



# SEN Information Report

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Acorn School

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What expertise and training do our Team Member have? How do we secure additional specialist expertise?

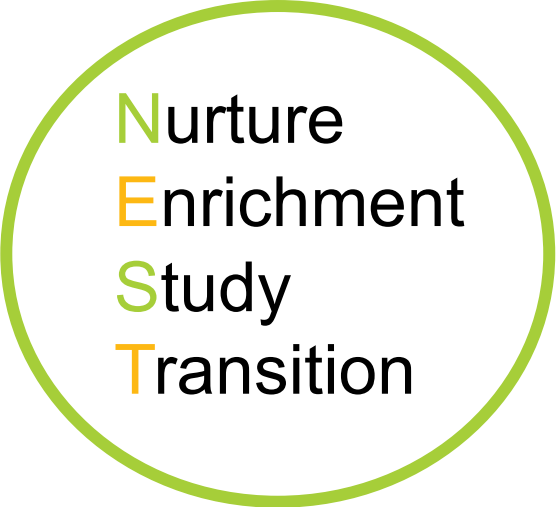
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# *Which Special Educational Needs does Acorn School provide support for?*

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- Acorn School is an independent day school which provides a caring and supportive learning environment for children aged 8 to 16, with social, emotional and/or mental health needs (SEMH), including those who have autism spectrum condition (ASC) and associated learning difficulties.
- Acorn School offers a therapeutic educational model, using a trauma and attachment informed approach (PACE).
- The curriculum includes a variety of approaches under the heading 'NEST' (Nurture, Enrichment, Study and Transition), and is adjusted according to the needs of the individual.



Nurture  
Enrichment  
Study  
Transition



Playfulness  
Acceptance  
Curiosity  
Empathy

## *How are the individual SEMH needs of our pupils identified?*

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- All pupils at Acorn School have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), which informs their educational package. Many of our pupils also have secondary needs relating to specific learning difficulties (dyslexia, language delay, sensory processing etc.) which are assessed and monitored throughout the school year.
- Our approach to education starts with the development of positive relationships with our pupils. Through getting to know our pupils' strengths and needs, we help them to develop their unique voice and learn the steps towards self-advocacy.
- Baseline assessments and classroom observations take place at the start of each pupil's learning journey with us, to ascertain strengths, interests, challenges and barriers to learning.
- Every pupil at Acorn School receives a therapy plan by our Integrated Therapies Team. Our in-house Speech and Language Therapist conducts dynamic and standardised assessments which inform each pupil's provision map. This provision map provides strategies that can be used to help a pupil with communication, self-esteem, social development and self-advocacy.
- Each pupil receives regular progress reviews with the Senior Leadership Team, where their concerns and aspirations can be voiced and heard.
- We foster a 'team around the child' approach. Each pupil has a key worker who supports them throughout the day and provides daily check-ins. Any concerns can be passed on to the Senior Leadership Team / SENDCo for further support. We uphold a strong line of communication between parents/ carers and/or external agencies to monitor progress. We adhere to our safeguarding and anti-bullying policies to ensure each pupil has access to a safe and inclusive school environment.
- Our Admissions, SEND and Curriculum policies include further information on identifying needs.

# How do we support our pupils with Special Educational Needs?

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- Acorn School's approach to meeting individual needs starts with the development of positive relationships between pupils and key workers. Pupil interactions are supported in a positive way to encourage inclusion and a love of learning.
- Acorn School provides pupils with an individualised education package within a safe, caring and supportive learning environment. This is achieved through our NEST pathways – Nurture, Enrichment, Study, and Transition. Pupils are grouped into classes based on their needs and pathway focus.
- At Acorn School, our class sizes are small (no larger than 4 - 5 pupils per class), and each class has a team of supportive and highly trained adults. All team members receive training and CPD in trauma and attachment awareness approaches, communication support, autism, ADHD, sensory play, executive functioning, interoceptive awareness, etc. We strive to provide a contained and safe learning experience, where a variety of learning modalities can be explored in an inclusive environment.
- We set high expectations for our pupils to develop their strengths and overcome barriers to learning. This is fostered through the consistent support of the team who set achievable targets, realistic expectations and the modelling of healthy boundaries. Classroom environments are adjusted to meet the sensory and learning needs and preferences of our pupils.
- A variety of interventions are available, such as literacy support for dyslexic pupils, focused tuition and booster sessions in English and maths, project development for high achievers, FunFit, and a variety of offsite learning activities. A dedicated Pastoral team provide weekly, daily, or ad-hoc interventions for pupils in need of additional SEMH support.
- The school works closely with parents, social workers and care Team Member to provide a joint approach to ensure the best possible outcomes for our pupils. Specialist relational mentoring support is sometimes sought through external agencies, as well as specialist assessments and input (e.g. CAMHS, Educational Psychology, Occupational Therapy) when needed.
- At Acorn School, safeguarding is paramount to our practice, and we have a strong team to support this throughout the school.

# *Specialist services and expertise*

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## Onsite at Acorn School:

- Speech & Language Therapy Input
- Art Therapy
- Music Therapy
- Educational Psychology Service (Phoenix L&C)
- Clinical Psychology Advice (Phoenix L&C)

## External Support:

- Careers South West
- Young Devon
- Children and Families Health Devon
- Sunrise Intervention (Relational Mentoring Service)
- Inspire South West (Relational Mentoring Service)

# How do we adapt our teaching to suit the needs of the pupils?

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- At Acorn School, a suitable pathway is established for our pupils, based on their EHCP needs and admissions information. Academic, developmental and emotional needs are assessed, and a learning programme is created.
- Our NEST pathway provides a broad and balanced curriculum which encourages academic, vocational, social, physical and moral development. At the core of our provision is our Therapeutic Approach, which informs our ethos and delivery.
- In general, as our class sizes are small, the needs of our pupils can be met through quality first teaching within the classroom. Some classes operate a continuous provision model whereby pupils can approach and explore learning at their own pace, in the order of their choice. This suits our pupils specifically with anxiety and PDA profiles, as it reduces demand and increases a sense of control for the pupil, within safe parameters.
- Further intervention is implemented to address gaps in maths and English. Specific dyslexia support is provided by our trained intervention teachers and TAs. Pupils who are excelling and showing a keen interest in specific subjects are stretched and challenged by specialist teachers. Speech and language support and creative therapy is available for pupils who need it, and the Therapy Team provides training and guidance to our teaching teams, which in turn, informs their practice.
- We aim to provide learning experiences where pupils can develop resilience, independence and confidence through cross-curricular activities outside of the classroom. Our pupils enjoy a range of weekly offsite lessons, such as Forest School and Construction School, which encourage participation, reciprocal communication and team building through practical activities.

## *Off-site learning experiences*

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Weekly and one-off trips, including but not limited to:

- Swimming
- Climbing
- Horse riding and care
- Muay Thai fitness
- Construction School
- Forest School
- Offsite sports
- Design workshop
- Guide dog training
- Soft Play
- Café visits
- Supermarket visits
- Garden centre visits
- Farm therapy
- Horticulture
- Boat restoration
- 3D printing and design
- Kents Caverns
- Aquarium
- Cinema



# *How do we consult with parents of children with SEN and involve them in their child's education?*

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- Acorn School aims to build positive and trusting relationships with parents and carers to provide the best possible support. We like to consult parents / carers regularly and gather views and share strategies.
- We do this through:
  - Regular home/school communication (phone, email, communication book, face to face meeting, etc.)
  - Weekly school report from teachers summarising the week and end of term reports
  - Regular progress review meetings
  - Annual EHCP review meetings
  - Termly PEP meetings for pupils in care.

We share our school news and provide signposting for supportive agencies and safeguarding sites through termly newsletters. We also provide regular opportunities to gather parent / carer views about their experience of the school through termly surveys.

We also hold the following events in the school:

- Christmas Fayre, Careers Fayres, SEND Parenting Network Events, Reports, Parent Consultations, Daily/Weekly Communication Emails and Phone Calls, Therapy Action Plans

# *How do we consult with children and young people and ensure they are actively involved in their own education?*

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- All pupils have a key supporting adult in the school to whom they have the opportunity to talk about any issues or concerns on a daily basis.
- Pupils are consistently encouraged to share their views around their education and activities. Regular review meetings take place where pupils have discussions with the Senior Leadership Team to discuss what is working and what is not working for them.
- Pupil voice is regularly captured through the following modalities:
  - School Council Meetings
  - Whole School Pupil Voice Meetings
  - Opportunities to give feedback
  - EHCP reviews
  - PEP and CIC review meetings
  - Responses to weekly reports from pupils and parents/carers
  - Pastoral sessions
  - Individual meeting with SLT as and when requested
  - Pupil surveys

# *How do we assess and review our pupils' progress towards outcomes? What opportunities are there to work with parents and pupils as part of this assessment and review?*

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- At Acorn School, we have high expectations for the learning outcomes of our pupils. Baseline assessments are gathered at the beginning of the school year and monitored throughout the year.
- Learning engagement and termly progress is tracked by the relevant key team members, then analysed and audited by lead members of the team regularly.
- The teaching team mark the progress of pupil work in accordance with our standard marking policy using 'formative' approaches to help pupils to understand how to improve. Other measures of progress are tracked through BKSB Functional Skills and our engagement tracker to identify a pupils preferred way of learning.
- Parents and carers receive daily and/or weekly reports which highlight pupil 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.
- Parents and carers are welcome to discuss and contribute to their child's educational programme.

# How do we support pupils with transition at the end of Year 11?

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- Acorn School ensures that the curriculum prepares all Year 11 pupils for the next positive steps in their lives. Pupils begin exploring careers and further education opportunities from Year 9, through the offer of an initial meeting with our Local Authority careers advisor. This interview is offered each year thereafter to support the process. Visits to post 16 educational provisions are organised for pupils and parents / carers as early as Year 9 to create aspirational pathways for future choices. Throughout Year 9, 10 and 11, pupils can opt in for learning opportunities to work towards their chosen career path.
- At Acorn School, pupils in Year 11 are offered an ASDAN employability course and the Barclay's Life Skills programme. These capabilities compliment skills previously learned at Acorn School, such as cookery, budgeting, sensible shopping and self-care. Collectively, all of this contributes to the development of personal responsibility and preparation for their future roles in adulthood.
- Pupils are encouraged to do weekly offsite learning activities in relation to their chosen career paths. Previous placements have included café work, mechanics, construction, hair and beauty, farming.
- Experiences of life outside school, home and care are a very important part of the education we offer, and we maintain links with external agencies such as careers advisors, colleges, police and youth services throughout the whole transition process.
- Acorn School holds an Annual Careers Fayre which brings together local colleges and businesses to provide information to pupils and parents/carers on further education and potential career options. Pupils are encouraged and supported in attending college taster days. We provide support with the application processes for post 16 provisions, utilising a joined approach with all relevant professions to guide pupils through any transition phase.

## *What expertise and training do our Team Member have? How do we secure additional specialist expertise?*

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- All teaching and support Team Member are appropriately qualified (or undergoing training) to fulfil their designated duties. Many have had many years of experience in education, especially in SEMH.
- Team Member training and professional development is given high priority across the whole school and organisation. Regular CPD for all Team Member reflects new developments in our specialism. Examples of CPD include trauma and attachment informed practice, autism awareness, sensory strategies, interoceptive curriculum, executive functioning, mental health, dyslexia strategies, maths and phonics.
- Regular training sessions/workshops from our Integrated Therapy Team, and recommendations from external agencies and health professionals also help to inform strategies that are implemented in order support our pupils. This allows Team Member to help pupils maximise their personal and academic potential.
- Other training opportunities include:
  - Teacher training
  - TA/HLTA qualifications
  - Additional qualifications/training for specific roles (leadership, safeguarding, first aid, Funfit)

# *How do we evaluate the effectiveness of the provision made for our pupils with SEN?*

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- At Acorn School, progress is checked through regular learning walks, team supervisions and daily debriefs. The implementation of provision follows a graduated approach (assess, plan, do, review) to ensure effectiveness.
- Academic data (core subjects), offsite enrichment activities, and academic, pastoral, and therapy interventions are monitored and tracked regularly. School data is regularly analysed by senior leaders. Feedback from Team Member, pupils and parents is regularly sought.
- Constructive feedback is delivered to the team on a daily basis through a variety of approaches including leadership observations, peer mentoring, reflective practice sessions and team / individual debriefing sessions. This ensures that schoolwide approaches are consistent, appropriate systems are in place to meet each pupil's need and teaching is to the highest standard. This is also an opportunity to highlight and share best practice.

## *What arrangements are in place for handling complaints from parents about the provision made at school?*

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- Acorn School welcomes the views of pupils, parents and carers, which helps to continuously develop and improve our school.
- 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.
- If you would like to provide feedback to the school or wish to make us aware of a compliment or complaint then you can find the link on our website.
- Alternatively, you may contact our Operations Director for Education, Darren Jackson on: [djackson@plcl.org.uk](mailto:djackson@plcl.org.uk)
- We treat all concerns appropriately and all complaints are investigated thoroughly following our complaints policy and procedure which can be found within the [Policies](#) section of our website.

## *Who to contact and our contribution to the Local Offer*

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For further information about SEN Information at Acorn School, please contact Sarah Long (SENDCo) or Zoey Shelley (Headteacher) at 0330 135 8201

For further information about Devon County Council's Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Local Offer, visit:

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/education-and-families/send-local-offer/>



## Useful Websites for Support

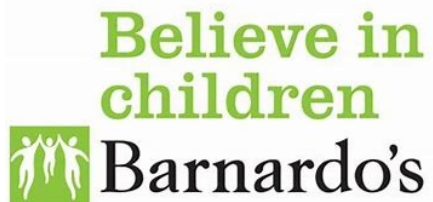
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<https://www.childrenandfamilyhealthdevon.nhs.uk>



<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>



<https://www.barnardos.org.uk>



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