



Woodlane High School

achieving success in a nurturing environment

5 Year Strategic Plan 2026-2031

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Foreword

The governors and senior leaders are pleased to present the Woodlane High School Strategic Plan for 2026–2031. This plan builds on a sustained period of success, during which the school has continued to provide an outstanding quality of education (under the previous Ofsted framework), and highly effective support for all pupils.

Over the previous strategic period, Woodlane has strengthened its provision across all areas of its work. This includes maintaining high standards of teaching and learning, delivering a broad and personalised curriculum, supporting pupils' personal development and wellbeing, and ensuring that inclusion remains at the heart of all that we do. These strengths reflect the commitment, expertise and shared values of our staff, pupils and wider school community.

This strategic plan has been developed collaboratively with governors, senior leaders and staff, and informed by a detailed review of the previous plan. It has also been shaped through engagement with pupils and reflects the value we place on pupil voice in informing the development of our provision. External expertise, including strategic planning support from Heads Up, has further strengthened this process.

As we move into the next phase, the context in which we operate continues to evolve. Demand for specialist provision is increasing, pupil need is becoming more complex, and expectations on schools are growing. At the same time, the national SEND system is undergoing significant reform, with a greater emphasis on inclusion, consistency and early intervention.

Alongside this, schools are working within an increasingly constrained financial environment. Funding and resourcing do not always fully reflect the complexity of need or the cost of delivering high-quality specialist provision. As a result, ensuring long-term sustainability while maintaining exceptional standards is a key consideration for the future.

This strategic plan sets out a clear and realistic direction for the next five years. It reflects our commitment to sustaining and further developing our provision across all areas, ensuring that every pupil benefits from a high-quality, ambitious and inclusive education, and is supported to achieve, belong and thrive.

Our core purpose remains unchanged: to provide an exceptional education, tailored to the needs of each pupil, within a safe, nurturing and aspirational environment.

We remain committed to continuous improvement, to supporting the wellbeing and development of our pupils and staff, and to working in strong partnership with families, governors and external partners.

This document provides the strategic framework that will guide the school over the next five years. It will be supported by our annual School Improvement Plans, which will set out the actions required to deliver our priorities and respond to the challenges and opportunities ahead.

We approach this next phase with confidence, clarity and a strong sense of purpose.

Executive Summary

Overview

Woodlane High School enters this strategic planning period from a position of considerable strength. The school continues to provide exceptional specialist provision for pupils with SEND, characterised by high-quality teaching, strong outcomes, a highly personalised curriculum and a skilled, dedicated workforce. Demand for places remains exceptionally high, reflecting both the quality of the school's provision and increasing pressures within the wider SEND system.

At the same time, the school is operating within an increasingly complex environment characterised by rising demand, increasing complexity of need, national SEND reform, workforce challenges and significant financial pressures. This Strategic Plan sets out how Woodlane will respond to these challenges while maintaining the quality, safety and effectiveness of its provision over the next five years.

Key Strategic Challenges

Over the next five years, Woodlane will need to respond to several interconnected challenges:

- Increasing demand for specialist SEND provision and sustained pressure on available places.
- Increasing complexity of pupil need, particularly in relation to SEMH, ASC and communication needs.
- National and local SEND reform, with evolving expectations regarding inclusion and specialist provision.
- Financial pressures and a funding model that does not always fully reflect the cost of delivering specialist provision.
- Workforce recruitment, retention, workload and sustainability.
- Balancing increasing demand with the school's responsibility to maintain safe, effective and sustainable provision.

6 Key Strategic Challenges



Navigating Demand



Complexity



National Reform



Finance



Workforce Sustainability



Long-term Provision Sustainability

Strategic Priorities 2026–2031

Responding to SEND and System Reform

Ensuring that Woodlane remains responsive to national and local developments while maintaining clarity about the continuing role and value of specialist provision for pupils with complex needs.

5 Strategic Priorities for 2026–2031



Responding to SEND Reform

Sustaining Quality in a Tightening System

Protecting the exceptional standards of education, support and outcomes that define Woodlane, while operating within increasingly constrained resources.



Sustaining Quality

Ensuring Financial Sustainability Aligned to Provision

Maintaining a sustainable financial model that supports high-quality specialist provision and ensures that resources remain closely aligned to pupil need.



Financial Sustainability



Managing Demand Safely

Managing Demand and Admissions Safely

Responding to increasing demand in a way that remains safe, appropriate, evidence-based and sustainable, while maintaining clear boundaries around capacity.



Maintaining Workforce Strength

Maintaining Workforce Strength and Expertise

Protecting and developing the skilled workforce that underpins the school's success, while ensuring staffing structures remain sustainable and aligned to pupil need.

What Success Will Look Like by 2031

By 2031, Woodlane will:

- ✓ Continue to deliver exceptional specialist provision and outcomes for pupils with SEND.
- ✓ Maintain a broad, ambitious and personalised curriculum.
- ✓ Operate within a sustainable financial model.
- ✓ Retain a skilled, stable and supported workforce.
- ✓ Maintain safe, appropriate and robust admissions processes.
- ✓ Continue to contribute positively to the development of the wider SEND system within LBHF and beyond.
- ✓ Remain recognised as a centre of excellence for specialist education.

Success Markers for 2031

-  **Achieving Exceptional Outcomes**
-  **A Sustainable Model**
-  **Status as a Centre of Excellence**

Woodlane High School: Strategic Plan 2026–2031

Navigating Systemic Challenges, Maintaining Outstanding Specialist Education

The Strategic Challenge



Demand
Increased pressure on places alongside more complex pupils.



Complexity
Navigating abstract cortex SEMH, and communication needs.



Reform
Navigating national SEND reform while balancing significant financial pressures.



Finance
Increased costs of coins and current funding assets.



Workforce
Managing specialist recruitment and funding model.



Sustainability
Navigating tree growing grow/school/school.

Our Strategic Priorities



SEND Reform & Sustaining Quality

Adapting to national changes while protecting the 'outstanding' education that defines Woodlane.

Sustaining Quality & Financial Sustainability

Aligning resources with pupil need and protecting the skilled team underpinning school success.



Managing Demand Ensuring Workforce Strength



Vision for 2031



Exceptional Outcomes

Delivering ambitious, personalised curriculum results for all pupils with SEND.



A Sustainable Model

Operating with a stable, supported workforce and a robust, sustainable financial framework.



Centre of Excellence

Maintaining status as a leading specialist education provider within the local community.

Projected Financial Pressure

Rising Net Deficits

Operational costs and staffing requirements are projected to outpace current funding frameworks.



Using this Document

This strategic plan is supported by the Executive Summary above, which provides a concise overview of the school's key strategic priorities, opportunities and challenges. The full strategic plan has been designed so that each priority can be read as a largely standalone section. As a result, some key themes, such as workforce, demand, quality, SEND reform and financial sustainability, are referenced across multiple priorities. This is intentional and reflects the interconnected nature of the school's work. While there may be some overlap in context, each priority explores these themes from a different perspective and sets out the specific outcomes, actions and timescales relevant to that area.

Acronym Key

Acronym	Meaning
ASC	Autistic Spectrum Condition
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
AP	Alternative Provision
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DfE	Department for Education
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
ISP	Individual Support Plan
IT	Information Technology
KS3	Key Stage 3
KS4	Key Stage 4
LA	Local Authority
LBHF	London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
MAT	Multi-Academy Trust
NHS	National Health Service
NPQ	National Professional Qualification
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
OT	Occupational Therapy
SLCN	Speech Language and Communication Needs
SALT	Speech and Language Therapy
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SEMH	Social Emotional and Mental Health
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SRMA	School Resource Management Adviser
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

Context

Woodlane High School is a successful, purpose-built community special school for pupils aged 11–16, located in the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham. The school has a well-established reputation for delivering a high-quality, inclusive and personalised education for pupils with a wide range of special educational needs and disabilities.

Woodlane is an outstanding school. Following the most recent Ofsted inspection in November 2024, the school was judged to have maintained the exceptionally high standards identified at the previous inspection, with provision continuing to be described as “*second to none*”.

Ofsted reports that Woodlane is a happy and safe place where pupils thrive, where there is a “*razor-sharp focus on what is best for each pupil*”, and where behaviour, relationships and outcomes are consistently of a very high standard.

Pupil Profile and Provision

The school supports pupils with a wide and increasingly complex range of needs, including:

- speech, language and communication difficulties
- autism spectrum conditions
- specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyspraxia
- social, emotional and mental health needs
- medical and physical needs
- pupils who have experienced significant barriers to learning in mainstream settings

Pupils typically enter the school with attainment significantly below age-related expectations. Through a carefully designed and highly personalised approach, pupils make strong progress from their individual starting points and achieve exceptionally well.

The curriculum at Woodlane is broad, ambitious and highly personalised. Ofsted notes that it is “*meticulously designed*” and often exceeds national expectations, including providing access to a wide range of accredited qualifications, including GCSEs.

The school’s provision places equal emphasis on:

- academic achievement
- personal development and wellbeing
- independence and life skills
- preparation for the next stage of education and adulthood

This ensures that pupils leave Woodlane well prepared for future education, training and independent living.

Demand and Capacity

Demand for places at Woodlane remains exceptionally high. The school continues to receive a significant number of consultation requests from a range of local authorities, reflecting both the strong reputation of the school and wider pressures within the SEND system.

Within the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham (LBHF) and nationally, there has been a sustained increase in the number of pupils with SEND and Education, Health and Care Plans, alongside increasing complexity of need.

The school currently operates above its sustainable capacity. While demand for specialist provision continues to grow, leaders are clear that maintaining the quality, safety and effectiveness of provision must remain the priority.

Local Authority Context (LBHF)

Woodlane operates within a local authority that communicates its commitment to developing a more inclusive and sustainable SEND system. The Hammersmith & Fulham SEND Strategy (2023–2028) sets out a clear ambition to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND, while promoting inclusion and independence.

Key priorities within the borough include:

- strengthening inclusive practice within mainstream settings
- improving early identification and intervention
- developing a graduated approach to support
- increasing access to high-quality local provision

The SEND Sufficiency Review highlights the need to ensure sufficient local provision to meet increasing demand, while reducing reliance on out-of-borough placements and supporting pupils to be educated within their local community wherever possible.

Within this context, specialist settings such as Woodlane play a critical role in:

- delivering high-quality specialist provision
- supporting pupils whose needs cannot be met solely within mainstream settings
- contributing to the wider development of SEND provision across the borough

Staffing and Specialist Support

Woodlane benefits from a highly skilled, experienced and committed staff team. Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and expertise in adapting learning to meet the needs of pupils with SEND.

The school works in close partnership with a range of professionals, including speech and language therapists and occupational therapists, ensuring that provision is holistic and responsive to pupils' needs.

However, the school continues to operate within a challenging workforce context, including:

- recruitment and retention of specialist teaching staff
- national shortages in therapy services
- increasing demands associated with complex pupil need
- financial pressures

In addition, the school has recently undertaken a series of staffing and structural changes as part of a wider programme of financial review, with more changes scheduled for the next financial year. These changes have been implemented in response to external financial pressures and expectations, and reflect a need to ensure the school's long-term financial sustainability.

Leaders and governors have approached this process with careful consideration, ensuring that decisions are:

- evidence-based
- proportionate
- and aligned with statutory responsibilities

While these changes have been necessary within the current financial context, leaders and governors recognise that they have reduced flexibility within staffing structures and increased pressure on capacity. The current model now represents a carefully balanced position, where staffing is closely aligned to operational need and wider industry standards.

Leaders remain clear that:

- the quality, safety and consistency of provision must not be compromised
- stable staffing structures are essential for pupils with SEND
- and further reductions would present increasing risk to provision, workforce sustainability and the school's ability to meet pupil need effectively

Within this context, maintaining a stable, skilled and supported workforce remains a critical priority for the school moving forward.

Financial and Operational Context

The school has a strong track record of financial management and has taken proactive steps to ensure long-term sustainability through careful planning and efficiency.

However, the school operates within a financial context where funding does not always fully reflect:

- the complexity of pupil need
- the staffing and specialist support required
- the cost of delivering a highly personalised, multi-pathway curriculum

At the same time, expectations on schools continue to grow, including increased responsibilities across education, health and social care systems.

Within its current footprint, the school is operating over capacity. As a result, any future development must be carefully considered to ensure that:

- provision quality is maintained
- staffing remains sustainable
- pupils continue to receive a high standard of support

Summary

Woodlane High School is a highly effective and outward-facing specialist provision, delivering exceptional outcomes for pupils within a complex and evolving system.

The school operates within a context characterised by:

- increasing demand for SEND provision
- growing complexity of pupil need
- evolving expectations around inclusion
- ongoing financial and workforce pressures

Despite these challenges, the school remains well placed to continue delivering high-quality provision, supporting pupils to thrive, and contributing meaningfully to the wider SEND system within LBHF.

Admissions

Admissions to Woodlane High School are managed in partnership with Local Authorities, with placements typically agreed through the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) process.

The school supports pupils whose needs are such that they cannot be appropriately met within mainstream settings, or where a placement has broken down, even with targeted support and intervention. Pupils admitted to Woodlane typically present with a complex range of needs, including speech, language and communication needs, autism spectrum conditions, specific learning difficulties, and social, emotional and mental health needs, alongside attainment significantly below age-related expectations.

Admission decisions are informed by the Headteacher, based on a detailed review of professional evidence and the pupil's EHCP. Where required, additional assessment or observation may be used to ensure that the school can meet a pupil's needs effectively. Other senior leaders, the SENDCo, the Transition or Nurture Leader may also be involved in assessments or observations to support the decision-making processes.

The Local Authority retains responsibility for determining whether to name Woodlane High School within a pupil's EHCP, taking into account the school's advice and wider placement considerations.

A central principle of the admissions process is that placements must be:

- appropriate to the pupil's age, ability, aptitude and special educational needs
- able to be supported safely and effectively within the school's resources and staffing
- compatible with maintaining the quality of provision for pupils already on roll
- an efficient use of resources

Local authorities will sometimes contradict the advice of the headteacher and name Woodlane, despite clear communication outlining why we cannot meet a pupil's particular special educational needs at Woodlane, this creates significant pressures in already challenging circumstances.

The school receives a very high number of consultation requests each year, reflecting both its strong reputation and the increasing demand for specialist provision. Pupils attend Woodlane from over 10 different Local Authorities, with this pattern of placement largely driven by parental preference for the school's provision. This further contributes to the level of demand and pressure on places.

Woodlane is currently operating at full capacity, with nearly 110 pupils. This represents the upper limit of the school's sustainable capacity in the long term. Leaders are clear that exceeding this level significantly could risk:

- compromising the quality of education
- impacting pupil wellbeing and safety
- and reducing the effectiveness of provision across the school

However, in response to ongoing financial pressures, the school is carefully considering the organisation of classes, including the potential for up to 12 pupils per class where appropriate. This reflects a need to balance financial sustainability with maintaining high-quality provision. Any such changes are implemented cautiously, ensuring that:

- pupil need remains central to all decisions
- staffing ratios and support remain appropriate
- and the quality and safety of provision are not compromised

As a result, the number of available places remains extremely limited, and all admissions decisions must carefully balance:

- the needs of individual pupils
- the demand for specialist provision
- and the school's responsibility to maintain a high standard of education and support for all pupils

Ethos, Values and Aims

At Woodlane High School, our ethos, '*achieving success in a nurturing environment*', underpins all aspects of school life.

Our ethos, values and aims have been developed collaboratively with staff and pupils and are central to our everyday practice. They inform our policies, our curriculum and our approach to supporting pupils, ensuring a consistent, clear and common purpose across the school community.

We are committed to providing a safe, supportive and ambitious environment in which every pupil is valued, respected and encouraged to succeed. We recognise that all pupils have individual strengths, needs and starting points, and we combine high expectations with a strong emphasis on care, support and understanding.

Positive relationships between staff and pupils are at the heart of the school. These relationships enable pupils to feel safe, develop confidence and engage successfully in learning.

We are proud to be a community where pupils feel listened to, supported and encouraged to take pride in their achievements.

Values

Our work is underpinned by a clear set of values, which are consistently reinforced through all aspects of school life:

- **Kindness**
We promote a caring and supportive environment where pupils and staff look after one another and show consideration for others.
- **Tolerance**
We celebrate diversity and promote understanding, ensuring that all members of the school community feel included and respected.
- **Honesty**
We encourage openness, integrity and accountability in all that we do.
- **Independence**
We support pupils to develop independence at a level appropriate to their individual needs, building confidence and life skills over time.
- **Effort**
We recognise and value effort as a key driver of progress, encouraging pupils to persevere and take pride in their work.
- **Aspiration**
We promote high expectations and ambition for all pupils, supporting them to achieve outcomes that prepare them for their future.

- **Resilience**
We help pupils to manage challenges, develop coping strategies and learn from setbacks.
- **Achievement**
We celebrate success in all its forms, recognising both academic progress and personal development.
- **Respect**
We foster a culture of mutual respect, ensuring positive relationships across the school community.

These values are integral to the culture of the school and support pupils in their development both within and beyond the classroom.

On a termly basis, form tutors review each pupil's development against the school values, considering the extent to which these have been demonstrated during the previous term. While these assessments are based on professional judgement and may vary slightly between tutors, they provide valuable insight into pupils' personal development and day-to-day engagement with the school's ethos. As the staff who spend the greatest amount of time with pupils, form tutors are well placed to make these evaluations.

At the most recent assessment point, staff judged 93.54% of pupils to be working within the Exceptional, Strong Standard or Expected Standard categories across all values.

The values with the highest proportion of pupils assessed as Exceptional were:

- Respect – 42.86%
- Kindness – 38.78%
- Honesty – 35.71%

The values with the highest overall positive outcomes (Exceptional, Strong Standard or Expected Standard) were:

- Honesty – 95.98%
- Kindness – 95.98%
- Respect – 95.98%

These findings demonstrate the strong culture that exists across the school and reflect pupils' positive development in the values that underpin Woodlane's ethos.

The Current Landscape

Overview

Woodlane High School continues to operate from a position of strength, delivering an exceptional quality of education and achieving consistently strong outcomes for pupils. This has been recognised through the most recent Ofsted inspection, which confirms that provision remains of an exceptionally high standard.

However, the context in which the school operates is increasingly complex and continues to evolve. The next phase of the school's development must therefore be understood within a wider local and national landscape characterised by rising demand, increasing complexity of need, system-wide reform, and significant financial and workforce pressures.

Demand and Complexity of Need

Demand for specialist SEND provision continues to increase both locally and nationally. Within LBHF, the number of pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) has risen significantly over time, reflecting sustained growth in need and improved identification.

The SEND Sufficiency Review highlights continued growth across several key areas of SEND which are placing increasing pressure on provision across the borough and have been used to inform future planning and sufficiency modelling.

Between 2017 and 2022:

- The number of pupils identified with SEMH as a primary need increased to 517 pupils. Forecasts suggest this could rise by a further 82% by 2030, creating significant pressure on both specialist and mainstream provision.
- The number of pupils identified with Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC) as a primary need increased to 653 pupils, representing growth of almost 20% over five years. While future growth is expected to be more moderate, demand for specialist ASC provision and wider SEND support continues to place pressure on the system.
- The number of pupils identified with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) reached 1,028 pupils, representing growth of approximately 5% over five years. Under the high-growth scenario within the review, this figure could increase by a further 11% by 2030.

These trends reinforce the need for continued strategic planning across the borough to ensure that specialist provision, mainstream support and workforce capacity remain aligned to changing patterns of need.

This is consistent with national trends, where the number of pupils requiring specialist support continues to rise year-on-year. Increasingly, pupils present with:

- complex and overlapping needs
- higher levels of social, emotional and mental health need
- a greater range of barriers to learning

Following the Covid-19 pandemic, schools continue to see the longer-term impact on pupils' learning, wellbeing and readiness for education. Many pupils now present with increased levels of social, emotional and mental health need, alongside gaps in learning and reduced confidence in accessing education. These longer-term effects continue to be evident and contribute to the increasing complexity of need within the cohort.

This aligns with wider national findings, including Ofsted commentary highlighting increasing complexity of need, particularly in relation to pupil wellbeing, behaviour and readiness for learning.

For Woodlane, this results in:

- a consistently high volume of consultations
- demand wildly exceeding the number of available places
- increasing complexity within the pupil cohort

The school is currently operating at full capacity. While demand continues to grow, leaders remain clear that maintaining the quality, safety and effectiveness of provision must remain the priority.

National Context and SEND Reform

The national SEND system is undergoing a sustained period of reform. Government policy claims to be focused on creating a more inclusive and consistent system, with an increased emphasis on early intervention and support within mainstream settings.

The emerging model introduces a more structured, layered approach to support, with Education, Health and Care Plans increasingly reserved for pupils with the most complex needs.

Alongside SEND reform, wider Department for Education priorities continue to shape the work of schools. These include:

- improving inclusion across all settings
- raising outcomes for all pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged
- improving attendance and engagement
- ensuring greater consistency and accountability across the system

There is an increasing expectation that schools are able to meet a broader range of needs within their existing provision, supported by earlier identification and intervention.

Taken together, this creates a context in which schools are increasingly expected to deliver both greater inclusion and higher outcomes within a more constrained financial and operational environment.

These reforms and expectations represent a long-term programme of change. Schools are therefore operating within a period of transition, where:

- expectations continue to evolve
- systems are not yet fully embedded
- demand for specialist provision remains high

For Woodlane, this requires balancing responsiveness to current demand with readiness for future system developments.

Local Context (LBHF)

Within this national context, Woodlane operates within the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, where there is a communicated commitment to developing a more inclusive and sustainable SEND system.

The Hammersmith & Fulham SEND Strategy (2023–2028) sets out a shared ambition to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND, promote inclusion, and support independence and long-term life outcomes.

Key local priorities include:

- strengthening ordinarily available provision within mainstream settings
- improving early identification and intervention
- reducing reliance on out-of-borough placements
- increasing access to high-quality local provision

The SEND Sufficiency Review highlights the need to ensure that there is sufficient local capacity to meet growing demand, while reshaping provision towards a more inclusive, early-intervention model.

Within this context, Woodlane plays a key role in:

- providing high-quality specialist provision
- supporting pupils whose needs cannot be met in mainstream settings
- contributing to wider system development across the borough

The school also admits pupils from over 10 different Local Authorities, largely driven by parental preference. This reflects the strength of the school's reputation, while also contributing to sustained demand and pressure on places.

Financial Context

The financial context for SEND provision remains one of the most significant challenges facing the sector. Rising demand, increasing complexity and wider economic pressures have created sustained pressure on high-needs funding both nationally and locally.

These pressures reflect wider national concerns regarding the sustainability of the SEND system, where increasing demand, workforce challenges and rising costs continue to place strain on schools, local authorities and support services.

Within this system, funding does not always fully reflect:

- the complexity of pupil need
- the staffing required to deliver specialist provision
- the cost of integrated therapeutic and pastoral support

The school has demonstrated strong financial management and has already implemented a range of measures to improve efficiency and sustainability, including changes to staffing structures and service provision.

However, these changes have:

- reduced flexibility within the staffing model
- increased pressure on workforce capacity
- required careful balancing of resources
- created a period of potential instability

The current financial and staffing position represents a carefully managed balance. Leaders are clear that:

- further reductions are increasingly limited without introducing risk
- financial sustainability cannot be achieved through cost reduction alone
- long-term sustainability is dependent on both internal management and wider system funding

Implications for Woodlane

This landscape creates a number of key considerations for the school moving forward:

- **Sustaining quality within constraint**
Maintaining high standards of provision within an increasingly challenging context
- **Managing demand and capacity**
Balancing high levels of demand with operating within sustainable limits
- **Responding to system reform**
Remaining flexible and responsive to national and local developments

- **Ensuring financial sustainability**
Balancing financial pressures with protecting provision quality
- **Supporting workforce sustainability**
Retaining and supporting a skilled staff team

Summary

Woodlane High School operates within a complex and evolving system. While the school continues to deliver exceptional provision and outcomes, the context in which it operates presents increasing challenges.

The next phase of development will require:

- clear prioritisation
- careful use of resources
- and a continued focus on maintaining high-quality provision

In this context, the school remains committed to ensuring that all decisions are guided by what is in the best interests of pupils, while ensuring that provision remains sustainable over the long term.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outstanding quality of provision Recognised by Ofsted as delivering an exceptional standard of education, with consistently strong outcomes for pupils • Highly personalised and ambitious curriculum A well-designed, multi-pathway curriculum that supports both academic achievement and personal development • Strong outcomes from low starting points Pupils make significant progress relative to their individual baselines • Positive relationships and behaviour culture A calm, supportive and structured environment underpinned by strong staff–pupil relationships • Clear, embedded ethos and values A consistent culture based on kindness, effort, aspiration, resilience and respect • Skilled and committed staff team Strong expertise in SEND and adapting provision to meet complex needs • Strong reputation and sustained demand High level of consultations, including placements from multiple Local Authorities driven by parental preference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating at full capacity The school is at its sustainable limit but still needing to explore class sizes of 12, restricting flexibility in admissions and provision • Reduced flexibility in staffing model Recent financial challenges have led to a leaner staffing structure, limiting capacity to absorb additional demand or variation • Financial model under structural pressure The cost of delivering specialist provision remains high relative to funding levels • Site constraints Physical limitations restrict opportunities for expansion or significant reconfiguration
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influencing the local SEND system (LBHF) Contributing to borough priorities around inclusion, early intervention and local sufficiency • Responding to SEND reform Positioning the school clearly within the evolving national system, particularly in relation to specialist provision for complex need • Refining curriculum pathways Further developing provision to support preparation for adulthood, independence and post-16 transitions • Targeted use of staffing and structures Careful adjustments (e.g. class organisation up to 12 pupils where appropriate) to support financial sustainability • Developing internal expertise and leadership capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising demand and increasing complexity of need Continued growth in EHCPs and complexity placing pressure on specialist provision • Mismatch between funding and need Funding does not fully reflect the cost of delivering high-quality SEND provision • Limited scope for further efficiencies Significant savings already delivered, reducing capacity for further cost reduction • Risk to provision from further staffing reductions Additional reductions would impact curriculum delivery, individual support and safeguarding capacity • Workforce challenges Recruitment and retention difficulties, particularly in specialist roles and therapies

<p>Strengthening workforce capability to sustain provision over time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uncertainty from national SEND reform Changes to systems, expectations and funding create uncertainty in planning
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Woodlane Funding

Funding and Financial Context

Woodlane High School operates within a complex funding framework, reflective of wider pressures across the national SEND system.

The school's core funding consists of:

- a base level of funding of approximately £10,000 per pupil – up to 110 pupils
- top-up funding of £11,738 per pupil, provided by Local Authorities to reflect assessed levels of need

In addition, a number of pupils receive bespoke funding packages, with 17 packages currently attracting additional funding to support more complex or higher levels of need.

While this model is designed to reflect individual need, in practice it presents a number of challenges.

Variation and Complexity in Funding

A key feature of the school's financial context is the variation in funding linked to pupil need.

Although all pupils attract the same top-up funding levels, the actual cost of provision can vary significantly depending on:

- complexity of need
- level of therapeutic input required
- staffing ratios and support required
- individual behavioural or medical needs

As a result:

- funding does not always fully reflect the true cost of provision
- pupils with the same funding levels may require significantly different levels of support

Bespoke funding arrangements, while essential, are:

- variable in value
- linked to individual pupils
- and subject to change over time

This creates a model that is inherently variable and difficult to predict, particularly when planning staffing and provision over time.

Financial Position and Management

Woodlane has a strong track record of effective financial management and is currently operating from a period of notable financial stability, with a surplus position in the 2025/2026 financial year.

However, financial projections for 2026/2027 indicate an in-year deficit of approximately £292,000, reflecting rising costs and increasing pressure on the funding model.

This shift does not reflect a decline in financial management, but rather:

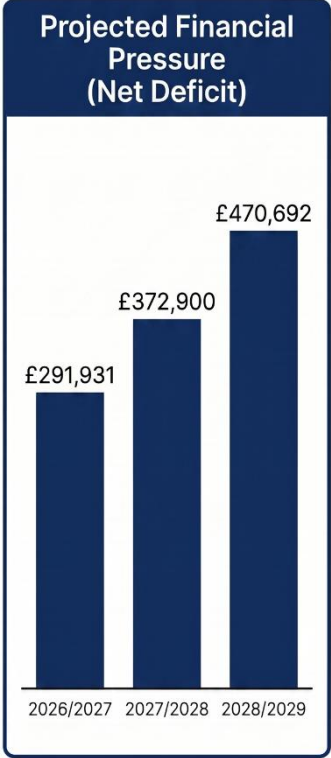
- increasing staffing and operational costs
- the complexity and intensity of provision required
- and the limits of the current funding framework

The school has already implemented a range of measures to improve sustainability, including:

- restructuring and reducing staffing where appropriate
- reviewing provision models
- and aligning resources closely with need

These actions have delivered efficiencies, but have also:

- reduced flexibility within the staffing model
- increased pressure on workforce capacity
- and limited the scope for further savings



Alignment Between Funding and Provision

The school delivers a highly personalised model of provision, including:

- small class sizes
- significant adult support
- integrated therapeutic provision
- a broad and ambitious curriculum
- a model based on our *'features of exceptional teaching and learning'*, *'features of exceptional support'* and *'features of exceptional progress over time'*.

However, the funding framework does not consistently align with:

- the staffing required
- the complexity of need within the cohort

- or the expectations placed on specialist provision

This reflects a wider structural challenge within the SEND system.

Future Considerations

The school is currently operating at full capacity. Within this context, and in response to projected financial pressures, leaders must continue to review how provision is structured and delivered.

This includes consideration of:

- staffing structures and deployment
- use of external services
- and class organisation

As part of this, the school is exploring the potential for up to 12 pupils per class where appropriate, in order to support financial sustainability. This is being implemented cautiously, ensuring that:

- pupil need remains central to all decisions
- staffing support remains appropriate
- and the quality and safety of provision are not compromised

Leaders are clear that:

- further reductions in staffing are increasingly limited without introducing risk
- financial sustainability cannot be achieved through cost reduction alone
- and long-term sustainability will require both effective internal management and greater alignment between funding and need

Summary

Woodlane High School remains financially well managed and currently stable. However, projected deficits highlight the growing pressures within the funding system.

The school is therefore operating within a tightly balanced financial position, where maintaining high-quality provision must be carefully managed alongside long-term sustainability.

Future planning will require:

- careful prioritisation
- continued efficiency where appropriate
- and a clear focus on aligning provision with available resources

3 Year Budget Overview

	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
Income (-)	-3,600,834	-3,600,834	-3,600,834
Expenditure (+)	3,892,765	3,973,734	4,071,526
Net position: Surplus (-) deficit (+)	291,931	372,900	470,692
Add carry forward	-204,103 (from 2025/2026)	+87,827	+460,727
Excess(-)/deficit (+)	87,827	+460,727	+931,420

Strategic Priorities

Our strategic priorities have been developed collaboratively by the governing body, senior leadership team, and staff representatives. They are deliberately not numbered, reflecting our view that no single priority is more important than another. Instead, our priorities are interconnected and will often run in parallel.

The broader targets and timeframes outlined below will be further developed and refined through our annual School Improvement Plans over the next five-year period, ensuring that our approach remains responsive, focused and aligned with the evolving needs of the school community.

Strategic Priority – Responding to SEND and System Reform

Context

The national direction of travel for education and SEND is set out in the DfE's *Every Child Achieving and Thriving* white paper, which outlines a significant shift in the purpose of the school system. This includes a move towards broader educational experiences, greater inclusion and increased engagement for all pupils, particularly those who have experienced significant barriers within education.

Within this, there is a clear focus on ensuring that more children and young people are supported effectively within mainstream settings, alongside earlier identification of need and a more consistent, structured system of support. These priorities are reflected locally within Hammersmith & Fulham, which is working to develop a more inclusive and sustainable SEND system.

Alongside this, expectations on schools are becoming more complex and demanding, with increased emphasis on outcomes, attendance and the effective support of pupils with additional needs within existing provision. These expectations are increasingly underpinned by statutory guidance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to behaviour, safeguarding and inclusion. Recent developments include strengthened expectations around mobile phone use, social media and updated exclusion guidance, all of which place greater emphasis on maintaining safe, calm and well-regulated learning environments.

These expectations are reinforced through the Ofsted inspection framework, which places a strong focus on inclusion, behaviour, attendance and pupils' readiness for learning. Schools are expected to demonstrate that all pupils, including those with SEND, are able to access an ambitious curriculum, engage positively in education and make strong progress from their starting points. However, these developments are taking place within a wider context of rising demand, increasing complexity of need, and ongoing pressures on funding and workforce capacity across the system.

Woodlane High School is currently delivering highly effective provision for pupils with complex needs. The school's self-evaluation demonstrates consistently strong and exceptional practice across almost all areas, including curriculum, inclusion, personal development and leadership. Pupils typically join Woodlane with significant barriers to learning and attainment well below age-related expectations. Through a highly personalised and holistic approach, Woodlane delivers the breadth of curriculum, support and outcomes that align closely with the ambitions set out in national policy for pupils with SEND.

While this reflects the direction of travel for the system, national policy is clear that this approach should increasingly be delivered within mainstream settings. However, Woodlane's experience is that this is not appropriate for all pupils. Many pupils require a level of specialist input, structure and adaptation that cannot be consistently delivered in mainstream environments.

Increasingly, Woodlane is supporting pupils whose needs have not been successfully met elsewhere. In some cases, this reflects a breakdown in placement

rather than a planned pathway into specialist provision. For some pupils, extended time in inappropriate settings can have a detrimental impact on learning, wellbeing and engagement with education.

Based on current self-evaluation and highly ambitious internal standards, Woodlane anticipates that provision will be exceptional across almost all areas. Attendance currently remains at a strong standard, which reflects the increasing complexity of pupil need; however, the school remains ambitious to further strengthen this area in line with its expectation of exceptional practice across all aspects of provision.

As a result, the school is operating within a system where expectations continue to evolve, but where the role of specialist provision remains essential. Woodlane must respond to national and local developments while maintaining clarity about its role and ensuring that the quality, appropriateness and safety of its provision are not compromised.

What is the current picture?

- Pupils are increasingly arriving with complex and overlapping needs, including higher levels of social, emotional and mental health need alongside significant gaps in learning
- A growing number of pupils have experienced difficulties in previous settings, including disrupted educational journeys and reduced engagement in learning
- Pupils joining the school often require a period of stabilisation, including rebuilding routines, behaviour, confidence and readiness for learning
- The level and complexity of need is not always aligned with standardised expectations or pathways, particularly in relation to inclusion within mainstream settings
- Highly structured, consistent and predictable environments are increasingly essential in supporting pupils' behaviour, safety and engagement
- The school operates within a more tightly defined regulatory framework, with increased expectations around behaviour, safeguarding, attendance and digital safety
- Woodlane already provides a highly structured and proactive approach to e-safety, including strict mobile phone expectations, comprehensive filtering and monitoring systems, and a curriculum that explicitly teaches online safety, social media awareness and responsible use of technology
- E-safety and digital safeguarding are embedded across the school's provision, including curriculum delivery, external specialist support, parental engagement and staff training, ensuring that pupils are supported to understand and manage risk effectively
- The school's approach to behaviour and safeguarding aligns closely with, and in many areas exceeds, current national expectations, providing safe, calm and well-regulated learning environments for pupils
- Woodlane continues to deliver strong outcomes for pupils with complex needs; however, this is within a context where expectations of the system do not always fully align with the realities of pupil need and the level of specialist support required

What are we working towards?

- To respond effectively to national and local SEND reform while maintaining clarity about the role of specialist provision
- To ensure that the needs of pupils are met within the most appropriate setting, recognising that mainstream provision is not suitable for all pupils
- To sustain and further develop high-quality specialist provision that supports pupils with complex needs to engage, achieve and progress
- To maintain a safe, structured and well-regulated environment, including strong practice in behaviour, safeguarding and e-safety
- To ensure policies and practices remain aligned with evolving statutory guidance and legislation, particularly in relation to SEND, behaviour, safeguarding and digital safety
- To ensure that EHCP processes are used effectively to secure appropriate provision and outcomes for pupils, including clear identification of need and provision
- To work in partnership with LBHF and other Local Authorities, contributing to the development of a sustainable SEND system, while maintaining the integrity and quality of the school's core provision

Estimated Timeline

Date	Action
Short Term (Year 1)	<p><i>Understanding, stabilising and aligning to a changing system</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and evaluate national SEND reform developments, including implications of the White Paper and emerging statutory guidance • Review and ensure alignment of key school policies (SEND, behaviour, safeguarding, mobile phones, e-safety) with updated legal and regulatory frameworks • Strengthen internal understanding and application of EHCP processes to ensure clarity of need, provision and intended outcomes • Maintain and reinforce Woodlane's established approach to behaviour, safeguarding and e-safety, ensuring continued consistency across the school • Engage with DfE initiatives and funding opportunities, including enrichment and wider curriculum programmes • Engage proactively with LBHF priorities and developments, ensuring clear communication about Woodlane's role and provision • Identify and respond to emerging patterns in pupil need, including increasing complexity and levels of need on entry • Continue to support pupils requiring stabilisation and re-engagement, ensuring strong routines, behaviour and readiness for learning • Review curriculum pathways, including vocational opportunities, to ensure they remain appropriate and responsive to pupil needs • Strengthen and expand work experience opportunities, ensuring they are appropriate to pupils' needs and support engagement, independence and preparation for post-16 pathways • Ensure that provision and outcomes remain consistent with the standards identified in the November 2024 Ofsted inspection • Maintain alignment with the evolving Ofsted inspection framework, ensuring provision reflects emerging expectations, including movement towards the highest standards across all evaluation areas • Subject to approval, work with LBHF to plan for the potential designation and development of additional provision (e.g. nurture provision at the BDA Primary site), including alignment of SEND places, staffing and curriculum design
Medium Term (Years 2-3)	<p><i>Embedding practice, refining approach and contributing to the system</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed consistent application of updated policies and frameworks in response to SEND reform and legal developments • Refine EHCP processes in practice, ensuring they effectively support pupil outcomes and clearly articulate provision • Strengthen alignment between curriculum pathways (including vocational provision) and intended long-term outcomes for pupils

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop practice in behaviour, safeguarding and e-safety in response to evolving risks • Maximise engagement with DfE-funded programmes and enrichment opportunities • Develop and strengthen partnerships with LBHF and other schools • Contribute to system development where appropriate, including sharing expertise and supporting inclusive practice • Demonstrate sustained high performance across all Ofsted areas • Prepare for future inspection, anticipated around November 2028, with a clear ambition to achieve exceptional standards across all areas of provision • Continue to monitor the impact of system pressures on provision and adapt practice where necessary • If progressed, implement and embed additional provision, ensuring high-quality delivery, alignment with Woodlane's standards, and effective integration within the wider school structure
Long Term (Years 4-5)	<p><i>Sustaining high-quality provision and influencing the system</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain high-quality specialist provision that remains responsive to evolving SEND reform and system expectations • Ensure policies and practices remain proactively aligned with ongoing legislative and regulatory change • Maintain clarity of Woodlane's role within the SEND system, ensuring provision continues to meet the needs of pupils for whom specialist support is essential • Sustain a broad, ambitious and enriched curriculum offer, supported where appropriate by external funding and partnerships • Demonstrate consistently strong outcomes for pupils with complex needs, including successful progression to post-16 pathways • Sustain a level of provision and leadership that remains consistent with, or exceeds, previous Ofsted expectations • Continue to develop and adapt provision in response to changes in pupil need, funding and system expectations • Play a considered role in contributing to wider system development, while maintaining the integrity and quality of the school's core provision

Strategic Priority – Sustaining Quality in a Tightening System

Context

The school continues to operate within a tightening educational and financial landscape, where resources are increasingly constrained and expectations on schools remain high. This includes ongoing pressures related to funding, workforce availability and the increasing complexity of pupil need.

Within this context, maintaining the exceptional quality of provision at Woodlane requires careful planning, prioritisation and a clear understanding of what is essential. The school has a strong track record of delivering high-quality education, with a broad, personalised curriculum, highly skilled staff and consistently strong outcomes for pupils with complex needs. However, sustaining this quality over time requires increasingly considered use of available resources.

The school is operating within a system where flexibility is reducing, and decisions around staffing, curriculum and provision must balance efficiency with effectiveness. There is a growing need to review how resources are deployed, including staffing structures, curriculum pathways and wider provision, to ensure that they remain sustainable without compromising quality.

At the same time, Woodlane remains committed to maintaining its core provision at an exceptional level. This includes high-quality teaching and learning, strong pastoral support, and a curriculum that is both ambitious and tailored to individual need. The challenge is not only to sustain these standards but to do so within tighter constraints, ensuring that key aspects of provision are protected.

These expectations are reinforced through the Ofsted inspection framework, which places a strong focus on quality of education, behaviour and pupils' readiness for learning. Recent developments in the framework, including a greater emphasis on consistency across all areas and higher standards of evaluation, further increase expectations on schools to sustain exceptional provision over time.

Staffing remains central to this priority. The availability of skilled staff, alongside the need to support staff wellbeing, workload and professional development, is critical to sustaining quality over time. As expectations on staff continue to evolve, maintaining a stable, skilled and supported workforce is essential.

There is also a need to ensure that the curriculum and wider offer remain both flexible and responsive. This includes maintaining a range of pathways, including vocational and personalised opportunities, while ensuring that these are deliverable within available resources. Links with the wider community, enrichment opportunities and enterprise activities continue to play an important role in providing a well-rounded experience for pupils.

As a result, the school must operate with increasing clarity about its priorities, identifying non-negotiable elements of provision and making strategic decisions about where resources are focused. Sustaining quality in this context requires ongoing review, careful resource management and a clear commitment to maintaining the standards that define Woodlane's provision.

What is the current picture?

- The school is operating within a tightening resource environment, requiring increasingly careful consideration of how staffing, curriculum and provision are structured and delivered
- There is growing pressure on staffing capacity, including the recruitment and retention of skilled staff, alongside the need to manage workload, wellbeing and professional development
- Staff are required to balance high expectations with increasing complexity of pupil need, requiring flexibility, resilience and consistent high-quality practice
- Decisions around staffing deployment, including the use of teaching assistants and higher-level teaching assistants, are becoming increasingly important in maintaining effective provision
- The curriculum offer remains broad and personalised; however, there is a need to regularly review pathways, including vocational and enrichment opportunities, to ensure they are sustainable within available resources
- The school continues to provide a wide range of opportunities, including clubs, enterprise activities and community links; however, these require careful planning to ensure they add value and remain deliverable
- There is an increasing need to identify and protect key elements of provision, ensuring that non-negotiables such as high-quality teaching and learning, strong pastoral support and structured environments are maintained
- Maintaining consistently high outcomes for pupils remains a strength; however, there is a continuous focus on ensuring progress remains at an exceptional level, despite increasing constraints
- There is a growing emphasis on reviewing efficiency and resource use, balancing the need to maximise impact with the need to maintain quality
- The school must make increasingly strategic decisions about where to prioritise time, staffing and resources, recognising that not all aspects of provision can expand within current constraints

What are we working towards?

- To sustain exceptional standards of teaching and learning, ensuring that high-quality classroom practice remains central to all provision
- To protect the core elements of Woodlane's provision, identifying clear non-negotiables that are prioritised and maintained despite external pressures
- To ensure that staffing structures are sustainable and effective, supporting a stable, skilled and motivated workforce with a continued focus on wellbeing and professional development
- To deploy staffing and resources strategically, ensuring maximum impact on pupil outcomes while maintaining efficiency
- To maintain a broad, ambitious and personalised curriculum, including appropriate vocational and enrichment opportunities, while ensuring that this remains deliverable within available resources
- To maintain and further strengthen outcomes for pupils, with a continued ambition to achieve exceptional progress across all areas
- To operate with clarity and discipline in decision-making, ensuring that all developments and changes are aligned with the school's core priorities and long-term sustainability

Estimated Timeline

Date	Action
Short Term (Year 1)	<p><i>Stabilising, reviewing and setting clear priorities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current use of staffing and resources, including TA/HLTA deployment and staffing structures, to ensure efficiency and effectiveness Identify and begin to develop opportunities for staff skill-sharing and collaboration, ensuring expertise is effectively shared across the team to support consistency and reduce pressure on individuals Identify and define key non-negotiables across provision, ensuring high-quality teaching, pastoral support and structured environments are consistently protected Continue to prioritise staff wellbeing, workload and professional support, recognising the impact of increasing demands on staff capacity Review curriculum pathways, including vocational and personalised provision, to ensure they remain appropriate, purposeful and deliverable within available resources Review wider provision, including clubs, enterprise and community links, to ensure these offer meaningful value and remain sustainable Monitor and maintain high-quality teaching and learning, ensuring consistency and exceptional progress and outcomes across all areas Expand appropriate uses of AI to support staff workload, planning and administration, ensuring safe, ethical and effective use Establish clear decision-making frameworks to support prioritisation and resource allocation
Medium Term (Years 2-3)	<p><i>Embedding practice, refining structures and strengthening impact</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed sustainable staffing models and structures, ensuring effective deployment of staff supports quality of teaching and learning Embed structured approaches to staff skill-sharing and professional collaboration, strengthening consistency in practice and supporting high-quality teaching and learning across the school Identify and begin to develop opportunities for staff skill-sharing and collaboration, ensuring expertise is effectively shared across the team to support consistency and reduce pressure on individuals Further develop approaches to staff wellbeing and flexible working, supporting retention, stability and long-term workforce sustainability Refine curriculum pathways to ensure strong alignment with outcomes, including progression, independence and post-16 readiness Embed consistent high-quality teaching and learning across all areas, ensuring practice remains exceptional despite pressures on resources Strengthen the impact of enrichment and wider opportunities, ensuring these are purposeful and clearly linked to pupil outcomes Develop and embed effective use of AI and digital tools to support efficiency, workload reduction and high-quality resource development Continue to review and adapt provision in response to resource constraints, ensuring efficiency without compromising quality Ensure leadership decisions consistently reflect agreed priorities and non-negotiables
Long Term (Years 4-5)	<p><i>Sustaining excellence and operating within a stable, efficient model</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustain a stable, skilled and supported workforce capable of delivering consistently high-quality provision Sustain a culture of professional collaboration and skill-sharing, ensuring that internal expertise continues to strengthen provision and support workforce resilience Maintain exceptional standards of teaching and learning across the school, with consistency across all curriculum areas Sustain a broad, ambitious and personalised curriculum that remains responsive to pupil need while being deliverable within available resources Ensure that staffing, curriculum and provision are optimised for long-term sustainability, balancing efficiency with effectiveness Sustain meaningful enrichment, community and enterprise opportunities that enhance pupil experience and outcomes Embed the purposeful use of AI and digital tools to support teaching, learning and operational efficiency Maintain strong pupil outcomes, with continued ambition to achieve exceptional progress across all areas Ensure that strategic decision-making remains disciplined and aligned to core priorities, with a clear focus on sustaining quality over time

Strategic Priority – Ensuring Financial Sustainability Aligned to Provision

Context

The school operates within an increasingly complex financial landscape, where funding arrangements, cost pressures and system expectations do not always align with the realities of delivering high-quality specialist provision. This includes variability in funding, rising staffing and operational costs, and increasing expectations from both local and national stakeholders.

Within this context, ensuring financial sustainability requires a clear and disciplined approach to aligning financial decisions with the needs of pupils and the delivery of provision. At Woodlane, financial planning is not separate from educational priorities; rather, it is directly linked to maintaining safe, effective and high-quality provision for pupils with complex needs.

The school has a strong track record of responsible financial management, including the implementation of a range of efficiency measures and structural changes over time. This includes planned adjustments to staffing structures, careful review of expenditure and ongoing refinement of how resources are deployed. These actions have been undertaken in a deliberate and proportionate way, ensuring that the quality, safety and consistency of provision have been maintained.

At the same time, the school is operating within a funding system that is not always fully aligned with pupil need or the cost of delivery. Funding can be variable, particularly where it relates to pupil-specific allocations, and does not always provide a consistent or predictable basis for long-term planning. In addition, historical factors and system-level funding arrangements continue to influence the school's financial position.

There is therefore a need to ensure greater alignment between funding and provision, including clarity around top-up funding, banding and the relationship between pupil need and resource allocation. This requires ongoing engagement with the Local Authority and wider system, alongside robust internal monitoring and financial planning processes.

The school must also operate within clear constraints. While further efficiencies will continue to be explored where appropriate, there are defined limits to the extent to which costs can be reduced without impacting the quality, safety and statutory compliance of provision. In particular, staffing structures are closely linked to curriculum delivery, safeguarding and the needs of pupils, and cannot be reduced without consideration of these factors.

As a result, financial sustainability at Woodlane is achieved through a balanced approach: maintaining tight control of costs and efficient use of resources, while ensuring that decisions remain aligned to provision and do not compromise the school's core purpose. This requires ongoing strategic decision-making, clear prioritisation and effective partnership working with the Local Authority and wider stakeholders.

What is the current picture?

- The school has already implemented significant cost-saving measures, including reductions in teaching, leadership and support staffing, alongside wider restructuring of roles and responsibilities
- Further planned changes to staffing and provision are being implemented in a phased way, including adjustments to deployment, contracts and the use of external services
- Staffing is now closely aligned to the minimum levels required to deliver the curriculum, meet EHCP requirements and maintain safeguarding and pastoral support
- There is limited flexibility within the current staffing model, with reduced capacity to respond to fluctuations in pupil need or staffing absence
- Internal systems for tracking and securing funding, particularly pupil-specific funding, are well established and form a key part of financial management
- Budget planning requires ongoing adjustment to reflect differences between projected and actual income, with some funding streams not fully reflected at the start of the financial year
- The school continues to actively review expenditure across all areas, including contracts, staffing deployment, resources and operational costs
- Efficiency measures are being applied across provision, including tighter control of consumables, use of digital systems and review of service delivery models
- Decisions about provision, curriculum and staffing are increasingly shaped by financial constraints, requiring careful prioritisation of resources
- Any further reductions in cost, particularly in staffing, would have a direct impact on the delivery, consistency and breadth of provision

What are we working towards?

- To ensure that all financial decisions are directly aligned to the delivery of high-quality, safe and sustainable provision for pupils
- To maintain a financially sustainable model that reflects the true cost of delivering specialist provision, including appropriate staffing, curriculum breadth and safeguarding requirements
- To strengthen the alignment between funding and provision, including continued engagement with the Local Authority to ensure clarity around top-up funding, banding and pupil need
- To maintain tight and disciplined control of expenditure across all areas, ensuring efficient use of resources while protecting key elements of provision
- To continue to review and refine staffing structures and deployment to ensure effectiveness, sustainability and alignment with financial constraints
- To ensure that income is maximised and accurately reflected, including effective tracking and securing of all available funding streams
- To operate with clear strategic discipline, recognising the limits of further cost reduction and ensuring that any changes do not compromise the quality, safety or statutory compliance of provision

Estimated Timeline

Date	Action
Short Term (Year 1)	<p><i>Implementing agreed changes and securing financial stability</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement agreed staffing and structural changes from September 2026, including reductions in teaching capacity, restructuring of roles and adjustments to PPA, flexible working and other arrangements ● Continue phased review of staffing deployment, ensuring alignment with pupil need, curriculum delivery and financial constraints ● Strengthen internal financial monitoring and ensure that income tracking systems, particularly for pupil-specific funding, continue to accurately reflect expected income ● Maintain tight control of expenditure across all areas, including staffing, contracts, resources and operational costs ● Implement planned contract and service changes (e.g. cessation or review of external services) and monitor their impact on provision and cost efficiency ● Engage with the Local Authority to seek clarity and alignment on funding arrangements, including top-up funding, banding and therapy provision ● Review class organisation and staffing structures in line with operational capacity, including consideration of pupil numbers within agreed limits where appropriate ● Ensure that all financial decisions remain aligned to the protection of provision, maintaining quality, safeguarding and statutory compliance ● Identify and pursue appropriate grant funding opportunities to support provision and reduce pressure on core budget
Medium Term (Years 2-3)	<p><i>Embedding sustainable structures and strengthening alignment between funding and provision</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evaluate the impact of staffing and structural changes implemented from 2026, including their effect on provision, workload, outcomes and financial sustainability ● Refine staffing models and leadership structures to ensure long-term sustainability, including potential implementation of revised leadership arrangements ● Continue to align staffing, curriculum and provision with funding levels, ensuring that resources are deployed efficiently while maintaining quality ● Strengthen financial planning processes and forecasting, including improved alignment between projected budgets and actual income ● Continue engagement with the Local Authority to secure greater clarity and consistency in funding arrangements and assumptions ● Explore and develop appropriate income opportunities, including grant funding and potential cost recovery approaches, where aligned to provision ● Embed more efficient approaches to resource use, including digital systems, curriculum resources and operational expenditure ● Ensure that financial decision-making remains disciplined and aligned to agreed priorities and non-negotiables ● Develop and embed a strategic approach to income generation, including grant funding and other appropriate opportunities aligned to provision
Long Term (Years 4-5)	<p><i>Sustaining a stable and aligned financial model</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sustain a financially stable model that reflects the ongoing cost of delivering high-quality specialist provision ● Ensure that funding and provision are increasingly aligned, with greater clarity around the relationship between pupil need, funding and delivery ● Maintain staffing structures that are sustainable and aligned to curriculum, safeguarding and EHCP requirements ● Continue to operate within efficient and controlled resource frameworks, ensuring that expenditure is proportionate and focused on impact ● Sustain effective financial monitoring and forecasting systems that accurately reflect income and expenditure ● Maintain strong strategic engagement with the Local Authority and wider system to support long-term financial sustainability ● Ensure that financial planning continues to protect the quality, safety and consistency of provision, recognising the limits of further cost reduction ● Sustain a balanced financial model supported by appropriate income streams, including grant funding, where aligned to provision and priorities

Strategic Priority – Managing Demand and Admissions Safely

Context

The school is operating within a context of increasing demand for specialist provision, alongside rising expectations on schools and Local Authorities to secure appropriate placements for pupils with SEND. At the same time, national policy direction, as set out in the SEND and Alternative Provision reforms, is focused on increasing inclusion within mainstream settings, with an expectation that more pupils' needs will be met outside of specialist provision. This has implications for how specialist places are planned, commissioned and funded, and requires close working with the Local Authority to ensure that available places are allocated appropriately. There is also increasing parental demand for Woodlane as a preferred placement, reflecting the school's reputation and the outcomes it achieves for pupils. This contributes further to the volume and complexity of consultations and adds an additional layer of pressure within the admissions process. This has led to a significant increase in the volume and complexity of consultations, with greater pressure on schools to respond quickly and accommodate a wider range of need.

Within this context, there is an expectation that schools will contribute to meeting demand across the system. However, this must be balanced against the requirement to ensure that placements are appropriate, safe and sustainable. The SEND Code of Practice is clear that placement decisions must be based on the needs of the pupil, the provision required to meet those needs, and the impact on the efficient education of others.

At Woodlane, admissions decisions are closely linked to the school's capacity, staffing structure and the nature of the existing cohort. The school operates within defined physical and organisational constraints, including available space, class structures and the balance of need across year groups and key stages. These factors directly influence the number and profile of pupils that can be safely and effectively supported.

The increasing demand for places has led to greater pressure within the consultation and admissions process, including the need to respond to requests where the appropriateness of placement is not always clear. In some cases, this reflects wider system pressures, including a lack of suitable provision elsewhere or breakdowns in previous placements.

As a result, the school must operate with a clear and robust admissions process, ensuring that all decisions are evidence-based, transparent and defensible. This includes maintaining clarity around admissions criteria, ensuring that decisions reflect both pupil need and the school's ability to deliver provision safely and effectively.

At the same time, there is a need for strong and constructive engagement with the Local Authority and other stakeholders, ensuring that communication is clear, consistent and supports appropriate placement decisions across the system. This includes both collaboration and, where necessary, professional challenge to ensure

that placements are in the best interests of pupils and do not compromise the quality or safety of provision.

Opportunities to increase capacity, including potential developments such as the use of additional space or buildings, form part of longer-term system planning. However, these must be carefully considered and aligned with staffing, resources and the integrity of the school's existing provision.

Overall, managing demand and admissions safely requires a balanced approach: responding constructively to system pressures while maintaining clear boundaries around capacity, appropriateness and the sustainability of provision.

What is the current picture?

- The school is experiencing a significant increase in demand, with approximately 400 consultation requests received over the past academic year
- A high proportion of consultations relate to pupils whose needs are not aligned with Woodlane's current specialist offer, including a large number of pupils with lower levels of complexity or needs that may be more appropriately met in alternative or differently structured provision, contributing to ongoing work with the Local Authority to review how specialist places are used and allocated across the system
- There is a notable increase in pupils presenting with severe social, emotional and mental health needs, often alongside complex and overlapping needs, which places additional pressure on decision-making and cohort balance
- The volume and nature of consultations requires substantial leadership input, with the Headteacher directly reviewing cases, making placement decisions and ensuring that responses are robust and defensible
- The consultation process is increasingly time-intensive, requiring detailed analysis of pupil need, consideration of cohort dynamics, and clear articulation of whether provision can be delivered safely and effectively
- There is a growing expectation for schools to provide detailed responses in relation to admissions decisions, including contributions to tribunal processes, preparation of written statements and attendance at hearings
- Responding to tribunals and legal challenge places additional pressure on leadership capacity, diverting time and resources from other areas of school improvement and strategic development
- The school is required to manage competing pressures, including Local Authority expectations, parental preference and the need to maintain safe and appropriate provision for current pupils
- Decisions around admissions must increasingly be carefully justified, with clear evidence to support whether a placement is appropriate and whether the school can meet need without impacting the provision for others
- The school continues to respond constructively to consultations; however, there is a need to prioritise capacity and ensure that responses are proportionate, particularly where the volume of requests exceeds what can be reasonably managed
- Physical capacity, including available space and classroom organisation, alongside staffing and cohort composition, continues to place clear limits on the number and profile of pupils that can be admitted safely

What are we working towards?

- To ensure that all admissions decisions are safe, appropriate and aligned to the school's capacity, cohort profile and ability to deliver provision effectively
- To maintain a robust, transparent and defensible admissions process, with clear criteria and consistent, evidence-based decision-making
- To respond to increasing demand, consultation volume and tribunal activity in a structured and proportionate way, ensuring that processes remain manageable within available leadership capacity, and that where placements are considered appropriate/ inappropriate, the Local Authority takes responsibility for leading and presenting such cases, with the school providing appropriate supporting evidence where required
- To ensure that placements are appropriate and in the best interests of the pupil, while maintaining the efficient education, safety and wellbeing of all pupils within the school
- To strengthen communication and partnership with the Local Authority, including clear escalation processes and appropriate professional challenge, ensuring that placements are agreed and allocated appropriately across the system
- To manage parental preference effectively, ensuring that decisions are clearly communicated, lawful and based on the appropriateness of provision rather than demand alone
- To work with the Local Authority to explore and, where appropriate, implement the development of additional nurture provision (e.g. through the potential use of the BDA Primary site), ensuring that this is achieved through the reallocation of specialist places across the system rather than an increase in overall numbers, and is aligned to identified need and the school's capacity to deliver high-quality provision

Estimated Timeline

Date	Action
Short Term (Year 1)	<p><i>Stabilising demand, strengthening process and setting clear boundaries</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage and respond to increased consultation volume, ensuring consistent, evidence-based decision-making aligned to admissions criteria • Maintain clear and robust recording of admissions decisions, ensuring all responses are well evidenced and defensible • Establish consistent approaches to consultation responses, including clear articulation of when placements are not appropriate • Ensure that tribunal-related work is managed proportionately, with clear expectations that the Local Authority leads and presents cases, with the school providing supporting evidence where appropriate • Continue to engage actively with the Local Authority, including clear communication and escalation where placements are not considered appropriate • Monitor patterns in consultation requests, including increases in SEMH need and lower complexity cases, to inform ongoing discussions with the Local Authority • Subject to approval, work with the Local Authority to begin planning for the potential development of additional nurture provision (e.g. through the BDA Primary site), including consideration of how places may be reallocated across the system • Explore the use of digital tools, including AI, to support efficiency in managing consultation processes, documentation and responses • Review class organisation and consider up to 12 pupils per class where appropriate, ensuring that this is carefully applied within available space, staffing and cohort context, and does not compromise the quality or safety of provision
Medium Term (Years 2-3)	<p><i>Embedding consistent practice and aligning provision across the system</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed consistent, high-quality admissions processes across the school, ensuring ongoing clarity, consistency and defensibility • Refine approaches to managing consultation volume, including prioritisation processes and proportional response systems • Strengthen shared understanding with Local Authorities regarding appropriate placements, admissions criteria and thresholds • Continue to apply appropriate challenge where placements are not aligned to the school's provision, ensuring decisions remain focused on safety and appropriateness • Further develop use of digital systems and AI to support efficient management of consultations, evidence gathering and reporting • If progressed, implement additional nurture provision through the BDA site, ensuring alignment with identified need and maintaining the quality and integrity of existing provision • Monitor the impact of any changes to provision and admissions patterns, including cohort balance, staffing implications and outcomes
Long Term (Years 4-5)	<p><i>Sustaining a controlled, safe and well-aligned admissions model</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain a robust and defensible admissions process that ensures placements remain appropriate, safe and aligned to capacity • Maintain clear boundaries around admissions decisions, ensuring that demand does not compromise the quality and safety of provision • Sustain effective partnership working with the Local Authority, supporting appropriate allocation of specialist places across the system • Maintain a stable model of provision, including any established nurture pathways, ensuring these continue to meet identified needs • Ensure that consultation and tribunal processes remain proportionate and manageable, with clearly defined roles between school and Local Authority • Continue to use digital systems and AI to support efficient, consistent and well-evidenced admissions processes • Ensure that strategic decision-making continues to reflect capacity, cohort balance and long-term sustainability of provision

Strategic Priority – Maintaining Workforce Strength and Expertise

Context

The strength of Woodlane High School's provision is underpinned by the expertise, commitment and stability of its staff. The school benefits from a highly skilled workforce with strong specialist knowledge of SEND, well-established relationships with pupils and a shared commitment to delivering high-quality provision. This expertise is central to the school's ability to achieve strong progress and outcomes for pupils with complex needs.

At the same time, the wider educational landscape is placing increasing pressure on the workforce. This includes challenges related to recruitment and retention, rising expectations on schools, and the ongoing impact of increasing pupil need and complexity. These pressures are particularly significant within specialist settings, where the demands on staff are both intensive and highly specialised.

Within Woodlane, staffing has been subject to careful review, with a number of changes already implemented and further significant adjustments planned from September 2026 as part of wider work to ensure financial sustainability. While these changes are designed to align staffing more closely to operational requirements, many of the most substantial impacts, including changes to workload and deployment, are not yet fully embedded. As a result, the school is entering a period of transition, where flexibility within the staffing model is expected to reduce, and the full impact on capacity, workload and sustainability will need to be carefully monitored over time.

Alongside this, staff are operating within a context of increasing demand. This includes the ongoing delivery of highly personalised provision, rising expectations in relation to progress and outcomes, and additional pressures arising from other areas of school activity, including consultation, admissions and safeguarding processes. These factors contribute to increased workload and the need to ensure that staff workload and wellbeing are carefully managed.

Maintaining workforce strength therefore requires a deliberate and strategic approach. This includes not only supporting staff wellbeing and retention, but also ensuring that expertise is sustained and developed over time. There is a need to continue investing in professional development, including structured CPD, opportunities for collaboration and the sharing of expertise, and access to high-quality training and external networks.

There is also a need to consider longer-term workforce sustainability, including succession planning and the development of leadership capacity over time. As staffing structures evolve and system pressures continue, maintaining a stable and skilled workforce will be critical to sustaining the quality and consistency of provision.

Overall, the school must balance the need to operate efficiently within a constrained system with the importance of protecting and developing its workforce. Sustaining workforce strength and expertise requires ongoing attention to workload, wellbeing,

professional development and the effective use of staff expertise, ensuring that the school remains able to deliver high-quality provision over time.

What is the current picture?

- The school currently benefits from a highly skilled and experienced staff team, with strong levels of specialist SEND expertise and well-established professional relationships that support the delivery of high-quality provision
- Staff demonstrate a high level of commitment and adaptability, contributing to a positive working culture and strong outcomes for pupils with complex needs
- Recruitment and retention remain ongoing considerations, particularly in specialist areas, where the availability of suitably experienced staff is limited and competition across the sector continues to increase
- A number of staffing changes have already been implemented as part of the school's ongoing financial planning, including adjustments to teaching capacity, leadership structure and support staff deployment
- Further significant staffing and structural changes are planned from September 2026; however, these are not yet fully implemented, and the current model still reflects a degree of transition between existing practice and the revised structure
- As a result, the full impact of planned changes to workload, staffing deployment and operational flexibility has not yet been realised, and there is potential for increased pressure and instability as these changes take effect
- Staff are currently managing a complex and demanding workload, including highly personalised teaching, increasing expectations around progress and outcomes, and additional pressures linked to wider school priorities such as admissions and consultation processes
- The staffing model is increasingly aligned to operational requirements, with reduced flexibility to absorb additional demand, respond to changes in pupil need or provide wider capacity within the system
- There is an emerging need to carefully monitor workload, wellbeing and staff sustainability, particularly as the school moves towards a more constrained and tightly aligned staffing structure
- Opportunities for professional development, collaboration and skill-sharing are in place; however, maintaining access to these and ensuring they remain meaningful within a more constrained system will require careful planning

What are we working towards?

- To sustain a highly skilled and experienced workforce, ensuring that specialist SEND expertise remains central to the quality of provision
- To maintain staff wellbeing and workload at manageable and sustainable levels, particularly as staffing structures are refined and operational pressures increase
- To ensure that staffing structures remain aligned to pupil need and provision, including the phased development of roles and responsibilities to reflect changes in the profile of the cohort
- To carefully implement and monitor planned staffing changes from September 2026, ensuring that their impact on workload, capacity and provision is understood and managed effectively

- To ensure that staffing capacity remains sufficient to meet statutory, safeguarding and curriculum requirements, recognising the limits of further reduction without impacting provision
- To continue to invest in high-quality professional development, including structured CPD, collaboration and access to external expertise, ensuring that staff skills remain current and responsive to emerging need
- To support the development and retention of staff through a clear focus on professional growth, recognition and sustainable working practices
- To progress longer-term workforce planning, including succession planning and the gradual refinement of leadership capacity through natural turnover, ensuring that roles remain aligned to operational priorities and emerging need

Estimated Timeline

Date	Action
Short Term (Year 1)	<p><i>Implementing changes and managing transition carefully</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement planned staffing and structural changes from September 2026, including adjustments to teaching capacity, leadership structure, support staff deployment and working arrangements • Carefully monitor the impact of these changes on staff workload, wellbeing, capacity and the consistency and quality of provision • Maintain clear oversight of staffing deployment to ensure that provision, safeguarding and statutory responsibilities continue to be effectively met • Provide appropriate support to staff during the transition period, recognising the potential for increased workload and reduced flexibility as new arrangements are embedded • Continue to prioritise staff wellbeing, including monitoring workload and ensuring that support mechanisms remain in place and accessible • Maintain access to professional development and skill-sharing opportunities, ensuring that CPD, collaboration and training continue despite increasing operational pressures • Review and refine workload expectations and working practices where possible and appropriate, ensuring that they remain realistic and sustainable within the evolving staffing structure
Medium Term (Years 2-3)	<p><i>Embedding sustainable structures and refining workforce model</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the impact of staffing and structural changes implemented from September 2026, including their effect on workload, staff wellbeing, retention and quality of provision • Refine staffing structures and deployment to ensure continued alignment with pupil need, curriculum delivery and operational priorities • Progress planned changes to leadership capacity through natural turnover, including the gradual reduction of leadership roles and the reconfiguration of responsibilities • Strengthen pastoral and behaviour-focused capacity within the staffing model, ensuring that provision reflects the changing needs of the pupil cohort • Embed sustainable workload practices, ensuring that expectations remain manageable and aligned to staffing capacity • Continue to develop staff expertise through structured CPD, collaboration and access to external networks and training • Support staff retention through a focus on professional development, wellbeing and sustainable working practices • Recognise and celebrate staff progression as a positive outcome of strong professional development, supporting the contribution of Woodlane-trained practitioners to the wider education sector while maintaining a focus on retention and workforce stability
Long Term (Years 4-5)	<p><i>Sustaining a stable, skilled and aligned workforce</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain a stable and skilled workforce capable of delivering high-quality specialist provision • Ensure that staffing structures remain aligned to pupil need, including an appropriate balance of teaching, leadership and pastoral capacity • Maintain a sustainable model of workload and staff wellbeing, recognising the limits of capacity within a constrained system • Sustain high levels of staff expertise through ongoing professional development and knowledge-sharing • Ensure that succession planning supports long-term leadership stability and continuity of provision

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain workforce resilience, ensuring the school can respond to changing pupil need without compromising quality• Ensure that staffing decisions continue to be closely aligned with financial sustainability, provision requirements and long-term strategic priorities
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