



Georgia Gould
Minister for School Standards
Department of Education
(by email)

02 February 2026

Dear Georgia Gould,

I am writing to follow up on my question at Education oral questions on 19th January regarding funding of SEND provisions in Herefordshire.

As I have raised in previous correspondence, the decision not to go ahead with the building of a specialist ASD school in Herefordshire is deeply disappointing. I am also concerned at the long delay in progressing the Westfield School rebuild.

As I set out on Monday, North Herefordshire is one of the most rural constituencies in England, and families with SEND children, especially those who require autism-specific provisions, face acute challenges when appropriate local school placements are unavailable. Existing SEND school in Herefordshire are hugely over-subscribed.

The reality for families in my constituency and across the county is that alternatives are often many miles from home, placing significant strain on children and their families. Rural areas like Herefordshire require solutions that explicitly recognise geography, transport limitations, and the importance of locally accessible, state-funded provisions.

I would therefore very much welcome the opportunity to meeting with the Minister to discuss how national policy and funding decisions can better reflect the specific needs of rural constituencies.

I look forward to hearing from your office soon to arrange a suitable date.

With thanks and best wishes,

Ellie Chowns MP
North Herefordshire