

Willmott Dixon sets standard for SEND school provision

3 years ago



Willmott Dixon has published a white paper that provides unique insight and learning for local authorities developing a new generation of schools for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

The landmark [Building for All](#) paper features contributions from a range of stakeholders, from councils and architects to Willmott Dixon's team building SEND schools, who share what they have learnt in creating highly specialised (SEND) school accommodation.

In particular, it highlights the approach taken in Lincolnshire and Leicestershire, where Willmott Dixon is principal contractor on a number of high-profile SEND projects.

Nick Gibb, deputy managing director at Willmott Dixon, said: "SEND schools are unlike any other project in the education sector. The intricacies associated with each project require early stakeholder management and that's one of the key considerations in this white paper. We want to set the standard for SEND project delivery and see this document as Willmott Dixon's deep dive into what it takes to make these projects a success.

"This white paper, while citing the issues felt from many voices in the sector, also has a very human element by placing the end-users at the heart – which was important to us in capturing the essence of this work. We want to share how effective collaboration and community engagement can push forward the creation of spaces that offer an abundance of educational opportunities."

SEND schools cater for ages four through to 19, and each carries a diverse range of needs that need to be met – for example, some pupils need lots of visual stimulation, while for others the opposite is true.

The spaces must accommodate physical and neurodiversity, extending to the construction process itself. Willmott Dixon has mastered putting processes in place to take pupils on the journey with them and instill a sense of calm – offering educational books and materials, and work experience for older pupils.

Willmott Dixon is principal contractor for a series of high-profile SEND developments across Lincolnshire, as part the county council's £86m school programme aimed at resolving pent-up demand. This includes the recently opened [Willoughby School in Bourne](#).

Eileen McMorrow, SEND programme manager at Lincolnshire County Council, said:

"We are pleased to see Willmott Dixon investing in its approach to become a partner of choice for SEND schools and local authorities, and we are certain that lessons can be learned from its white paper.

"With an 'all needs, all through' approach, equity of provision is essential – if one school has significantly different facilities to another, there is the risk of parents and carers being drawn away from their nearest school, defeating the object of the approach. Consistency is incredibly important.

"Key to delivering a successful SEND project is having a team on our side that shares our vision. With Willmott Dixon, we have found a contractor that has come on this journey with us."

Willmott Dixon is on track to have completed 15 SEND school projects across the Midlands region over the course of the past ten years, marking the company's dedication to delivering this much-needed provision for local communities and leaving a lasting legacy.

To learn more, please read the Building for All white paper by visiting: <https://www.willmottdixon.co.uk/buildingforall>