



3<sup>rd</sup> October 2023

## **Consultation on Proposal to add an Autistic Spectrum Disorder Specialist Resource Base at Birchfield Primary School from 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2024**

### **Our Proposal**

Prince Albert Community Trust would like to hear your views on our proposal for Birchfield Primary School, Trinity Rd, Aston, Birmingham, B66AJ to add a 12 place Autistic Specialist Resource Base from 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2024.

We appreciate that young people with autism, can struggle to engage with learning and cope in a classroom without additional strategies and interventions. A Resource Base will support the young people to overcome their barriers to learning, be better able to cope and to be re-integrated into a mainstream setting, in which they can achieve their potential.

We are very keen to provide this support at Birchfield Primary School as we already support many young people with autism in our 'Nurture Class' and mainstream environment. Our Specialist Resource Base will be initially located within the current school site. We propose as our school continues to grow, we will make adaptations to create a specialised environment for autism learners in bespoke accommodation to meet their needs.

The Resource Base will be managed day to day by the headteacher and governing body of Birchfield Primary. The Resource Base will have a recurrent funding agreement to support an agreed staffing structure for the Resource Base, including resources, equipment and running costs.

Places at the Specialist Resource Base will be agreed through Birmingham County Council SENAR admissions processes and the school will be part of the decision-making process. It will grow to full capacity through this admissions process and will not be full on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2024.

Resource Bases are a key part of Birmingham Councils Local Offer for children with special educational needs and their families and have been identified in Birmingham's SEND Strategy as a priority for development.

Please note; Our proposal is subject to significant change determination, a full building programme including tender process, planning determination and construction periods as well as staff recruitment and training in line with our Trust and whole school policies and procedures.

### **What is a Resource Base?**

Autism bases form part of the Resource Base programme in Birmingham and are a key component of Birmingham Councils SEND Local Offer, and of mainstream inclusion support to young people, families and the school system.

Autism Resource Bases are areas within a mainstream school with a dedicated lead teacher and Primary levels of support staff. They are an integral part of the school and provide additional support from trained staff for young people with social communication difficulties or a diagnosis of autism. Autism Resource Bases provide a learning area which is calm and adapted to meet these needs. Young people can be taught in the Resource Base or within mainstream classes as required. Pupils are supported to access mainstream classes alongside their peers as much as they are able to. The balance of time spent between the Resource Base and mainstream classes can vary and depends on each student's individual needs.

Placements at the Autism Base are permanent, and pupils will be on the roll of Birchfield Primary School. These places do not form part of the school published admission number (PAN) and are registered in addition to that number.

### **What are the benefits of this proposal?**

The main driver for Prince Albert Community Trust and the senior leaders of Birchfield Primary School is to meet the increased demand for specialist educational provision within our area and the needs of our most vulnerable learners. We feel our proposal would benefit young people because it will:

- Support more students with special education needs and disabilities to be educated and thrive in their local school and community;
- Enhance students' progress by effectively meeting their individual social communication and interaction needs;
- Help facilitate better access to the curriculum and support students to achieve their potential;
- Ensure that needs can be met locally avoiding the need for students to spend unnecessary time travelling to an appropriate school further away. This is better for young people and saves the taxpayer money in transport costs;
- Increase the availability of places to meet the needs of students with SEND;
- Address identified geographical, and age and phase gaps in Resource Base provision as identified in Birmingham Councils SEND Strategy;
- Support the sharing of expertise and good autism practice as part our school and Trust.

### **Capital costs**

All capital costs for any adaption of our accommodation will be funded by Birmingham City Council capital fund to ensure there is the appropriate accommodation to meet the young people's needs.

### **How can you have your say?**

The school will be holding a drop in event at Birchfield Primary on **Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023 between 9:15am-10:30am** where you can come and find out more about this proposal.

If you unable to attend this event but would like to comment on our proposal, you can have your say by:

- Accessing our online survey;
- Returning the completed form to the school office at Birchfield Primary School
- Scanning the QR code provided on this page.

We need all responses by 12pm on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023.



### **What happens next?**

Prince Albert Community Trust will consider all the responses received during this consultation and decide whether to complete a business case and send it to the Regional Department of Education (DfE) Director for a decision.