8th May 2024

**To all stakeholders of Churchward School,**

Churchward School Expansion - Swindon UTC Consultation

## Introduction

Many thanks to those parents, carers, members of the Churchward School community and local residents who took the time to complete the UTC Expansion Consultation survey.

Following a review of specialist placements, by Swindon Borough Council, it was identified that there is a shortage of Special Educational Need (SEN) places locally and as a result Swindon Borough Council has commissioned an additional 35 places at Churchward School for September 2024. The additional places will increase the PAN (Published Admission Number) at Churchward from 90 to 125 students.

These additional places will primarily be met by the opening of a satellite provision at Swindon UTC. 32 students will be accommodated at this site, split into four classes of 8. It is likely that the majority of these students will be Post 16. Swindon Borough Council has agreed capital funding to ensure this new satellite provision will provide the same quality of provision that current students receive at existing Churchward School sites.

Churchward School held an open consultation, which was promoted on the school website, the Trust website, and on social media, which ran for six weeks from Wednesday, 13th of March until Wednesday, 24th of April 2024.

## Results

Out of the responses received, 84% were in support of the UTC expansion and 16% of the responses we received were against the expansion.

## Designation – who took part in the survey?

The designation of responses came from parents, carers, staff, the Local Authority and local residents.

## Questions raised from survey:

No questions were raised form the survey.

## Concerns from survey, with answers:

***Concerns about the environment at UTC for some of the students.***

The environment is being designed and created to support the students and their needs. It will offer a blend of therapeutic interventions whilst also providing students with the opportunity to access formal learning.

***Concerns about increasing class sizes and the impact on the current school.***

Class sizes will not be impacted due to the expansion happening at the new location. A staff structure has been agreed which enables the expansion to proceed without impacting on the running of other areas of the school.

***Suggestion that Churchward School is large enough to increase PAN without the need for an additional site.***

The students that attend CWS have very specific challenges and the building was designed in such a way that supported these without compromise. To increase the number of students attending the current school would detrimentally impact on our ability to support them and see the outcomes, that have been so successful in recent years, be reduced.

There are also planning and operational concerns with increasing the number of students including parking, travel plans and capacity of specialist teaching spaces such as science and PE.

***One comment stated they wished Churchward School could accept students without an EHCP.***

As a designated special needs school, Churchward is unable to admit students without an EHCP.

## Positive Comments received from the survey in support of expansion.

“Great idea fully support this”

“It is a wise and sustainable idea to make the most of sites that already exist such as the unused space at UTC.”

“Great news for families in and around Swindon.”

“With the assumption that additional staff will be recruited for this site, we fully support the expansion and feel that a sixth form away from School will further develop our son's independence.”

## Conclusion

In conclusion, we feel the survey was positive with 84% of respondents supporting the expansion at UTC. Although we are increasing places, we are recruiting additional staff, for the classes at UTC, ensuring class sizes remain safe and all students continue to thrive. Students will continue to access specialist teaching in an exceptional learning environment – both inside and outside, that supports their individual needs and enables all students to continue to reach their full potential.

## The next steps…

Following the positive response to the consultation, we will be moving forward with the submission of our significant change business case to open a satellite provision of Churchward School and increase our PAN to 125 places.

Yours sincerely,

**Dave Dearsley**
**Headteacher**