



# The Acorns School

## SEND Information Report 2024/25

### **Contributing to the Lancashire Local Authority Local Offer**

#### **School Mission Statement**

Together we strive to provide a caring, structured learning environment in which all pupils can develop academically, socially and emotionally and in which pupils and staff feel safe, secure and valued.

We offer a caring, enriching, educational environment for pupils who have experienced difficulties in school. In our school pupils are accepted, valued and feel safe. We assess pastoral and learning needs and plan for progress, “learn to achieve”!

Our pupils learn to manage themselves and their relationships with others. We give time to pupils and teach strategies so they can reflect on and reassess their difficulties, build self-esteem and develop meaningful relationships.

We provide an exciting and challenging curriculum designed to capture pupils' interest and prepare them for life. We aim to improve each pupil's academic performance, ability to learn and social and emotional skills so that pupils are able to return to school, further education or enter the world of work.

Every adult is highly motivated and committed to the pupil's wellbeing. Staff are well trained in the specialist work of supporting vulnerable youngsters and use a variety of appropriate assessment and creative teaching approaches.

We work productively and collaborate with parents, carers, other schools and agencies for the good of all pupils.

#### **Introduction**

Welcome to our SEND Information Report which is part of the Lancashire Local Offer for learners with Special Educational Needs (SEND).

The Acorns School is an inclusive school where every child is valued and respected. We are committed to the inclusion, progress and independence of all of our students, including those with SEND. We work to support our students to make progress in their learning, their emotional and social development, and their independence. We aim to create a learning environment which is of high quality but we also actively work to support the learning and needs of all members of our community.

#### **High quality teaching**

The Acorns School staff strive to provide high quality teaching to all of our students. Teachers prepare Schemes of Work and lessons which support the learning and progress of all students through a variety of methods, creative and innovative teaching techniques and the use of a wide variety of resources. Individual departments are

responsible for their curriculum and teaching staff adapt their teaching and resources to suit the needs of all learners, including those with SEND, in their classrooms (known as differentiation). Such in-class differentiation may involve many adaptations and strategies, dependent upon the needs of the student.

Staff have access to regular training opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills, including regular CPD sessions on a wide variety of educational concerns, including SEND issues. CPD already planned for 2019/20 includes thinking and processing skills; improving memory, retention and recall; quality first teaching strategies to support pupils with ADHD and those with dyslexic tendencies; supporting SEND learners with reading. We are also supporting one of our Senior Teachers to become a Specialist Dyslexia Teacher, training with Edge Hill University.

All staff are responsible for assessing, monitoring and tracking the progress of our students. Each student is regularly assessed in class in all subjects and levels are recorded on SIMS and reported to parents at least once per term. Staff are responsible for setting each student achievable yet challenging targets and having high expectations of progress. Form Tutors, Managers and the SENCO regularly check on the progress of students and raise a concern if students are not making expected progress. Some students who are not making expected progress are supported by interventions, which maybe within the classroom.

## **Identifying SEND**

On entry to our school pupils undertake a range of baseline assessments in English and Maths and are tested to establish CAT Scores, reading and comprehension ages. Depending on the results of these tests further WRAT tests may be carried out. Pupils are then set individual and challenging targets, with progress closely monitored by teaching staff.

Despite high quality teaching, some students are unable to make expected progress and this could be for a variety of reasons, one of which is a special educational need. Staff use tracking data and knowledge of students to identify such students and if they have a concern that there might be an undiagnosed special educational need, they will raise that concern with the SENCO. The SENCO will then investigate further by liaising with parents, gaining the views of the student, gathering more information about the student from other staff who teach or support them, carrying out testing as appropriate and referring the student to an Educational Psychologist, if necessary. Once this information has been gathered, if a special educational need is suspected or diagnosed, a TAF meeting will be arranged, to discuss the student's needs and subsequent actions.

Some students transitioning to The Acorns School are already diagnosed with a special educational need and this information will have been passed on by their previous school. Such students may or may not be placed on the SEND register, but will all be monitored and tracked in terms of their progress and supported as appropriate. If a parent suspects an undiagnosed special educational need in their child, they should initially contact the SENCO to share their concerns. The SENCO will then investigate further, as above.

The definition of a special educational need is 'where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, namely provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age. Making higher quality teaching normally available to the whole class is likely to mean that fewer pupils will require such support'. (*Definition taken from the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years. 2015.*) Students with SEND will be placed on the school's SEND register which is accessible to all staff in school on the T drive.

## **Supporting SEND students**

Where a student is diagnosed with a special education need, support will be put in place to help them make progress. Such support might involve: further differentiation in class by teachers, advice to teachers on a student's need and strategies to be implemented, one-to-one or small group targeted intervention sessions with a TA, in-class support, referrals to outside agencies, 1-1 teaching etc. A learner passport is provided for each pupil, documenting which strategies are to be used by staff to meet learners' needs.

Interventions may involve bespoke packages or a programme developed specifically for that student or group of students. The aim is that learners with SEN should be able to access the same teaching and learning alongside their peers. Social and emotional support is provided through the keyworker system, nurture and pastoral manager.

Interventions follow a monitoring cycle involving: assess-plan-do-review. Where an intervention with a student is not found to be effective, the school will endeavour to find out why and put in place a more effective programme. Interventions are regularly reviewed to ensure effectiveness and to ensure that the school continually strives to improve their intervention programme.

Some students receive technology support, such as the use of a laptop or tablet, mainly via equipment supplied by school. Students with visual or hearing impairments may also be assessed and supplied with equipment to support their needs.

Parents/Carers of students with SEND will have regular meetings with school staff to discuss their child's progress, support needs and any concerns they may have. However, parents/carers are welcome to request a meeting or discussion with school staff at any time, including the SENCO, if they have a concern.

## **Education, Health and Care Plans**

Where a student with SEND is failing to make progress, despite high quality teaching and support through their SEND support, an application to the Local Authority for an Education, Health and Care Plan may be considered. Parents, the Local Authority and outside agencies will be fully involved in such decisions and meetings will be organised to consider and plan such a referral. More information on the application process and criteria for Education, Health and Care Plans is available on the Local Authority website.

Students with SEND who have Education, Health and Care Plans will receive a higher level of support than other students and such support is co-ordinated by the SENCO.

Their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) will be reviewed regularly, at least once per year, with the parent/carer, student and appropriate outside agencies.

### **Working with outside agencies**

Where a student with SEND is not making progress and The Acorns School feel that they need advice and support from external professionals, we will discuss such a need with parents. If it is felt appropriate, we will then refer a student to an external agency and/or professionals for diagnosis, support or advice. Subsequent to such a referral, we will work with the external agency to support such students, using their support and advice. The Acorns School works with the Educational Psychology Service to whom we make referrals for Advisory Support Teachers and Educational Psychologists. The Acorns School also works with other external agencies such as the Virtual School, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Speech and Language Therapy, School Nurse Services and the Paediatrics Team, Early Intervention Prevention and Wellbeing Services

### **Parent and child involvement**

The Acorns School puts working with parents/carers and students at the centre of its work. Students are regularly involved with reviewing their progress and encouraged to express their needs and concerns with relevant staff. Students with SEND are encouraged to express any concerns they may have to the SENCO, TA/ Keyworker, their Form Tutor, or any other member of staff with whom they feel comfortable to talk about their concerns.

Parents and Carers are equally at the centre of supporting their children. They are fully involved in decisions about support for their child, including decisions to investigate a potential diagnosis, referral to external agencies, planning and evaluating support. They are encouraged to contact any member of staff at school if they have any concerns about their child. The SENCO is always pleased to discuss any concerns involving SEND with parents and carers.

### **Equality (incl. accessibility)**

'All schools have duties under the Equality Act 2010 towards individual disabled children and young people. They must make reasonable adjustments to prevent them being put at a substantial disadvantage.' 'Schools also have wider duties to prevent discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations' (Quotations taken from the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years. 2015)

The Acorns School is an inclusive school and actively seeks to promote the inclusion of students with SEND and disabilities. We use our best endeavours to ensure that all students with SEND and disabilities are able to fully participate in the life of the school, both in their learning and in the wider provision and life of the school. Adaptations and provisions are made for SEND and disabled students to enable them to participate in all school trips and other out of class activities. For more information, refer to our Accessibility, Single Equality and Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policies on the

Policies section of our website [www.theacornsschool.co.uk](http://www.theacornsschool.co.uk) Click on Information and then Policies.

Students with SEND are actively encouraged, supported and given opportunities to become involved with extra-curricular enrichment and homework club activities, for example music, extended curriculum opportunities and vocational taster days students have also participated in student panels for charity and community activities.

The Acorns School understands that transition between schools and other establishments is sometimes an anxious time for parents/carers and students, especially for students with SEND. For students coming to Acorns, the Pastoral Manager will do home visits, participate in host school TAF's etc., to gain as much information as possible about these students, including SEND information. For students with SEND, the SENCO at The Acorns School liaises with SENCOs from our feeder schools, who pass on all relevant information, including SEND files. Parents/Carers of students with SEND whose child will be coming to The Acorns School are always welcome to contact our SENCO who will discuss your child and their provision on the telephone or arrange a meeting for you (and your child if appropriate) to come in to discuss this.

All students who will be attending Acorns are invited in for assessments and nurture sessions to help them adjust to life at Acorns. Many students with SEND are invited in for extra transition sessions to introduce them to life at The Acorns School and to try to allay any anxieties as much as possible. All Parents/Carers of students including those with SEND are invited in to an admissions meeting to get to know how The Acorns School supports all students.

For students with an EHCP, the SENCO will attend Review meetings to begin to understand the needs of these students and plan their transition. For students with high transition needs, the SENCO will put in place a more personalised transition programme, in conjunction with the school and parents/carers. For students leaving Year 11, the SENCO works with our Careers Advisors to ensure that all students have thought through their next steps and have at least two applications to post-16 providers. We also liaise with their next provider to ensure that they understand about a student's support needs. All students with an Education, Health and Care Plan will have access to our Careers Advisors from Year 9 onwards.

## **Funding for SEND**

The Local Authority funds schools in two ways to support their SEND provision. Each individual school receives their own SEND funding from the Local Authority. In addition, the Local Authority provides funding to as a top up fund in certain circumstances. The Schools Forum agrees how this money is divided to supplement each school's SEND budget. Each school identifies specific interventions to use this. Top up funding also comes to Acorns from mainstream schools whose students are placed at Acorns on intervention programmes (paid for places).

The Acorns School uses professional judgement to ensure that the funding is distributed to have the greatest impact on our SEND pupils. We regularly review to

ensure maximum effectiveness and efficiency. We strive to ensure equality, transparency and clarity and accountability for the monies spent on all learners and their needs.

## **Anti-Bullying**

The Acorns School School is committed to creating a safe environment in which everyone is appreciated and in which care and consideration for others is nurtured within a community which is seeking to live by strong values rooted in respect. Emphasis is placed upon the development of a school culture and expectation that bullying is unacceptable, challenged and resolved. For more information about how our school responds to bullying incidents, please refer to our Anti-Bullying Policy in the Policies section of our website.

## **Staff**

Key individuals working with students with SEND are as follows:

SENCO(s) – Sue Stephenson and Cathryn Woodhall. Responsible for implementation of the school's SEND policy

Assistant SENCO – Jaclyn Turner

DSL- Fiona Melling

Special Exam Access Arrangements: Sue Stephenson

Teachers - Responsible for monitoring the progress of students and interventions for students requiring any additional support.

Key Workers: working with SEND students both in-class and on intervention programmes.

SEND Governor: Bev Harrison

Reviewed 17<sup>th</sup> September 2021 JH

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