



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
**KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA**

## **Appendix 1**

**This document is based on the DfE Free School Assumption advice, Annex A**

### **BARLBY SPECIAL SCHOOL, KENSINGTON**

#### **School Specification**

##### **1. NEED FOR THE SCHOOL**

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea identified in detail in 2014 through its SEN Strategy the appropriateness of a new special school with 80 places to support pupils with severe Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and/ or Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD).

Whilst the Royal Borough did not fail to discharge its statutory duties to local children with these additional needs, it did so increasingly to the detriment of its partners' and neighbours' special schools, and also through costly out-borough or non-maintained special schools. Some 76 pupils are placed in other boroughs of which 65 are placed in neighbouring Hammersmith & Fulham and nine in Westminster.

The Royal Borough's use of the independent/non-maintained sector for SEN placements is significantly greater than the London and national averages, with consequent pressure on budgets for Independent and Non Maintained Special Schools placements and home to school travel. Without action, current (or potentially increased) levels of expenditure in the Independent and Non Maintained Special Schools sector will constitute an unsustainable and permanent drain on available resources over the longer term. High Needs Block funding spent in schools outside RBKC reduces the resource available to in-borough state-funded schools.

Whilst there has been significant investment in provision for children with autism/communications issues at Barlby, ARK Brunel and Marlborough primary and Kensington Aldridge secondary schools, the Education Service would benefit immensely from wider expertise on ASD in a local, specialist special school, particularly if a combination of both in-school support and dedicated training were available.

It is unlikely that all 80 places will be taken by residents in the Royal Borough as there will be demand for places from both Westminster and Hammersmith & Fulham as well as from other nearby boroughs such as Ealing and Brent. However, as noted above, the Royal Borough is itself currently dependent on places at schools in neighbouring boroughs. In the absence of local capacity, the Royal Borough has hitherto had to use more expensive placements even further afield. This trend is likely to continue or increase at continually rising cost to Royal Borough as those boroughs are also dealing with rising demand.



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
**KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA**

For further information, please see the Royal Borough's new Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities aged 0-25, 2018-2021, which can be found on the Council's website (search for Local Offer).

The Royal Borough intends to be the lead sponsor for the new school.

## 2. SITE/LOCATION/BUILDING

Following a detailed feasibility study, the Royal Borough has confirmed its intention to build a new special school on an existing school site in Barlby Road, North Kensington, London W10 6BH. This large site is currently occupied by a primary school, which will also be rebuilt as part of the scheme, so that both schools will co-exist on the same redeveloped site. In detailed discussion with governors and the head teacher it has been agreed that new, conjoined primary and special school buildings be established to replace the tired Barlby primary school building. The two schools will be separate and separately operated, however, they will share some services (principally mechanical services and catering provision).

Planning permission was granted on 17 April 2018.

The building itself will be fully 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 provided throughout the design and construction process to that effect.

The special school will be a Free School and will be granted a 125-Year lease.

Design details/plans – see Appendix 2

## 3. PAN/AGE RANGE

The School will have a pupil capacity of 80, aged 2 – 19, thus inclusive of both Nursery and Sixth Form age ranges.

## 4. GENDER

The school will be gender inclusive.

## 5. NURSERY PROVISION

There will be nursery provision.



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
**KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA**

## 6. SIXTH FORM PROVISION

There will be Sixth Form provision.

## 7. COMMUNITY USE/SHARED USE

The school has been designed to maximise the facilities available for children with SEND. Consequently community and shared use is expected to be limited. The adjoining primary school is more likely to be able to offer community use.

Where feasible it will make its facilities, especially the halls, available to the wider community; but use by the schools' own family and community between 8:00 – 20.00 may well limit that access.

## 8. CATCHMENT AREA ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS

The School will be a Free School and thus sets its admissions arrangements according to the established regulations; but it is envisaged that the Authority's strong history of working with such 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. Officers will continue to work with other special schools within neighbouring boroughs. The school, it is envisaged, will 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.

## 9. TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS

Most pupils are likely to be transported to school by contracted minibus or taxi services and an appropriate safe area has been designed 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.

## 10. CHARACTER/ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

The Council as lead sponsor expects that the School will be open and inclusive to all members of the community and will not be affiliated to any particular faith.



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
**KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA**

## 11.EQUALITIES IMPACT ANALYSIS

Please see the attached Equalities Impact Assessment

## 12.FUNDING

As a special free school, places will be funded by the Education & Skills Funding Agency outside the Borough's High Needs allocation. Top-up rates have not been set.