



# **Birmingham Special Free School (ASD)**

**Contextual information for applicant  
groups applying to open a new  
Special Free School**

**Birmingham City Council**

**May 2023**



**RATIONALE, CONTEXT AND NEED FOR THE SCHOOL, INCLUDING  
PROPOSED COMMISSIONING**

- **DEVELOPING LOCAL PROVISION** - The DLP programme is supporting schools and settings to feel confident and competent to identify, assess and meet the needs of CYP with SEND. This initiative will enable more children to achieve excellent outcomes in mainstream settings as part of the graduated approach.

The sufficiency of appropriate school places is an essential component of the SEND Strategy. BCC has recently commissioned its SEND forecasting which indicates an increasing and sustained demand for SEND places (pupils with EHCP) between now

- reduce number of pupils in out of borough provision and the reliance on more expensive independent provision.
- reduction in exclusions, children without a school place and NEET population.
- better use of specialist provision that meets local needs.
- clear pathways for children and young people with a wide-ranging learning, development and training offer embedded within the offer.
- increased uptake of provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities in mainstream schools and settings.

The new free school will play a fundamental part in improving the educational



infrastructure links with a number of large local housing projects planned. The site can comfortably house the build and infrastructure for an all-age special school and offers opportunity for temporary provision which may be needed. We do not envisage the new school having any detrimental impact on existing special schools and our commissioning arrangements with other settings.

We have consulted with a wide range of stakeholders including parents regarding new special free school proposals. We have received positive responses. 95% of responders to the consultation were in favour of the type, location, size, and the age range of the proposed special school.

We have carried out an initial Equality Impact Assessment on these proposals to ensure that all factors have been considered, however we do not anticipate a negative impact on other special school or mainstream providers within the city. Improving access to appropriate and local provision will reduce; journey distance and times, number of appeals, number of children out of school, number of exclusions, number of NEETs, waiting times for placement and improve attendance.

The new free school will play a fundamental part in improving the educational opportunities and experience for children with autism across the whole education system, through the proposed outreach and multi-agency engagement.

In line with our SEND strategy, success will be measured through:

- better transitions and improved progression pathways that support more children achieving outcomes for Preparation for Adulthood (PfA).
- the creation and implementation of specialist programmes of learning more locally.
- recognition of a local workforce, participation and belonging for vulnerable SEND learners.
- locally shared data and knowledge between key professionals.
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The demand for special school places continues to outstrip supply. There are a large number of pupils currently awaiting a special school place. 107 pupils are out of school requiring a special school place. 195 pupils in mainstream are awaiting a special school place. The new free school is part of our robust sufficiency plan to encouraging local placements and reducing the reliance on out of city or independent placements. This will also ensure financial sustainability. Pupils will be funded according to need and in accordance to banding indicators.