



acornschool
> INSPIRING LEARNING

PROSPECTUS

Empowering Learning
through Positive and
Creative Education



Welcome to **Acorn School**

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Head Teacher's Welcome

We are an independent co-educational school which provides learning and supportive learning environment for students from Key Stage 2-4 with Social, Emotional, Mental Health difficulties, Autism Spectrum Condition and/or Specific Learning Difficulties.

I am privileged to be the Head teacher of this nurturing school, where the individual child is at the heart of what we do. We recognise that every student is different, yet equal, and all staff are committed to treating each individual with inclusion, compassion and understanding. We understand that every student will have different needs and offer a safe and encouraging learning environment where, students can feel supported and encouraged to reach their full potential.

At Acorn School we aim to help our students to overcome their individual challenges by supporting them with underlying difficulties that may be leading to displays of frustration. A carefully planned and bespoke curriculum, which includes social development as well as academic and vocational learning allows our students to achieve the best possible outcomes.

We believe that all children and young people should be provided with the opportunity to achieve their individual potential; through building resilience, self-regulation and trusting relationships, we support our students to flourish; this promotes improved outcomes, attainment and self-esteem.

Zoey Shelley MBA, QTLS
Head Teacher



Acorn School at a Glance

- Innovative approaches to teaching and learning.
- Therapeutic approaches and interventions.
- Specialists in teaching children with autism and a range of SEMH needs.
- High Staff to student ratio.
- ASC Friendly Classrooms.
- Access to calming spaces.
- Age range 9-16.
- Attachment aware staff.



Aims and Ethos

The Phoenix values of Honesty, Empathy, Aspiration, Respect and Teamwork underpin everything that we do here at Acorn School. We endeavour to use the best innovative practices to make learning inspirational, engaging and relevant.

Students who attend Acorn school often arrive with significant barriers to learning. Through building positive relationships and building a bespoke curriculum around the individual we strive to remove those barriers.

We aim to:

- Promote a culture where students feel safe, secure and have a voice.
- Help and encourage students to take responsibility for themselves and their actions.
- Provide students with appropriate specialist support and interventions.
- Provide students with Individualised academic and therapeutic learning plans which focus on development of: Emotional Literacy, Independence, Cognition, Creative and Expressive, Physical, Sensory skills.
- Increase self-esteem, self-regulation and independence.
- Help students develop positive relationships with others
- Provide students with the independence to prepare them for life once they move on to college or the world of work.
- Provide a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that meets each student's needs and focuses on Linguistic, Mathematical, Scientific, Technological, Human and Social, Physical, Aesthetic and Creative education.
- Know our student's strengths through robust base lining and assessment rigorous monitoring and celebrating small steps of progress.
- Provide students with the skills to keep themselves safe.
- Provide all students with a high quality education regardless of their background, gender, sexuality, religion or race.
- Work in partnership with parents, carers and other professionals as an effective multi-disciplinary team.



Staff act as excellent role models so that students adopt positive attitudes to learning, which in turn encourages them to attend school

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Acorn School offers a holistic, therapeutic and individualised approach to learning that is oriented towards the needs of the student. It is our belief that how we teach is fundamental to the success of our students and we use a range of strategies to enable our students to feel safe enough to learn.

Lessons are carefully planned around the individual learning and developmental needs of our students. Our focus on building positive and trusting relationships and a sense of belonging enables our students to develop the skills and knowledge they need to access the full school curriculum.

At Acorn School we have forged strong relationships between school staff, parents, carers, social workers, Local Authorities and other agencies, in order to ensure that each student is supported in the best way possible. We believe that our students will make the most progress when they feel safe and are enjoying school.

We celebrate all successes, however small, so that students know what they are achieving and are able to recognise their own positive contributions to school life.



Philosophy

We encourage a 'can do' culture at Acorn School and by recognising student's individual needs, we are able to work with their particular situation and help them to realise their potential. We believe that students should be treated equally regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, disability, social status or race and that every student deserves respect.

We have high expectations for every individual and believe that our students are most likely to achieve if they are able to build on their self- worth and self- esteem. By keeping class sizes small and 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. We believe that making mistakes is part of the learning process but this is often hard for our students to accept. By focussing on the positive, having clear targets and realistic expectations our students are able to thrive and reach their goals.

Learning Environment

At Acorn school we offer a calm and friendly learning environment where students are able to grow in confidence and flourish. Class sizes are small and all students have access to autism friendly classrooms, attachment aware staff and calming spaces where they can unwind and take some time out, if needed.

We offer students a stimulating learning environment through the use of modern teaching methods, on and off-site enrichment activities and the use of innovative technology such as virtual reality. This can be used to supplement the teaching of social and communication skills whilst being fun and engaging.





Curriculum

Acorn School offers students a holistic, 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.

Literacy and Numeracy are the main focus of every morning and students are taught in small groups or 1:1 allowing teachers to target their individual literacy and numeracy needs.

We offer a range of qualifications and awards across the curriculum, including GCSE's, Entry Level Certificates, ASDAN awards and short courses, Functional Skills Certificates, ECDL and AQA unit awards.

Subjects Offered:

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|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| • English | • Citizenship |
| • Maths | • ICT |
| • Science | • MFL |
| • Humanities | • Music |
| • Design & Technology | • Outdoor Education |
| • Art & Textiles | • Physical Education |
| • Cookery | • RE / Cultural studies |
| • PSHE | |

Gardening and the environment

We are lucky enough to have land and countryside as a teaching tool. We aim to create a horticulture area to meet the needs of our students where they can grow their own vegetables, which they can then use in their cookery lessons. Our gardening projects link closely to many areas of the curriculum including maths, science, design and technology and communication skills.

PSHE and Citizenship

Personal, Social and Health Education [PSHE] and Citizenship are taught to all of our students as discrete subjects. The PSHE curriculum enables learners to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding of spiritual, moral and cultural issues needed to manage their lives now and in the future. Many of our PSHE lessons are bespoke so that we can also focus on the specific needs the student may have around e.g. risk taking behaviour or unhealthy choices. All students are taught how to remain safe on the internet protected from radicalisation and are given the tools to help them to stay safe.

At Acorn we help students to understand and stay safe in a wide range of relationships. We offer Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) - both in Science and PSHE Programmes - where we look at sex and relationship education, early sexual activity and pregnancy, the importance of relationships, how different forms of contraception work, where to get advice and the nature and importance of marriage for family life and the bringing up of children. Parents may withdraw their children from all or part of the sex education that is provided by the PSHE programme but not that which is required as part of the National Curriculum science.

Life Skills

The program facilitates 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 together with embracing difficult cultures and celebrating diversity. 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.

Specialist careers advice is also offered. Each student has access to a full programme of careers education and guidance and the school is supported by our local careers service



Personal, social, health and emotional (PSHE) development lessons develop students' self-esteem, and their understanding of the importance of positive relationships and how to keep safe. Students appreciate the fact that the school is teaching them to be safe

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Outdoor Learning

We try to use the beautiful natural environment surrounding the school to stimulate an interest in the outside world. Our outdoor learning lessons encourage learning, confidence and self-esteem through practical activities and 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.

Activities include:

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|------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| • Woodwork | • Cooking | • Construction | • Orienteering |
| • Shelter Making | • Natural Craft | • Bush craft | |

Physical Education

Weekly use is made of the local facilities at local sports centres and we also visit local swimming pools as part of our Physical Education Curriculum. Our PE lessons focus on the social and emotional aspects of learning as well as improving physical ability.

We can offer:

- | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------------|-----------|
| • Tennis | • Badminton | • Sailing* | • Orienteering | • Running |
| • Football | • Volleyball | • Kayaking* | • Assault courses | • Walking |
| • Basketball | • Climbing | • Swimming | • Horse riding* | • Surfing |

*These activities involve local fully trained instructors



Enrichment Activities

At Acorn we believe that learning should not be confined to the classroom. In order for our students to have new experiences, become receptive to new ideas and develop an understanding of their place in the world, students have access to weekly enrichment activities. These provide the opportunity to develop their social skills and self-esteem whilst learning in a more practical way. Curriculum theme days, celebration days and enterprise projects also further enhance the school curriculum.

We have visited museums, heritage sites, beaches, outdoor education centres as well as trying out new skills such as archery, dry slope skiing and horse riding.

Progress and Achievement

At Acorn school we believe that every day is a fresh start. We recognise all successes, however small, and reward our students for them. We aim to build confidence and self-esteem through the use of praise and encouragement, which is re-enforced with a reward scheme and the opportunity to earn points and credits for achieving their own personal targets and a positive attitude to learning.

Specialist Approaches

Staff at Acorn School have extensive experience in working with students who have encountered a range of barriers to their learning. They are particularly skilled at working with those students who may have attachment disorder or may have suffered trauma.

Acorn School is an 'Autism friendly' school and staff have access to a range of strategies that best meet the needs of the individual students such as TEACHH, PECS, SCERTS and the use of social stories and a sensory curriculum.



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Senior leaders and staff have established a calm and caring ethos. Students are well looked after and nurtured in a safe and secure environment

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Therapeutic Approaches

At Acorn school we use Therapeutic approaches in order to help students build trusting relationships and feel safe in the school environment. Initial assessments highlight the developmental needs of our students and allow us to build a package that will help them to make progress socially and emotionally, as well as academically. We work closely with parents and carers to help support students to reach their potential.

Acorn School is able to access support, advice and consultation from the Phoenix Group Integrated Therapies Team as well and through referrals to CAMHS and local authority support.

Our Integrated Therapies Team is multi-disciplinary and includes clinical psychology, educational psychology, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, counselling, behaviour support and play and arts therapies.

Additional therapeutic packages can be outsourced and offered to students such as Equine Therapy, Forest School and Family Interventions.

Main policies are available on our website and all others are available on request.

Contact us



If you would like to
find out more about
Acorn School then
please contact

Head Teacher. Zoey Shelley MBA, QTLS
t. 0330 135 8 201
e. acorn@phoenixschools.org.uk

Acorn School
Seckington Cross
Winkleigh
Devon EX19 8EY

phoenixschools.org.uk/acorn

DFE: 878/6061

Part of the Phoenix Learning and Care Group



Support Hub
Chinon Court, Lower Moor Way,
Tiverton Business Park, Tiverton, EX16 6SS
t. 0330 135 8 135 e. hello@plcl.org.uk
phoenixlearningcare.co.uk



Acorn School adheres to the values of the
Phoenix Learning and Care Group: Honesty, Empathy, Aspiration, Respect and
Teamwork - our values that go to make the HEART of Phoenix.