



Recognising Strengths, Gaining Skills, Achieving Success

A photograph showing a woman in a red top on the left and a young boy in a school uniform on the right, both looking at each other and interacting at a table. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a classroom or activity room.

# Consultation Document

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[WWW.CHURCHWARDSCHOOL.ORG.UK](http://WWW.CHURCHWARDSCHOOL.ORG.UK)

# Welcome from Churchward school

## From the sponsors

Churchward School was approved by the Department of Education in 2016 with an expected opening date of September 2018 to provide secondary and sixth form places for students with autism and associated social communication difficulties.

We are very excited about the proposed special school as we are convinced that it will provide life changing opportunities for some of the most challenged young people in our community.

The school will be part of the Brunel SEN MAT, and sponsored by Uplands School. Churchward School will be a separate entity with separate governance and accountability but there will be an on-going connection through a shared vision and set of values.

This new school, with its bespoke packages and highly specialist staff, will equip students with the skills to enable them to make appropriate life choices, achieve their aspirations, build and maintain social relationships and therefore make a positive contribution to society.

Thank you for taking the time to read about Churchward School. We hope you will respond to this consultation using the questionnaire.

William Wyldbore-Smith

**Chairman of Brunel SEN MAT  
Board of Directors**

Derek Fry

**Chair of Governors**



# Discover Churchward Introduction

## We've been approved

Following a successful proposal from the Brunel Special Educational Needs Multi-Academy Trust (Brunel SEN MAT), sponsored by Uplands School, the Secretary of state for education has approved a proposal to establish a Free School. Churchward School will be an outstanding special Free School for students aged 11-19 years with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) and/or Social Communication Interaction Difficulties (SCID) as their primary need, who live in Swindon and its surrounding areas.

## Location

Churchward School is scheduled to open in September 2018 in a specialist centre with the intent of moving to the permanent site in North Swindon the following year. The specialist centre will

then become a work related learning venue for the Uplands Educational Trust with its primary purpose to provide work skills opportunities for the students of Churchward School.

This document invites your views as to how this proposal should be taken forward.

## Details of how to respond:-

You can respond by completing the questionnaire slip enclosed with this leaflet and giving it to a member of our team or by sending it to Uplands School. Alternatively you can respond on-line via our website at

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

# Discover Churchward Consultation period

## Planning ahead

**The statutory consultation period will run from the 20<sup>th</sup> November to 5<sup>th</sup> January 2018.**

This document gives you more information about Churchward School and invites you to help shape its development.

All ideas and comments gathered during this consultation will form part of a report which will be passed onto the Government Ministers in the Department for Education.

They will take your views into account when making the decisions about the proposed Free School and whether to enter into a funding agreement which will enable Churchward School to open.

The questionnaire that goes with this document has a specific question about whether you support the granting of a Funding Agreement for the foundation for this new School.



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.



Churchward school

# Why is it needed?

## Strategic planning

The Brunel SEN MAT and Swindon Local Authority have identified a need for additional provision for students with autism and/or social communication and interaction difficulties (SCID). The current provision in Swindon is full to capacity, with significant additional pressure predicted over the next few years. Churchward School is a necessary and timely solution to this urgent problem.

Our original bid was based on a maximum capacity of 64 however, it has become clear that a maximum capacity of 75 is a more realistic number to meet needs. Your views on this is being sought in the questionnaire.

### Our Vision and Ethos

Recognising strengths, gaining skills, achieving success

Churchward School will be a research focussed, forward-thinking, innovative and aspirational school with our students, their families, and their communication and interaction needs, at the centre of all we do. The school will have a culture of inclusion and adaptability, putting our students and their families first, enabling us to meet all our aspirations for them. We will uphold a commitment to never exclude any student.

Churchward School will be a positive choice for families with high ambitions for their young people with communication challenges. It will offer a motivating personalised curriculum and culture that fully develops students' individual strengths, skills and interests enabling them to make far greater progress than is currently expected.

# Learning Mentors and partnerships with families

## Learning mentors

A key feature of our curriculum model is that it will be delivered by highly skilled learning mentors, overseen by qualified teachers. The staff team will be selected for their high levels of empathy and their calm approach to managing students who can be both challenging and vulnerable. They will have knowledge and expertise of working with students with autism and/or SCID. They will provide an outstanding teaching and learning environment through activities that are highly motivating and matched to each student's needs. Rigorous monitoring, regular observations, and performance appraisals will ensure staff maintain outstanding standards and maximise each student's attainment opportunities

## Families

We believe that families should be key partners to support learning. We will ensure regular effective two-way communications on the social behaviour, interaction and progress in learning. We shall encourage parents and carers to share observations and concerns, helping to develop appropriate strategies focussing on the needs of the individual student.

## Employability

Young people with autism can suffer due to a lack of understanding within society generally. This hinders their participation as active members of the community. Churchward School will use existing links with public and private (employer) bodies within the local community to continue to raise awareness of how to support our students. Through work placements and supported internships our students will forge effective links with the local community which we hope will last long after they have left school.



# The Curriculum

## Personalised learning

Churchward School will provide a personalised curriculum using a range of ASC teaching strategies. Careful consideration will be given to the sensory needs of each student and a sensory programme designed to support self-regulation will be devised wherever needed.

Support and advice will be regularly sought from a range of professionals such as speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, art and drama therapists, community nurses and educational psychologists to ensure a holistic approach.

## Communication

All students will have some difficulties in communication and social skills. We, therefore, will employ the services of a

Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT) to work with students, staff, and parents/carers in developing Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs) for all students to develop their communication skills.

## The learning facilities

All students will have access to a range of on-site/ off-site facilities. As well as classrooms, this will include sensory rooms, cooking rooms, in and outdoor physical education facilities and art rooms. In addition, best use will be made of Swindon's community resources in addition to the Uplands Educational Trust Farm, retail facilities for work related learning.

Given the range of ASC need, areas for group work and individual study will also be provided. To reduce anxiety the learning environment will have visually

recognisable pathways and clearly designated spaces. This will enable the ASC young person to successfully transition to activities throughout the day.



## What we offer...

External accreditation will include but is not limited to:

- OCR Life and Living Qualifications: Entry 1 – Entry 3
- OCR Functional Skills up to level 2
- GCSEs
- ASDAN Towards Independence Awards
- Vocational BTECs

Students may also follow GCSE courses for subjects of particular interest or areas of strength and these courses can be accessed in a number of different ways.



# Recognising Strengths, Gaining Skills, Achieving Success

## Admissions

Churchward School is a special school which will initially provide 20 places for children of both genders in the age range 11-19 with autism or social communication and interaction difficulties.

For a child to be admitted, the school must be named, by a local authority, in the child's education health and care plan (EHCP).

Parents wishing their children to benefit from our provision should ask their local authority to name our school in their child's EHCP.

For further information on our school, and the process for obtaining a place here contact:- Fiona Clark, Telephone:- 01793 493 910

Finding out what you think?

We hope that everyone who receives this document will take the time to respond and share their views with us by completing the questionnaire. Alternatively you can respond through the Churchward website at:

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

If you are completing the paper questionnaire, please reply by 5 January 2018 and return to Fiona Clark, c/o

Uplands School, The Learning Campus, Tadpole Lane, Swindon SN25 2NB. If you have any questions then please telephone 01793 493 910 and ask to speak to Fiona Clark.