

Dan Boatright-Greene

Cabinet Member for Education, SEND & Skills at Worcestershire County Council

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Josh MacAlister OBE MP
Minister for Children and Families
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16th October 2026

Dear Minister,

Thank you for your response to my letter of 10 September 2026. I am writing to follow up on several points raised in your reply, particularly the continued delay to the Enterprise Academy in Malvern and the impact this is having on Worcestershire's SEND provision.

Firstly, thank you for clarifying that September 2029 is now the earliest the Enterprise Academy is expected to open.

However, I must express my considerable disappointment that a school originally due to open in September 2027 has now been delayed by at least another two years. This is a school that Worcestershire desperately needs, and I would urge your Department to do everything possible to prevent any further delays.

As you will be aware, Worcestershire County Council has recently received confirmation that it is eligible for an indicative £162.7 million grant through the High Needs Stability Grant, following approval of our Local SEND Reform Plan. This will cover 90% of our eligible historic Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit up to the end of March 2026.

I very much welcome the Government's financial support, but I hope you can appreciate my frustration. We are receiving substantial funding to deal with the consequences of growing pressures on specialist education, while one of the very schools that could help us address those pressures is being delayed by your Department.

Surely we can agree that this cannot be a sensible or sustainable way forward?

While the council awaits the construction of the Enterprise Academy, an independent provider has purchased the former Malvern Hills College site and is developing a specialist school which is now expected to open in September 2027.

This will provide a further 120 places in the county, and I want to be clear that I welcome any additional provision that helps children and young people access the education they need.

However, placements in independent specialist schools can cost considerably more than equivalent provision within the state-funded sector. In some cases, the costs can be as much as three times higher, placing further pressure on an already overstretched system.

My concern is that, with the Enterprise Academy now delayed until at least September 2029, the council will have to continue relying on more expensive alternatives to meet its statutory responsibilities.

Worcestershire County Council has already committed considerable resources to increasing specialist school places, alongside expanding and improving SEND provision in mainstream schools. Our programme is ambitious, and we are working closely with our partners to deliver the right support for our children and young people.

However, that programme relies on everyone delivering their commitments.

We have done our part. We have supported the Enterprise Academy, committed resources and worked to ensure that this much-needed provision can be delivered.

Yet we now find ourselves facing another two years of delay, with the associated financial consequences and, more importantly, the impact on the children and families who desperately need these places.

In short, the Government is providing substantial funding to address historic SEND overspending while delays to its own school-building programme risk allowing those costs to build up again.

That is not sustainable, either for the public purse or for the young people whose education depends on us getting this right.

I remain keen to work constructively with your Department to ensure that this project moves forward without further delay, but I do need some assurances that we are not simply going to find ourselves having this same conversation again in another twelve months.

I would therefore be grateful if you could confirm what steps are being taken to prioritise the Enterprise Academy, whether September 2029 is now a firm delivery target, and what can be done to accelerate the programme.

I would also welcome a discussion about the additional financial pressures placed on local authorities when promised state-funded specialist provision is delayed and councils are left to commission more expensive alternatives.

I will be in Parliament on Monday 2 November 2026 for the f40 drop-in event and would very much welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue with you directly if you are available.

We have done our part, and we stand ready to work with your Department to get this project delivered. What we cannot do is continue asking children, families and council taxpayers to shoulder the consequences of further delays.

Our young people deserve better, and I hope we can work together to deliver it.

Yours sincerely,

Dan Boatright-Greene

Cllr Dan Boatright-Greene

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