

Planning Statement – Proposed New School at Cornbrook

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared by Supreme Start Limited in support of a planning application for the establishment of a new Special Educational (SE) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) primary school within the existing premises at Cornbrook Enterprise Centre, 70 Quenby Street, Manchester, M15 4HW.

Supreme Start Limited currently operates a Specialist Curriculum and Nurture (SCN) primary provision in Oldham, which has been highly successful in supporting children whose needs are not fully met within mainstream settings. That provision has worked in close partnership with Manchester, Rochdale, and Oldham Councils, receiving positive feedback for the quality of care, the tailored educational approach, and the positive outcomes achieved for pupils. Building on this success, the proposed school seeks to extend this specialist model into a new area of need.

The school will focus on children with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) and SEMH needs, delivering an alternative to mainstream education through smaller class sizes, personalised learning, and a nurturing, therapeutic environment. The aim is to provide a structured but flexible setting that enables young children to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

The application relates solely to the use of the existing building as a school facility, with no external or internal structural alterations required. The premises will be used in their current form and will operate with a maximum capacity of 50 pupils on site at any one time.

This submission is accompanied by the required application forms, site location plan, floor plans, and this Planning Statement, which sets out the context, policy background, and justification for the proposal.

2. Site and Surroundings

The application site is within the administrative area of Manchester council. The property is an existing building that has historically been used for school but then converted for office purposes, and is well-suited to conversion into an educational setting without the need for physical alterations.

The building sits within an established urban area, characterised by a mix of residential uses. The surrounding neighbourhood is accessible by local road networks and is supported by good public transport links, making the site convenient for pupils, staff, and visitors travelling from the wider catchment area.

The site benefits from existing access arrangements that will continue to be used as part of the school operation. Adequate provision is available for safe arrival and departure of pupils, with opportunities to encourage sustainable travel through walking, cycling, and public transport.

No extensions or external works are proposed to the building or its grounds. The use of the site will therefore maintain its existing character and appearance, with the change being confined to the internal occupation of the premises as a specialist SEMH primary school.

The site offers an appropriate, sustainable, and accessible location for a specialist educational facility, and its adaptation to this use will contribute positively to meeting local demand for alternative education provision.

3. The Proposed Development

This application seeks approval for the change of use of the existing premises at Cornbrook Enterprise Centre, 70 Quenby Street, Manchester, M15 4HW into a specialist SE and SEMH primary school. No external or internal building works are proposed as part of this application. The property will be used in its current form, making this a change of use only.

The building, which extends to approximately 5,591.31 sq ft, provides sufficient internal space to support the proposed educational use. The school will accommodate up to 50 pupils at any one time. The teaching approach is based on small, highly focused groups, with class sizes of between 4 and 6 pupils per classroom. This model ensures that children receive the personalised support and nurturing environment required to meet their individual needs.

The staffing model will include approximately 20 members of staff, enabling a high staff-to-pupil ratio and ensuring that pupils are supported academically, socially, and emotionally throughout the school day.

The existing facilities within the building allow for flexible and effective use of space. The largest room will be designated for sporting and physical activities, ensuring pupils benefit from regular structured exercise and recreation. In addition, there is ample outdoor space available on site. Outdoor use will be carefully managed through a staggered approach, allowing pupils to benefit from outside activity while maintaining safe and structured supervision.

The site also benefits from an on-site car park, which provides sufficient capacity to accommodate staff parking requirements. Space for safe pick-up and drop-off of pupils will be managed on site, and sustainable travel options such as walking, cycling, and public transport will be encouraged where appropriate.

The proposed use of the building as a specialist primary school therefore makes efficient use of an existing facility, with no construction phases or physical works required. The development will deliver much-needed educational provision for children with SE and SEMH needs in Manchester, whilst ensuring the site remains in active and beneficial use.

3.1 Supporting Infrastructure

The existing site at Cornbrook Enterprise Centre is well-equipped to accommodate the proposed specialist primary school without the need for additional building works. The supporting infrastructure is summarised as follows:

- **Car Parking:** The site benefits from an established car park with sufficient capacity to meet staff requirements. Spaces will be reserved for the 20 staff members employed at the school. Pick-up and drop-off arrangements for pupils will be managed on site to ensure safe and orderly access.
- **Cycle and Sustainable Travel:** Although the site will provide dedicated car parking for staff, pupils and staff will also be encouraged to travel sustainably through walking, cycling, and the use of nearby public transport links. A School Travel Plan will be developed to promote and manage these modes of travel.
- **Recreational Space:** The building includes a large internal hall, which will be designated for sporting and physical activities, ensuring pupils have regular opportunities for structured exercise within a safe indoor environment.
- **Outdoor Provision:** The site has ample outdoor space, which will be used for play and recreation. Access will be managed through a staggered timetable to ensure small groups of pupils can safely enjoy the outdoor environment, consistent with the school's approach of small class sizes and close supervision.
- **Facilities:** The internal layout of the building provides flexible classrooms accommodating 4–6 pupils each, as well as spaces for therapy, small-group support, and staff facilities. The total floorspace of 5,591.31 sq ft is sufficient to support the planned pupil capacity of 50.

This infrastructure ensures that the school will operate effectively and safely, providing a balanced learning and recreational environment that is tailored to the needs of children with SE and SEMH requirements.

4. Planning Policy Context

This section outlines the key planning policies relevant to the proposed change of use at Cornbrook Enterprise Centre, 70 Quenby Street, Manchester, M15 4HW, and demonstrates how the scheme aligns with both national and local planning objectives.

4.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (2023) sets out the Government's planning policies for England. Several themes are directly relevant to this proposal:

- **Promoting healthy and safe communities (Chapter 8)** – The NPPF supports the delivery of strong, healthy, and safe communities through accessible services and facilities. Schools are explicitly recognised as essential community infrastructure, and local authorities are encouraged to plan positively for new school development.

- Meeting the needs of education (Paragraphs 95–97) – The NPPF emphasises that great weight should be given to the need to create, expand, or alter schools, and decision-makers should take a proactive, positive, and collaborative approach to planning applications that enable school provision.
- Making effective use of land (Chapter 11) – The proposal represents a sustainable reuse of an existing building, making efficient use of a previously developed site without the need for new construction.
- Sustainable transport (Chapter 9) – The site is accessible by public transport and will operate with a School Travel Plan to promote sustainable modes of travel.

Overall, the proposal aligns with national planning policy by meeting a clear local education need and making efficient use of an existing, accessible site.

4.2 Local Planning Policy

The site falls within the jurisdiction of Manchester City Council, whose development plan includes the Core Strategy (2012) and saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), together with emerging guidance from the forthcoming Local Plan.

Relevant local policy themes include:

- Community Facilities – Local policies support the retention and enhancement of community infrastructure, including educational facilities, particularly where these address local needs and contribute to social inclusion.
- Design and Accessibility – Policies emphasise high-quality design, inclusive access, and safe environments for all users. The proposal meets these objectives through small class sizes, supervised outdoor use, and accessible building layouts.
- Sustainability and Transport – Local transport policy encourages developments to be located in accessible locations and supported by measures to reduce reliance on the private car. The site is well served by existing road and public transport networks, and a Travel Plan will underpin sustainable travel choices.

4.3 Summary

The proposal is consistent with both national and local policy objectives. It:

- Provides much-needed specialist primary education provision in Manchester.
- Makes effective use of an existing building, avoiding the need for new development.
- Supports the creation of a healthy, safe, and inclusive community facility.
- Aligns with the NPPF directive that great weight should be given to the need to create and expand schools.

5. Conclusion

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of an application by Supreme Start Limited for the change of use of the existing premises at Cornbrook Enterprise Centre, 70

Quenby Street, Manchester, M15 4HW to a Special Educational (SE) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) primary school.

The proposal represents a sustainable and efficient reuse of an existing building, with no physical works required. The property provides approximately 5,591.31 sq ft of internal floorspace, sufficient to accommodate up to 50 pupils and approximately 20 staff, with small class sizes of 4–6 pupils that reflect the specialist nature of the provision. Supporting infrastructure, including staff parking, indoor activity space, and outdoor play areas (managed through a staggered timetable), ensures that the school can operate safely and effectively within the existing site.

The case for approval is compelling:

- Educational Need – There is a clear and growing demand for SEMH provision in Manchester. Supreme Start Limited has already demonstrated the success of its approach through its SCN provision in Oldham, which has been delivered in partnership with Manchester, Rochdale, and Oldham Councils and has received positive feedback. This proposal will build on that success to meet local demand.
- Policy Alignment – The development fully complies with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which places great weight on the need to create and expand schools, as well as with relevant policies in the Manchester Core Strategy and Local Plan that support community facilities, inclusive design, and sustainable development.
- Limited Environmental Impact – No external works are proposed, and initial checks show no obvious flood risk, heritage, or highway constraints that cannot be managed through standard planning conditions.
- Community and Social Benefits – The scheme will provide vital educational opportunities for children who are not thriving in mainstream settings, create new local jobs, and retain the building in active, beneficial use.