation Programme

We will also develop strong connections to complement and support the delivery of other key Council strategies which include:

- Warwickshire Council Plan 2022-2027
- Warwickshire Children's Strategy 2021 2030
- Warwickshire Economy and Skills Strategy 2020 2025
- Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020 2025
- A countywide approach to Levelling Up in Warwickshire
- The Joint Coventry and Warwickshire All Age Autism Strategy 2021 2026

Along with using existing, or creating new partnerships to facilitate engagement, coproduction and involvement of our partners and stakeholders.

Governance

A Delivery Plan will be developed to accompany this Strategy which will be monitored and reviewed on a quarterly basis. Alongside this, our Education Transformation Programme activity will see the development of a new performance dashboard that will enable us to effectively track our progress and the impact of our actions.

The key deliverables from the Strategy will be incorporated into the Council Delivery Plan with progress reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis. Regular updates will also be provided to the Council's Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee alongside the established reporting on educational outcomes. In addition, the SEND Member Panel will monitor progress against the SEND elements of the Strategy.



AP - Alternative Provision

CDP - Corporate Delivery Plan

CIC - Children in Care

CME - Children Missing Education

DBV - Delivering Better Value

DfE - Department for Education

EHC - Education Health and Care (Plan)

EHE - Elective Home Education

ESFA - Education and Skills Funding Agency

EYFS - Early Years Foundation Stage

GLD - Good Level of Development

LGA - Local Government Association

LSOA - Lower Super Output Areas

Ofsted - Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills

Pex - Permanently Excluded/ Permanent Exclusions

SEND - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

WCC - Warwickshire County Council



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For help to understand this information please contact us on 01926 410410

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