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# SECTION 10 CONSULTATION REPORT

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Churchward Free School

JANUARY 6, 2018  
BRUNEL SEN MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST  
The Learning Campus, Tadpole Lane, Swindon, SN25 2NB

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# Section 1 - Summary

This Section 10 Consultation Report has been compiled in respect of the Free School Application for Churchward School made by the Brunel SEN Multi-Academy Trust (Brunel SEN MAT), to aid a decision on entering into a funding agreement with the Brunel SEN MAT by the Department for Education.

The consultation also included an additional question regarding the increase in PAN from 64 to 75 places in order to evidence the large demand for ASC specific educational places within Swindon and its surrounding areas.

This report covers the open consultation which took place for a six week period between 24<sup>th</sup> November 2017 and the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2018. The report documents all of the planning, activities and resources that were designed, created and distributed in order to deliver a fully comprehensive and informative consultation regarding the opening of Churchward School. The activities undertaken by the project team to create this report are in accordance with the statutory requirements set by the Department for Education.

In establishing the proposal to open Churchward School, the Brunel SEN MAT has actively engaged with identified key stakeholders including local residents, prospective parents, prospective students, Local Authorities, Schools and other Education related professionals throughout Swindon and its surrounding areas. By engaging with these stakeholders the project team are now fully aware of what Churchward School needs to provide in order to meet expectation and respond to the evident needs of the community. The comments received endorse the rationale proposed in the initial Free School Application which stated that Churchward is a necessity for Swindon.

The positive feedback from our wide range of respondents strongly demonstrates that there is a genuine need in Swindon for a new ASC provision and that there is an enormous amount of support for Churchward School from all stakeholders in relation to this project.

# Section 2 - Consultation Overview

## Introduction

The Brunel SEN MAT proposes to open a new ASC Free School, Churchward School, in Swindon in September 2018 that will meet the needs of children and young people who have autism and/or social communication and interaction difficulties named in their Education, Health and Care Plan.

- At capacity Churchward School will provide 75 places across for young people aged 11-19.
- This proposal is being submitted in order to meet existing and projected demand for additional high quality places for children and young people in Swindon and its surrounding areas with autism and/or social communication and interaction difficulties.
- Churchward School will open in September 2018 in temporary accommodation in Lydiard Millicent which will, after minor refurbishment, provide appropriate and accommodation for the school. Churchward School proposes to offer 20 places the first year of opening in temporary accommodation. In September 2019, Churchward School will move to its permanent site in North Swindon where it will increase to the PAN of 75 by 2022.
- Churchward School will be strategically led by the CEO of the Brunel SEN MAT, Jackie Smith MBE. The day-to-day operational running of the school will be managed by the Principal Designate (not yet appointed) who will be the first point of contact regarding matters relating to curriculum and the behaviour, care and safety of students.
- Admission will require the school to be identified by the Local Authority in the student's Education, Health and Care Plan. Places will then be allocated by the SENAT team using their usual protocols in line with the defined designation for Churchward School.

## Approach

The public consultation period for Churchward School was active from the 24<sup>th</sup> November 2017 to the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

The Consultation aimed to engage key stakeholders including:

- Parents/Carers
- Students
- Teachers
- Local Authority Employees
- Local Business Employees
- Neighbours of the Site
- Local Residents
- Councillors
- Local Governors
- Local Organisations

The project team published a full consultation brochure at the beginning of the public consultation period which detailed the nature of the proposed Free School and invited responses in the form of a consultation survey. This brochure was distributed to parents and carers of prospective students of Churchward School. 200 paper based copies of the brochure were published. This relatively modest number was a deliberate decision to ensure that whilst meeting the requirements of the consultation process, expectations about the number of places and growth plan were managed. However, the brochure and survey were also available on the Churchward School website and so could be accessed by anyone who wished to learn more about the Free School proposal.

Throughout the public consultation period, the Brunel SEN MAT has actively engaged with stakeholders to:

- Ensure interested parties understand the Multi-Academy Trust and the concept of a Free School. The consultation brochure contains an introduction to the Brunel SEN MAT describing its role as an academy proprietor. There is also a section within the brochure entitled 'What is a Free School?' which explains the terminology. Further to this, the CEO fully explained the role of the Brunel SEN MAT along with offering a document outlining the vision and mission of the Trust. The minutes taken from this meeting including any questions raised and answers given can be found in Appendix V. The Vision and Mission document provided to the consultation attendees can be found in Appendix
- Seek the views of interested parties on the vision and ethos proposed for Churchward School. The Brunel SEN MAT achieved this through actively engaging with 10 different stakeholder groups as well as holding an open consultation event for any interested parties.
- Capture and respond to all feedback from interested parties to ensure that Churchward is meeting the needs of Swindon in the best way it can. The feedback received can be found in Appendix IV.
- Seek endorsement to enter into the funding agreement with the Secretary of State and to show that there is a necessity and local appetite to endorse the request to increase the PAN from 64 to 75 in order to deliver on the pressing need for places at Churchward School.

The following key methods of engagement were used to inform the various interested parties and the general public about the proposal:

- Consultation brochure (online and hard copy)
- Consultation survey (online and hard copy)
- Website ([www.churchwardschool.org.uk](http://www.churchwardschool.org.uk))
- Direct letters
- Email
- Public open meetings
- Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/Churchward-School>)

## Key Outcomes

The consultation process undertaken by the Brunel SEN MAT has provided an opportunity to engage with stakeholders and interested parties of Churchward School.

The responses and enquiries received as a result of the consultation came from a broad spectrum of the community including Local Authorities, teachers, local educational provisions,

local schools, local councillors and local residents, as well as families and friends of children and young people with autism and/or social communication and interaction difficulties. The total number of consultation questionnaires received was 326. Of those responses, 97.2% were fully supportive of the proposal to open Churchward School. A detailed analysis of the responses can be found in Section 4.

## Section 3 - Public Consultation

### Consultation Literature

The Trust agreed that there should be five key questions posed to all key stakeholders. The questions asked:

- 1) Do you support the proposal to open Churchward School?
- 2) Do you support the vision and ethos of the school?
- 3) Do you support the admissions policy we are proposing for requesting a place at Churchward School?
- 4) Do you think that the Brunel Multi-Academy Trust should enter into a funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education to open Churchward School?
- 5) Do you agree in the increase of the school's maximum capacity from 64 to 75 students?

The remainder of the questions were intended to collect information on the respondent and also on potential future students for Churchward School. These questions asked:

- 6) Which group do you represent? (Tick box choices of :)
  - Parent/Carer
  - Student
  - Teacher
  - Local Authority Employee
  - Local Business Employee
  - Neighbour to the Site
  - Local Resident
  - Councillor
  - Local Governor
  - Local Organisation
  - Other (please state)
- 7) Please enter your postcode \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) Are you interested in requesting a place at Churchward School?
  - If yes, is the young person Male/Female?
  - What is their year group?

At the bottom of the questionnaire there was a blank section to allow for 'any other comments' in order to gain individualised feedback from the respondents.

The Trust felt that these questions were proficient in understanding the support and interest regarding Churchward School.

The consultation brochure was produced in printed format and also as a PDF online on the [www.churchwardschool.org](http://www.churchwardschool.org) website, and contained the following information;

- Churchward School's vision and mission statement.
- Churchward School's ethos, the types of pupils that it would serve and the provision that would be available to them.
- Location of the proposed Free School both temporary and permanent sites.

200 copies of the consultation brochure were produced and distributed. A copy of the consultation document can be found in Appendix I.

The consultation document was accompanied by a survey insert which was available from the start of the consultation period for completion and submission either online or in paper format. Paper submissions were then manually loaded on to the website by the project team in order to collect all of the data in a central location to analyse. Potential respondents were asked to submit completed consultation questionnaires by January 5<sup>th</sup> 2018 to align with our consultation closing date. A copy of the survey that was sent out to all key stakeholders can be found in Appendix II.

## Website

[www.churchwardschool.org.uk](http://www.churchwardschool.org.uk)

Churchward School's website was also published during the consultation period to allow those who could not access paper copies of the consultation document to read it online. The link to the survey was also clearly visible on the website. Through the website, the wider public were able to access the survey and the majority of the responses were made online. The website was advertised within the brochures, on letters sent to staff and key stakeholders as well as on the Churchward School Facebook page. An example of one of the website pages can be found in Appendix IV. The website will be a useful resource moving forward with this project as the project team can continue to update it with Churchward School's progress to keep our stakeholders informed.

The website published the following policies:

- Admissions Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Autism Policy
- Assessment, Reporting and Recording Policy
- Behaviour Policy

The open consultation event was also advertised on the Tadpole Garden Village 'Village News' website (see link below). This advertisement gave a brief overview of Churchward School and invited all future neighbours of the permanent site to attend the consultation event to ask any questions they might have about the site or the implications of the school being built.

<http://tadpolegardenvillage.com/village-news/churchward-school-consultation-event/>

## Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/Churchward-School-1473995149381881/>

The Churchward School Facebook Page was set up during the section 10 consultation in order to reach a wide range of people. The page now has 65 followers and the post that invited

Facebook users to fill out the survey reached 5861 users. The Facebook page was also used to invite local residents to the open consultation event at Uplands School.

## **Public Open Meetings**

A public open meeting was held on the 4<sup>th</sup> January at Uplands School.

The event was advertised through letters distributed throughout organizations within and external to the Brunel SEN MAT. The event was also advertised on the open Facebook group and shared on the Tadpole Garden Village website and therefore local residents were informed and free to attend. The consultation event was a great opportunity to hear what local residents, parents and councilors felt Churchward School could offer and allowed the project team to answer any questions.

The consultation brochure, as well as a document on the vision and ethos of the Brunel SEN MAT was available to all attendees (see Appendix VI). The CEO of the Brunel SEN MAT and the Free School Project Lead gave a presentation summarizing all of the information within the Churchward consultation brochure. The Chair of Churchward Governors and the current Learning Mentor Programme staff at Uplands School were also present to answer any questions and offer their expertise to prospective parents.

The minutes taken from this open consultation can be found in Appendix V.

## **Communication**

Throughout this consultation progress there has been an open dialogue established between the Brunel SEN MAT and the following stakeholders:

- Local Residents
- Local Governors
- Local SEN Schools
- Local SRPs
- All MAT Staff
- Volunteer SEN Groups
- Prospective parents/carers and students

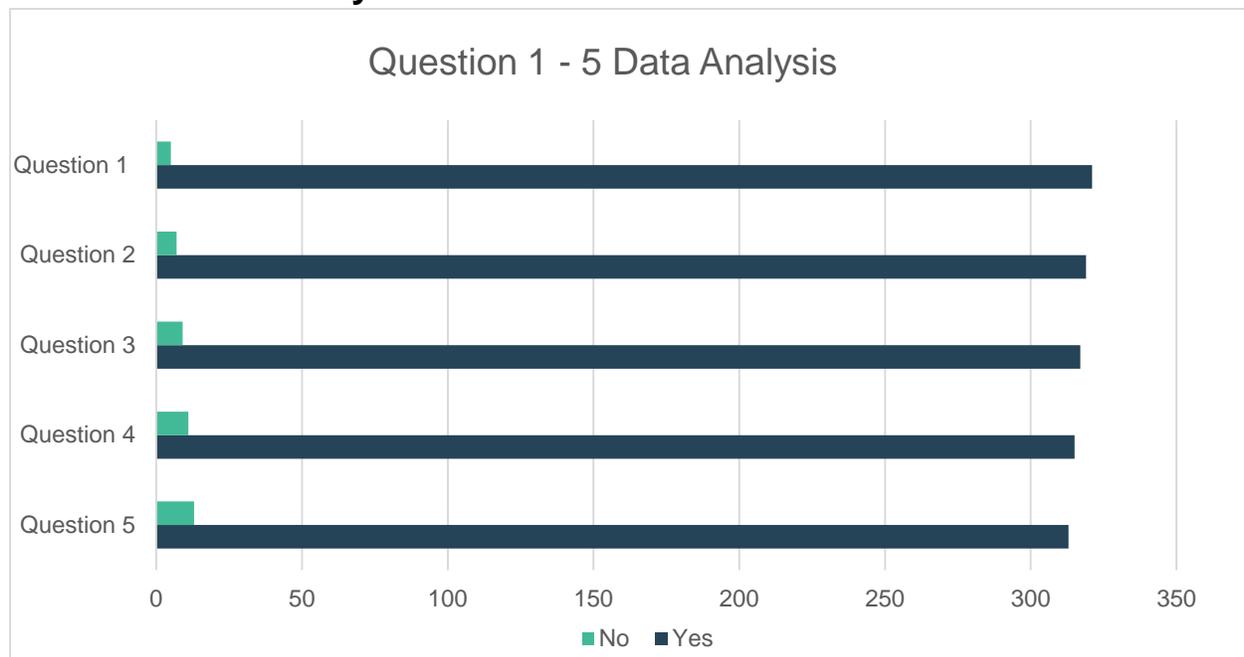
By engaging with these groups we were able to seek a wide range of interaction and opinions in order to fully understand what effect Churchward School will have on the Swindon community.

## **Engagement and Responses**

- There were a total of 326 responses to the consultation survey.
- Of these responses 97.2% of answers to questions 1-5 answered YES in support of Churchward School.
- 95.8% of responses agreed that Churchward School should increase the PAN from 64 to 75.
- 96.5% of responses agreed that the Brunel SEN MAT should enter into a funding arrangement with the Secretary of State for Education to open Churchward School.
- At total of 44 people attended the open consultation event on January 5<sup>th</sup> 2018.

# Section 4 - Analysis of the Consultation Responses

## Consultation Survey Results



The graph above demonstrates the extremely positive support received for Churchward School from the respondents in Questions 1-5 of the consultation survey. 326 respondents answered each question as they were statutory components of completing the survey.

- Question 1 had the highest percentage support with 98.4% (321) of the respondents supporting the proposal to open Churchward School.
- Question 2 found that 97.8% (319) of the respondents agreed with the vision and ethos of Churchward School.
- Question 3 found that 97.2% (317) of the respondents supported the admissions policy of Churchward School.
- Question 4 found that 96.5% (315) of the respondents agreed that the Brunel Multi-Academy Trust should enter into a funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education to open Churchward School.
- Question 5 found that 95.8% (313) of the respondents agreed that Churchward School should seek to increase the maximum capacity of places from 64 to 75 places.

The remainder of the questions in the survey were optional and aimed at collecting information on the respondent and those looking for a place at Churchward School. Question 6 directly asked 'Are you interested in a place at Churchward School?' 96 respondents answered 'Yes' to this question. The range of ages of interest in places were from students of Churchward School age ranging between 11-19 years old and also potential future students from primary, infant and EYFS. Churchward School intends offer a maximum of 75 places as the Trust's current ambition is to increase the PAN from 64 to 75. Based on the large response received to Question 6 it is clear that there is both a present and future demand for places at Churchward

School and therefore increasing the PAN to 75 will allow more students to be placed in an environment they can succeed in.

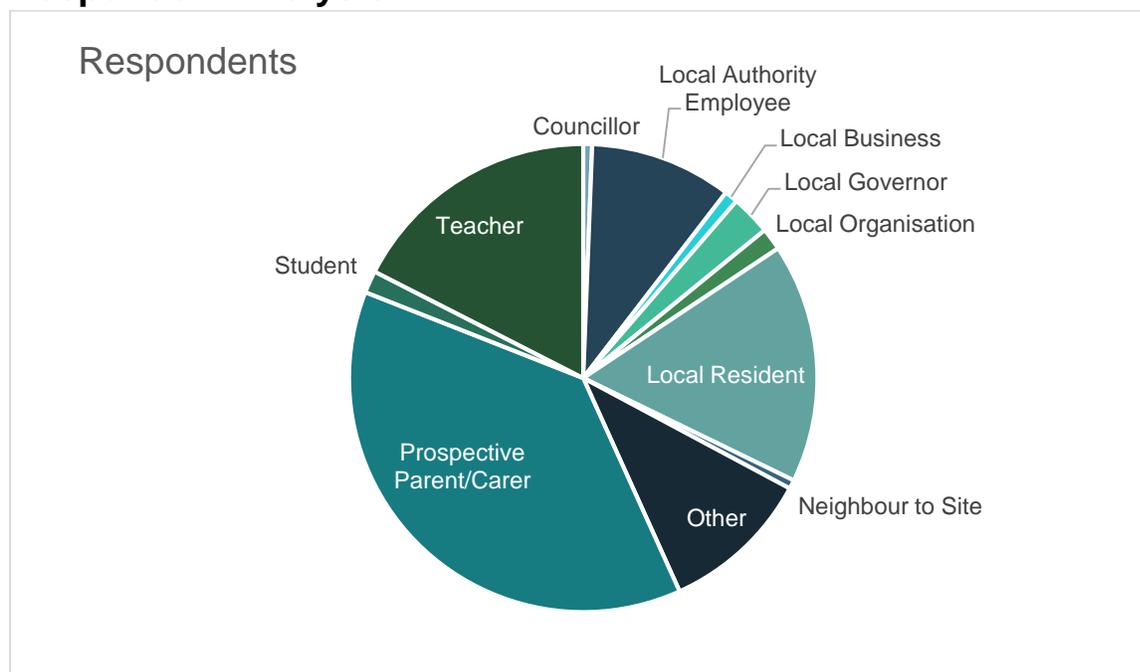
During the public consultation there were also concerns raised about the number of places available compared to the large demand for spaces across the whole of Swindon and its surrounding area. Many parents expressed that they would strongly support their child or young person attending Churchward School but were concerned that they might not get a place when competing with other prospective students for places. It is therefore in the best interest of the Swindon ASC community to increase the PAN from 64 to 75 in order to provide a specialist education for as many students as possible.

During the open consultation the CEO was questioned as to why the school is only for 75 students. The Consultees did not think Churchward School was big enough to meet the demand as young people are going out of borough and into mainstream schools where they are not coping which, it was expressed, is detrimental to their well-being. 'Can Churchward School request more places?' was a question raised during the meeting.

The CEO responded that national funding is a challenge and we have to be creative and provisions need to work together. The Brunel SEN MAT works closely with the Local Authority to carefully plan the placement of children and young people across Swindon. In addition, the Brunel SEN MAT's Director of Education, John Bell, runs the Brunel, Access, School, and Improvement Service which will provide support to mainstream schools to give them the confidence, skills and the right environment to do things differently. The Trust is working creatively across Swindon to improve opportunities for children and young people with autism.

Alongside this quantitative data there were also a wide range of supportive comments regarding the proposal from different members of the community that can be found on page 10 as well as a full log of comments in Appendix VI.

## Respondent Analysis



The largest respondent group was prospective parents and carers. This group is responsible for 123 (38%) of the 326 total responses to the consultation survey. This demonstrates that parents and carers are willing to support Churchward School and want their child / young person placed within this provision as they feel it will be a more appropriate educational experience when considered alongside other SEN provisions and mainstream schools across Swindon. These findings are confirmed in the written feedback received with many parents expressing their support and interest in Churchward School. This was also reflected at the open consultation event where the majority of attendees were parents/carers.

There was also a large response from teachers as many educational services across Swindon are being affected by the current lack of provision for children and young people with autism and/or social communication and interaction difficulties.

Regarding neighbours of the site, of the respondents, 97 responses (29%) came from those living within the SN25 postcode. There were only a small number of respondents who identified themselves as 'neighbours of the site' and so it is likely that respondents identified primarily with the other titles offered as options in Question 6. 100% of the 97 respondents who lived within the SN25 agreed to support the proposal to open Churchward School with one commenting that Churchward School will be 'a much needed addition for our community'. Therefore the decision to open Churchward School on the Tadpole Garden Village site remains the clear appropriate choice of location.

'Other' Respondents included extended family and relatives, CAMHS workers, School Nurses and general supporters of the Free School proposal.

## **Consultation Questionnaire Feedback**

Churchward School received a large amount of positive feedback from a wide variety of stakeholders. The quotations below demonstrate the range of responses Churchward School received during the consultation process including both positive and negative feedback. 27% (89 of 326) of the total respondents left individualised feedback as part of their questionnaire response. Churchward School's respondents left 80 (90%) positive responses with only 9 respondents (10%) leaving negative responses. A complete log of all of the feedback that was received during the consultation period can be found in Appendix IV.

Positive Feedback:

*"This is amazing! Just what Swindon needs. The struggle that parents of ASD children have to get correct understanding and support at school is unreal. The correct setting and support makes a life changing difference."*

– Parent/Carer

*"This will provide a unique opportunity to gather specialist teachers, therapies and resources into one place and develop world leading practice in education of pupils with communication and ASC needs. The pupils will gain so much purely from being in a bespoke environment that is designed to cater for the needs of those with ASC needs. In the long term pooling these resources is not only effective but a cost efficient way of educating. To provide*

*this level of expertise across multiple sites is extremely expensive and inefficient. In addition to this the specialist teaching strategies these pupils will encounter will enable them to be more independent and thus require less intervention and consequently less financial investment into adulthood.”*

- Teacher

*“Uplands are the best placed school and organisation to make this work for the families and young people in Swindon and surrounding areas. A huge team of dedicated staff truthfully reflects Ofsted's 'outstanding' grading, both in 2014 and then again in 2017.”*

-Local Authority Employee

*“This is a brilliant idea to provide young people with autism with the necessary skills to live a rich and fulfilling life.”*

– Local Resident

*“Having at one time worked for an organisation which provided employability skills training, I am aware of the need to provide facilities for young people with special educational needs. Many of these young people have skills which need to be nurtured in order that they can aspire to a career that will be right for them. I think it is an excellent and worthwhile project.”*

– Councillor

*“This school is urgently needed to relieve the pressure of other special school (Brimble & Uplands) because they are full and have waiting lists for students wanting to attend. The new school will also provide much overdue educational facilities to an increasing number of ASC young people who have been struggling to find proper facilities within Swindon.”*

– Local Governor

Negative Feedback and Response from the Trust:

*“Not all children with social interaction and/or autism have EHCPs. My daughter desperately needs an EHCP but to no avail. She is currently permanently excluded with no education provision due to her previous school not being able to cope with her needs! This school would be perfect for her but it looks like we won't fit the application requirements.”*

– Parent/Carer

The most repeatedly raised concern from respondents was regarding the admissions policy of needing an EHCP to place a child or young person at Churchward School. This was also raised during the open consultation. During the consultation the CEO responded that the Trust will be looking at the best way it can meet the young person's needs across its facilities. Churchward School must be named on an EHCP. EHCPs can be reviewed at an interim annual review. When the secondary school place is applied for the EHCP can be changed. The CEO advised that the SENAT team are best placed to answer a parent's questions regarding place-planning as the EHCPs are co-produced with the SENAT team and in co-production with the young person and their families.

The CEO explained that young people are allocated a place based on a band which determines the funding regardless of where the young person goes e.g. SRP, Special School or Mainstream School. It is important for young people and their families to have a choice.

In addition to this, Question 3 of the consultation survey found that 97.2% of respondents supported the admissions policy of Churchward School.

*"Yet another free school taking even more money from state schools that are grossly underfunded."*

– Teacher

This respondent is not against Churchward School specifically and is instead against the wider notion of Free Schools. The Trust has made every effort to educate and inform the wider public on 'what is a Free School' by including this within the Churchward School Consultation Brochure and on the website:

'Churchward is a free school that will be a part of the SEN MAT. A Free School is an exciting opportunity for a school to open and tailor itself around parents' and carers' specific needs and preferences for their learners' education. A Free School is funded directly from the Government which means the school can focus on each students' bespoke learning pathway independently from their local authority and national curriculum. This allows a Free School to operate to enable each student to reach their maximum potential. Free Schools are regulated and inspected by Ofsted so just like all other schools, the performance of a Free School is closely monitored to assure parents and carers that their learners are being provided with a high standard of education.'

There were also two comments indicating that the Learning Mentors were unqualified to teach at Churchward School. Learning Mentors do not need to hold teaching qualifications, however, all learning mentors are under the supervision of fully qualified teachers and are specialists in behaviour management and ASC.

## **Conclusion**

The Brunel SEN MAT has received an extremely positive response to its Section 10 Consultation in respect of its Free School Application for Churchward School. The majority of endorsements were received from parents and carers of children and young people with the particular needs that the school could educate and support. Churchward School is a much-needed provision in the community which is widely supported by both members of the wider community and education related professionals.

The Trust will be publishing the key findings of the consultation process on the [www.churchwardschool.org](http://www.churchwardschool.org) website, as well as information on how the Trust will remain in

contact with the local community. Churchward School aims to be responsive to all comments made; where individual respondents have asked questions or suggestions/comments made we will, wherever possible, make sure that we respond to them directly or indirectly through information published on the website, various events, meetings and publications.

# Section 5 – Appendices

## Appendix I: Consultation Document

WHAT IS A FREE SCHOOL?

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About us

## The Brunel SEN MAT

### Our connections

The Brunel SEN MAT is a multi-academy trust specialising in the special school sector. The Trust has the experience, skills and expertise to influence and shape special education, enabling the development of a range of provisions and the delivery of high standards and performance which will improve the life outcomes of children and young people with SEND. The Brunel SEN MAT's vision is clear: "No barriers, only potential". The Trust will put the well-being and achievement of all students at the heart of its decision making. Operating within a culture of trust and respect for all, the Trust will celebrate achievement and value the contribution of individuals with high expectations of all involved.

### What is a free school?

Churchward is a free school that will be a

part of the SEN MAT. A Free School is an exciting opportunity for a school to open and tailor itself around parents' and carers' specific needs and preferences for their learners' education.

A Free School is funded directly from the Government which means the school can focus on each students' bespoke learning pathway independently from their local authority and national curriculum. This allows a Free School to operate to enable each student to reach their maximum potential.

Free Schools are regulated and inspected by Ofsted so just like all other schools, the performance of a Free School is closely monitored to assure parents and carers that their learners are being provided with a high standard of education.



## Appendix II: Consultation Questionnaire

# Consultation Survey



Recognising Strengths, Gaining Skills, Achieving Success

	YES	NO
1. Do you support the proposal to open Churchward School?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do you support the vision and ethos of the school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you support the admissions policy we are proposing for requesting a place at Churchward School?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do you think Brunel Multi-Academy Trust should enter into a funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education to open Churchward School?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Do you agree in the increase of the school's maximum capacity from 64 to 75 students?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Which group do you represent?		
Prospective Parent/Carer <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Local Authority employee <input type="checkbox"/> Local business employee <input type="checkbox"/>		
Neighbour to the site <input type="checkbox"/> Local resident <input type="checkbox"/> Councillor <input type="checkbox"/> Local Governor <input type="checkbox"/> Local Organisation <input type="checkbox"/>		
Other – please state .....		
7. Please enter your postcode.....		
8. Are you interested in requesting a place at Churchward School?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, is the young person Male/Female Year Group.....		

Any other comments:

.....

.....

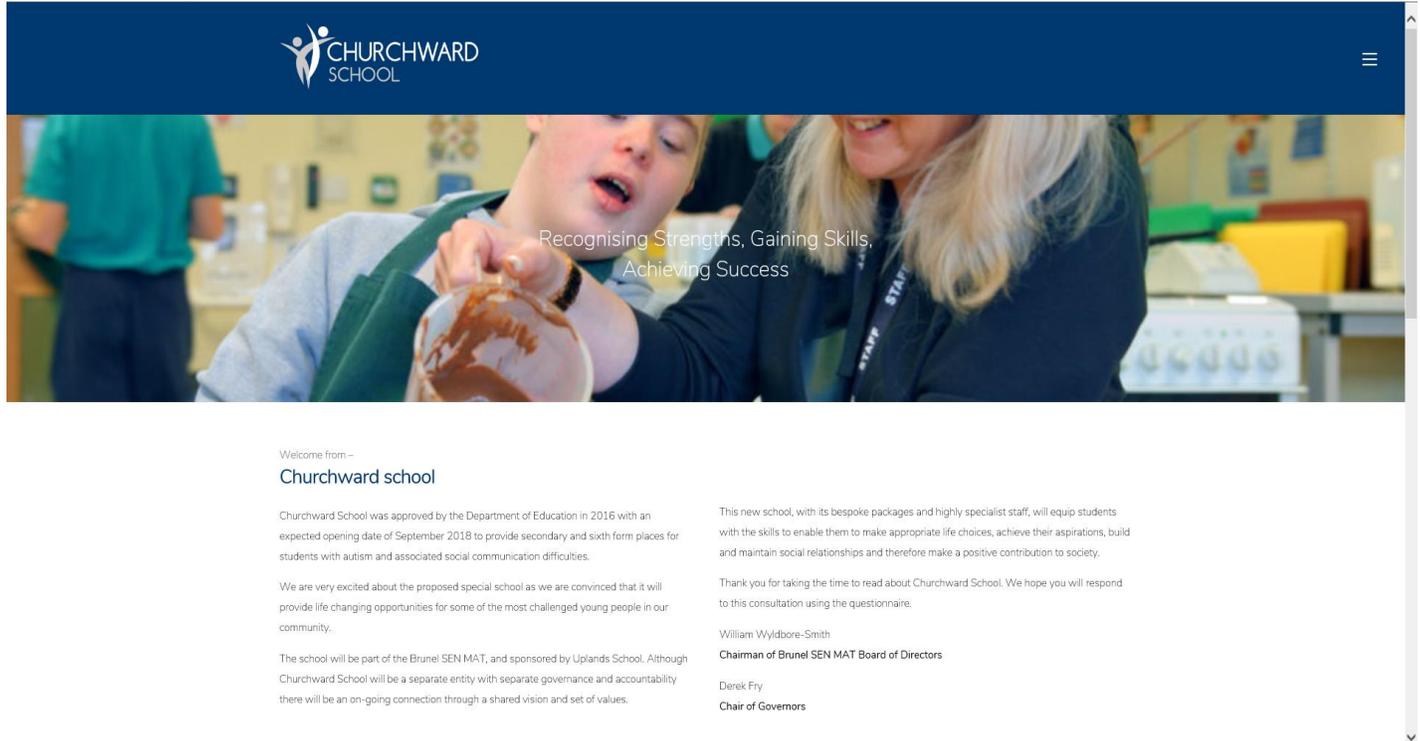
.....

Please use reverse if you have more comments

Thank you – please return completed questionnaires to Fiona Clark, Churchward Project Lead, c/o Uplands School, The Learning Campus, Tadpole Lane, Swindon, Wiltshire SN25 2NB or drop into one of the Uplands Charity Shops across Swindon.

A full copy of our Section 10 Consultation will be available to view on our website [Churchwardschool.org.uk](http://Churchwardschool.org.uk)

## Appendix III: Website Screenshot



To view full website visit: [www.churchwardschool.org](http://www.churchwardschool.org)

## Appendix IV: Consultation Questionnaire Comments

To question 5 [should we increase the PAN to 75] and more!

It would be great to build on the success of the LMP. This will be a much needed provision for the whole of Swindon.

I think it is a good idea to have this school open to reduce the overcrowded pupils struggling to fit other schools where there is not enough support to help both teachers and pupils which is creating a lot of issues. So we are looking forward to when this school is open.

ASD student currently year 5 in speech and language unit

My son is currently year 1. I will be looking to secure him a secondary school placement in the next couple of years and am eager to see more local provision in line with his needs.

Diagnosed ASD Feb 2017

Sounds like this is much needed - good luck!

One thing we would like to see more is Extra Hours of support from Schools.

Early Start and Late Hours - I would recommend - 8.30 AM to 6.30 PM

And extra Clubs on weekends

Also regular Clubs on weekends.

I can understand extra resource and fund is required to meet this demand, I suggest we form a Parents Helping group where Parents volunteer to Help during this extra hours at School on a rota basis.

These students have a lot to offer, having worked with some of them they need somewhere they can continue to shine with a future.

This school may have been helpful for us as my son struggles in school. Academically he is good, but is struggling socially. He is gradually becoming more withdrawn & difficulties becoming more pronounced with time. Although his school don't see his problems as severe because he manages to hold it together and hide it at school, he hates going because he finds it so difficult, and at 14 years old we are now having trouble getting him there some days. Somewhere like this, if he'd been accepted at a younger age would have probably been beneficial. Now he is half way through GCSEs with a good core group of friends and it would not be a good time for a move for him. I hope this school can be expanded to help as many other families as possible.

Just what is needed and the right organisation to successfully implement it

this would have been fantastic for our son but the education department failed him

There is a clear need for this school within Swindon. The numbers of children attending alongside the child to specialist staff ratio will have a minimal impact on the local community. Significant short and long term benefits will help both local parents and the community.

Would have answered all the questions but was unable to follow the link. Not sure about the admissions policy as I couldn't find it. I answered yes to both questions bit the correct answer would don't know.

Good luck.

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Exactly what the area needs.

Currently children travel too far for provision.

I have a Nephew with learning difficulties and struggled at Senior School with no support This sort of College/Uni would be great. There are lots of People out there with Learning difficulties can hold a job down give the chance by Employers. Even though there is a law about employing people like people with disability they always manage to get around it. Good Luck with everything you're trying to do.

A school like this that focuses on the specific attributes of children on the autistic spectrum is desperately needed having 2 children who are both on the spectrum ensuring they have a fair start in life after school is a must for us as parents.

As A parent with a child with learning difficulties and a former Chair of Governors of a local secondary school, I know there is a significant lack of facilities for these children and would welcome extra provision, especially by Uplands.

This is a brilliant idea to provide young people with autism with the necessary skills to live a rich and fulfilling life.

The proposal is that students follow bespoke programmes led by learning mentors who may not be qualified in any way for the needs of the students. Our kids deserve to be taught by qualified teachers.

The proposal is that students follow bespoke programmes led by learning mentors i.e. unqualified teachers. I do not wish to have my child to be taught by learning mentors.

Yes I am a sendco working in SN5. I find this an amazing opportunity for any age. I would be interested in any possible jobs that may become available.

Very interesting initiative which could have life changing impact on children and young people with autism.

Think this is a brilliant idea and will provide the necessary support Swindon is lacking for these students and their families.

My Son is currently in a mainstream school. Diagnosed ASD. Struggles in mainstream education in Year 4.

There is a huge need for secondary spaces for our children. Mine is currently struggling in a mainstream school and it's killing him

This is a much needed school!

This is really needed in Swindon

We might need access for sixth form depending on the outcome of a college application and exam results. Our son is out of borough at the moment and has been out of education a number of times. The gap filling we need to do to get him through maths and English mean that he is in real terms a year or two behind his mainstream peer group.

Swindon provision must include a specialist school, tailored to the needs of the young person. Getting it right is so important. Please see The Venturer's Academy in Bristol to get great practices, linking in with the community and boosting self-esteem!!!!

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Unable to see the full admission criteria, but majority of ASD Children will not require the highest level of bespoke packages and therefore a free school for ASD children should be for all not only for those with EHCP's as most ASD children fail unless in Units or specialist provision. There must be an alternative to Mainstream for the majority not just the minority

May need in the future

Uplands do a fantastic job and should be supported to grow and expand with every opportunity possible!

The LMP is a very successful and sought after provision. A new school based on this model will be hugely beneficial for Swindon. I suspect places will be quickly filled.

I feel this is a much needed resource. I look forward to working with the school, to obtain the best outcomes for the children, young people and families that I have the pleasure of working with

Churchward is a much needed school for our ASC community.

Not all children with social interaction and/or autism have EHCPs. My daughter desperately needs an EHCP but to no avail. She is currently permanently excluded with no education provision due to her previous school not being able to cope with her needs! This school would be perfect for her but it looks like we won't fit the application requirements due to the lack of ehcp (again, this is a continuous battle)

Interested to know if this would be suitable for a child with severe ADHD where biggest struggle is her social and communicative needs

I work with SEN children and there needs to be more places to accommodate the children that have these needs it's not fair that they are just left.

currently at brimble hill

My son has a current ECHP plan

This is so needed in Swindon. Too many ASC AS children are excluded permanently from mainstream schools. While others are struggling and needs are not being fully met in mainstream school. So looking forward to this school opening and may consider moving my son from his current Mainstream/SRP

My son is autistic and he is presently attending Abbeymeads school with full time one to one. He has an ehcp in place already and I'm thinking that this looks like an ideal secondary school for him in 2019. I'm going to hope there's a place for him when he's due to start

The school looks like an ideal place for my son, who is autistic, presently at Abbeymeads school with one to one support. He has an ehcp in place at the moment. I will be hoping that there will be a place for him when he is ready to start secondary school in September 2019

Much needed help, currently Home educated as mainstream school failed our daughter.

This would be a greatly welcomed school for those with sen as it's so very hard trying to get a placement for our children who need specialist support.

I'm excited at the prospect of a better option for my son who struggles in mainstream. Currently unable to access his education.

I've just requested uplands thinking this was my only option. If not I'd like further info.

I think it's absolutely marvellous that Swindon will be gaining another school for young people with autism. There is a great pressure currently on places and this will help enormously.

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This is amazing! Just what Swindon needs. The struggle that parents of ASD children have to get correct understanding and support at school is unreal. The correct setting and support makes a life changing difference. The only thing I don't agree with would be the admission criteria (needing to have an EHCP). I only say this as so many parents are fobbed off by schools that their child won't be given one and by the time they realise they do need one, it's too late to get one in place to apply for a place at an SRP etc. Result: child struggling in mainstream.

Such great news this is going ahead though! :)

Great idea we need for facilities and schools for kids with autism.

This school sounds perfect for my daughter. She is just about to be granted a EHCP, but her only diagnosis at the moment is speech language, processing impairment. She is on the ASD path way and I strongly think she will eventually be diagnosed. This school sounds like the perfect place for her as were currently looking at a speech and language school, but this sounds like a perfect all rounder school.

With the number of autistic teenagers in Swindon this would make a well needed resource.

My son is currently primary school at chalet in band 2. Promising that there will be a good secondary school option near to where we live.

At present my son is 5 and is in mainstream education with good support. I appreciate he may learn coping mechanisms in the next five years but if he was not to be at the right place developmentally to achieve success and find his niche in mainstream secondary school it would be good to know that there were other options for learning and development that would suit him and ensure he has the best opportunity to be a part of life, to find his place in the world and to keep his belief in his self and how amazing he is.

There are currently not enough ASD spaces across Swindon leaving my son (who has a dual diagnosis of ASD and ADHD in mainstream with inadequate support. This school is very needed.

I think a provision up to 25 would be even better as there is very little available from 19-25. It's a good start!

Think my son is too severe for an autistic school as has multiple difficulties but I know so many autistic children struggle in mainstream schools

Just a shame on distance. I don't believe my son is receiving adequate support in mainstream and it's more difficult to get ehcp. Therefore my high functioning autistic son's education is struggling.

Much needed further education placements.

I am home educating my son now as we tried mainstream school for a second time and it isn't suitable for him.

Support is desperately needed within the Swindon area.

More provision is desperately needed across Swindon.

Yet another free school taking even more money from state schools that are grossly underfunded. You should be ashamed of yourselves.

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Having at one time worked for an organisation which provided employability skills training, I am aware of the need to provide facilities for young people with special educational needs. Many of these young people have skills which need to be nurtured in order that they can aspire to a career that will be right for them. I think it is an excellent and worthwhile project.

Secondary school may seem a long way off for my son, but it will soon come around.

Mainstream schooling for many autistic children is not an option due to many factors including lack of support, understanding and experience.

Our children are more vulnerable and will be easier targets for bullying and becoming isolated

My son is currently year 1 but I would be interested in applying for a place on his behalf when he's older. The more SEN provisions the better!

It's a long way off for us and we are still at the start of our sen journey but it is clear that provision for children with needs like this is severely inadequate locally. I'm hoping adjustments can be made to enable my son to remain in mainstream, as without new provisions like this there is a chance my son's needs will simply not be met due to lack of places available. That's not a great position to be in! I'd encourage the consideration of potentially higher achieving individuals too. Early entry to A Level in some instances may really give individuals with complex needs what they need to be successful, even if it is only in one area. Please make this truly individual education rather than a limiting form of education.

Will this school

Support high functioning autism but with additional complex needs (adhd and dispraxia) that cause much high level energy behaviours but learning ability is average?

Going g through the drawn out EHCP process at the moment.

We need more provision for our children who cannot cope in mainstream schools

Had hoped the ethos of the school was going to be more focused on pupils who have good academic ability but struggle in mainstream, but it appears to be an extension of the learning mentor programme already running at Uplands which doesn't currently accommodate this demographic of pupils

41 York Road

I think this a very positive move for the town and a desperately needed provision for many children who are struggling the moment. I applaud this.

Swindon, as a borough and community, must seek to provide a good, or better, education for all of its young people. As such, the Churchward provision can only help achieve this goal.

This school is much needed.

Working within a mainstream school for the last 15 Years I have seen a significant need for this much needed school.

Currently there isn't enough provision for the children who have SEMH needs and these are some of our most vulnerable.

This school is urgently needed to relieve the pressure of other special school (Brimble & Uplands) because they are full and have waiting lists for students wanting to attend. The new school will also provide much overdue educational facilities to an increasing number of ASC young people who have been struggling to find proper facilities within Swindon.

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I found it hard to answer most of the questions as there is no information available about the school to make an informed decision. I had to answer no to all except the first and fifth questions due to this lack of information.

A much needed addition for our community

I fully support this proposal, having witnessed existing benefits to the students and their families/carers of this model of provision.

This will provide a unique opportunity to gather specialist teachers, therapies and resources into one place and develop world leading practice in education of pupils with communication and ASC needs. The pupils will gain so much purely from being in a bespoke environment that is designed to cater for the needs of those with ASC needs. In the long term pooling these resources is not only effective but a cost efficient way of educating. To provide this level of expertise across multiple sites is extremely expensive and inefficient. In addition to this the specialist teaching strategies these pupils will encounter will enable them to be more independent and thus require less intervention and consequently less financial investment into adulthood.

how will the uplands school change in the future and existing staff job positions

Uplands are the best placed school and organisation to make this work for the families and young people in Swindon and surrounding areas.

A huge team of dedicated staff truthfully reflects Ofsted's 'outstanding' grading, both in 2014 and then again in 2017.

I think this will be a much needed additional provision for young people with autism in Swindon.

The provision will very much meet local need

Churchward will benefit many young people in Swindon / Wiltshire who struggle in mainstream environments. It will enable windows of opportunity for so many young people.

## **Appendix V: Open Consultation Meeting Minutes**

Free School Consultation Meeting

Uplands School - 04.01.18

The CEO gave an overview of the Brunel SEN Multi Academy Trust and her role. The CEO explained that Uplands School is one of the school's within the Multi Academy Trust (a group of schools working together). The CEO advised that her role is to ensure that all young people have the opportunities they deserve.

The Brunel SEN MAT is a boutique MAT, a group of special academies who provide standards and quality. The MAT recognise the importance of an individualised, unique approach which looks at the individual's needs. No barriers, only potential.

The CEO explained that the MAT ethos is about opening doors and opening minds. The Brunel SEN MAT is bespoke and different. Recognising individual skills and strengths. All schools within the MAT are unique and have an important part to play. The MAT has a zero percent exclusion policy with very high attendance rates.

Fiona Clark is the Headteacher of Uplands School and Project Lead for Churchward School. Churchward is a specialist ASC Secondary School where we are able to create the right environment for students with ASC or SCID as their primary SEN need. Young people can be challenged by the environment they are in. The right environment will help young people to cope with their environment. Churchward School offers a bespoke learning environment.

Del Fry is the Chair of Governors for Churchward School. Del explained that Churchward School has a very experienced Governing body. Peter Crockett, retired Headteacher of Crowdy's Hill, Jenny Muirhead, Swindon ASC Advisory Service Lead.

Fiona explained that Churchward School is being built on the model of the Learning Mentor Programme at Uplands School so there will be some familiar faces going with the Free School.

Lorna Breslin is the current LMP Lead and Deputy Headteacher of Uplands School.

Mike Grier is the Operational Lead for the Learning Mentor Programme.

Laura Wickham is the LMP teacher. All staff are available to speak to parents after the presentation.

Fiona explained that the Learning Mentor Programme offers a bespoke curriculum. A mainstream environment and timetable does not always meet ASC learners' needs. The curriculum is individualised and specialist. Churchward School will have access to a wider expert team from Primary, Secondary, College, Occupational Therapists, and Physiotherapists to meet a range of needs.

The programme has aspirations for all young people. End goals are set that young people can achieve. Specialising in working with young people to build successful relationships is the heart of all we do. Young people and families are at the centre of what we do.

Key features of the new provision:

ASC/SCID as the primary SEN need

Provision will be for up to 75 learners by 2022

At the start of the journey eligibility for a place at Churchward School will require an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) with Churchward School named in it. Churchward is a Secondary provision, including Sixth Form, with links with Horizons College and other providers. There will be an all through intake for the first year and beyond. There is a high focus on social communication skills which is a central part of all aspects of the curriculum.

The CEO explained that the term 'Free School' relates to the application process. The school is funded by Central Government. Place values of £10k per student is funded from central government, not from the local high needs budget.

A key feature of the curriculum are the Learning Mentors who work very closely with the young people, supported by qualified teachers. Relationships are built and specialist bespoke programmes are delivered both on and off site. Calm, experienced supportive staff work closely with the young people to engage them in learning. There is a focus on in-depth contact with families to share their wealth of expertise on how to get the best for the individual. A personalised curriculum together with the national core curriculum, using ASC strategies.

Individual interests are used as a starting point to learning. This has proved to be a very successful model. All programmes are bespoke, tailored and flexible to ensure that the pace is right for the individual.

Employability – we expect every young person to have a meaningful place in their community. This could mean part time or full time work, higher education or social enterprise. This is looked at individually to include work related learning within the tailored programme of learning. There are lots of great links with Uplands Educational Trust who have charity shops, and a farm provision within the Uplands family. Young people are also guided and encouraged to work outside of the Uplands family. Some young people have been offered paid employment.

Bespoke, alternative providers can be sourced. For example one young man attends a work placement at an iron works forgery. Another is studying for a riding instructor qualification alongside doing literacy and numeracy skills.

Music and creativity arts is part of the curriculum. Therapy skills enable young people to self-regulate. This takes consistency to build on skills. We also have our own therapy dog, Morse.

All young people have an external qualification at the heart of their programme including OCR, Life and Living Skills, Functional Skills up to Level 2. These can be delivered in bite sized pieces. GCSE's are studied where appropriate. ASDAN – Towards Independence can be a great start and a spring board to more challenging things as well as vocational BTECS.

Churchward will be opening in temporary accommodation in Lydiard Millicent in September 2018. The permanent site will open in Sept 2019. Churchward School's website and Facebook page will keep parents updated.

### **Questions and Answers:**

Q. What is the designation?

A. The criteria is to have an EHCP with SCID and/or Autism as the primary need.

Q. Does the child have to have a diagnosis of Autism?

A. We will be looking at the whole child and never say never however we do need to be confident that we can meet the young person's needs. Churchward School must be named on an EHCP. EHCP's can be reviewed at an interim annual review. When the secondary school place is applied for the EHCP can be changed. The CEO advised that the SENAT team are best placed to answer parent's questions. EHCP's are co-produced with the SENAT team. When a school is named on an EHCP it is not set in stone. EHCP's are written in co-production with the young person and their families.

The CEO explained that young people are allocated a place based on a Band which determines the funding regardless of where the young person goes e.g. SRP, Special School or Mainstream School. It is important for young people and families to have a choice.

Q. Why is the school only for 75 students? The school is not big enough to meet the demand and young people are going out of borough and in to mainstream schools where they are not coping which is detrimental for the child. Can Churchward School request more places?

A. National funding is a challenge and we have to be creative and provisions need to work together. The Brunel SEN MAT works closely with the L.A. In addition the Brunel SEN MAT's Director of Education, John Bell, runs the Brunel, Access, School, and Improvement Service will work with mainstream schools to give them the confidence, skills and the right environment to do things differently. Working creatively across Swindon to create provisions.

Parents responded that there are not enough places for North Swindon area, SN25 area.

The CEO advised that Churchward is a Swindon School for Swindon places. Place planning looks at where places are needed but we also need to recognise that we need to be creative with what we do.

Parent responded that the school can be filled easily from the SN25 post code area and it will be disheartening for parents if they cannot get a place. The CEO advised that she will take parents comments to the L.A commissioners.

Parents clearly expressed that of the 75 places available at the school, Swindon parents are requesting places for Swindon children.

The CEO advised that there will be a year 7 in take in each year – in take is not prescriptive and will be an option for all years. Year 7 in take will still continue at Uplands School.

Q. Parent asked if qualifications can be taken at different stages as part of the bespoke packages?

A. Fiona confirmed that students can do what is needed when it is right.

Q. Parent asked about college placements. Will Churchward take in Sixth Form Students?

A. The CEO advised that Horizons College in Stratton Road College and Headlands provide college provision. Uplands School have a Sixth Form and there will be a Churchward School Sixth Form. Links with other Swindon Colleges are also a possibility. Horizons or Churchward need to be named on the EHCP.

The CEO advised parents to e-mail her directly re; individual options. There are a range of options to meet a range of needs.

The CEO explained that the reason for the question in relation to the funding agreement.

The CEO explained that the cost of placements is based on bandings. Place funding comes from Central Government. The level of support is provided according to the individual needs to enable young people to be independent.

Parents expressed that they have to provide a case before the L.A will listen. Being ill prepared is a mistake in parents' experience. JS advised that parents need to express what they want.

Q. Will there be a school uniform.

A. Uniform will be optional.

The CEO explained that the 'non-negotiable's' are deliberate damage to property, deliberate damage to people, and absconding. Lorna Breslin advised that Learning Mentor's work with the young people in one to one sessions to listen to young people regarding risk assessments and safeguarding. The process involves the young people and enables them to reflect on things that do go wrong.

Parent responded that it is so refreshing to hear people that understand and have aspirations for the young people's needs.

The CEO advised that everyone is welcome. Ensuring that we are affordable is a priority. We will help families find the right solution for their young person.

Q. Parent asked about the ratio between boys and girls. SRP's do not have a lot of girls.

A. There are 4 girls on the Learning Mentor Programme, 30/60 split which reflects the national disparity. There are both of female and male Learning Mentor role models. Diagnosis is skewed towards boys. Girls are very good at masking autism and function differently to boys. Girl's individual bespoke needs are met according to their needs.

Linked work takes place with other settings to link up with other like-minded young people.

Places are limited, Churchward will open in September 18 with 20 young people. In September 2019, 16 places.

Fiona is happy to talk about individual cases. Students have been identified individually for the temporary accommodation.

Permanent site located next to Great Western Academy with a lot of outside space. Uplands was built for 75.

Q. Parents asked if temporary accommodation could be at GWA.

A. The CEO advised this was considered but not a viable option. The DfE will spend £250k on the building which will become a work related learning environment for Churchward School – it will become a legacy for the organisation.

The CEO thanked everyone for attending and for their interest in Churchward School.

## Appendix VI: Brunel SEN Multi-Academy Trust Handout



*No barriers only potential*

The Brunel SEN MAT (BSM) is a 0 - 25 multi-academy trust specialising in the special education sector. The Trust has the experience, skills and expertise to focus on special education enabling the development of diverse quality provisions while maintaining high standards and performance which will improve the life chances and outcomes of children and young people with SEND.

The Trust's vision is to deliver this aspirational specialist approach through a "boutique" MAT which values and recognises the need for each specialist provision to be creative and unique to ensure they meet the individual needs of the children and young people.

Each of our provisions are committed to the BSM vision and have firmly embedded the core values in all they do.

### ***Brunel SEN MAT Vision:***

*To be a creative educational family committed to opening doors, opening minds, improving lives and realising potential for all.*

### ***Brunel SEN MAT Core Values:***

Aspiration - Integrity - Inclusion

***Aspirational*** attitudes are underpinned by absolute ***integrity*** resulting in true ***inclusion*** for all.

### ***Brunel SEN MAT Mission:***

The Trust will ensure:

**Commitment** to quality teaching & learning which is focussed on outcomes & engagement leading to improved life chances for all children & young people.

**Collaboration** and effective partnership working both within the BSM and with external agencies and professionals.

**Coproduction** is embedded as a preferred way of engaging with individuals and groups to benefit the whole.

**Effective** continued professional development for all.

**Efficient** systems & processes offering value for money and organisational resilience through operational economies to ensure greater purchasing power and cost saving through economies of scale.

**The Provisions will ensure:**

Active **engagement** and **commitment** to working together to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEN.

**Shared core values** are embedded and understood.

**Inclusion** is at the heart of all they do.

A culture of **value, trust** and **respect**.