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ASSOCIATES

# Gilbert Ward Academy Consultation Report

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August 2021



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## **1. Introduction**

In May 2020 the Department for Education approved the application for Prosper Learning Trust as the preferred academy trust to deliver a new Special Free School in Northumberland for children aged 11-16 with Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs and autism. Following approval of the feasibility and outline plans for the capital build project the Trust were able to move forward with the statutory consultation.

The following report summarises the key information and data which was shared as part of the consultation and informs stakeholders of the outcomes and actions resulting from this consultation period. Consultation ran from 7 June 2021 – 16 July 2021.

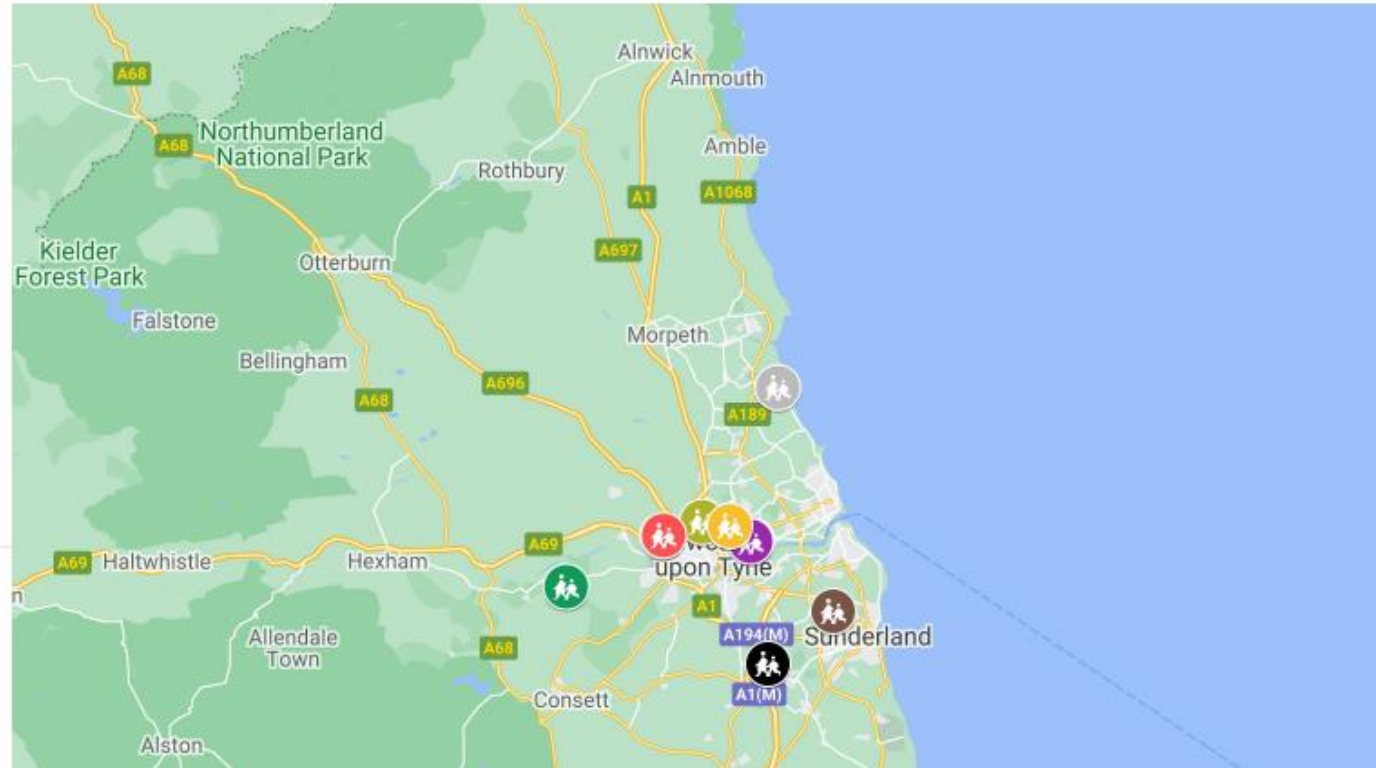
### **1.1 Geographic position of the school(s)**

The map below shows where Gilbert Ward Academy is to be located in the region alongside other Prosper Learning Trust schools. The ability to facilitate joint working across the Trust is key to delivering sustained improvements and improved outcomes for learners.

# Gilbert Ward Academy

## School Names

- Thomas Bewick School
- Newcastle Bridges School
- Ferndene
- Walkergate Hospital
- Alnwood
- Freeman Hospital
- Harry Watts Academy
- Mary Astell Academy
- Harry Watts Expansion Site
- Gilbert Ward Academy



## 2. Consultation Methodology

The overall aim of the consultation process was to ensure that everyone who has a stake in the development of the new school had the opportunity to hear about the proposals and to share their views and ideas about the plans.

The objectives of the process were to:

- Provide relevant background information and context for stakeholders
- Explain the reasons for the new school
- Share key detail including key policies linked to admissions, safeguarding and SEND, site information and curriculum plans
- Provide an opportunity for stakeholders to hear / read more and ask questions

The principles laid down by the project team for the consultation were that it should be:

- An open and transparent process
- Accessible to all stakeholders in terms of:
  - The times of the events
  - The ability to meet virtually or physically
  - The language used (jargon-free wherever possible and acronyms fully explained)
  - Well-publicised and advertised
  - The venues being DDA compliant

A variety of media were used to consult including:

- Direct letters to all schools in Northumberland, the Local and Neighbouring Authorities, residents near to the new school, Colleges, parent/carer forum (over 300 in total)
- Press releases / Media content
- Leaflets and posters distributed
- Publicised meetings involving presentations and questions and answer sessions
- Frequently asked questions and comments slips
- Online Survey
- Dedicated consultation email account
- Website / Social Media
- Emails

### 2.1 Direct letters

A letter and/or email introducing the consultation were sent electronically to the following groups and an example is included at Appendix 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e and 1f:

- Parents/Carers/Community members
- Local schools, colleges, universities and training providers

- Local Authorities
- Key stakeholders in the region

## 2.2 Online survey

Throughout the consultation Google survey was used to capture a response to 11 key questions, these included:

1. Please tick the box which best describes the type of stakeholder you are?
2. Do you agree with our statement of provision (admissions policy)?
3. Do you agree with our safeguarding policy?
4. Do you agree with our SEND policy?
5. Is the proposed curriculum offer engaging for the pupils who may attend the school?
6. Our proposed permanent site is situated in Blyth, on the site formerly occupied by Princess Louise First School on Princess Louise Road. Do you agree this is an appropriate location?
7. Should the Trust enter into a Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State to open Gilbert Ward Academy? To understand more about what is a Funding Agreement log onto <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-and-free-school-funding-agreements-multi-academy-trust>
8. Would you be interested in hiring the school facilities for community use out of school hours?
9. If you would be interested in hiring the school facilities for community use out of school hours, please give more information.
10. Any further comments or questions?
11. If you would like to receive a copy of the final report and findings and/or would like a response to any question asked whilst completing this survey, please complete the details below before submitting your form

There was also an opportunity with all 11 questions to leave additional comments should the stakeholder wish to do so.

## 2.3 Press Release

A press release was prepared and issued to 13 media contacts via email on 7 June 2021, a copy is attached in Appendix 2.

## 2.4 Website

<https://www.prosperlearningtrust.co.uk/gilbertwardacademy-consultation/> was live throughout the consultation period. The site (which was accessed via the Prosper Learning Trust website) was aimed at providing detailed information about Prosper and the proposals with an opportunity to

email questions or comments or to conduct the online survey. A screen shot of the site can be seen below.

The screenshot shows the Prosper Learning Trust website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Prosper logo, contact information (admin@prosperlearningtrust.co.uk, 0191 229 6020), and a search icon. Below the navigation bar are links for Home, Our Trust, Our Academies, News, Opportunities, and Contact Us. The main content area is titled 'GILBERT WARD ACADEMY CONSULTATION' and includes a breadcrumb trail: Home > Our Academies > Gilbert Ward Academy Consultation. The text explains that in May 2020, the Department for Education approved the application for a new special free school in Northumberland for children aged 11-16 with Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs and autism. The school will be called Gilbert Ward Academy. It states that the Trust is now entering the next phase of this journey and is looking to create a new school which will prepare pupils for new and exciting learning opportunities. The education offer will be varied, with a focus on ensuring children are exposed to a rich and varied curriculum that meets all individual needs. The overarching aim is to engage all pupils in their learning. Under section 10 of the Academies Act 2010, the Trust is required to consult with stakeholders on their proposals for the new school. There are two prominent buttons: 'Find Out More About Gilbert Ward Academy' and 'Complete Online Survey Here'. A section titled 'When do I need to feedback by?' states that the consultation runs from 7 June 2021 to 16 July 2021 inclusive, and the final report and findings will be issued by no later than September 2021. It provides two routes for feedback: email (consultation@prosperlearningtrust.co.uk) and post (Gilbert Ward Academy Consultation, c/o Prosper Learning Trust, Linhope Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE5 2LW). Alternatively, it mentions calling 0191 2296020 and selecting option 7. A section titled 'Consultation Events' lists several events for stakeholders, including Community Consultation, Parent Consultation, Partner Agencies Consultation, Councillors Consultation, and Parent Consultation, with details on dates, times, and venues. A 'Booking' section at the bottom states that to book attendance at one of the consultation events, users should click the relevant link below.

To book your attendance at one of our Consultation events please click the relevant link below and complete the booking form. If you would like to attend an event virtually please indicate this on the form and we will send you a link with instructions on how to join prior to the event.

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Community Consultation Event</b><br><b>22 June 4.00pm</b><br><br><b>Book Now</b>   | <b>Parent Consultation Event</b><br><b>22 June 6.00pm</b><br><br><b>Book Now</b> | <b>Partner Agencies Consultation Event</b><br><b>23 June 10.00am</b><br><br><b>Book Now</b>      |
| <b>Councillors Consultation Event</b><br><b>30 June 2.00pm</b><br><br><b>Book Now</b> | <b>Parent Consultation Event</b><br><b>30 June 4.00pm</b><br><br><b>Book Now</b> | <b>School Heads and Chairs Consultation Event</b><br><b>1 July 4.30pm</b><br><br><b>Book Now</b> |

Alternatively you can email us at [consultation@prosperlearningtrust.co.uk](mailto:consultation@prosperlearningtrust.co.uk) to reserve your place.

## 2.5 Publicised meetings

The following meetings were communicated to stakeholders and carried out during the consultation period:

| Date    | Time   | Event                                     | Venue                     |
|---------|--------|---|---------------------------|
| 22 June | 4pm    | Community and General                     | Port Training Services    |
| 22 June | 6pm    | Parent 1                                  | Port Training Services    |
| 23 June | 10am   | Partner Agencies                          | Northumberland College    |
| 30 June | 2pm    | Elected Members, Councillors, LA Officers | Isabella Community Centre |
| 30 June | 4pm    | Parent 2                                  | Isabella Community Centre |
| 1 July  | 4:30pm | School Event                              | Isabella Community Centre |



## 2.6 Leaflets and Posters

Copies of the leaflets and posters issued to stakeholders can be found in Appendix 3 and 4. These were distributed with all letters.

The Trust also hand delivered 210 letters and leaflets to local residents on the immediate roads surrounding the school. The roads included: Newsham Rd, Victoria Mews, Princess Louise Rd, The Broadway, First Avenue, Second Avenue, Elm Trees and Kendal Avenue.

## 2.7 Email – [Consultation@prosperlearningtrust.co.uk](mailto:Consultation@prosperlearningtrust.co.uk)

The email address above was used to enable anyone who wished to be able to post a question or a comment about the proposals. At the end of the consultation period these questions and comments were collected to be responded to as appropriate.

## 2.8 Community, LA, Partner Agencies, Schools, Councillors and Parent/Carer Presentations

At each of the consultation meetings a presentation was given with information about Prosper Learning Trust and why they are looking to open a new school in Northumberland. A copy of the presentations can be found in Appendix 5.

## 3. Overview of the Feedback received

Appendix 6 contains all the questions, comments and feedback received from the various media used throughout the consultation period. Numbers of participants in meetings and surveys are below.

### 3.1 Attendance at Consultation Meetings

| Date    | Event                                     | Venue                     | Number in attendance |
|---------|---|---------------------------|----------------------|
| 22 June | Community and General                     | Port Training Services    | 2                    |
| 22 June | Parent 1                                  | Port Training Services    | 2                    |
| 23 June | Partner Agencies                          | Northumberland College    | 0                    |
| 30 June | Elected Members, Councillors, LA Officers | Isabella Community Centre | 2                    |
| 30 June | Parent 2                                  | Isabella Community Centre | 3                    |

|        |              |                           |   |
|--------|--------------|---------------------------|---|
| 1 July | School Event | Isabella Community Centre | 0 |
|--------|--------------|---------------------------|---|

### 3.2 Online Survey

We received 12 completed surveys online. Full detailed feedback is attached in Appendix 6 and a summary of the feedback is highlighted on the following 2 pages:

| Please tick the box which best describes the type of stakeholder you are? | Do you agree with our admissions policy (statement of provision)? | Do you agree with our safeguarding policy? | Do you agree with our SEND policy?  | Is the proposed curriculum offer engaging for the students who may attend the school? (Detailed curriculum plans will be shared within our meetings and copies of the information will be displayed ...) | Our proposed permanent site is situated in Blyth, on the site formerly occupied by Princess Louise First School on Princess Louise Road. Do you agree this is an appropriate location? | Should the Trust enter into a Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State to open Gilbert Ward Academy? To understand more about what is a Funding Agreement log onto <a href="https://www.gov.uk/governmen...">https://www.gov.uk/governmen...</a> | Would you be interested in hiring the school facilities for community use out of school hours? | If you would be interested in hiring the school facilities for community use out of school hours, please give more information. | Do you have any further comments or questions?   |
|---|---|--|---|--|--|---|--|---|--|
| Parent/Carer;   | Yes   | Yes  | Yes   | Don't know   | Yes  | Yes   | Yes  |   |  |
| School staff member;  | Yes   | Yes  | Yes   | Yes  | Yes  | Yes   | No   |   |  |
| Parent/Carer;   | Yes   | Yes  | Yes   | Yes  | Yes  | Yes   | Maybe  |   |  |
| Parent/Carer;   | Yes   | Yes  | Yes   | Yes  | Yes  | Yes   | No   |   |  |
| Parent/Carer;   | Don't know  | Yes  | Yes   | Yes  | Yes  | Don't know  | Maybe  |   |  |
| LA representative;  | Don't know  | Yes  | You still need to add the link to Northumberland LA Local Offer (it only says Newcastle and Sunderland) | Don't know   | Don't know   | Don't know  | No   |   | I hope that this school will embrace Emotion Coaching as a way of supporting relationships between staff and pupils and provide an evidence based way to help children to regulate their emotions. If you are planning to use a behavioural approach (which focuses on controlling and modifying behaviour through the use of rewards and punishments) then you should NOT be allowed to open a school for pupils with SEMH. |
| Parent/Carer;   | Yes   | Yes  | Yes   | Don't know   | Yes  | Don't know  | No   |   |  |



| Please tick the box which best describes the type of stakeholder you are? | Do you agree with our admissions policy (statement of provision)? | Do you agree with our safeguarding policy? | Do you agree with our SEND policy? | Is the proposed curriculum offer engaging for the students who may attend the school? (Detailed curriculum plans will be shared within our meetings and copies of the information will be displayed ... | Our proposed permanent site is situated in Blyth, on the site formerly occupied by Princess Louise First School on Princess Louise Road. Do you agree this is an appropriate location? | Should the Trust enter into a Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State to open Gilbert Ward Academy? To understand more about what is a Funding Agreement log onto <a href="https://www.gov.uk/governmen...">https://www.gov.uk/governmen...</a> | Would you be interested in hiring the school facilities for community use out of school hours? | If you would be interested in hiring the school facilities for community use out of school hours, please give more information. | Do you have any further comments or questions?  |
|---|---|--|------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|---|---|
| Community member;   | Yes   | Yes  | Yes                                | Yes   | Yes  | Yes   | No   |   |   |
| Parent/Carer;   | Yes   | Yes  | Yes                                | Yes   | Yes  | Yes   | No   |   |   |
| Community member;   | Yes   | Yes  | Yes                                | Yes   | NCC land large field back Park Road/ Plessey Road corner this land was to build a new school on ready to open approximately 1978 but it just stands unbuilt                            | Yes   | No   |   | Site Security is upmost and hopefully CCTV will be 24 hr coverage / as there is a public path / walkway running alongside this Special School |
| LA representative;  | Yes   | Yes  | Yes                                | Yes   | Yes  | Yes   | No   |   | Thirston Parish Council fully support this proposed academy.  |
| School staff member;  | Yes   | Yes  | Yes                                | Yes   | Yes  | Yes   | Maybe  |   |   |

A summary of all the responses, themes and the messages contained therein, is provided below in section 3.4.

### **3.3 Resident's mailing**

We received one response from a local resident objecting to the school opening on the proposed site.

### **3.4 Themes and Key Messages**

Overall feedback was generally extremely positive about the new school proposals. The themes stakeholders are most interested in are:

#### **3.4.1 Admissions**

There were two main lines of enquiry regarding admissions.

1. The number of Northumberland children who would benefit
2. The admissions process and how parents can secure a place at the school for their child

Both questions are answered in detail in Appendix 6. Prosper will work with the local authority and parents to ensure as many Northumberland children and families as possible can access the new provision.

#### **3.4.2 Community use/access**

Residents and councillors who responded were keen to ensure there was capacity to extend the school facilities to the community for out of hours use. Prosper are planning for community use and the building is being designed in such a way we can facilitate out of hours use of the school for a variety of groups.

#### **3.4.3 Site location and size**

In the main stakeholders agreed with the proposed site with the following reasons named as concerns.

- Location – the size of the county means many children could miss out on attending the school because of its location in Blyth. Was there nothing more central? Representation was made about travel distance and how this would be managed for children.
- Size is too small why have bigger sites not been considered?

#### 4. Trust response to the consultation feedback

Prosper Learning Trust have reviewed the feedback provided as part of the consultation and are delighted with the quality of feedback although the numbers of those participating in the consultation was smaller than anticipated/hoped.

As a result of the feedback received the Trust will be ensuring that the points highlighted below are actioned by the deadlines shown in bold text:

- Ongoing communications to Stakeholder groups – Ongoing
- Planning consultation – the Trust will notify stakeholders when the build consultation is underway – August / September 2021
- Prosper will liaise with the LA to ensure updated communications are issued to parents with regards to the admissions process for Gilbert Ward – **Ongoing**
- Prosper will meet and engage with community groups with a view they can access school facilities for out of hours use when it is up and running - **Ongoing**

#### 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In summary throughout the 6 weeks consultation we have concluded that there is a strong demand for the Gilbert Ward Academy and that there is support and commitment from a variety of stakeholders across the county of Northumberland.

The Trust will follow up on actions identified in the feedback linked to admissions, community engagement and look forward to sharing further communications as the project develops through to opening and full operation.

## 6. List of Appendices

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Appendix 1a – 1f</b> | Direct Letters                              |
| <b>Appendix 2</b>       | Press Release                               |
| <b>Appendix 3</b>       | Leaflet                                     |
| <b>Appendix 4</b>       | Poster                                      |
| <b>Appendix 5</b>       | Presentation                                |
| <b>Appendix 6</b>       | Feedback comments and questions and answers |