



Section D1: Curriculum Plan

Mainstream applicants (Wave 15)

Private & Confidential

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. What information will you need to include?	4
2.1 If you do not run an open, state-funded school of the same type and phase you are proposing	4
2.2 If you currently run an open, state-funded school of the same type and phase you are proposing	5
2.3 Applying to set up a school with 16-19 places	6
2.4 Applying to set up a nursery	6
3. Writing a strong curriculum plan	8
3.1 Take advantage of the longer word count	8
3.2 Consistency	8
3.3 Refer to the white paper	8
3.4 Existing provisions	9
3.5 Further support	9

1. Introduction

This resource has been designed to provide further guidance and advice for section D1 for mainstream free school applicants. This section of the application is an opportunity for you to outline your proposed curriculum, however this section will need to be completed differently for each type of mainstream applicant. Therefore, this resource will provide a range of guidance tailored to proposers of primary, secondary and 16-19 provisions – as well as proposers with or without existing schools.

The DfE's published guidance for mainstream applicants on what to include is available [here](#). Through this guide we are aiming to clarify what you are required to include, as well as some guidance on writing section D1 of your application.

2. What information will you need to include?

The different types of mainstream proposers will be required to include different information throughout the application, section D1 similarly requires varying information. The DfE acknowledge that certain school features will require further explanation, therefore there are different word counts for this section dependant on details of the school. Below are the maximum word counts not including the required tables for section D1 as outlined by the DfE in their guidance for mainstream applicants.

- Schools with a nursery: 3,500 words
- Schools with an SEN unit: 3,500 words
- Schools with 16-19 places, either standalone or a school with a sixth form: 4,500 words
- All other applicants: 3,000 words

You will be required to submit varying levels of information depending on whether you currently run an open, state-funded school of the same type and phase. However, for all mainstream proposers, you must include a list of all subjects which will be offered, including Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) where applicable. You will also need to discuss the proposed length of the school day – including enrichment time. The white paper identifies the aim to work towards a richer, longer average school week, therefore, it would be useful to refer to this where possible to highlight to your assessor where the proposed school aligns with the aims of the white paper.

2.1 If you do not run an open, state-funded school of the same type and phase you are proposing

2.1.1 Anticipated cohort

If you do not currently run a state-funded school, you will need to provide more in-depth information surrounding your proposed curriculum. With regards to your expected pupil intake, you will need to identify your anticipated cohort's needs. This will require you to outline potential numbers of students with SEND, looked after children, children requiring literacy and numeracy intervention, EAL students and disadvantaged students. This should be based on the levels of each of these student types in primary schools in the area.

2.1.2 Curriculum details

You should also discuss your proposed curriculum as outlined in the table in detail here. If you are not planning on following the national curriculum you should provide a clear rationale for this.

Additionally, you should outline where your curriculum differs from the national curriculum and how you will ensure students still receive a broad and balanced education. Through D1, you should also outline your approach to teaching and learning – particularly in relation to the identified cohort’s needs.

Whilst describing your curriculum plan, you should also identify any extra-curricular or enrichment activities which will be offered through the provision which will further allow the delivery of the vision you outlined previously in section C. Following this, you should evidence that these activities will be deliverable and affordable – here you should discuss any resources which will be shared from existing provisions which will further allow the curriculum to be delivered.

2.1.3 Pupil wellbeing

Additionally, you should outline your proposed approach to managing behaviour and attendance in the proposed school. Student personal development will also need to be covered in D1. You should clearly outline how you will ensure that pupils are supported to develop to their potential through the proposed school. You should then discuss any procedures which will be in place to ensure that pupils joining and leaving the school will be able to work towards successful futures.

Safeguarding is also a key issue which you are required to cover if you do not currently run a state-funded school of the same phase. You must outline your safeguarding strategy and evidence that there will be a strong culture of safeguarding.

2.2 If you currently run an open, state-funded school of the same type and phase you are proposing

You will be required to include less detail in section D1 if you already run a state school of the same phase, however where possible you should include as much information as possible to make the most of the available word count.

You will need to discuss the details of your current pupil intake at your existing school, outlining any key differences you anticipate for the likely cohort of the proposed school. This will involve an in-depth discussion of your current intake of pupils with SEND, Looked After Children (LAC), pupils requiring literacy and numeracy intervention, EAL students, as well as pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Following this you should outline any differences you expect to this intake in your proposed school.

Any changes you will be making to the curriculum at your existing school should be outlined, justified, and shown to be deliverable throughout this section.

2.3 Applying to set up a school with 16-19 places

Whether you are proposing a school with 16-19 as a standalone provision or as part of a secondary school, you will be required to include the same details of your curriculum in section D1. It is essential that throughout this section you are consistent with the information previously outlined in section B1b and B2.

Section D1 is an opportunity to present a case that the proposed 16-19 places will enhance the current local offer available, perhaps through a broader range of subjects or type of qualification. The DfE are expecting free schools to offer T Levels, if your provision is not planning on delivering these, you should provide a clear rationale for this decision.

Throughout this section you should evidence that your proposed curriculum will be attractive to your target cohort and will support student outcomes after leaving the provision. If you already run a provision with 16-19 places, you may wish to discuss the pathways students at your existing provision take following Key Stage 5. It is particularly important here to discuss your assumptions on future pathways relating to disadvantaged students.

Whilst outlining your proposed curriculum, you should address how the provision will complement existing post-16 provision in the area. This may involve evidencing engagement with schools and colleges in the area to understand the local curriculum offer currently available. Additionally, if there are any proposals for collaborating with schools or colleges in the area in order to offer a broader curriculum through shared resources, include details within this section.

It is important to note that if you are proposing a secondary school with a sixth form, you are expected to offer at least 15 A level subjects. These can be delivered either directly or through a partnership – however if you are not planning on offering a minimum of 15 subjects at A level, you must provide a clear rationale for this decision.

2.4 Applying to set up a nursery

When applying to set up a primary or all-through school, you may also be applying to set up a nursery provision. The DfE have allowed a longer word count to these applicants, to allow the following information to be included:

- How you will meet the requirements of EYFS for nursery and reception classes
- Whether the nursery will be delivered by the school or through a partnership with an external provider – you should include your rationale for this approach here
- Where appropriate, how you will deliver the government’s commitment to providing 30 hours of free entitlement provision for 3 and 4 year old children of working parents, and whether you will offer provision over and above any free entitlement
- Your approach to making places available for 3 and 4 year old children whose parents do not qualify for the 30 hours entitlement
- Whether funded provision for disadvantaged 2 year olds will be included
- A proposed staffing model and ratios, including whether this will include qualified teacher status QTS
- Intended numbers with an approximate breakdown of 15 and 30 hours
- Details of any proposed wrap around care

3. Writing a strong curriculum plan

At Create: Schools we have a range of expertise, which has allowed us to identify some useful advice on how to write this section. Below are some key tips which you may find beneficial when writing your curriculum plan.

3.1 Take advantage of the longer word count

This section has one of the largest word counts in the application, therefore you should use this to your advantage. As there is a lot of space here to discuss your curriculum, you should attempt to include as much detail surrounding your proposed curriculum as possible.

Although there is significantly less criteria to cover if you already run a state-funded school of the same type and phase, if you have word count left to use it would be beneficial to cover some of the criteria tailored to proposers who do not run a provision of the same type and phase. We recommend making the most of the high word count in this section in order to further strengthen your application and offer detailed insights into how the new school will deliver the proposed curriculum.

3.2 Consistency

Throughout each section of your application, you should aim to communicate your proposed school's vision – you should do the same here. Ensure that as you are reading through your curriculum plan, it still aligns with the rest of your application. By maintaining consistency throughout the application, it will be clear to your assessor that your vision is well-established and will be able to run throughout the new school if approved.

3.3 Refer to the white paper

The DfE have confirmed that they are especially interested in applications will allow them to work towards the aims they outlined in the white paper. Wherever possible you should align your application with these aims. In this section of the application, there are many opportunities to refer to the white paper.

For example, when discussing your curriculum and your proposed cohort it would be beneficial to discuss what strategies will be in place to support positive outcomes for disadvantaged students. In particular at secondary and post-16 level, reference to supporting disadvantaged students into top universities will align your proposed curriculum with the white paper.

3.4 Existing provisions

As previously discussed, proposers who already run a provision of the same type and phase will have less criteria to address here. With more word count available, this should be used to discuss the existing curriculum in closer detail. Any proposed changes should be addressed with a clear rationale behind them. Proposers with existing provisions may also find it useful to discuss specific elements of their curriculum which will be used in the new school, with evidence to show where this has previously been successful. It could also be beneficial to discuss safeguarding and other elements of the school here to ensure that the high word count is used effectively.

3.5 Further support

Throughout this guide, we have outlined how you should approach section D1 and the specific criteria you will be assessed against. If you would like further support on this section of your application, please reach out to us at Create: Schools with any questions you may have.