

# **West Sussex special schools provision descriptor**

## **Type: generic special school**

Woodlands Meed is a maintained special school located in Burgess Hill. It has pupils aged 2 to 19 years who experience learning difficulties and other associated needs. Placements within the sixth form years (years 12 to 14) cater for the most complex learners with severe and complex learning difficulties and other associated needs. Pupils without severe and complex learning difficulties will transition to local college or other suitable provision at the end of Year 11 (see Preparation for Adulthood/Post 16 section below).

## **The college offer**

### **Overall aims:**

- Support each pupil's development academically, socially and emotionally.
- Enable pupils to benefit from the access to a range of specialist experiences.
- Enable pupils to access the provision set out in the education, health and care (EHC) plan and achieve the agreed outcomes.
- Ensure the provision offer is in line with the fundamental principles set out in the special educational needs and disability (SEND) Code of Practice 2015, in particular the setting will have regard to:
  - the views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person, and the child's parents
  - the importance of the child or young person, and the child's parents, participating as fully as possible in decisions, and being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions
  - the need to support the child or young person, and the child's parents, in order to facilitate the development of the child or young person and to help them achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, preparing them effectively for adulthood.

### **The school will support this by ensuring the following:**

- The participation of children, their parents and young people in decision-making.
- Providing greater choice and control for young people and parents over support.
- Collaboration between education, health and social care services to provide support.
- Providing high quality provision to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.
- High expectations for the pupils attending the setting.

### **The college will focus on the following:**

- inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning
- successful preparation for adulthood, including independent living, community inclusion, good health and employment (Preparing for Adulthood pathways)
- supporting needs associated with learning difficulties and other associated areas of SEND
- supporting pupils to make good progress in relation to their learning and other needs from their relevant starting points
- providing a smooth transition to their next identified setting (education, employment or training).

### **The college provision/curriculum will:**

- be specialist and highly differentiated. It will be personalised to meet individual needs, enabling each pupil full access to an adapted curriculum supporting moderate to severe learning needs
- include resources in the community that enrich the curriculum and support the development of life skills. Examples might include shopping, educational visits and journeys and experiences
- be different to that ordinarily provided in a mainstream school. It will suit learners with needs that require provision in excess of the differentiation, reasonable adjustments and range of support and intervention that can be provided in a mainstream setting
- reflect specialist expertise in a range of needs, including learning difficulties, Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC), sensory difficulties, speech, language and communication needs, physical needs and behaviour that can be challenging
- focus on the delivery of key personalised targets across a broad range of educational activities
- provide access to smaller class sizes and additional adult support
- provide a total communication environment that supports the full range of communication needs, including the use of signing, object and picture communication systems and use of technological communication aids as appropriate
- focus on the development of social skills and positive behaviour
- build skills and confidence for life outside of and after school
- follow a multi-sensory approach to learning and teaching as appropriate
- follow a very structured approach to learning and teaching for those that need it, Particularly for those children/young people with Autism
- support the personal care and health needs of those that need it, including the use of toilet training programmes as appropriate

- support complex medical conditions/physical needs
- offer individualised programmes at Key Stage 4 (Years 10 & 11). For example:
  - Entry Level Certificates (qualifications that are pitched at just below GCSE level)
  - BTECs (work related qualifications that combine practical learning and theory)
  - ASDAN (which supports the achievement of preparing for adulthood outcomes against the four areas of employment, independent living, friends, relationships and community and good health)
  - Duke of Edinburgh awards and other vocational accreditation
  - Other qualifications may be considered linked to individual needs and abilities and particular subjects a student is achieving well at
- support development of life skills and independence skills needed to prepare for as independent adulthood as possible including independent/semi-independent living and employment where appropriate to the young person's needs. This might include from:
  - Key Stage 3 (years 7 to 9) access to a careers support programme which includes workplace visits, careers events, work rehearsal
  - Key Stage 4 (years 10 to 11) work experience (where appropriate and available) and other tailored opportunities to help them prepare for adulthood.

## **Needs of the pupils**

Children/young people will be working significantly below their mainstream peers in a range of developmental areas. Most children/young people will have had their needs identified early in their childhood.

Pupils will have a learning difficulty/disability and associated additional needs which impact significantly on their ability to learn and make progress. This learning difficulty will range from moderate in nature to those with severe, profound and complex learning difficulties.

Some children/young people may have a varied profile of skills, perhaps demonstrating some strengths in some areas but significant weaknesses in others (sometimes termed as a spiky profile). They will, however, continue to require a significantly adapted curriculum and support programme as described above.

Some children/young people may have needs that limit the demonstration of their underlying abilities. These learners will require a highly specialist approach to help them achieve at a higher level in some areas.

It is likely that the majority of children/young people will need additional support into adulthood.

Many children/young people will have a range and combination of needs that impacts significantly on their learning and development and ability to access the curriculum. Examples of these might be:

- A diagnosis of Autism or a social communication difficulty
- Significant speech and language needs
- Sensory processing difficulties
- A high level of medical and/or physical needs
- Hearing and/or visual needs
- Behaviours that can challenge that are mainly as a consequence of difficulties arising from any of the above.

## **Speech, language and communication needs**

Pupils with speech, language the communication challenges may have needs that fit the following descriptors:

- Speech, language and communication skills difficulties. These difficulties will affect their ability to express themselves clearly and/or understand the language being used in their environment. This may lead to frustration and/or lack of engagement in learning and/or social interactions. Some children/young people will be pre-verbal and need access to additional/alternative communication methods, including signing, use of object and picture communication systems, and technology aids.
- Difficulties in communication with peers and, as a consequence, difficulties forming and retaining peer relationships. Some may have a tendency to talk about a 'safe' topic of personal interest.
- No verbal communication or an uneven presentation of skills e.g., a child/young person who has lots of expressive, verbal language (but not always functional) but has difficulties in understanding language.
- Significant difficulties in reciprocal social interaction and communication (such as their ability to make appropriate peer relationships, effective use of non-verbal communication, difficulties expressing/reading/regulating emotions and/or following another person's lead).

## **Behaviour needs**

Pupils may demonstrate the following behavioural traits or challenges:

- Restricted, repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behaviour, interests, movements and activities that can cause barriers in their ability to access learning opportunities. This could also result in ritualistic behaviour and resistance to changes in routine or in details of the home or school environment (for example the movement of furniture).

- Particular interest or concern about the smell or feel of something or someone, which sometimes interferes with learning or results in inappropriate behaviour.
- Limited self-help skills and awareness of danger.

## **Profound and multiple learning needs**

Some children/young people will have profound and multiple learning and other difficulties which are likely to include:

- Significant developmental delay
- Complex medical and/or physical needs requiring ongoing supported care from appropriately trained staff
- A high level of dependency for all activities throughout his/her life
- Dependence on adult support for mobility, travel and changes in position
- A need for multi-agency input from health services and social care services
- A visual and/or hearing difficulty.

## **Other areas of need**

Pupils may also demonstrate some of the following areas of need:

- Fears/phobias that get in the way of learning and development.
- Difficulties sleeping.
- Limited diet and or obsessions with particular food types.
- Behaviour that is challenging which may include self-injury (e.g., biting wrist or banging head).
- Physical difficulties including those with significant and severe needs.
- Fine and gross motor difficulties.
- Some may have a visual and/or hearing difficulty.

## **Staffing and class arrangements**

Teaching and support is provided by a team with a high level of specialist skills, experience and SEN training. This includes training which is individualised to meet the needs of children/young people.

Class sizes will be smaller than would usually be found in a mainstream setting and higher levels of staffing to enable flexible delivery of a curriculum designed to support learners in developing basic learning and social skills.

Staffing ratios are likely to vary across the day/week dependent on the needs of the children/young people and the particular subject/lesson.

## **Specialist support and therapies**

Advice/support from sensory specialists (hearing and vision) is available and incorporated into the specialist offer where required to meet specific pupil need.

There is a co-ordinated and shared approach to therapy provision ensuring it is integrated throughout the school day by school staff in consultation with the relevant therapy teams. School staff are trained to implement therapy programmes on a regular basis.

Delivery of therapy provision will be responsive to need as detailed within the pupil's EHC plan.

The setting works collaboratively with colleagues in other professional teams, such as Social Care and other health teams, as appropriate, to ensure a joined-up response to pupils need.

## **Environment**

A mixture of different sized and types of indoor and outdoor learning spaces are provided. These enable the school to organise the curriculum/learning flexibly to meet the needs of the children/young people. They include a mixture of class bases, general learning area and specialist curriculum areas.

To see what the site looks like, visit the [Woodlands Meed School website](#).

## **Mainstream inclusion**

Where it meets the individual needs of the child/young person, consideration may be given where practicable to access supported inclusion opportunities in a local mainstream setting. This would be discussed with the child/family as part of the Annual Review process.

## **Engagement with families**

There will be regular liaison with, and support to, parents and carers of pupils attending the setting.

Pupils at the setting and their families will be fully involved in decisions about their support in school in line with the overall aims described above.

## **Preparation for adulthood/Post 16 offer**

Placements at Woodlands Meed within the sixth form are aimed at those young people with the most complex needs.

Staff will be working with the young people, their families and local Post 16 providers to prepare those that are ready at the end of year 11 to take the next step into

adulthood through access to a suitable post 16 provision. The voice of the young person will be key to identifying the most appropriate Post 16 setting that will provide a suitable pathway for them.

At annual reviews from year 9 and sometimes earlier the schools will be working with the young person and their family to identify the best progression route for them.

The post 16 offer includes access to a curriculum that focuses on the relevance of subjects to everyday independent living, social skills, travel training, preparation for adulthood, future learning and leisure, livelihood planning, employability skills and careers.

## **Monitoring and reviewing progress**

Methods of monitoring and reviewing progress will be individualised in nature and responsive to need.

The progress of some children/young people will be measured using levels of engagement and small steps. The progress of children/young people with life limiting or degenerative conditions may be in relation to retaining skills and control over their environment.

At times pupils may leave Woodlands Meed before the usual/expected leaving date. This might be when careful monitoring and review has indicated greater or less progress than the pupil's peers. If this is the situation the pupil may be ready to go to different type of setting to ensure their needs continue to be met.

The usual process for consideration of this will be through the Annual Review of their EHC plan (which can be brought forward if required). The school will discuss this with you should it be required.

All pupils will have an Annual Review of their EHC plan each year.

## **Flexibility of offer**

Whilst the pupil's needs and associated provision described above will most commonly be supported at Woodlands Meed, the Local Authority and the setting themselves recognise the need to be flexible. This may require consideration of adapting the core offer to accommodate a pupil who would also benefit from admission to the setting.

It will, however, be important to consider whether any adaptation of offer still provides the pupil with an appropriately ambitious curriculum and suitable school experiences to support their preparation for adulthood and ensure they are able to achieve their long-term outcomes.

Woodlands Meed will, whenever possible, work flexibly within their locality to support other mainstream schools by offering advice, outreach and in-reach to demonstrate the delivery of specialist interventions.