

INFORMATION ABOUT WESTFIELD SCHOOL

We are currently in the final stages of an LA requested expansion programme to increase our number of children on roll to 85. This is an acknowledgement of the quality and success of our work, a significant investment in the future of the school and an exciting opportunity to further develop our provision.

We are a coeducational Primary Special School. Our pupils will have a Moderate Learning difficulties (MLd) learning profile with significant difficulties arising from a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum disorder (ASd) and/or Speech, Language and Communication needs (SLCn). Because of their special needs, we expect our pupils to have displayed behaviours that are significant barriers to their learning when in mainstream school. However, we are not designated to work with children who have a prime need of SEMH.

WORKING AT WESTFIELD

We are a happy, relaxed, team-based school where staff feel valued, their support and training are a priority and children enjoy attending.

We recognise that although enjoyable, starting work at Westfield is a steep learning curve which must focus on developing the technical teaching skills needed. Those techniques and skills (and the theoretical understanding underpinning them) together with the experience gained in their development and practice, are transferable to all learning settings whether specialist or mainstream. This experience places any teaching professional at a real advantage in terms of personal development, broadening future options and career path.

We recognise that we are specialists in our field and that traditional external training does not often meet the needs of staff in developing the provision our pupils require. For this reason, we work closely with a range of professionals and fully use the in-house expertise we have developed to support and extend the skills of new staff.

SURROUNDS AND CATCHMENT AREA

Pupils can be drawn from the whole of Bucks, though the school is most obviously linked with the High Wycombe and Chiltern & South Bucks Areas in the South of the County. We also take pupils from the Unitary Authorities in Berkshire and from other neighbouring Authorities.

The school enjoys a quiet site in a residential area, very close to the village centre with its shops, library and community facilities. The River Thames is a few minutes' walk away.

The school grounds include a 3 playgrounds (1 for each learning base). We have a school field; half of which is developed as a large Forest School, a fundamental element of our provision. Our membership of Rotakids (an international Rotary Club gardening club) supports the vegetable allotments all the children work on, the various 'eco' areas around the site and our association with a school in Zambia.

The main building is laid out in a quad, with a secluded inner courtyard and pond. The light, well-proportioned school building is well maintained and resourced, and provides a great deal of space, allowing flexibility of use and provision ideal for our pupils. There is also a large PE Hall, dining room, a meeting room, seminar room for training and intervention rooms (used for delivery of aspects of the specialist curriculum and by external professionals) as well as specialist Food Technology rooms. Expansion building work also provides us with a purpose built training suite.

SCHOOL ORGANISATION

The school currently has 10 classes, split into 3 learning bases. Apple Tree base works with children who are developmentally within the early EYFS curriculum. Pear Tree base caters for children working at the end of the EYFS curriculum and transitioning into the Year 1 National Curriculum expectations. Cherry Tree base works with the older children who are progressing from the end of KS1 into KS2 curriculum expectations. Within these bases, children are allocated to classes with regard to their needs-profile rather than chronological age groups. This means that teaching strategies, resources and support can be precisely targeted and tailored to the needs of the pupils and delivery of both the national curriculum and our specialist curriculum can be achieved without the very high levels of differentiation otherwise necessary.

Each class has its own large room with computers and a quiet area for 1:1 work or for pupils to use to self-regulate their arousal levels.

Classes are grouped within Learning Bases so that staff can work as a team to share expertise and provide support to each other. Each class has a minimum of one teacher and one or two support members of staff. Class size depends on the needs profile of the pupils and is usually between 8 and 10.

The school works closely with external professionals such as Occupational and Speech & Language Therapists so that professional knowledge and expertise is shared and staff always have a range of support available to them. Our own team of specialist staff provide training, supervision and advice to all staff on the delivery of or specialist curriculum and associated interventions.

THE WESTFIELD SCHOOL PUPIL PROFILE

For our pupils, the underlying causes for their behaviours derive from their communication and interaction needs. In mainstream this will have also prevented them from accessing the National Curriculum, social learning and wider school life. This has prevented them achieving expected levels of progress and attainment. For this reason, we aim to provide our pupils with a learning environment and curriculum which addresses their complex learning and communication needs so that real, long lasting and positive changes can be made, so that they make progress towards being independent individuals who can organise and manage themselves as learners and members of a community.

The range of underpinning difficulties experienced by our pupils include:

- Speech and language difficulties
- Cognition within the MLd range
- Social thinking and interaction
- Co-ordination, fine and gross motor skills
- Sensory processing
- Attentional deficits
- Inhibition
- Working memory

These difficulties produce a range of cognitive, speech and language, occupational therapy and psychosocial needs which lead to presenting behaviours and difficulties accessing and making progress within the National Curriculum in traditional ways.

In order to support our pupils' access to the National Curriculum and effective progress in attainment, learning opportunities and teaching styles must be provided to them in a way which both takes account of, and addresses, their individual needs.

WHAT AND HOW DO WE TEACH?

We emphasise core skills and teach Literacy and Numeracy as discrete subjects as well as through other subjects. We teach the full National Curriculum (e.g. Science, History, Geography, Art) in the way that most suits the needs of the pupils and staff in that classroom.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL CURRICULUM

This is an area of learning that bridges the National Curriculum and the specialist learning curriculum. Social and emotional learning is a very significant developmental area for all our children and we have created a highly specialised curriculum to meet these needs. It focuses on developing a child's understanding of how they think and feel and respond, and of how other people think, feel and behave, and on the development of positive and constructive social relationships.

SPECIALIST LEARNING CURRICULUM

The specialist curriculum is designed to target specific learning skills and ways of thinking that affect how well children learn and behave. It is taught throughout the school to all children. It has four areas: Working memory, Attention, Inhibition and Thinking skills.