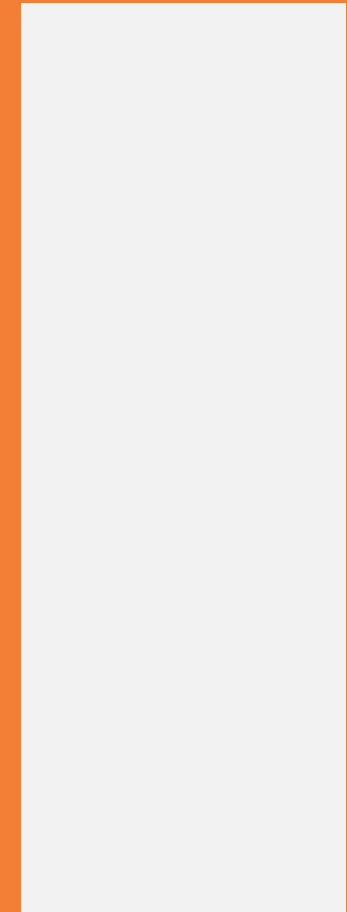
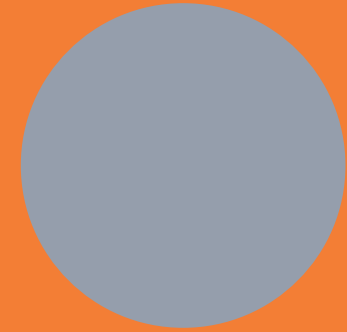


**isos
partnership**

Towards an effective and financially sustainable approach to SEND in England

A discussion with pupils at Dawn House School

www.isospartnership.com



Overview of our discussion with pupils at Dawn House School

In July 2024 Isos Partnership published a report for the Local Government Association and the County Councils Network, looking at the future of the 'SEND system' in England.

Since the publication of the report, we have been holding discussions around the country with leaders from government, education, health and parent and carer representative bodies.

We have also been holding discussions with groups of young people with additional needs and disabilities, to hear their views on some of the key themes in our report.



TOWARDS AN EFFECTIVE AND FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE APPROACH TO SEND IN ENGLAND
AN INDEPENDENT REPORT BY ISOS PARTNERSHIP COMMISSIONED BY THE COUNTY COUNCILS NETWORK & LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION
isos partnership CCN Local Government



We were really pleased to have the chance to talk to pupils from Dawn House School in January 2025. This is a short summary of our discussion. We will be publishing a report in 2025, drawing on this discussion and the conversations we are having with other groups of young people.

Thank you to the pupils at Dawn House School for giving up your time and sharing your views!

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**The language we use
around special educational
needs and disability**



“ My parents said I was going to a school for children with disabilities. I was ok with that; it made it clear what support I’d get.”

GEORGE

“ I don’t like ‘special’ – makes me feel I’m being treated specially, instead of how everyone else is being treated.”

JACK

“ I just don’t think it’s fair to say [‘special’] because everyone’s gonna be different in some sort of way, whether that be height, eye colour, gender, hair colour. But it’s not ok to put people into ‘special’ and ‘not special’ because everyone deserves different levels of attention depending on how they are.”

ELLIE

Language we prefer...

“ ‘Additional’ rather than ‘special’ needs.”

“ ‘Additional’ needs means we’re going to a place we can get help from. I like that term.”

GEORGE

“ A school that helps you.”

“ A school that understands.”

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What EHCPs mean to us



“ An EHCP clarifies what you’ve been up to; it gets reviewed every year.”

JESS

“ It’s so the school can understand what help we need.”

SKYE

“ All I know is they’re annual.”

ELLIE

“ It’s given me more options for help.”

JACK

“ It just changed my life forever basically, knowing that I was actually coming to this school from my old school [because I got my EHCP]. I don’t actually miss anyone from my old school whatsoever, so I’m just really happy being here.”

JESS

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Comparing experiences of mainstream and special schools



“Classes are smaller. There were just so many children in the same room [at mainstream school], and they’re working faster – I’m far behind, I just couldn’t keep up with what they were doing. I was just not getting it. Here [at special school] it’s slower, more explained.”

GEORGE

“[At mainstream school] I wasn’t getting the support I needed. There was one teacher and one TA in my class, and I didn’t understand any of the work. The TA was just writing stuff in my book; I wasn’t learning anything. At this school I get a speech therapist in classes, the classes are really small and the work’s really easy to understand as well.”

JESS

“ My old [mainstream] school is not that much different. Except at this school there’s more people who can actually help me with my disabilities, and I feel more accepted at this school because there are more people that have the same experiences that I have.”

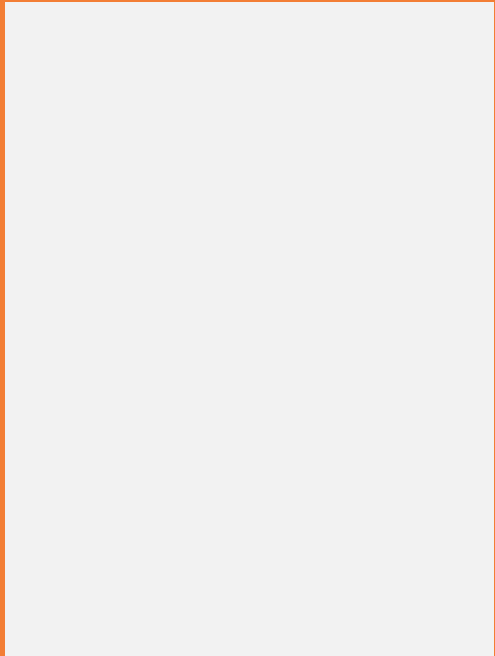
GEORGE

“ At my old [mainstream] school, teachers just didn’t really like me. Made stuff up about me. Teachers here are nicer and more understanding. They let you think about stuff more; you get more time to answer questions.”

JACK

“ What I’ve learnt to do at this school is actually a lot better than our previous schools, because we get to do more activities... the old school, we used to do boring lessons. But this [school]’s actually a lot of fun.”

JESS



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