

# **Public consultation – March 2021 Proposed Development of Mainstream Autism Base**

This document contains information that will help you understand the issues surrounding this proposed change. An informal virtual drop-in session has been arranged to explain the proposal and to answer questions:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> March – for parents and Carers Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> April – for all interested parties</b>
<b>Time</b>	<b>6pm</b>
<b>Venue</b>	<b>Via Zoom- invitations can be requested via the school office office@chaddesleycorbett.worcs.sch.uk</b>

Dear Parents / Governors / Colleagues

Consultation on proposed development of a mainstream autism base for ten primary aged pupils at Chaddesley Corbett Endowed Primary School

This document explains:

- Why we feel it is appropriate to consider building a new mainstream autism base.
- The timescale for the consultation
- Who is being consulted
- What happens at the end of the consultation period

## Have your say

It is very important that all those involved have a say. A copy of the response form can be downloaded from the school website or a hard copy picked up from the school office.

Responses must be submitted to:

The Headteacher  
Mrs Emma James  
Chaddesley Corbett Endowed Primary School,  
Nethercroft Meadow,  
Lower Chaddesley  
Kidderminster  
DY10 4QN

Or e-mail to [office@chaddesleycorbett.worcs.sch.uk](mailto:office@chaddesleycorbett.worcs.sch.uk)

Responses must be received by noon on Sunday 25 April 2021

Yours sincerely,

*E James*

## Background information

Worcestershire County Council are consistently working to meet their statutory duties to improve the standard, quality and range of educational provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Chaddesley Corbett Endowed Primary School is a voluntary aided school under the auspices of the Chaddesley Corbett Educational Foundation whose trustees support the school in meeting its statutory duties.

A consultation is needed to ensure that everyone interested in the school's future is given the opportunity to consider and respond to the proposal for making prescribed alterations to a maintained school by developing a mainstream autism base (MAB) at the school.



The school is situated in a rural village and draws pupils from a diverse area. It is a wholly inclusive school where diversity is celebrated, and with strong moral values underpinning its practice. It was built in 2012, and purpose designed throughout to support a full range of pupil needs. Externally, the school enjoys 8 acres of open space, and the curriculum offers unique opportunities for outdoor learning, including Forest School, Sensory Garden, Therapeutic Horticulture, Physical Activity Trails and varied ecosystem exemplars in its grounds. Every class base has its own outdoor learning classroom attached to it to maximise the flow from in class to outside learning opportunities. The school has easy access to farmland and protected woodlands which provide rarely found spaces for children to learn and staff to exercise flexible creativity. The school and its pupils enjoy generous support from the community and every child considers themselves a child of the village. SEND provision within the school is directed by a national Specialist Leader in Education (SLE) for SEND, Jayne Edwards, and the school has a unique mix of expertise to develop provision for children with additional needs. The SEND link governor is a retired executive head/ director of education from the independent SEMH/ SLCN sector. Professor Barry Carpenter CBE OBE PhD, the UK's first professor of mental health in education, is the lead adviser for the MAB development, and an associate governor of the school. Together with the Headteacher, they will oversee the development phase.

## The Proposal

The leaders of the school are proposing:

- The establishment of a 10 place Mainstream Autism Base within the site at CCEPS which offers enhanced provision for primary aged children with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder, referred to the school by WCF, and will be supported by existing and new specialist staff advised by Autism experts.
- The development of a dynamic equilibrium model for mainstream autism support which more than meets local authority needs, supports replicability, has potential for expansion and offers opportunities for provision of specialist supportive services to other schools.
- A sustainable development which has social benefits for the entire school, increases the number of pupils on roll, holds productive implications for overall school resources and which offers staff career development opportunities and enhanced well-being support.

- A base which is a beacon of expertise, able to offer interim and assessment placements to assist WCF in identifying need, reducing disadvantage and time spent out of school for vulnerable children, forging deep family support structure and enhancing quality of education and impact for children with an Education Health Care Plan.
- A resource which is designed for continuity during any further/future pandemic issues.

The base would be built during 2021 and opened in January 2022.

The base would add a specialist resource building to the school which would enhance the SEND offer to all children at CCEPS; raise staff skill levels; enrich diversity and equality of opportunity and support raising achievements for all.

## Evidence of Demand

The numbers of children with autism and associated mental health issues is rising (McConkey 2020 NASEN). All schools understand the requirement for extension of personalisation in learning and flexibility to optimise the opportunities for these children to succeed in mainstream and manage phase transition well.

A well resourced MAB type provision would reduce disadvantage and secure the futures of the most vulnerable pupils; offer creative and flexible inclusive provision which would positively augment the educational and social experience of *all* CCEPS children and promote career enhancing development for staff whilst better supporting their own well-being needs via engagement with and support from autism specialist staff.

At the start of 2020, under the auspices of the SENDCO, a pilot project was begun to offer enhanced provision to pupils with autism and associated barriers to learning. A specialist classroom was repurposed to provide a base for the growing number of children with autism and allied difficulties requiring a more nuanced blend of 1:1/small group and larger class provision for individuals struggling to progress. Self-referral processes accompany staff referral to allow children and families to explore what patterns of provision will enable optimal success.

The school is currently engaged in the Awardplace Well Being in Schools award programme to further improve mental health support provision for all and recognises the potential to extend and expand the pilot. The award requires a fully integrated response from staff, pupils, parents and governors and will underpin the MAB inclusive model and link directly with AET autism standards to audit, monitor and develop provision.

## Accommodation Required

A new building will be constructed similar in size to the nursery/wraparound building. It is proposed to site the building at the rear of the music room and to link it to the main building. Additionally, within the main school a "portal" room will be established which will serve both MAB children and children from existing classes. Plans are being drawn up by a local property consultant and will be made available on the school website.

## How the decision will be made

At the conclusion of this consultation period the Governors will consider any issues that have been raised before deciding whether to amend the concept brief and agree with the Local Authority and Trustees the course to be followed.

The Governors and trustees will consider evidence from various sources in order to reach a considered view on the proposal. In particular the following factors:

- The response to the public consultation

- The ability of the school to manage the proposed change to support the continued improvements at the school

## Who is being consulted?

This document will be made available to:

- Parents and carers of pupils attending the School and pupils themselves.
- Staff and Governors of other local schools
- Local District and County Councillors
- The Local Education Authority
- Immediate neighbours
- Local Member of Parliament
- Chaddesley Corbett Educational Foundation trustees
- Any other local stakeholder

## What happens next?

### Consultation Phase – 15 March 2021 to 25 April 2021

During the consultation phase anyone with an interest can express their views on the options expressed in this document. This document and the meeting detailed on the cover form part of the consultation.

### Submission of formal proposal to Local Authority - by 7 May 2021

The governors will take note of issues raised during the consultation at the full Governors meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> April. At the conclusion of the consultation period, a decision will be made whether to submit a formal proposal to expand to the Local Authority, requesting their support.

If a formal proposal is made, the school, diocese and local authority officers will then prepare a report for the Cabinet Members with Responsibility for Education and Skills detailing the arguments for and against the expansion and the capital allocation that would be required to deliver the required accommodation. The responses of the public consultation will be shared with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility along with the Governors' comments on the issues raised.

### Cabinet Member Decision – 28 May 2021

If the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and Skills decide to support the proposal the County Council will publish formal Public Notice of the proposed scheme. You will then have a final opportunity to comment or object within a four-week timescale laid down in law. Notices are published in the local press and displayed outside the school. At the end of the four weeks any objections will be reported to the Lead Councillor for Children's Services for a final decision.

It is very important that all those involved have a say. Please submit your comments by noon on Sunday 25 April 2020 by completing the online response form available on the school and WCC website at [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/schoolconsultations](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/schoolconsultations). If you are unable to access the online response form you can obtain a paper copy from the school office.