



Connecting



**CST Annual
Conference 26**

15 & 16 October, ICC, Birmingham

#CSTConf26

Inclusive by design

Creating environments where all learners thrive



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#CSTConf26

How do we create education environments that enable a wider range of learners to participate, belong and thrive?

Demand is outpacing the system

A capacity, funding and place challenge

+71%

School pupils with
EHCPs

2018–2024

+59%

High-needs funding

Real terms, 2015–16 to 2024–25

1/3rd

Fall in funding per
EHCP

Real terms

£3.3bn+

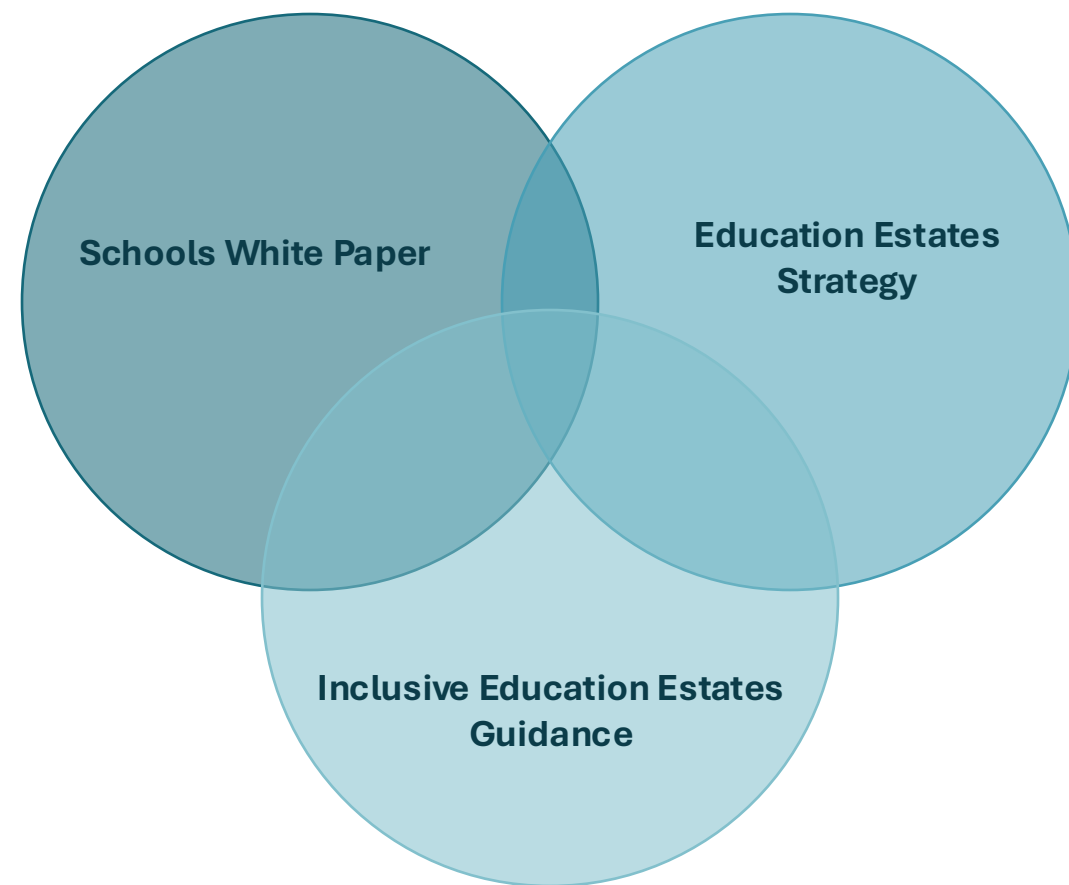
Accumulated high-
needs deficits

IFS estimate

Funding has increased, but demand has increased faster.

The policy direction is converging

- 1 More inclusive mainstream provision
- 2 Earlier support
- 3 More local provision
- 4 Specialist capacity for complex need
- 5 Estates aligned with need



An inclusive, suitable and adaptable estate



MANAGE

**Understand need and
barriers**

IMPROVE & RENEW

**Make every project
count**

BUILD & REBUILD

**Create capacity
where needed**

Inclusion should be designed in, not added later.

Beyond compliance

Compliance is the baseline rather than the destination

ACCESS

Can I enter and move through the space?

PARTICIPATION

Can I learn, communicate and regulate?

BELONGING

Does this feel like a place designed with me in mind?

Movement | Wayfinding | Sensory comfort | Acoustics | Lighting | Nature



Sound



Air quality



Lighting



Aesthetics



Design



SCOTT BROWNRIGG⁺

Integrated expertise | Progressive Design | Seamless Delivery

BEYOND THE ACCESS AUDIT

It's about really understanding how
different people experience space



THE ISLAND SCHOOL, CYPRUS

INCLUSION IN PRACTICE

What mainstream schools need from specialist learning environments



HOWARD OF EFFINGHAM, SURREY

IT STARTS WITH CHOICE

A diverse, adaptable environment
can support everyone



THE SPARK SOLENT UNIVERSITY, SOUTHAMPTON

USING WHAT YOU HAVE

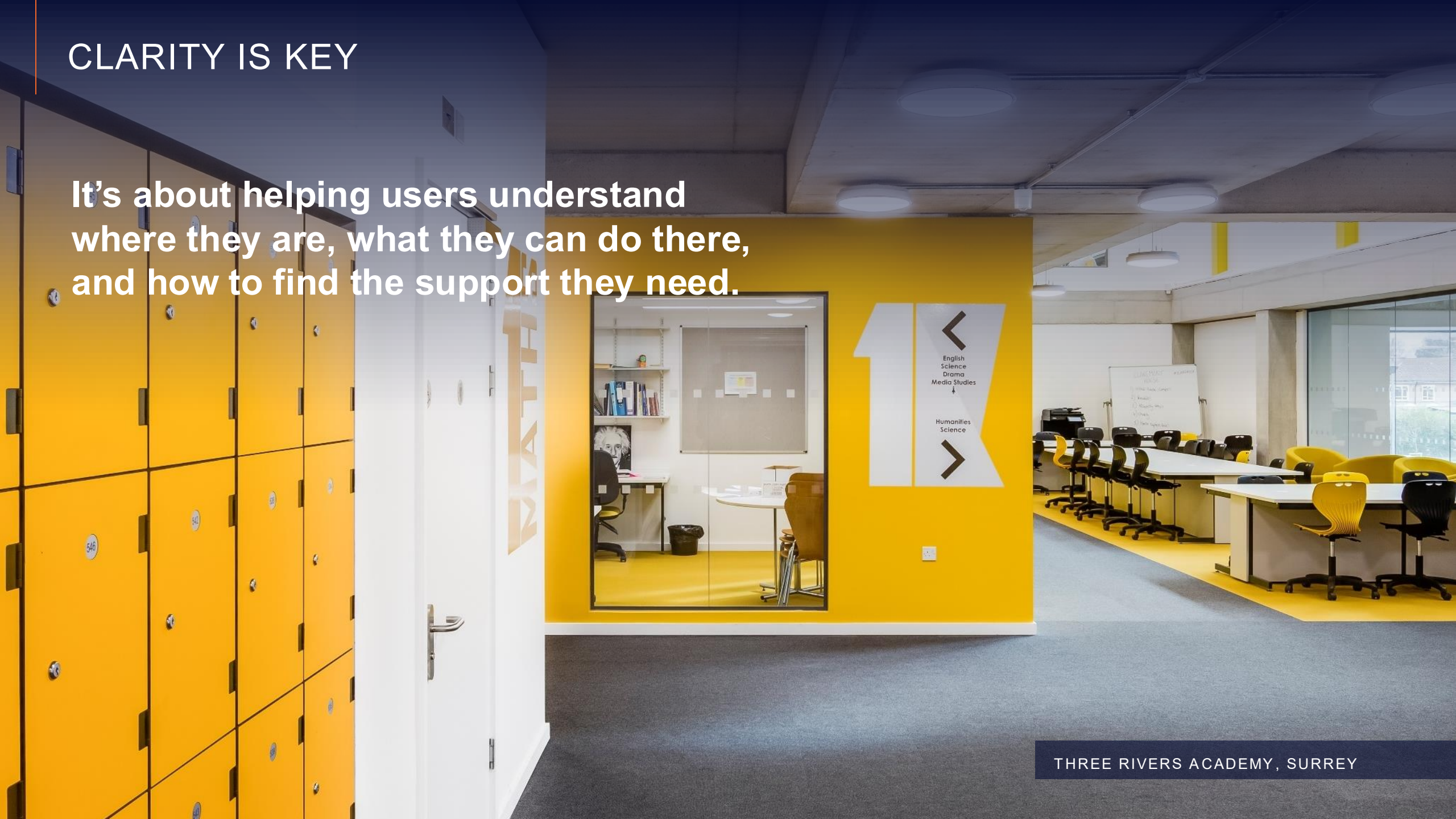
Layout, character and performance to support clarity, accessibility and sensory comfort.



IVYDALE SCHOOL, LONDON

CLARITY IS KEY

It's about helping users understand where they are, what they can do there, and how to find the support they need.



CASE STUDY



LONDON DESIGN AND ENGINEERING UTC

CASE STUDY



NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE COLLEGE

A HOLISTIC APPROACH



AIR

WATER

COMFORT

MIND

MATERIALS

LIGHT

NOURISHMENT

MOVEMENT

SOUND

COMMUNITY

INSIDE + OUTSIDE

EXISTING BELLWOOD BUILDING INTERNAL
REMODELLING AND REFURBISHMENT

EXISTING CHILDREN'S CENTRE
REMODELLING AND REFURBISHMENT
TO ACCOMMODATE NURSERY

IMPROVEMENTS
TO JUNIOR
PLAYGROUND

IMPROVEMENTS
TO NURSERY
EXTERNAL PLAY AREA

IMPROVEMENTS
TO INFANT
PLAYGROUND

IVYDALE SCHOOL, LONDON



THANK YOU

Inclusive by Design

*Creating learning environments that transform
lives*

Diane Brazier

Director of Estates and Facilities

16th October 2026



About Us

- OHCAT
 - 13 specialist schools
 - 2300 learners
- OHC
 - 10 specialist college Sites
 - 500 learners
- Our learners have a range of learning abilities and additional needs
- Learner needs have become more complex over time



Estates Vision, Strategy, People & Data

Estate Vision and Strategy

- Clear action plans and deliverables

People

- Specialist governance & estate expertise

Asset Information

- Measured drawings, Condition, suitability & sufficiency surveys

Output

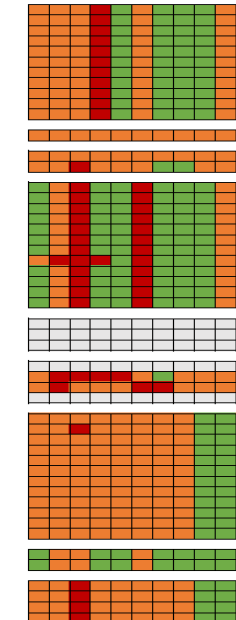
- Informed decision making

Suitability Assessment [St. Dominic's School]
based on a site visit July 2024

■ Good - suitable space for teaching, learning and wellbeing in the school
■ Reasonable - teaching, learning and behaviour is affected
■ Bad - lower impact on teaching, learning and behaviour
■ Not applicable

St. Dominic's (ASD)				
Room Name	Room No.	Area (sqm)	No. Students	
Main House Building / 11A				
Basic Teaching	Music	MHO 02	34.9	
	Classroom	MHO 08	25.4	
	Classroom	MHO 22	40.2	
	Classroom	MHO 17	26.4	
	Classroom	MHO 24	23.5	
	Classroom	MHO 25	36.5	
	Classroom	MHO 01	39.1	
	Classroom	MHO 43	39.8	
	Classroom	MHO 41	23.4	
	Classroom	MHO 37	24.9	
Halls				
	Main Hall	MHO 18	65.5	
Learning Resource				
	LRC	MHO 34	5.4	
	LRC	MHO 05	5.4	
Staff & Admin				
Office	Office	MHO 07	16	
	Office	MHO 10	19.7	
	Office	MHO 15	13	
	Reception Office	MHO 14	39	
	Meeting Room	MHO 16	23.5	
	Office	MHO 35	9	
	Office	MHO 11	11	
	Staffroom	MHO 13	22.9	
	Office	MHO 19	18	
	Head Teacher	MHO 17	34.1	
Office	Office	MHO 46	7.5	
	Office	MHO 45	16.3	
Storage				
Store	Storage	MHO 06	7.5	
	Store	MHO 02	3.5	
	Music Store	MHO 02	3.2	
Catering / Kitchen				
	Kitchen	MHO 04	11.5	
	Kitchen	MHO 18	30.7	
	Kitchenette / Office	MHO 37	3.5	
	Kitchen	MHO 16	9.2	
Toilet & Personal Care				
Wash	Wash	MHO 12	2.8	
	WC	MHO 11	2.7	
	Cleaners	MHO 26	4.5	
	Male WC	MHO 28	27.9	
	Female WC	MHO 29	2.2	
	Male WC	MHO 30	2.2	
	Shower	MHO 05	2.7	
	WC	MHO 07	1.9	
	Bathroom	MHO 19	6.2	
	WC	MHO 20	3	
Bathroom	Bathroom	MHO 29	9.3	
	Bathroom	MHO 38	13.5	
Therapy				
	Therapy Room	MHO 28	19.8	
	Therapy Room	MHO 39	25.9	
Circulation				
	Lobby	MHO 06	35.8	
	Lobby	MHO 08	1.8	
	Entrance	MHO 19	5.7	
	Lobby	MHO 20	5.2	

Suitability Elements									
Health and Safety	Flexibility of Space	Accessibility / Inclusivity	Staff / Shop	Location / Joining of Facilities	Ventilation / Solar Gain / Thermal Comfort	Natural / Artificial Lighting	Acoustics	Security	ICT Infrastructure



Inclusive by Design



- Arrival and departure - providing the right start and end to the day.
- Learning environments meet the diverse range of needs
- Efficient
- Safe
- Staff wellbeing

Specialist Facilities



Personal Care



Regulation



Sensory

Our estate provides learning environments to support cohort specific needs.



Lessons Learnt

- Engage Stakeholders to ensure learning spaces are adaptable and suitable for their needs.
- Due diligence is essential to ensure design requirements and building condition are known.
- Suitability and sufficiency - an inability to meet DfE design standards that support learner needs and desired outcomes



Maximising Your Assets



One investment delivering multiple outcomes



Trauma Informed Practice

Brantridge School

- Welcoming
- Homely
- Calm
- Engaging



TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE

At Brantridge School we follow Trauma Informed practice and have adapted our learning environments.

A trauma informed classroom helps students regulate their emotions, develop coping skills and build resilience. This, in turn, contributes to their emotional wellbeing and overall mental health.

This means that:

- Classrooms set out in 'lounge style' approach with comfortable seating
- Learning area set up in communal approach
- Fewer traditional display boards
- Aim to set the learning in a relaxed setting
- Aim to break the association with traditional classroom settings that have negative connotations for some pupils.
- Research based approach

Build resilience

Regulate Emotions

The infographic features a large green house-shaped graphic. Inside the house, the text 'TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE' is written in green and black. Below this, the Brantridge School logo is visible. To the right of the house, a vertical text 'Build resilience' is written. At the bottom, a horizontal text 'Regulate Emotions' is written. The infographic includes several photographs: a top right photo of an outdoor play area, a middle left photo of a classroom interior with comfortable seating, and a bottom row of five small photos showing different classroom setups.

Brantridge School



EYFS Classroom

Vocational

St Philip's School Willow Block

- Learning
- Skills
- Experience
- Employment



Inclusive & Independent

Sutton Life College Centre

- Ambulant and non-ambulant students can learn together
- Accessible
- Life skills
- Building confidence
- Supporting learning outcomes



Community

Sutton Life College Centre

- Work Experience
- Life Skills
- Community Connection



Panel Discussion Questions



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