

Which Special Educational Needs does Acorn School cater for?	Acorn School is a small, independent day school which provides a caring and supportive learning environment for 9-16 year olds with social, emotional and/ or mental health difficulties (SEMH/ SEBD) and for those who have autism spectrum condition and specific learning difficulties. Acorn School offers a holistic, therapeutic and individualised approach to learning that is oriented towards the needs of the individual student.
How are the individual SEMH needs of our students identified?	Most of our students have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), which will be related to their SEMH needs. Many of our pupils will also have secondary needs relating to cognition and learning, communication and interaction and sensory/ physical needs. A thorough baseline assessment at the start of a student's learning journey at Acorn School enables us to ensure that we understand every student's learning style and barriers to learning. We use a variety of data and observations to assess needs and implement innovative strategies to overcome these barriers. Our SEND, Admissions and Curriculum policies include further information on this.
How do we help our students with Special Educational Needs?	Acorn School provides students with individually tailored packages of education for students within a safe, caring and supportive environment. The emphasis is on the development of friendly and caring relationships, where learning and living can be positive and

	enjoyable experiences. Our students often have trouble in building and maintaining relationships with peers and adults and as a result they struggle to engage with learning and to cope in mainstream education. Many of our students may often feel anxious and misunderstood and need support to help them manage their emotions and therefore, their behaviour. Acorn school's approach is based around meeting the individual needs of each and every student, wherever possible on a personalised basis. By working 1:1 and in small groups with our students we are able to provide positive role models and mentors that can help students develop positive relationships with staff and peers. By focussing on the positive, having clear targets and realistic expectations our students are able to thrive and reach their goals. The school works closely with parents, Social workers and care staff to provide a joined up approach to ensuring the best possible outcomes for our students. Acorn also works collaboratively with external professional agencies (e.g. Social Services, Health, CAMHS, Speech & Language Therapy Service, Educational Psychology Service, Careers South West, YOT, Police)
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How do we adapt our teaching in order to suit the needs of the students?	Acorn School provides a personalised curriculum in order to meet student's individual educational, emotional and social needs. These students have historically had interruptions to their educational experiences which have impacted on their development and by creating a bespoke programme to include both on and off site education curriculum; we are able to evidence impact on learning and development. This flexible approach is rooted in holistic thinking about the individual and their needs. Acorn School offers students a broad and balanced curriculum which allows students to grow academically, vocationally, socially, physically and morally. When a student starts their learning journey at Acorn School we assess their academic, developmental and emotional needs. A learning programme will then be designed in order to help them succeed. Our learning outside the classroom sessions encourage learning, confidence and self-esteem through practical activities and we plan activities which foster enjoyment, participation, practical and social skills. Independence is encouraged by an understanding of health and safety needs, group and individual tasks. In addition, the Outdoor Curriculum offers a therapeutic and educational programme to students who can sometimes be hard to reach and who may have experienced difficulties with a more formal
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	approach to education and rigid timetables. We aim to provide opportunities and experiences where students can develop: • Knowledge and understanding of the environment • Resilience and risk-taking • Team-work and leadership • Cross curricular learning, outside the classroom • Independence • Self-esteem • Self-confidence • Social interaction and communication
How do you consult with parents of children with SEN and involve them in their child's education?	Acorn School aims to build positive and trusting relationships with parents and carers in order to provide the best possible support. We do this through • Regular home/ school communication. • Weekly progress reports • Regular review of progress targets. • Annual EHCP reviews. • Termly PEP meetings for those students who are in care.
How do you consult with children and young people and ensure they are actively involved in their own education?	All students have 1:1 mentoring sessions with key staff in the school when they are able to talk about any issues or concerns. As Acorn School is a small school there are regular opportunities for all students to come to together to discuss ideas. The student voice is also captured through: • School Council Meetings • EHCP reviews • PEP meetings • Care Reviews • Responses to weekly reports from students and parents/carers.

	• Close home/school liaison
How do you assess and review children and young people's progress towards outcomes? What opportunities are there to work with parents and pupil as part of this assessment and review?	Assessment is a key area in school to ensure that all students make expected progress in line with their abilities and special educational needs. This begins with baseline assessment on admission to Acorn School. The information from this allows staff at Acorn to determine a learning flight path for each student. Progress is then measured from this baseline starting point on a termly basis. Staff also regularly take assessment for learning opportunities and mark students work on a regular basis in accordance with our standard marking policy using 'formative' approaches to help students to understand what they need to do to improve. Parents and Carers receive a weekly report which highlights student successes and achievements as well as considering their next steps, attendance and attitude to learning. Further to this, parents and carers receive a termly report which includes progress and attendance data as well as a written report for each subject.
How do you support students with transition at the end of Year 11?	Acorn School's enrichment and life skills programmes facilitate young people in taking responsibility for themselves, by preparing them for their future roles as responsible adults. We offer a short course in personal finance which aims to help young people to understand where money comes from, how to budget and live independently and understand the financial

	implications of personal life choices. We have weekly cookery lessons which teach students to cook sweet and savoury recipes from around the world and students are encouraged to think about healthy food choices and how to budget for food and ingredients. Experiences of life outside school, home and care are a very important part of the education we offer and we maintain links with outside agencies such as careers advisors, colleges, and police and youth services in order to widen the curriculum and provide motivation. Students have opportunities to complete a work experience placements as well as attending college taster days. Previous work experience placements have included nursery work, mechanics, upholstery, carpentry, hairdressing and charity work. Each student has access to a full programme of careers education and guidance and the school is supported by our local careers service. Acorn School ensures that the curriculum helps to prepare all Year 11 students for the next positive steps in their lives. This includes: • Working with students to help them develop their future career aspirations from as early as Year 9 onwards. • Personalisation of their curriculum and timetable to suit their needs in order to achieve their goals.
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	• Working with the local colleges and local community to source work experience placements, in order to provide students with first-hand experience of working life. • Supported visits (student & parent/ carer where possible) to post 16 educational provisions as early as Year 9 in order to create aspirational pathways for future choices. • Support with the application processes for post 16 provisions • Joined up support with all relevant professions in order to guide students through any transition phase • Preparation for adulthood through our life skills and functional skill programmes help students develop the skills and experiences they need for their next steps.
What expertise and training do your staff have? How do you secure additional specialist expertise?	All teaching and support staff are appropriately qualified (or undergoing training) to fulfil their designated duties. Many have had many years of experience in education, especially in SEMH. Staff training and development is given high priority across the whole school and organisation as a whole and there is a continuous CPD programme for all staff which reflects new developments in our specialism. All staff receive on-going training in SEMH

	related aspects of professional development to help them to understand and meet students' needs, particularly in areas around attachment, mental health and ASC. Recommendations from Educational Psychologists and our therapy team also help to inform strategies that are implemented in order support our students. This allows staff to help students maximise their personal and academic potential. The Thrive approach towards the assessment and progression of emotional and social development is firmly embedded throughout the curriculum. All school staff receive regular awareness raising / training in: • Safeguarding & Child Protection related issues (including PREVENT & CSE) • Health & Safety such as COSHH, Fire Training, Food Hygiene and First Aid • THRIVE (Emotional Development) and Attachment Awareness. • De-escalation and physical intervention techniques. • Autism Awareness • Mental Health Awareness • Medication Training
How do you evaluate the effectiveness of the provision made for children and young people with SEN?	Pupil progress and school data is regularly analysed by senior leaders and governors and feedback from staff, students and parents is regularly sought. The impact of interventions is regularly reviewed by all staff and governors.
What arrangements are in place for	Acorn School welcomes the views of students, parents and carers and we will always listen to

handling complaints from parents of children with SEN about the provision made at school?	views which will help us to improve. All concerns and complaints will be dealt with honestly and with integrity and will be investigated swiftly, thoroughly and fairly. Where possible, complaints will be considered on an informal basis in order that we can resolve the situation quickly and effectively with an explanation or an apology where we have got things wrong or information on any action taken.
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