

West Sussex special schools provision descriptor

Type: Generic special school (11-16); Complex Learning needs (16-19)

Oak Grove College is a maintained special school located in Worthing. It supports children aged 12 to 19 years who have severe learning difficulties and other associated needs.

Who have a range of complex needs meaning that many need a high level of support for sensory, communication, medical and physical needs. These include students with severe and profound needs.

The College offers:

Overall aims:

- Support each student's development academically, socially and emotionally.
- Enable students to benefit from access to a range of specialist experiences that are relevant to them.
- Enable students 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 family,
 - the importance of the child or young person, and the child's family, 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 family, 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 college will support this by ensuring the following:

- The participation of children, their family and young people in decision-making.
- Providing greater choice and control for young people and families 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 students 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, adult social care, Continuing Health Care).

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 their social, emotional and mental health needs. The curriculum will support them to understand and manage their own behaviour/ regulation needs and learn to demonstrate positive, more appropriate behaviour,
- provide small and well-supported groups that enable progress in academic and Life Skills as well as in the development of emotional resilience, social skills and self-regulation of behaviour,
- support children and young people to understand their anxieties and learn ways to regulate and manage these, enabling them to build resilience, to enable them to successfully transition from OGC and support young people to remain calm and manage stress and enable students in developing a positive mindset/sense of themselves and who they want to be as well as how to develop positive relationships with adults and peers,
- offer a therapeutic/ holistic approach to teaching, learning and the curriculum,
- offer outdoor learning as appropriate, this will include access to on site as well as off-site activities to support learning, development and independent living skills,
- provide a focus on skills for life across all age groups, which will include skills needed for independence and to prepare for adulthood,
- offer a very individualised package of support dependent on child or young person need, this might include an enhanced and highly supported transition and integration plan,
- offer a range of curriculum opportunities relevant to need and age,
- support children and young people to develop the skills to successfully transition between different activities and places, between school and home/their community, and into the next phase of their learning and adulthood,
- have a focus on developing children and young people's communication, independence, social and functional everyday living skills and include resources in the community that enrich the curriculum and support the development of life skills. Examples might include shopping, educational visits and journeys,
- reflect specialist expertise in a range of needs, including severe and profound 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 relationships,
- build skills and confidence for life outside of and after college,
- 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,
- support complex medical conditions/physical/ sensory needs,
- support development of life skills and independence skills to build capacity for as independent living as possible,
- offer individualised programmes at Key Stage 4 (Years 10 & 11 in Subject Based Learning). For example:
 - 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 work encounters, visits, careers events, work rehearsal,
 - Access to a range of FE providers and independent work experience organisations.

Students will have complex learning difficulties and will need differing levels of support in their adult life. They are likely to require support from a range of different agencies into adulthood. Their ability to make progress will be in very small steps across all areas of development.

They may have a diagnosis of Autism (including Profound Autism) or a social communication difficulty, which may be alongside significant language and/or sensory needs.

Speech, language and communication needs

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

- Speech, language and communication skills difficulties. These difficulties will affect their expressive and receptive language skills. 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.

- No verbal communication or an uneven presentation of skills e.g., a student 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 which can mean that they do not understand social cues/ socially appropriate ways to form relationships.

Students 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.
- It is important to recognise that these behaviours are often comforting for them when they are not feeling safe for many different reasons.

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,
- Visual and/or hearing/sensory difficulty.

Other areas of need

Students 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,
- A visual and/or hearing difficulty,
- Sensory needs,
- Limited self-help skills and awareness of danger.

Staffing and class arrangements

Teaching and support are 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 student need.

There is a coordinated and shared approach to therapy provision ensuring it is integrated throughout the college day by college staff in consultation with the relevant therapy teams. Staff are trained to implement therapy programmes on a regular basis.

Delivery of therapy provision will be responsive to need as detailed within the student's EHC plan and in response to changing health needs.

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 students need.

Environment

A mixture of different sized and types of indoor and outdoor learning spaces are provided. These enable the college to organise the curriculum/learning flexibly to meet the needs of the 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 [Oak Grove College website](#).

Mainstream inclusion

Where it meets the individual needs of the 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 students attending the setting.

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

Preparation for adulthood/Post 16 offer

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

The post 16 offer is for students with complex learning disabilities and 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. Our Subject based learners will leave Oak Grove College at the end of Yr 11 into carefully planned for post 16 placements.

Monitoring and reviewing progress

Methods of monitoring and reviewing progress will be individualised in nature and responsive to need. At times students may leave Oak Grove College before the usual/expected leaving date. This might be when careful monitoring and review has indicated greater or less progress than the student's peers.

If this is the situation the student 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 college will discuss this with you should it be required.

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

Flexibility of offer

Whilst the student's needs and associated provision described above will most commonly be supported at Oak Grove College, 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 student who would also benefit from admission to the setting.

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

Oak Grove College 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.