acornschool

PROSPECTUS

Empowering Learning through Positive and Creative Education









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Welcome to
Acorn School

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Ofsted Good School

Welcome to Acorn School



Acorn School is an independent co-educational school providing a supportive and nurturing learning environment for Pupils across Key Stages 2 - 4 with Autism, Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, and Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD).

I am privileged to be the Headteacher of this nurturing school, where the individual child is at the heart of everything we do. We recognise that every Pupil is unique yet equal, and all Team Members are committed to treating each individual with inclusion, compassion, and understanding. We understand that every Pupil has different strengths, needs, and life experiences, and we tailor our support accordingly.

We provide a safe, nurturing, and encouraging learning environment where Pupils feel valued, supported, and empowered to develop confidence, resilience, and independence. Through strong relationships, personalised support, and high expectations, we encourage all Pupils to achieve their full academic, social, and emotional potential.

At Acorn School, we are committed to helping Pupils overcome their individual barriers to learning and achieve positive outcomes. Our carefully planned and personalised curriculum is developed collaboratively with each Pupil, taking into account their strengths, aspirations, interests, and individual needs. Alongside a strong focus on core academic subjects, we incorporate Pupils' interests and talents to promote engagement, motivation, and a love of learning. This personalised approach enables Pupils to build confidence, develop essential skills, and achieve success both within and beyond the classroom.

We believe that every child should be given the opportunity to achieve their individual potential. Through nurturing resilience, developing self-regulation skills, and fostering trusting relationships, we support our Pupils to thrive and grow. Our therapeutic and nurturing approach enables Pupils to build confidence, improve self-esteem, and develop the skills they need to overcome challenges and succeed both academically and personally.

By creating a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment, we empower Pupils to flourish, develop a positive sense of self, and achieve meaningful outcomes that prepare them for their future lives.

At Acorn School, we nurture potential, celebrate individuality, and empower every Pupil to succeed.

Zoey Shelley
Executive Head Teacher

Acorn School at a Glance

- Nurture Through Relationships
- Individualised Learning Pathways
- Safe Therapeutic Environment
- Building Confidence Daily
- Developing Emotional Resilience
- Celebrating Every Success
- Empowering Independence
- Unlocking Individual Potential

Aims and Ethos

The Phoenix Values of **Honesty, Empathy, Aspiration, Respect,** and **Teamwork** underpin every aspect of life at Acorn School. These values are embedded within our culture and guide the way we learn, communicate, and build positive relationships. We are committed to using innovative and evidence-informed approaches to ensure learning is engaging, meaningful, and accessible for every Pupil.

Many Pupils join Acorn School having experienced significant barriers to learning, which may have impacted their confidence, wellbeing, and engagement in education. Through the development of safe, trusting relationships and a highly personalised curriculum, we work alongside Pupils to understand and overcome these barriers. By recognising and building upon each Pupil's strengths, interests, and aspirations, we create opportunities for success, enabling them to develop resilience, self-belief, and a positive sense of identity. Our aim is for every Pupil to feel valued, achieve meaningful outcomes, and flourish both in school and beyond.

At Acorn School, we strive to create an environment where every Pupil feels safe, valued, understood, and empowered to achieve their full potential. We achieve this by:

- Creating a culture of safety, belonging, and trust, where every Pupil feels heard and their voice is valued.
- Supporting Pupils to develop self-awareness, personal responsibility, and positive decision-making skills.
- Providing specialist therapeutic support and targeted interventions that meet individual needs.
- Delivering personalised academic and therapeutic learning pathways that nurture emotional literacy, independence, cognitive development, creativity, communication, physical development, and sensory integration.
- Building self-esteem, resilience, self-regulation, and confidence to enable Pupils to thrive.
- Supporting Pupils to develop healthy, trusting, and meaningful relationships with others.
- Equipping Pupils with the skills, independence, and aspirations needed for successful transitions into further education, employment, and adulthood.
- Providing a broad, balanced, and engaging curriculum that inspires curiosity, develops talents, and prepares Pupils for life in modern Britain.
- Understanding every Pupil's unique strengths through robust assessment, ongoing evaluation, and the celebration of individual progress and achievement.
- Teaching Pupils the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to keep themselves safe and make informed choices.
- Ensuring every Pupil receives a high-quality education in an inclusive environment where diversity is respected and celebrated.
- Working collaboratively with Parents/Carers, and external professionals to provide a holistic and cohesive approach to support and achievement.

Our Commitment

We believe that with the right relationships, support, and opportunities, every Pupil can overcome barriers, discover their strengths, develop a positive sense of self, and flourish both within school and beyond. Our ambition is for every young person to leave Acorn School with confidence, resilience, aspiration, and the skills needed to lead a fulfilling and successful future.

Our Approach

At Acorn School, we provide a holistic, therapeutic, and highly individualised approach to education, recognising that every Pupil has unique strengths, experiences, and aspirations. We understand that meaningful learning can only take place when Pupils feel safe, connected, and emotionally supported. Therefore, relationships are at the heart of everything we do.

Our nurturing and trauma-informed approach creates an environment where Pupils feel valued, respected, and understood. By prioritising emotional wellbeing, co-regulation, and a strong sense of belonging, we help Pupils develop the confidence to engage with learning, embrace challenge, and believe in their own potential.

Learning experiences are carefully tailored to each Pupil's individual needs, interests, strengths, and developmental stage. Through personalised pathways and ambitious expectations, we support Pupils to develop the knowledge, skills, and resilience required to succeed both academically and personally. We encourage every Pupil to recognise their achievements, celebrate their progress, and develop a positive sense of self.

Strong partnerships are central to our success. We work collaboratively with Parents/Carers, Local Authorities, Social Workers, Therapists, and a range of other professionals to ensure that each Pupil receives consistent, joined-up support. Together, we create the conditions that enable Pupils to thrive and achieve meaningful outcomes.

At Acorn School, we recognise that progress looks different for every child. Whether a Pupil is taking their first steps towards emotional regulation, building positive relationships, increasing independence, or achieving academic success, every achievement is valued and celebrated. We believe that recognising and celebrating these milestones helps Pupils develop self-belief, resilience, and motivation for future learning.

Our ambition is not simply for Pupils to succeed whilst they are with us, but to leave Acorn School equipped with the confidence, emotional strength, independence, and aspirations needed to flourish in further education, employment, and adult life. We strive to empower every young person to believe in themselves, embrace their individuality, and pursue a future filled with opportunity, purpose, and success.

> Pupils are at the heart of Acorn School. The school's ambition for pupils to succeed and flourish is exceptional.
>
> **OFSTED**



> Pupils overcome many significant challenges because the school enables them to be resilient and persistent when faced with difficulties.
>
> **OFSTED**

Philosophy - High Expectations, High Support

At Acorn School, we foster a culture of possibility, where every Pupil is encouraged to believe in themselves, embrace challenge, and recognise their own potential. By taking the time to understand each Pupil's unique strengths, needs, experiences, and aspirations, we are able to provide the individualised support that enables them to thrive. We are committed to creating an inclusive community where every Pupil feels valued, respected, and empowered, regardless of their background, identity, ability, culture, or life experiences.

We hold high aspirations for every young person and believe that success is built upon strong relationships, positive experiences, and a growing sense of self-worth. Through small class sizes, personalised support, and meaningful interactions with trusted adults, Pupils are able to develop confidence, emotional security, and a sense of belonging. Our Team Members act as positive role models, helping Pupils to build healthy relationships, develop social skills, and experience the benefits of being part of a supportive community.

We recognise that learning is a journey and that mistakes are an essential part of growth and development. Many of our Pupils arrive with a fear of failure or a reduced belief in their own abilities. Through encouragement, guidance, and a strengths-based approach, we help Pupils to develop resilience, self-compassion, and the confidence to persevere when faced with challenges. By focusing on progress, celebrating achievements, and setting ambitious yet achievable goals, we support every Pupil to experience success and develop a positive vision for their future.

Our ambition is for every Pupil to leave Acorn School with confidence in who they are, pride in what they have achieved, and belief in what they can accomplish. By nurturing self-esteem, independence, and aspiration, we empower young people to flourish both within school and beyond, equipped with the skills, resilience, and determination needed to lead fulfilling and successful lives.









An Enriching and Supportive Learning Environment

At Acorn School, we provide a welcoming, and nurturing environment where Pupils feel safe, valued, and empowered to grow in confidence and flourish. We recognise that emotional wellbeing and a sense of belonging are fundamental to successful learning, and we strive to create an atmosphere where every Pupil feels understood, respected, and supported.

Small class sizes enable us to build strong, trusting relationships with our Pupils and provide highly personalised support. Our learning spaces are thoughtfully designed to meet the needs of our Pupils, and have dedicated spaces where Pupils can regulate, reflect, and recharge when needed. This therapeutic approach helps Pupils to develop emotional resilience, self-awareness, and the confidence to engage positively in school life.

We are committed to providing stimulating and meaningful learning experiences that inspire curiosity, creativity, and a love of learning. Through a combination of innovative teaching practices, enrichment opportunities, and real-world experiences both on and off site, Pupils are encouraged to discover new interests, develop existing talents, and broaden their horizons.





The trusted and highly nurturing relationships between staff and pupils enable pupils to manage the increasing demands placed on them.

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Our Curriculum

At Acorn School, we provide a holistic, ambitious, and personalised curriculum that supports Pupils to develop academically, socially, emotionally, physically, and vocationally. Our curriculum is designed to nurture the whole child, recognising that success is about more than academic achievement alone. We aim to inspire curiosity, build confidence, and equip Pupils with the knowledge, skills, and resilience needed to thrive both in school and beyond.

Every Pupil's journey begins with a comprehensive assessment of their academic attainment, developmental profile, strengths, interests, and emotional needs. This enables us to develop an individualised learning pathway that reflects their aspirations and provides the appropriate support and challenge to help them achieve success.

Literacy and numeracy form the foundation of our curriculum and are prioritised throughout each Pupil's educational journey. Through small-group teaching and individualised support, Pupils receive targeted interventions and personalised learning experiences that enable them to develop essential skills, build confidence, and make meaningful progress at their own pace.

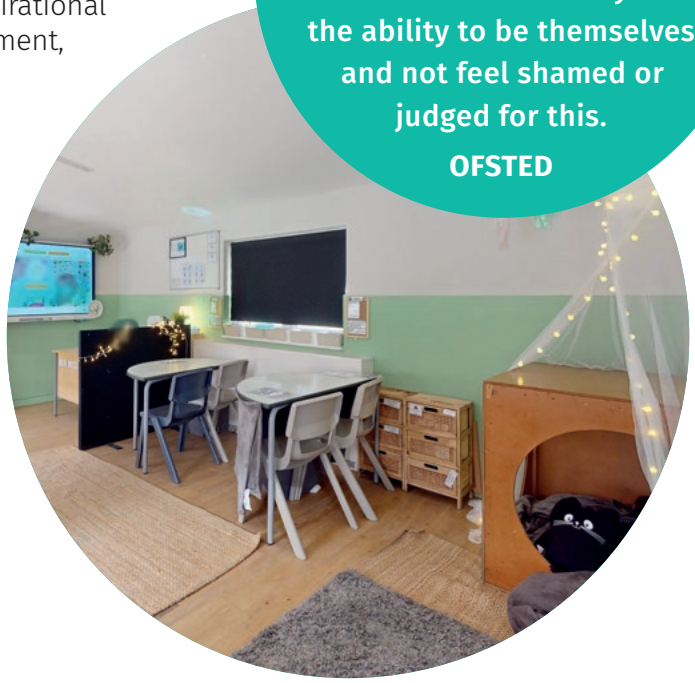
We recognise that Pupils learn best when learning is engaging, purposeful, and tailored to their individual needs. Our broad and balanced curriculum provides opportunities for Pupils to experience success across a wide range of subjects while developing communication, independence, problem-solving, creativity, emotional literacy, and preparation for adulthood.

To ensure every Pupil can achieve and be recognised for their accomplishments, we offer a diverse range of qualifications and accreditation pathways. These include GCSEs, Functional Skills Qualifications, Entry Level Certificates, ASDAN Programmes and Short Courses, AQA Unit Awards, Digital Skills Qualifications, and a range of vocational and personal development awards. This flexible approach enables Pupils to celebrate success, experience achievement, and progress towards aspirational destinations in further education, training, employment, and adult life.

At Acorn School, we believe that every Pupil deserves a curriculum that recognises their individuality, celebrates their strengths, and inspires them to achieve their fullest potential. Through high aspirations, personalised support, and meaningful learning experiences, we empower our Pupils to become confident, capable, and successful young people ready for the next stage of their journey.

"Pupils feel safe. Many describe how much they value the ability to be themselves and not feel shamed or judged for this."

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Curriculum Highlights

- Personalised learning pathways
- Small-group and 1:1 teaching
- Strong focus on literacy and numeracy
- Therapeutic and nurture-informed approach
- Broad and balanced curriculum
- Academic and vocational opportunities
- Preparation for adulthood
- Range of recognised qualifications
- Celebration of individual achievement
- High aspirations for every Pupil





Enrichment Beyond the Classroom

At Acorn School, we believe that some of the most powerful learning experiences take place beyond the classroom. We are committed to providing opportunities that broaden horizons, inspire curiosity, and help Pupils develop a deeper understanding of themselves, others, and the world around them.

Our enrichment programme is an integral part of the curriculum, offering Pupils regular opportunities to explore new interests, develop life skills, and experience success in a range of different contexts. Through carefully planned activities, Pupils are encouraged to step outside their comfort zones, build confidence, and develop the resilience needed to embrace new challenges.

These experiences support the development of social and communication skills, emotional wellbeing, independence, teamwork, and self-esteem, whilst making learning meaningful, engaging, and memorable. Enrichment activities also provide valuable opportunities for Pupils to apply classroom learning in real-life situations, helping them make connections, develop aspirations, and discover new talents.

Children also have the opportunity to participate in a range of weekly enrichment activities tailored to their individual interests, strengths, and learning pathways. Opportunities may include **The Farm, Construction Skills, Mentoring, Forest School, Climbing, Swimming, Horse Riding, Muay Thai, Cookery,** and many other experiences designed to develop confidence, independence, wellbeing, and preparation for adulthood. These activities are carefully selected to support each Pupil's individual development and aspirations and are dependent upon their personalised pathway.

Throughout the year, Pupils take part in curriculum enrichment days, enterprise projects, community engagement opportunities, and celebrations that further enhance learning and strengthen their sense of belonging. These experiences encourage creativity, problem-solving, leadership, and personal growth whilst helping Pupils develop the confidence to engage positively with the wider world.

Our Pupils have enjoyed a wide range of educational visits and outdoor learning opportunities, including museums, heritage sites, beaches, outdoor education centres, and local community projects. These exciting activities enable Pupils to discover new interests, challenge themselves, and develop resilience through achievement.

By providing enriching experiences beyond the classroom, we seek to nurture aspirations, celebrate individuality, and create opportunities for every Pupil to succeed. Our aim is for every young person to leave Acorn School with increased confidence, wider life experiences, and the belief that they can achieve more than they ever thought possible.

Please note that enrichment activities are dependent upon each Pupil's individual pathway, interests, developmental needs, and therapeutic goals.

Therapeutic Approach

At Acorn School, relationships, wellbeing, and emotional safety are at the heart of our approach. We recognise that many of our Pupils require support to develop trust, build positive relationships, and feel secure within their learning environment. Through a therapeutic, trauma-informed, and nurturing approach, we create the conditions in which Pupils feel safe, understood, and ready to learn.

When a Pupil joins Acorn School, a comprehensive assessment process helps us to understand their strengths, developmental needs, emotional wellbeing, and individual aspirations. This enables us to develop a personalised package of support that promotes progress across academic, social, emotional, and communication development. We work closely with Parents/Carers, and professionals to ensure a consistent and holistic approach that supports each Pupil to achieve their potential.

Our therapeutic provision is strengthened through access to the Phoenix Group Integrated Therapies Team, as well as consultation, advice, and support from external agencies, including CAMHS and FCAMHS and Local Authority services, where appropriate. This collaborative approach ensures that Pupils benefit from a coordinated network of support centred around their individual needs.

The Phoenix Group Integrated Therapies Team provides a multi-disciplinary approach to meeting Pupils' needs and includes expertise in:

- Educational Psychology
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Play Therapy
- Creative and Arts Therapies

Working together with educational Team Members through an integrated approach, therapists help ensure that therapeutic support is embedded throughout each Pupil's school experience, enabling them to develop emotional regulation, communication skills, resilience, independence, and positive relationships.

In addition to our core therapeutic offer, Pupils may access a range of specialist interventions that further support their personal development and wellbeing depending on individual needs.

Our goal is to help every Pupil develop a positive sense of self, build trusting relationships, and gain the confidence and emotional resilience needed to flourish. By combining therapeutic support with high-quality education, we empower Pupils to overcome barriers, recognise their strengths, and embrace a future filled with possibility, purpose, and success.

"Pupils reflect, with a sense of pride and positivity, the impact the school has on them so that they can achieve aspirational future goals."

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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

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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.