**Application Form**

Free school presumption competition for a new all through school in the area of MK East for September 2027

**Early notice –** wewould welcome early notice from providers intending to submit an application. It will be strictly confidential and will help us with preparations for the remainder of this timeline if we know how many applications we may receive. Please send a brief email to [sufficiencyandaccess@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:sufficiencyandaccess@milton-keynes.gov.uk) by **13 June 2025**. If you later choose not to apply please let us know.

**The deadline for your completed form is midday on 25 July 2025 to**

[sufficiencyandaccess@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:sufficiencyandaccess@milton-keynes.gov.uk)

**We will send you an acknowledgement of receipt. If this is not received within 24 hours, please contact the team to confirm safe receipt.**

**NOTE – Applications should be no longer than 60 pages including annexes**

**APPLICANT**

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| Name of your organisation |  |
| Lead contact name for your application |  |
| Email for lead contact |  |
| Telephone for lead contact |  |
| Address |  |
| Central email for organisation |  |
| Central telephone for organisation |  |

**Please type your information into the space under each of the questions below. The questions are in line with the** [**model criteria from the Department for Education**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/706177/Free_school_presumption_AnnexC-_Model_criteria_for_LAs_and_proposers.pdf)

**Please ensure that you complete all sections:**

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|  |  | **Scoring weighting** |
| Section A | Your organisation | 15% |
| Section B | Your vision | 20% |
| Section C | Education plan and staffing | 20% |
| Section D | Capacity and capability | 10% |
| Section E | Admissions | 4% |
| Section F | Capital project | 3.5% |
| Section G | Finance | 4% |
| Section H | Leisure and community | 3.5% |
| Section I | Partnership working | 20% |

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| **SECTION A - YOUR ORGANISATION** | |
| **A1** | **Please describe your organisation and how governance is structured (include an organisation chart). Provide experience your organisation has of establishing a new school or from sponsoring or working with existing organisations.** |
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| **A2** | **For schools, academies or free schools within the trust, please give details including the most recent Ofsted and attainment data for each. If the trust works in partnership with other schools or has supported other schools, Ofsted and attainment data can also be included but please make clear the relationship that the trust has with these additional schools.** |
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| **A3** | **Did you put this application together with support from another company or organisation? If so please provide contact details for this organisation.** |
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| **A4** | **Please explain how your organisation’s knowledge and experience of the local area would be used to inform your plans to establish this particular school.** |
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| **SECTION B - YOUR VISION** | |
| **B1** | **Please explain your overarching vision for the school and how it meets the requirements in the published specification. Mention (but do not detail here) if there is an enrichment programme crucial to achieving your vision. If you already have more than one school, provide a brief overarching vision for your chain and your planned expansion strategy, including how many schools you hope to have in total, geographical spread and timescales.** |
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| **B2** | **Due to insufficient space on the site, sixth form provision has not been included in the specification. How would you seek to address the need for sixth form provision from this area if your bid is successful?** |
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| **B3** | **The specification does not define that the council is seeking a school with a religious ethos or designation. Please demonstrate:**   1. **How the school will be welcoming to pupils of all faiths / world views and none** 2. **How the school will address the needs of all pupils and parents** 3. **How the curriculum will prepare children for life in modern Britain, including SMSC, PHSE, safeguarding, welfare** 4. **How the school will promote British values** 5. **How the school will attract pupils from different backgrounds and communities and encourage them to work together, learn about each other’s customs and beliefs.** |
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| **B4** | **If your intention is for the school to have a faith ethos, or to be designated as having a religious character, please outline:**   * + 1. **how it will be reflected in the curriculum**     2. **proportion of timetable devoted to RE and other faith based subjects**     3. **alternatives to prayer and RE that will be available for pupils of different faith or none**     4. **how school policies will affect pupils of different faith or none, including uniform, meals**     5. **criteria for staff appointments**     6. **how you will seek to attract pupils of different faiths and backgrounds to the school.** |
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| **B5** | **The school will be operating as an all-through school with separate buildings for the primary and secondary phase. Please detail what experience your trust has with the all-through model and how the trust would maximise the benefits of an all-through school.** |
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| **SECTION C - EDUCATION PLAN AND STAFFING** | |
| **C1** | **Please explain how your educational offer/curriculum plan meets the requirements for highest quality education for this community:-**   1. **An ambitious and deliverable curriculum consistent with the vision** 2. **A curriculum appropriate for a specialist SEND unit** 3. **How you would work with wider services, for example SALT/OT to meet the needs of pupils with SEND** 4. **How it meets the needs of the gradual pupil intake** 5. **Qualifications pupils will be working towards (vocational/GCSEs)** 6. **List of subjects and whether they are different to the national curriculum** 7. **Length of school day including enrichment time, making a distinction between compulsory and voluntary activities** 8. **Details of enrichment and extended services – breakfast club, sports clubs, homework clubs, music/art clubs (including children with SEND)** |
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| **C2** | **Measuring pupil performance – Please detail your:**   * + 1. **Strategy for assessments and data tracking including for ‘looked after children’**     2. **How you will establish a baseline of students’ current level of attainment including external validation of this**     3. **How you will review success measures and targets**     4. **Strategies to support pupils when they enter and leave the school**     5. **Strategy for achieving targets for performance, behaviour and attendance**     6. **Meeting the needs of those requiring literacy intervention**     7. **Meeting the needs of the most able / gifted**     8. **Meeting the needs of children with SEND at SEND support/EHCP level**     9. **How you will ensure inclusivity**     10. **Pupil premium**     11. **Your plans to liaise with and report progress to parents** |
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| **C3** | **Please outline the intended staffing structure which can deliver the planned curriculum within expected income levels and the extent to which the staffing model matches the curriculum. Include:**   * + 1. **Whether you are planning to use any of your existing staff and how this will work in practice**     2. **How you will measure and improve quality of teaching**     3. **Your strategy for staff performance management**     4. **Are you planning to replicate an existing staffing model from another school**     5. **Provide a structure chart for phased teaching and support staff (including nursery if primary) each year until the school is at full capacity in line with planned pupil numbers.**     6. **If you are not replicating an existing structure demonstrate that you will have an affordable structure and sensible phasing plans**     7. **How you would approach making savings if there were a reduction in funding**     8. **Will nursery provision be led by a qualified teacher**     9. **Please advise whether you plan to use the recommended staffing structure for the SEND unit and if not, how would you propose staffing this unit with the allocated funding provided.** |
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| **SECTION D - CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY** | |
| **D1** | **Please provide confirmation that you have access to the necessary experience, credentials, and capacity to expand your organisation and provide details of the access you have to educational, financial and other expertise either in your group or externally. Include:**   * + 1. **Who will be in charge during pre-opening**     2. **If the senior leadership roles are not in place, or there are key skills gaps (finance, project management, marketing, HR, safeguarding H&S), what is the timeline for recruitment**     3. **If they are in place, who will be the principal designate and who will be the executive head. Please include their CVs.** |
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| **D2** | **Please confirm that you have suitable governance arrangements in place and state what external quality assurance you have in place to assess effective governance of all areas of delivery. Please:**   * + 1. **Demonstrate that you have access to relevant individuals including a diagram of the proposed governance structure including lines of accountability between the company members, the school’s trustees, any local governing bodies or committees and the school’s senior leadership team. (see Academies Financial Handbook)**     2. **Explain roles and responsibilities of company members, trustees, any proposed committees and the principal**     3. **Outline your strategy for avoiding and minimising conflicts of interest and securing independent challenge to members and trustees**     4. **Outline plans to recruit and train additional members for the governing body and/or the trust board** |
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| **D3** | **What changes will you make to governance to ensure strong accountability both before and after the new school opens, and for the rest of your trust?** |
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| **D4** | **Do your Articles of Association include provision to appoint a Local Authority nominated governor for each school?** |
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| **SECTION E – ADMISSIONS** | |
| **E1** | **The council has planned for provision to open in September 2027 for year R, 1 and 2. The school is planned to grow in line with growth of housing. The opening of the secondary provision is to be determined at a later date.**   1. **Please confirm that you would open the pupil places gradually in consultation with the council?** 2. **Please could you provide an example of how you have previously worked with an LA / other partners to ensure sufficiency of local provision, whilst being sensitive to other local schools? This could include growing PAN or reducing PAN accordingly.** 3. **Please could you provide an example of when you worked in partnership with the LA to admit children and young people with an EHCP.** |
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| **E2** | **The council has outlined the initial PAN and how admissions will operate in the initial years, allowing the trust to determine admissions arrangements for September 2029 in line with the timeline of the School Admissions Code. Please confirm:**   1. **That the school will manage admissions and appeals as stated in the specification. If your plan proposes any changes to this, please detail the changes and the rationale for them explaining how this would benefit the local residents and existing schools.** 2. **Please confirm that you will follow the council’s admissions process for the SEND unit.** 3. **How the admission arrangements will reflect the way in which the school will meet the needs of the local community and provide evidence of how admission arrangements across existing schools prioritise the needs of children and families from the local community** |
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| **SECTION F – CAPITAL PROJECT** | |
| **F1** | **The primary phase building is complete and the design process for the secondary phase will commence at a later date. Please confirm that the trust will accept the building as contractually “complete” and that Milton Keynes City Council will not be responsible for any alterations the trust would like to make. If not, detail why you think otherwise.** |
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| **F2** | **Explain how your organisation would meet the physical requirement for the school to be opened for September 2027 and what resources will be deployed to enable this? Please provide examples of working with the council on capital projects.** |
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| **SECTION G – FINANCE** | |
| **G1** | **The specification outlines indicative pre and post opening support the council would anticipate to be in place. Please confirm that the trust understands that funding is subject to prior agreement by the Milton Keynes Schools Forum.** |
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| **G2** | **How will the financial management arrangements for this school sit within that of the overall trust structure? Please include any details of the finance structure and any other relevant information for example, how much central charges would be applied to the individual school by the trust?** |
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| **G3** | **How will the financial sustainability of the school be managed while the school pupil numbers, the funding and staffing are growing to capacity in line with the current growth funding policy?** |
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| **G4** | **The financial health of a school is critical – can you give some examples on how you have sought efficiencies or best value financially, in your schools / trust and quantify any efficiencies if possible?** |
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| **G5** | **How will you manage meeting the increasing numbers of pupils with SEND in line with your notional SEND budget?** |
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| **SECTION H – LEISURE AND COMMUNITY** | |
| **H1** | **The successful sponsor will be required to permit community use of the sports facilities on site and will be subjected to a legally enforceable Community Use Agreement (CUA). Please confirm that the trust is willing to enter into a CUA and provide information and evidence of any prior experience where you have had a CUA at any other schools within the trust.** |
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| **H2** | **Please confirm that the trust is willing to provide facilities for an emergency rest centre and polling station, which may occur more than once in a single year, if required.** |
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| **H3** | **In the initial years of the school being open, it is expected that the build will have an amount of spare capacity due to opening school places gradually in line with local development. It is therefore expected that the successful sponsor will make this space available for community use during this time. Please confirm that the trust is willing to do this and provide examples/evidence of where this has been achieved with any other schools within the trust.** |
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| **SECTION I – PARTNERSHIP WORKING** | |
| **I1** | **MKCC has a strong working relationship with all schools in Milton Keynes. It is expected that any provider will cooperate with the council and other schools by engaging with and providing relevant information as determined by law and information reasonably requested by the council. Please provide examples of how you have worked in partnership with local authorities and partners in areas such as:**   * **SEND – inclusion including commitment to ensuring EHCPs are a high quality with provision being delivered in a fair and equitable way - meeting the needs of all children within your setting** * **SEND placements – Local schools for local children** * **Fair Access Protocol** * **Suspensions and Exclusions (local inclusion partnership)** * **Admissions (including weekly starter/leaver data returns to MKCC)** |
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| **I2** | **The specification outlines that the new school will be expected to cooperate with the council and other schools. Describe how you work with other schools and provide evidence of systems leadership, including examples of how you have demonstrated this and worked with local authorities and partners - such as locality meetings and collaboration projects in relation to local priorities and strategies.** |
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| **I3** | **There is an expectation that the school will work in partnership with the other schools in the interest of the community.**   1. **How will the new school promote community engagement within the existing and growing community?** 2. **What role will the organisation itself play?** 3. **How will the organisation engage with other local schools? Please provide any evidence showing how this has been successfully achieved in the past.** |
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**CONTACT US**

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Post: Free School Competition

Access to Education, Employment and Training

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**NOTE – Applications should be no longer than 60 pages including annexes**

Prepared: March 2025