Consultation on a proposal to develop new provision at Primrose Hill Primary School to support pupils with autism

What are we proposing?
Camden Council, in partnership with the governors of Primrose Hill Primary School, wants to develop new provision for up to 14 children - two pupils per year group - who have autism.

This provision will be known as an additionally resourced provision (ARP). We are not calling them resource bases any more, as it is not just about having a ‘base’ but about the school developing their strengths, including having a strong inclusive ethos.

The new additionally resourced provision, and additional specialist staff to support these pupils to take part in mainstream classes where possible, would begin from September 2019 with two pupils in Reception. In September 2020, another two pupils will start in Reception and so on, building up to full capacity of 14 pupils across the school by September 2025.

It may be considered later down the line to further increase capacity, but that is not an option at this point. This additional development would depend on the success of starting with the first 14 places and whether we could get planning permission for a new build. This would be Phase 2 of the development at some point in the future if deemed appropriate.

Pupils with autism at Primrose Hill Primary School
At Primrose Hill, we are proud of our inclusive approach and our success in supporting children with autism, as well as those with other special educational needs. Our staff already have good skills in teaching and supporting children with autism in an inclusive way.
Part of our ethos at the school is to be inclusive to all in our community. The Headteacher, staff and governors all feel that having the additionally resourced provision (ARP) will be a natural extension to the work we already do in the school.

What physical changes are required?
A number of improvements would be made to Primrose Hill Primary, as part of the proposal that would benefit all pupils. These would be Phase 1 (for 14 places) and would include:
- acoustic treatments throughout the school (completed on a phased approach) – these would help absorb noise to create calmer spaces
- a hub for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) on the second floor, including a gym, therapy room, soft play area and a calm room
- group rooms on each floor
- improvements to the dining area
- improved toilet facilities, including accessible toilets.

These improvements would be carried out with as little disruption to the school as possible, starting in the summer term 2019 and completed by the end of the autumn term in 2019. The aim would be for the first children with ASD to start at Primrose Hill Primary in September 2019.

As part of these developments, all pupils at the school would benefit from these newly-created spaces, the acoustic treatments (which will help with soundproofing), as well as from the adaptation of the playground to create a new sanctuary and horticultural space.

How would this affect staff at the school?
The proposal would involve recruiting new specialist teachers and teaching assistants to support children with ASD. These staff would be recruited to Primrose Hill Primary School, as the number of children with ASD grows each year.

Existing staff at the school would also have the opportunity to develop additional specialist skills and roles, with the help of training and professional development. Training and support would be given to all staff at Primrose Hill Primary School.

Consultation process and dates
This document is part of the informal consultation stage, which takes place before formal consultation (also known as statutory consultation). The purpose of the informal consultation stage is for us to have lots of conversations with parents, carers, staff and other interested parties to understand any concerns and answer any questions.

This will then help us decide whether we need to rethink any of our plans, before we go to formal (statutory) consultation.

The Head Teacher at Primrose Hill will be talking to parents throughout September and informal consultation will start, subject to governors’ agreement, on 27 September 2018. Information will also be available on the school’s website and in the reception area of the school.
The last day for feedback at this stage of consultation will be Friday 12 October 2018. Formal (statutory) consultation will start in late October.

We would like to know:

1. If you agree with our proposal (Phase 1) to develop an additionally resourced provision for 14 pupils at Primrose Hill Primary School.

2. If you are against the proposal or have any comments or concerns about them.

Let us know your thoughts or questions – please contact us:

Emma Ferrey, ASD Project Manager, Camden Council
Email: emma.ferrey@camden.gov.uk  Tel: 07932 660092
Option 1: Autism Inclusion Hub

What is being considered?

Camden has an increasing number of children assessed with ASD. Camden’s Cabinet, along with their department for Children, Schools and Families have been working to establish the nature of the need and the model for a new provision, which would best meet the needs of the known children.

In brief, the options considered were a stand-alone facility or resource bases within existing mainstream schools. The latter is the preferred option as this reflects Camden’s commitment to making our schools as inclusive as possible and also reflects the challenge of finding suitable new sites in Camden. There is a long-term goal to provide at least 28 primary places within the borough.

Officers have consulted with schools and so far two primary and two secondary schools have shown an interest in providing additional ASD accommodation. Officers are supporting these schools to develop their thinking around revenue, staffing, admissions, SEN model and inclusion.

Primrose Hill Primary has been selected for further consideration, given they already have a strong SEN/autism provision that is well established and encourages inclusion, and their desire to further increase this with a dedicated provision.

Architects Haverstock, specialists in SEN school design, were asked to consult with the school and Camden to define how the desired new hub spaces could be incorporated within the existing school. This is the summary of their report.

What is the proposal?

Following consultation and reviewing of various proposals, the school outlined their preference for two of the shown options. The initial option is to use the existing spare space capacity at the school, on the second floor, to create an autism inclusion hub to support 14 students. These students would integrate in to the mainstream school as much as desired, but also have their own dedicated space when required. The school brief was very clear that the mainstream students should benefit from any proposed works, including the use of the newly created spaces. It was felt the option presented here achieved that aim.

The second option could potentially occur as a later phase, and would expand the provision to 28 students (an additional 14), this phase is also being consulted on now and is presented on a separate sheet. Option 1 can occur as a standalone solution for 14 students.

Next steps

We would like to hear your thoughts on these proposals, and how we can incorporate your comments into the final proposal. We will then take the designs forward to be costed and assessed against the other schools we are considering, to form a considered view on how we proceed.

Primrose Hill Primary School
Primrose Hill Primary School
– proposed additionally resourced provision for pupils with autism

Frequently asked questions

What is autism?
Autism is a lifelong developmental disability. It is part of the autism spectrum and is sometimes referred to as an autism spectrum disorder, or ASD. The word 'spectrum' is used because, while all children and adults with autism share three main areas of difficulty, their condition will affect them in very different ways. Some are able to live relatively 'everyday' lives; others will require a lifetime of specialist support.
The three main areas of difficulty, which all children and adults with autism share are:
- social communication – impairment in the ability to understand and use non-verbal and verbal communication
- social interaction – impairment in the ability to understand social behaviour, which affects interaction with children and adults
- social imagination – impairment in the ability to think and behave flexibly, which may be shown in restricted, obsessional or repetitive activities or interests and difficulties in developing play skills.
For more information about autism visit the National Autistic Society website at www.nas.org.uk or phone 020 7633 2299.

Why are we developing this provision?
Camden Council has a duty to offer high quality education for children and young people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. This includes pupils with a wide range of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

In line with a national increase in the diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), more local children of nursery and primary age are being identified with this disability. The council therefore needs to provide more local primary school places for children with ASD and is considering ways of doing this. Many of these children currently have to travel to other boroughs for a suitable school place. This can involve long journeys for pupils and does not make the best use of council resources.

A new, fully-equipped additionally resourced provision (ARP) could be provided at Primrose Hill Primary School. The school has expressed an interest in gradually admitting 14 children with ASD. It is proposed that this would be a maximum of two pupils per year group, admitted year by year in Reception, from September 2019. The pupils with ASD would receive intensive and specialist support in mainstream classes in the school as well as within the new provision.

Once new practices for the provision are embedded, the school may consider expanding the ARP but this is not an option until the ARP is fully established and we can evaluate its success. This would be Phase 2 of the process. A variety of factors would need to be considered including – further consultation with staff, governors and parents, seeking planning permission and approval from Camden Council.
What is being proposed?
Camden Council, in partnership with the governors of Primrose Hill Primary School, wants to develop new provision for up to 14 children - two pupils per year group - who have autism.

This provision will be known as an additionally resourced provision (ARP). We are not calling them resource bases any more, as it is not just about having a ‘base’ but about the school developing their strengths, including having a strong, inclusive ethos.

The new additionally resourced provision, and additional specialist staff to support these pupils to take part in mainstream classes where possible, would begin from September 2019 with two pupils in Reception. In September 2020, another two pupils will start in Reception and so on, building up to full capacity of 14 pupils across the school by September 2025.

What does it mean that the provision will be inclusive?
Our aim would be to integrate pupils with ASD into mainstream classes as much as possible, with the support of specialist staff.

The proposed additionally resourced provision would play an important role in preparing and supporting pupils with ASD for inclusion in mainstream teaching and learning. The aim would be for most of these pupils to spend part of their day in the ARP’s hub (more details below), often the morning, with the rest of the day in a mainstream class, with specialist support, as appropriate for the needs of each pupil.

How will the provision affect the rest of the pupils in the school?
As well as the benefits for children placed in the additionally resourced provision, pupils across the school at Primrose Hill Primary would benefit from the skills and development of staff, and inclusion in some specialist group work. All facilities would be used creatively alongside the mainstream school to benefit the entire school community.

How will the provision affect the staff in the school?
Primrose Hill is proud of its inclusive approach and success in supporting children with autism, as well as those with other special educational needs. Staff at the school already have good skills in teaching and supporting children with autism in an inclusive way.

Part of the ethos at the school is to be inclusive to all in the community. The headteacher, staff and governors all feel that having the additionally resourced provision will be a natural extension to the inclusive provision, which the school already delivers.
The proposal will involve recruiting new specialist teachers and teaching assistants to support children with ASD. These staff would be recruited to Primrose Hill Primary School, as the number of children with ASD grows each year.

Extra staff would be provided to ensure there would be no additional demands on existing school staff and no negative impact on the learning of mainstream pupils at Primrose Hill Primary School.

**Will the provision use funding from the main school budget?**
No. All ARPs are funded separately to the school and receive funding based on the number of pupils placed in the provision. This covers the higher cost of supporting pupils with increased levels of need, such as more staff to provide support in and out of the classroom.

**What are the advantages of having the provision?**
A number of improvements would be made to Primrose Hill Primary School, as part of the proposal, that would benefit all pupils - such as acoustic treatments throughout the school to reduce noise, access to group work rooms, improved toilet facilities and the adaptation of the playground to create a new sanctuary and horticultural space.

If Phase 2 goes ahead, there will be additional spaces in the new building as well as a possible roof top decked playground to compensate for the loss of playground space.

One of the aims of the additionally resourced provision would be to increase the time that pupils with ASD can spend in mainstream classes by developing social, communication, interaction and independence skills, as well as helping them to manage their anxiety and behaviour.

Equally, some mainstream pupils could benefit from time in the ARP’s hub (more details below), for example, for group work programmes. Mainstream children could also benefit from joining pupils with ASD at playtimes or lunchtimes in the quieter play areas, where they may feel more nurtured, or joining in the soft play activities.

**What building works are being proposed?**
A number of improvements would be made to Primrose Hill Primary, as part of the proposal that would benefit all pupils. These include:
- acoustic treatments throughout the school (completed on a phased approach) – these would help absorb noise to create calmer spaces
- an ASD hub on the second floor, including a gym, therapy room, soft play area and a calm room
- group rooms on each floor
- improvements to the dining area
- improved toilet facilities, including accessible toilets.
If additional 14 places for Phase 2 are agreed, to take the total of pupils with ASD up to 28, work would take place at some point in the future, depending on the views of the headteacher, governors, staff, pupils and parents as to when this would best be carried out.

Phase 2 building work would include a new building with:
- two dedicated classrooms
- a group work room
- a calm room
- two hygiene rooms
- a new playground toilet for all students.
Depending on funding, there may also be the opportunity to create a roof-deck playground on top of the new building.

**Will the building works be disruptive to the school or to pupils’ learning?**
These improvements would be carried out with as little disruption to the school as possible, starting in the summer term 2019 and completed by the end of the autumn term in 2019. The aim would be for the first children with ASD to start at Primrose Hill Primary in September 2019.

**What is the timeline for these developments?**
Key dates are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informal consultation</td>
<td>27 September to 12 October 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formal (statutory) consultation</td>
<td>29 October to 25 November 2018</td>
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<td>Architects working with the school to develop designs for the provision</td>
<td>November/ December 2018</td>
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<td>Building works (for Phase 1)</td>
<td>April to December 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building works for Phase 2 (if agreed)</td>
<td>To be confirmed - possibly 2021 or later</td>
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