

## **THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA IMPACT ASSESSMENT BARLBY SPECIAL SCHOOL**

### **1. Background**

The new Special School is the Royal Borough's first, and will be situated adjacent to a residential area and on part of the site of existing Barlby Primary School. The primary school will be rebuilt adjacent to the special school on the same site.

The school will provide 80 places for pupils aged from 2 to 19, thus inclusive of both Nursery and Sixth Form age ranges. It will form an integral part of the planned provision for additional special school places as set out in the RBKC Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities aged 0-25, 2018-2021.

The special school will cater for children with principal diagnoses of either Autistic Spectrum Disorder / Condition or Severe Learning Difficulties. It is anticipated that a number will have diagnoses of both. Needs are likely to be complex; but although the building will be fully wheelchair accessible it is not anticipated that a large amount of pupils will be wheelchair users. The local need for the school has been established through the Authority's special needs place planning process, agreed by the Cabinet in 2013 and endorsed by ongoing data analysis summarised and described in this document.

### **2. Impact on other Schools including Free Schools**

As of January 2018, the 529 children and young people with an EHCP or Statement of Special Educational Needs who were the responsibility of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea were based at the following settings:

- 328 attended mainstream schools
- Of those, 7 attended resourced provision within mainstream schools
- 112 attended LA maintained special schools
- 6 attended special free schools or academies
- 43 attended non-maintained or independent special schools
- 21 were in further education or other post 16 institutions.
- 3 attended early years settings
- 11 attended alternative provision/ pupil referral units (AP/ PRUs)
- 2 were educated at hospital schools

Currently, as confirmed by the 2017 review, the Authority "has a large number of pupils placed in the independent non-maintained special school sector" (some 75) – many more than in comparable authorities and mostly with ASD or SLD. Costs relating to these sectors are high, and numbers are increasing over time.

The Authority also “makes significant use of special schools in other LAs” (76). 65 of these pupils are placed in neighbouring boroughs, 56 of them in H&F, nearly half of that 56 at Queensmill. Queensmill is already heavily over-subscribed. The review remarks that “most of these placements have been due to the fact there have been no other local options.”

The School will be a Free School and thus sets its own admissions arrangements according to the established regulations; but it is envisaged that the Authority’s strong history of working with Free Schools will be replicated here and that the admissions policy and the Royal Borough’s purchasing of places will reflect the identified local need. Local pupils are therefore likely to constitute the highest proportion of the intake; but other pupils may well be admitted according to their own needs and the schools’ characteristics.

The Authority will be working with the school and local population prior to opening, to endeavour to accommodate pupils at least at the point of transition, under 5s; 5 year olds; 11 year olds and post 16. The Royal Borough will continue to work closely with the special schools in Hammersmith & Fulham and Westminster. The school will also work closely with the local school and family community, delivering in-service training, family support and outreach accordingly to need and capacity with specially designed facilities for so doing.

### **3. Equalities Impact Assessment**

The Special School is therefore intended to support greater equality of opportunity for local, very vulnerable young people by:

- Providing education opportunities closer to their homes and support systems of these pupils;
- Relieving the pressure on places at other LA’s schools;
- Reducing reliance on high cost places at independent non-maintained special schools and thus allowing more efficient and effective use of resources to the advantage of local children and their families.

The building itself will be full accessible throughout and designed in accordance with 21<sup>st</sup> century design principles (including those expressed in Building Bulletins) so as best to meet the needs of its anticipated cohorts of children and their families. Specialist advice is being sought throughout the design and construction process to that effect.

Most pupils are likely to be transported to school by contracted minibus or taxi and an appropriate safe area has been designed on the plans for this purpose. A small number of parents may wish to transport their own children (a relatively rare occurrence in our experience) and this can be accommodated. Independent, usually escorted, travel will be encouraged and supported with older children, where appropriate and feasible, as a preparation for life thereafter.

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