



Leppington, Birch Hill, Bracknell, RG12 7WW  
Headteacher: Michael Dillon B Ed (Hons) MA

## **Birch Hill Primary School**

### **Proposed development of a Specially Resourced Provision (SRP)**

#### **Frequently asked questions**

##### **What is autism?**

Autism is part of the autistic spectrum and is often referred to as autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), or autistic spectrum condition (ASC). The word 'spectrum' is used because, whilst children and adults with autism share three main areas of difficulty, their condition will affect them in very different ways. Whilst, some children and adults may experience some minor challenges, the other end of the spectrum might mean that some 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](http://www.nas.org.uk) or phone 020 7833 2299.

##### **Why are we developing this provision?**

Bracknell Forest 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 autism, 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 autism 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 specially resourced provision (SRP) could be provided at Birch Hill Primary School. The school has expressed an interest in gradually admitting up to 10 children with autism and other associated learning difficulties. It is proposed that this would be a maximum of two pupils per year group, admitted year by year in Reception, from September 2021. The pupils would receive specialist support within the SRP provision and then access some mainstream classes, depending on ability and learning need.

### **What is being proposed?**

Bracknell Forest Council, in partnership with the governors, Head Teacher and SENDCo of Birch Hill Primary School, wants to develop a new provision for up to 10 children - two pupils per year group - who have autism.

The new specially resourced provision, and additional specialist staff to support these pupils to take part in mainstream classes where possible, would begin from September 2021.

The provision would start with a small number of children and would see numbers increase gradually. An example of this would be that 3 / 4 children would start in September. In September 2022, another two pupils will start in Reception and so on, building up to full capacity of 10 pupils across the school by September 2025.

### **Admission Criteria**

All children attending the provision would have an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) or be under assessment for an EHCP. Likewise, having an EHCP will not automatically give children access to the SRP.

There is some flexibility in the above numbers – e.g. we may admit more in September 2021 and build up to capacity in a shorter period.

It may be also 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 10 places.

### **What will happen to the school Published Admission Number PAN?**

The proposal is that the number of children (10) in the SRP will be in addition to the school PAN. Therefore the PAN will increase by 10.

### **What does it mean that the provision will be inclusive?**

Our school vision and motto is Learn, Believe, Achieve Together. Our aim is to develop all children's aspirations through high quality teaching and an inclusive approach. We have a proven track record of early identification and working closely with parents and other professionals to co-produce provision that meets the needs of our children.

Our aim would be to integrate pupils attending the SRP into mainstream classes as much as possible, with the support of specialist staff.

### **How will the provision affect the rest of the pupils in the school?**

As well as the benefits for children placed in the specially resourced provision, pupils across the school at Birch 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?**

We demonstrate a high level of multi-agency working to support our children's learning and our staff development. We would anticipate running further training for all staff to deepen their knowledge of autism and speech & language communication difficulties and understanding how to meet the children's needs in a mainstream classroom.

Our staff already have good skills in teaching and supporting children with autism and other SEND in an inclusive way.

The Head teacher, SENDCo and governors all feel that having the specially 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 autism. These staff would be recruited to Birch Hill Primary School, as the number of children with autism 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 Birch Hill Primary School.

### **Will the provision use funding from the main school budget?**

No. All SRPs 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?**

One of the aims of the specially resourced provision would be to increase the time that pupils with autism 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 SRP's hub (more details below), for example, for group work programmes.

### **What building works are being proposed?**

A number of improvements would be made to Birch Hill Primary, as part of the proposal that would benefit all pupils. These would include refurbishing and developing the modular building:

- Refurbish one of the modular classrooms.
- Convert one set of the toilets into a sensory room that would be used as a calming, sensory space and enable us to deliver occupational therapy.
- Create a disabled/adult toilet.
- Refurbish some of the outdoor space around the modular.

These improvements would be carried out with as little disruption to the school as possible, and as yet the timing of the building works has not been decided. The building works are not essential to us starting the provision so we are aiming for the first children to start in the resourced provision at Birch Hill Primary in September 2021.

### **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, and would take place over the school holidays as much as possible.

## What is the timeline for these developments?

Activity	Date: 2021
Informal consultation	Wednesday 29 <sup>th</sup> January – Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> February.
Formal (statutory) consultation	Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2021 and run until Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> March.
Building works	Summer holidays
Specially Resourced Provision opens	Thursday 2 September

## I want to give feedback on these proposals. Whom should I contact?

### We would like to know:

1. If you agree with our proposal to develop a specially resourced provision for up to 10 pupils at Birch Hill Primary School.
2. If you disagree with this proposal or have any comments or concerns about it.

To give feedback on these proposals or to ask any questions, please contact:

Emma Ferrey, Bracknell Forest Council SEND Consultant. Emma is happy to answer any of your questions and is contactable on:

Email: [emma@tillian.co.uk](mailto:emma@tillian.co.uk)

Tel: **07932 660092**