

# PRESS RELEASE



7 June 2021

## Consultation Commences for New Special School in Northumberland

Consultation commences from 7 June 2021 – 16 July 2021 for the proposed new special school, Gilbert Ward Academy in Blyth. Between now and 16 July 2021, Prosper Learning Trust\* are consulting on proposals to open a new Special School providing education for children aged 11-16 with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) and autism (ASD).

The school received approval from the Department for Education to move forward in July 2020 and will primarily meet the needs of children in Northumberland but will also serve North neighbouring areas. It is due to open in September 2022 with up to 40 pupils in school during the first year growing to 80 pupils by September 2023. The proposed site at the former Princess Louise First School in Princess Louise Road, Blyth will have a new purpose-built building in the 2022/2023 academic year.

*Mark Jones, Chief Executive Officer, Prosper Learning Trust, said: "This is an exciting time for the county, we are proud to be delivering a school which will serve Northumberland and neighbouring areas. Working together with the local authority, Department for Education and partners we will create a school which is recognised as a centre of excellence regionally and nationally providing a personalised curriculum to meet the unique qualities and needs of each pupil."*

*Cath McEvoy-Carr, Executive Director for Adult and Children's services, said: "The new proposed school in Blyth will open up more learning opportunities for those children with additional needs in Northumberland."*

*"We are committed to growing capacity to meet the needs of our young people with social, emotional, mental health and autism and by working in partnership with Prosper Learning Trust we are now at a stage where we can move this forward."*

*"Please do take the time to share your views on the proposals. Thank you."*

The consultation is focussing on key areas including the proposed site, the admissions process, key policies and our education offer. Between now and the 16 July 2021 we are keen to hear your views about our proposals. To find out more you can log on to [www.prosperlearningtrust.co.uk/gilbertwardacademy-consultation](http://www.prosperlearningtrust.co.uk/gilbertwardacademy-consultation) where you can read much more detail and also reply to our online survey. A breakdown of all consultation meetings and events can also be found on our website, along with how to book.

(ends)

**NOTE to EDITOR:**

*\*Prosper Learning Trust (PLT) is a Multi Academy Trust, which was established in January 2018 by Newcastle Bridges School. The Trust currently comprises, Newcastle Bridges School, Mary Astell Academy, Harry Watts Academy and Thomas Bewick School. The Trust work together to offer appropriate educational pathways for all its pupils whatever their needs, abilities or interests.*

