

Oaklands School Prospectus



Building Foundations for Fulfilling Futures



'Everyone is highly ambitious for all pupils to fulfil their potential.'
Ofsted February 2024

Headteacher: Mrs Sarah Osborne
Chair of Governors: Mrs Sonia Barnes



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Section 1: Welcome to our wonderful school

Dear Parents & Carers,

Thank you for your interest in our school. We hope you find all the information you might need in the following pages to get to know us and the ways in which we work, and we look forward to beginning a fantastic partnership with you in supporting your child and their learning. We think Oaklands is a really special place and are very proud of our staff and children. Together we have achieved so much in the past few years, including:

- Becoming the only [National Autistic Society](#) Advanced Accredited school in Leicester city as well as receiving a Commendation for Enhanced Practice
- Being told that the work we do is 'exceptional' by [Ofsted](#) February 2024
- Becoming an Inclusion Quality Mark [Flagship](#) School

We know that the future is bright for our school and our wonderful children and families.

This is our logo, Oakey the Squirrel. He lives in our beautiful old oak tree outside the main building, which everyone passes on their way into school. Because of this lovely tree and Oakey, all of our classes are named after native British animals.



If you would like to know more or arrange to visit the school, please contact the office (office@oaklands.leicester.sch.uk) or call 0116 2415921. If you have any comments or suggestions about how we can improve the prospectus, please contact Ingrid Spencer by email at ispencer@oaklands.leicester.sch.uk

Key School information and contact details

Address: Oaklands School Whitehall Road Leicester LE5 6GJ	Telephone: 0116 241 5921
	Email: office@oaklands.leicester.sch.uk
	Website: www.oaklands.leicester.sch.uk
Type of school	LA Maintained Special school for children aged 4-11 years with Communication & Interaction difficulties, Autism, Moderate or Severe Learning difficulties as their primary needs

Key staff	
Chair of the Governing Body	Sonia Barnes
Clerk to Governors	Natalie Tegala-Patel
Head Teacher	Sarah Osborne
Deputy Head Teacher	Ingrid Spencer
Assistant Heads	Vicky Bland, Sally Bott, Sammy Nour
School Business Manager	Ashleigh Haines
Family Support Worker	Mala Chohan
Finance Administrator	Tara Mistry
Office Administrator	TBC
SEND Administrator	Neena Pancholi

A little bit about Oaklands

Oaklands is a primary school for pupils with Special Educational Needs, situated in the Evington area of Leicester.

We are a day school catering for 135 pupils aged from 4 to 11 years. All of our current pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP); occasionally we may admit a pupil for a period of assessment. Our pupils at Oaklands have moderate and severe learning difficulties. Most pupils have delayed communication and language skills, and difficulties with social interaction. The majority of pupils have a diagnosis of Autism, and some have Social, Emotional, Mental Health issues, sensory impairments, and/or medical conditions, in addition to their communication difficulties.

Before entry to Oaklands, we gather as much information as possible about each child so that we can place them in a class with pupils who are working at a similar stage of development. To meet the differing needs and communication abilities of our children, we have developed our own Oaklands curriculum. This approach to learning with a strong focus on life skills is delivered through four pathways, Nurture, Willow, Elm and Cherry, each with their own distinctive ways of learning and working.

The school offers facilities in ICT with a small computer suite in addition to mobile technology. The school has three well equipped outdoor play areas, two sensory rooms, a soft play room and a Forest School area and we are developing a fruit and vegetable garden where our school chickens live. In addition, we have a studio space and a cookery room. We have a well motivated School Council who work hard to ensure the voices of the pupils are heard.

'I feel safe and confident leaving my child with the staff at Oaklands School. They understand my child's needs and have the expertise and equipment to ensure my child is not just being looked after, but also learning'

(Oaklands Parent - October 2024)

**The Oaklands School vision is that we are
*Building Foundations for Fulfilling Futures***

To do this, we are living our UNIQUE values everyday, for everyone in our community. These are our U.N.I.Q.U.E values:

U	UNDERSTANDING	We are an Autism Specialist school where staff strive to understand every child's needs so they can develop their full potential and work with the community to develop wider understanding about Autism
N	NURTURE	Every member of Oaklands school (children, staff & families) is nurtured to develop their talents, interests and skills, now and for the future
I	INTERACTION & COMMUNICATION	We insist on high quality interactions between children, staff and community in every environment at all times, so that every member of our school can express their character and value using their preferred methods of communication
Q	QUALITY	We strive to excel in every area of school, including through sports, social and cultural experiences, and in our work with the community so that our Oaklands family have a high quality of life
U	US	Oaklands is a family and everyone who is involved with school has value and can contribute to our shared learning
E	ENGAGEMENT	Our learners are engaged and challenged through an irresistible curriculum that meets their needs and prepares them for the world

Safeguarding Statement

Oaklands School is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment, ensuring that the wellbeing of the children is paramount. Everyone working within our school, whatever their role, is acutely aware that the protection of children should underpin everything that we do in our school. The parents of our pupils entrust the care of their children to us and together we are all responsible for their wellbeing. This means that we have a *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy* which must be adhered to at all times

All our practices which deal with safeguarding, child protection and safer recruitment, are in accordance with the local authority procedures, which also comply with the DfE's

safeguarding children, anti-radicalization, and safer recruitment statutory guidance. We take the approach that 'It could happen here' and are always vigilant about the wellbeing and health of all of our children, and staff. Every year staff receive face-to-face training on key safeguarding issues and practice and they are kept updated about changes in legislation and policy throughout the year.

If you are ever concerned about the safety or well-being of someone at our school, please talk to one of the school's Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs). Our Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) are:

Head Teacher	Sarah Osborne (Lead DSL)
Deputy Head	Ingrid Spencer (Deputy DSL)
Assistant Heads	Vicky Bland, Sally Bott, Sammy Nour (Deputy DSLs)

Angela James is the school's
Safeguarding Link Governor.



Child Protection Procedures

It may be helpful to know that the Head Teacher is required to report any obvious or suspected case of child abuse to Social Services including non-accidental injury, physical neglect, emotional abuse and/or sexual abuse. This procedure is intended to protect children at risk and schools are encouraged to take the attitude that where there are grounds for suspicion, it is better to be safe than sorry. This does mean that the Head Teacher runs the risk of upsetting some parents by reporting a case which, on investigation, proves unfounded. In such circumstances, it is hoped that parents, appreciating how difficult it is for Head Teachers to carry out this delicate responsibility, would accept that the Head Teacher was acting in what was believed to be the child's best interest.

Section 2: School organisation and procedures

Admissions

Subject to there being space, admissions may be made at any time during the year. Oaklands School provides education for children who have a variety of learning difficulties and all admissions are made in accordance with the current school policy (see website) and the appropriate legislation. All pupils enter Oaklands with an Education, Health and Care Plan, unless they are on a period of assessment.

Places are offered subject to availability. Mutual co-operation between parents/carers and school staff is seen as a key to the success of Oaklands. Applications for a place at Oaklands

can only be made through Leicester City Council. Information can be found here: <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/school-and-colleges/school-admissions/>
Or by calling 0116 454 1009 (select option 1)

Transition Arrangements

New pupils: We will work closely with new children's existing setting or nursery to ensure a smooth transition into Oaklands and will also conduct a home visit for new families, and offer opportunities for transition visits of increasing lengths to prepare our young people for the school move.

Secondary Transition: At the Annual Review meeting for pupils in Year 6 (i.e., at 10/11years old), we begin the process of planning a successful transition from Oaklands to the next phase of education. This involves parents, carers, pupils, Health and Social Care Services. Through the Annual Review process, we can also explore inclusion programmes for pupils at all ages.

Attendance

Attendance is crucial if children are to achieve their potential and take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Oaklands School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, and so we have set an ambitious whole school attendance target of 95%. We monitor attendance very closely and take action to support parents if their child/children are not attending regularly.

Although it is parents/carers who have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Head Teacher and Governors at our school work with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. This may include referring a family to the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if necessary.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress. Even infrequent absences can have a big impact; for example, a child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will have missed, over their time at primary school, two whole terms of learning.

Our Attendance Policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available on our school website www.oaklands.leicester.sch.uk. The policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Absence Procedures

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence by calling the school office on 0116 2415921. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences in the school's database. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence as it is this information that is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Head Teacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised. Having a high number of unauthorised absences can lead to intervention by the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we send a letter requesting these details to parents/carers to complete. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date, then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check the registers from 9.10am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. If we are unaware why the child is absent, we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

Long term or chronic illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work. If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

If a child is taken ill at school, arrangements are made for them to go home as soon as possible. Anyone who has been sick or had diarrhoea should not return to school until 48

hours after the sickness or diarrhoea has ceased. We have many extremely vulnerable young children in school and it is important that we limit the chances of infection spreading.

First Aid, Medication and Personal Care

School staff are usually able to deal with minor incidents on the spot, and we have a number of staff who hold First Aid Certificates. Several staff have received enhanced training to administer anti-convulsant medication, inhalers and EpiPens.

Please note: If your child needs to take any medicines at school on a regular basis, then they should be sent to school **via the transport escort** in their original containers with the child's name and clearly written instructions regarding the dosage: please do not put these in children's bags or coat pockets. There is a consent form which needs to be filled in **prior** to the medicine being given to a child. <https://www.oaklands.leicester.sch.uk/downloadable-forms/>

Please note that for all pupils we need to know about any special medical needs or problems and how to contact families in an emergency. It is therefore vital that parents fill in all parts of our "essential information" form. The school is registered under the Data Protection Act.

Sun Protection: During the summer months, parents are asked to send in a hat and sun protection cream for their own child's use. Cream or lotion should be in a named container.

Personal Care: For those children who are incontinent, nappies, incontinence pads, wipes and any creams such as Sudocrem should be sent to school clearly marked with your child's name. Reminders are usually sent when further supplies are needed. **Children who are occasionally incontinent should always have some spare clothes in school to enable us to change them and make them more comfortable. If no clothes are available, we may have to call home to ask for these to be brought in.**

Absence for term-time holidays

With effect from September 2013, the government abolished the right of Head Teachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays. As good attendance is so important for children's progress and relationships with other children, we will not authorise any holidays in term-time unless there is an exceptional reason for the time off to be needed. Any holidays or extended absences not for illness within the school terms will need to be requested by filling in a form available from the school office.

Please note that if you do take your child out of school for a holiday that has not been authorised, this will show in their record. Any attendance that falls below 90% is considered by the Department for Education to be *persistent absence* and might lead to intervention from the LA Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

The School Day

Significant times for willow during the school day are:

8.45-9.10	Registration
9.00-12.00	Teaching Time including Outdoor Learning Time
12.00-1.00	Lunch
1.00-2.30	Teaching Time
2.30	Home Time

There are 27.5 hours of curriculum time each week.



In School Therapists and Family Support

Behaviour Support

For many pupils with special needs and / or disabilities, their needs can cause them to feel overloaded and anxious and this, at times, can lead to negative or challenging behaviour. At Oaklands we understand that behaviour is communication and we work hard with each child to help them to develop self-regulation and appropriate social skills. Should your child's behaviour give us cause for concern, we will discuss it with you. If a pupil has persistently challenging behaviour, we will also seek advice and support from other professionals and develop an individual Positive Behaviour Support Plan. Our Behaviour Lead Assistant Head Sally Bott is also our Mental Health Champion and very experienced in working with children and families to develop positive strategies for behaviour and wellbeing.

External therapist support

We work closely with the Local Authority (LA) to ensure that our children have access to services. We have LA NHS Speech & Language therapists in school for the equivalent of two days per week and we work closely with the school nursing services. Sally Bott, Assistant Head, holds joint planning meetings termly with external professionals such as the Educational Psychology and SEMH teams to plan for their support in school, and where necessary, we liaise closely with visual and hearing impairment teams. Parents are encouraged to also make contact with LA service providers when they feel their child needs more support. If parents would like help to do this, they can make an appointment with our Family Support Worker who will talk them through the process and can also give advice about many issues, including financial assistance.

We have a musician/drumming facilitator in school for 1 day a week who works with class groups using rhythm activities to develop social communication, as well as a range of other skills.

Family Support Worker

Our Family Support Worker, **Mala Chohan**, works in school 10am-2pm Mon-Thurs and 10am – 1pm Fri. Some of the things she can support parents with are:

- Home visits to support you around managing your child's behaviour
- Supporting you to attend appointments such as medical appointments, school appointments, benefit appointments etc.
- Chasing up medical appointments or other professionals on your behalf
- Support around signposting you to other services like Citizens advice, money wise, mental health, children centres and many more.

- Referring you to groups and courses to expand your knowledge and understanding.
- Support around benefits and form filling.
- Referrals for food parcels if needed.

If there is anything else parents are worried about, then they can contact school on **0116 241 5921** and ask to speak to the Family Support Worker.

School Transport

As necessary, and as assessed by the Local Authority, pupils may be transported free of charge to and from school, though you may bring your child if you wish. If you have any concerns about transport, please contact the school in the first instance or Leicester City Council here: <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/transport-and-streets/special-needs-and-community-transport/>

If the school has to close because of bad weather, it will be broadcast on Radio Leicester. You can also view the Leicester City Council School Closures web page (<https://www.leicester.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/school-and-colleges/school-closures>).

In bad weather, the transport operators have the responsibility for getting children safely to and from school. They will decide whether to transport your child, given their knowledge of the prevailing road conditions.

If the weather worsens during the day, pupils may leave school early. We will contact you to make sure that someone is at home to receive them. Please ensure that the school office always has **at least two** up to date contact numbers and ensure that a responsible person is contactable at all times in case of any necessary early closures or changes to transport home. You may also wish to advise your child's transport operator of your contact number/s in case they need to contact you.

School Uniform

The Governing Body encourages all parents to ensure that pupils wear school uniform, although this is not compulsory. We have a uniform that consists of:

- Black or grey trousers or skirt
- Dark green sweatshirt, cardigan or jumper
- Dark green polo shirt
- Green and white checked gingham dress
- Dark green fleece



A range of sweatshirts, polo shirts, cardigans, fleeces, coats and school bags are available to order from school. Please contact the school office staff for an order form and current price list or this is available on the School's website.

All children are expected to be dressed appropriately in sensible, clean clothes with the minimum of fastenings. It is very important that all of your child's clothing and belongings are **clearly marked with their name**. Staff cannot be held responsible for returning clothing that is not clearly named.

The wearing of jewellery and ear-rings (small studs may be allowed) is not allowed as it is considered unnecessary and can be dangerous in certain school situations. Children should not attend school wearing jewellery, unless of a religious nature.

Special clothes are needed for PE and swimming to keep your child safe and to meet Health and Safety requirements. These should be sent into school each week, preferably named and in a named bag which can be kept on your child's peg in school.

PE:

- Shorts, T-shirt, socks, plimsolls or clean trainers.

Swimming

- Swimming costume/trunks, towel, brush/comb.
- Swimming hat for children with long hair.
- Verruca socks if and when needed.
- Children who are incontinent need to wear special nappies suitable for swimming which are available from Boots, Tesco and other larger stores.

If parents do not provide the correct clothing, the school will expect pupils to wear clothing provided by the class teacher.

Liaison with Parents/Carers

We value the school/home relationship and believe that if we work together we will achieve better outcomes for our pupils. Therefore, we share information by providing:

- Information on the website
- Regular updates from each pathway about the half term's topic, what children will be learning and ideas on how to support your child at home
- Class Dojo / ParentPay
- Home-School Visits for new families
- A thorough Annual Review process

- Social media – Facebook, Youtube & Twitter

We expect parents to attend their child's Annual Review and the twice-yearly Parents' evenings, so that we can discuss together your child's progress and future targets. We will always advertise the dates of Parents' evenings in advance via our newsletter and on our website. Parents will be encouraged to contribute and respond, as appropriate, to both the curricular and extra-curricular achievements of their children:

- By attendance at Stay & Play sessions
- By attendance at our focused coffee mornings, workshops & Parent Forum – we are always delighted to accommodate parent requests for the agenda for these
- By attendance at Parent / Governor evenings
- Through Class Dojo messaging
- By attendance, if possible, at our special event assemblies

All parents/carers connected with the school have a right to access to all documentation specifically relating to their child. Parents/carers also have right of access to the following documents:

- The school curriculum;
- The National Curriculum and associated documentation;
- Any published H.M.I. and Ofsted reports which refer expressly to the school;
- The arrangements for the consideration of complaints about the school curriculum;
- Any school policies.



All of the above and more can be found on our website:
www.oaklands.leicester.sch.uk

If parents would like hard copies of any of these documents, please ring the main school office.

Change of Address

It is parental responsibility to inform the school in cases of change of address, and changes to parental responsibility, i.e. parents separating or divorcing. If applicable it is also the responsibility of parents to inform the school about any court orders, who can collect the child (passwords can be arranged) and who should be invited to Annual Reviews. The school can make arrangements to have parents attend at different times if necessary. Please also inform us of change of telephone number; we **MUST** have at least 2 registered numbers for each child at all times.

School Meals

School meals are available to all pupils at a cost of £2.65 a day/ £13.25 a week. School meals are cooked offsite and served in our hall. The children are able to select their lunch on the day from a range of photographs allowing them to develop more independence and choice making skills. Special diets can be catered for and staff will arrange for packed lunch if the class is on a trip.

Please send dinner money into school on the first day of the week in a sealed and named envelope. Dinner money can be paid termly/half termly, if you prefer, but must be paid in advance. If paying by cheque, please make it payable to **Oaklands School**.

Some parents/carers may prefer to send a packed lunch.

Free School Meals and Pupil Premium Funding

Some pupils may be entitled to receive Free School Meals. To find out if you qualify and to apply please do either of the following:

- contact the School Office
- visit the website <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/grants-and-allowances/free-school-meals/> where you can apply by clicking on the Quick Link

For all pupils who are registered for Free School Meals the school is given additional funding known as Pupil Premium funding by the Government. The Pupil Premium fund is intended to help children from lower income families to do well in school, by enabling the school to provide extra support and resources for learning.

Even if you do not wish for your child to have a school meal, and would prefer to send a packed lunch, please still apply for Free School Meal status, as the school will receive Pupil Premium funding for all pupils who meet the criteria. Your application is confidential and it will not affect any other benefits you are claiming. Please note, the school does not receive any Pupil Premium funding for pupils receiving a school meal under the UIFSM scheme unless parents have applied for Free School Meal status as above.

Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM)

In addition to the above, pupils in year groups Reception, Year 1 or Year 2 are entitled to a school meal at no cost to their parent/guardian under the Government Scheme Universal Infant Free School Meals (which is a separate scheme to the Free School Meals and Pupil Premium scheme above). If your child is in one of these year groups you will simply need to tell their class teacher that you would like your child to have a school meal provided free of charge, or alternatively please send in a packed lunch.

Complaints Procedure

In accordance with the 1988 Education Act (Section 23), complaints about the curriculum and related matters may be made in the first instance to the Head Teacher. Full details of the complaints' procedure are available from the School's website.

Section 3: Teaching, Learning and Assessment at Oaklands

We have fifteen classrooms in school and these are divided into four pathways: **Nurture**, **Willow**, **Elm** and **Cherry**. Our curriculum is designed to enable all children to develop skills in our Areas of Learning at an appropriate level for their current stage of development. Each pathway interprets the core curriculum to meet the specific language communication and cognitive needs of that pathway's pupils to ensure that there is progressive challenge and engaging learning for all, regardless of their starting point.



Nurture Pathway: Nurture is the entry point for those pupils who are at the earliest stages of developing language and communication skills, and who are not yet ready for subject-specific learning. They will be working within the [Engagement Model](#). Pupils assessed using the engagement model are usually described as having severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties which lead to significant delays in reaching neurotypical developmental milestones. Oaklands' Nurture children are at very early stages of cognitive, physical, social and emotional development. In addition, these pupils are likely to experience more significant sensory processing, as well as communication & language difficulties than pupils in our other pathways.

Oaklands Nurture children will require a high level of adult support, are likely to need sensory stimulation and a curriculum that is broken into small steps and personalised in a way that is specific to their needs. Most Nurture pupils will communicate non-verbally. Nurture children need more support to manage the demands of school life and so their learning programme will be predominantly emotional regulation and wellbeing (ER&W), communication, interaction and social skills (CISS) building.



Willow Pathway: Children are placed in Willow pathway if they are pre-verbal and have significant developmental delay. Their key learning needs are developing behaviours for learning such as listening and attention, Communication and Language, and Personal and Social skills. These classes may have 6 to 9 pupils, with high levels of adult support being required. The classroom environment will be low arousal to reduce distractions, and encourage attention and engagement. Key strategies used to support children's cognitive and language development include multisensory exploration, Attention Autism, continuous provision and play-based learning, Intensive Interaction and TacPac. PECS and Makaton are used to support learning (alternative and augmentative communication). Most learning experiences will be one to one, in pairs or small groups and Willow children will have some subject-specific sessions in Maths and Literacy as well as more holistic sessions aimed to develop their communicationn, interaction, language and life skills.



Elm Pathway: Children are placed in Elm pathway if they have some language and expressive communication and are showing an interest in peer communication and interaction. Most learning experiences will be whole class, in pairs or small groups and Elm children will have frequent subject-specific sessions in Maths and Literacy as well as sessions aimed to develop their emotional regulation and independence and life skills. Classes in Elm tend to have 9-10 children. Sharing space, resources and play with their peers will be a key focus as will increasing independence in their self care and spontaneous communication skills.



Cherry Pathway: Pupils in the Cherry Pathway have developed their language skills and will be working on their Reading, Writing and Maths skills in longer and more formal learning than the other pathways. Although still requiring adult support within the classroom, they will be developing independence and social skills. Although most Cherry children will communicate in speech (at different levels) visual systems, PECS and Makaton will also be used to support communication. At the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, some pupils may be entered for SATS and/or Phonics Screening where appropriate. Some pupils may also be included in lessons at Whitehall school (with support from a familiar member of Oaklands staff) when this is considered to be appropriate to further enhance their learning.

The Oaklands Curriculum

Oaklands have developed a curriculum which we feel reflects the needs and ways of being and learning of our pupils. It has been developed in response to a change in the types of pupils at the school, and after listening to the pupils themselves, their families, staff and other professionals. The age-related expectations set out in the National Curriculum are not appropriate to the pupils in our school due to their SEN, with a large percentage of the school population having severe learning difficulties and significant communication and language delay. However, the school does refer to the National Curriculum to help inform its curriculum planning. The team continues to refine our core curriculum based around our Areas of Learning with a strong emphasis on developing meaningful life skills.

Our Areas of Learning and related assessment frameworks are as follows:

Areas of Learning	Related assessment including OPAL ladders
Emotional Regulation & Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emotional Regulation Skills Ladder
Communication, Interaction & Social Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication Skills Ladder• Interaction & Social Skills Ladder
Physical Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical Development Skills Ladder• PE within the National Curriculum• National Swimming Awards (Yr6 only)
Independence & Life Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self Care Skills Ladder• Self Care in the Community Skills Ladder
Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Literacy Skills Ladder• Oaklands Reading Profile• Phonics screening test (when applicable)• SATs papers (when applicable)
Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mathematical Skills Ladder• SATs papers (when applicable)
Science & environmental education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whole school Eco Awards
Creativity & the Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ArtsMark awards

In order to meet the needs of our children, most of whom have a diagnosis of ASD, we consider carefully their sensory as well as learning needs and work hard to personalise learning within the shared curriculum. When children are able to access parts of the National Curriculum, we work closely with Whitehall Primary school to ensure that they can have some learning time there each week. Many classes use Attention Autism and other specialised teaching strategies. (There is a useful explanation of AA [here: http://www.drumbeatasd.org/attachments/download.asp?file=102&type=pdf](http://www.drumbeatasd.org/attachments/download.asp?file=102&type=pdf)). All classes and pathways focus on developing children's communication, independence and social skills as the foundations for lifelong learning. PECS and Makaton are used throughout the school to support learning (examples of alternative and augmentative communication).

To find out more about our school curriculum, please contact our Deputy Head, Ingrid Spencer (ispencer@oaklands.leicester.sch.uk)



'Before my child came to Oaklands, I was worried. She has made such progress since she started that I actually feel excited about the future brings now for my daughter whereas before I was terrified'

(Oaklands Parent - February 2024)

Assessment

In 2014 the government set up the [Rochford Review](#) to look into assessment for pupils with SEND working below age-expected levels. A key recommendation was that schools 'adapt assessment arrangements to suit the needs of their pupils and curriculum' for pupils working below the standard of national curriculum tests, therefore, in 2018-19, we developed a bespoke assessment package to match our bespoke curriculum and pathway structure. Many of our children make incremental progress and we want our assessment system to capture these small steps in learning as well as provide a way for us to set appropriately challenging targets. Where children are learning more slowly, it becomes particularly important for parents, teachers and learners themselves to be able to recognise and celebrate progress.

Our primary assessment tool is our own competency and skills-based system **OPAL (Oaklands Progressive Assessment Ladders)** which is ipsative and tracks each child's unique learning journey. Their starting point is taken 13 weeks after admission and across numerous skillsets within the eight OPAL ladders. This ensures assessment is very rigorous and gives a very rounded view of each child's unique strengths & learning need profile. After this baseline a *data snapshot* is taken every 13 weeks, and from this progress can be measured and standardised. However much more important than this raw data is the depth of information about a learner we can collate through the 1500+ finely grained *I can* steps within the ladders. How well a child can show a skill is measurable in the OPAL APS sheets where A= can access or attend to skill being demonstrated or makes an attempt to do it; P= practicing with intent; S= child is fully engaged in using & developing that skill; fully collaborating if guided.

By having this APS element on the child's tracking documents, we can measure both horizontal and vertical progress and so identify in a very detailed way what pupils can do and what support they need to progress. To ensure that assessment practice is every day, ongoing, purposeful, and informing planning & teaching, individual tracking is on paper and the shared responsibility of the whole class team. Assessment at home is also encouraged, supporting our partnership with parents and carers.

In addition to increase the bespoke nature of our curriculum provision, and based on OPAL steps, short interventions called **Resilience Building Programmes** (RBPs) can be planned for pupils with a particular short term need, or to boost progress in a particular area. These will often be cross-curricular in nature, such as **Sensory Processing, Peer interaction, Communication/Speech & Language** related.

OPAL statements are linked to the areas of learning and are important indicators of where children are in their learning. Knowing where they are providing pointers for the next steps in learning and so provides the basis for setting targets and for describing and measuring

progress. To ensure that our judgements are rigorous and valid, we work alongside other special schools to develop effective processes and moderate attainment evidence.

Annual Reviews

We will keep you informed of your child's progress towards the outcomes in their Education Health and Care Plan. You will receive information on your child's progress against these outcomes which are closely linked to OPAL statements on a yearly basis; this leads to the opportunity to set new outcomes with your child's teacher at their next annual review meeting. We will also invite health and care professionals to attend the Annual Review meetings whenever possible. Before the meeting you will receive the class teacher's annual review report which gives details about your child's progress towards achieving the EHCP outcomes. It is very important that you read and understand this information as it forms the basis of the review meeting. If you need help with translation or to go through the review report face-to-face before the meeting, please contact the office.

Life in Modern Britain and fundamental human values

Our school aims to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain and the vibrant and diverse communities of Leicester City in particular. We promote fundamental human values through teaching about democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. We follow the DfE guidance in teaching about religion to focus mainly on Christianity but also including the major faiths of the city, Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism.

Out of School Activities

The school organises a wide range of educational visits and activities for its pupils. We regard such activities as an important aspect of our curriculum, contributing towards our school aims.

As well as supporting and enhancing our curriculum, our out of school activities provide opportunities for staff and pupils to get to know each other on more informal basis. They help the children to become more mature, confident and independent.

Collective Worship

We have separate pathway assemblies each week led by the leadership team. These assemblies focus on a celebration of pupils' experiences and achievements through the presentation of certificates, stickers and awards. We sing school and seasonal songs and

share our learning. Other special assemblies take place throughout the school year, and many of these we welcome parents to join.

Religious Education

We teach Religious Education in accordance with the requirements of the Education Reform Act of 1998 and within the framework of the Leicester Agreed Syllabus, adapted to meet the needs of our pupils. We aim to promote values consistent with a caring, democratic and multi-cultural society.

Right of Withdrawal

Parents/carers may request in writing that their child be withdrawn from Religious Education lessons. However, requests for withdrawal are often based on a misunderstanding of the nature and function of RE and we would wish to discuss this further before a final decision is made.

Relationships & Sex Education (RSE)

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is now a statutory part of the English national curriculum and it forms one part of the PSHE area of learning (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education). At Oaklands we use the So Safe! Programme designed for SEND pupils to support them in understanding how to be safe in their personal relationships. Topics range from developing a social awareness of girl/boy, male/female relationships, to issues related to puberty. Pupils are encouraged to develop a positive image of themselves and awareness of appropriate public/private behaviours.

We will discuss the need for appropriate sexual information with parents/carers before pupils begin the programme. A copy of the School's *Relationships & Sex Education Policy* is available on request. Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from these lessons, but not from lessons that cover areas that overlap with the science curriculum.

As children with SEND are particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation we feel it is very important for our children to learn about their right to privacy, not to be touched without consent and wider relationships issues, including online communication. We hope that parents will support us in this as key part of our safeguarding duty. The NSPCC PANTS campaign is a useful resource for families if you want to discuss this with children in a non-threatening way: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/underwear-rule/>

Section 4: School Policies & procedures

School Policies

Oaklands has all statutory policies in place, including:

- Admissions
- Accessibility
- Equalities
- Behaviour and Physical Intervention
- Safeguarding & Child Protection
- Health & Safety

Most are available on our website; however, if you require a hard copy you can contact the office to request them.

Charging and Remissions Policy

Occasionally it will be necessary to ask parents/carers to make a contribution towards the cost of activities within and outside the school day. These charges are voluntary and no pupil will be excluded from that activity on the grounds that parents/carers are unable or unwilling to contribute. However, if not enough parents/carers contribute, the activity may have to be cancelled. In cases of genuine hardship, parents/carers are invited to apply in confidence to the Head Teacher for help in meeting some or all of the costs. We regularly review our charging policy and the latest version will be available on the school website.

Equalities and Discrimination

Everyone at Oakland is committed to equal opportunities and to developing an ethos in which all people can develop their abilities, confidence and self-esteem. We take all reasonable steps to ensure that there is no discrimination against any pupils, members of staff or other people working in or visiting the school on the grounds of disability, race, sex, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender re-assignment, pregnancy or maternity. We are very proud to be an Inclusion Quality Mark Flagship School.

Data Protection & Freedom of Information

Oaklands School and the Local Authority are registered with the Office of the Information Commission and we have appointed Primary World to act as our Data Protection Officers as required by General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). All personal data is held in strict confidence and will only be accessed by appropriate staff members who are aware of the law and the importance of privacy and accuracy. As the field of data protection is ever changing, we will constantly review our policy and practice in handling personal information. You will find a detailed **Privacy Notice** on our website.

School Security

We are very conscious of the need to ensure that the school is safe and secure. All outside doors to the school have security locks and all visitors must report to the main reception area, sign in and collect an identification badge.



Section 5: Governors and wider school and community links

School and Parent Governors

The Governors of the School make decisions about how the school is run. Governors' meetings are held four times a year and all parents are welcome to attend to listen to the proceedings (except where matters of confidentiality are discussed). Once approved and signed by the Chair of Governors all minutes of governors' meetings are available in the school office for anyone to read.

Governors are appointed to help decide what is taught; to contribute to the interviewing, selection and management of the staff; to consider policies including behaviour management and to ensure that the school budget is spent appropriately. Governors also have certain legal duties, powers and responsibilities. All decisions of the Governing body are made through committee and not by individual Governors.

The Governing Body consists of parents, LA nominees, the Head Teacher, staff and other members of the community. All Governors have voting rights, but not necessarily at all meetings. Governors usually serve for a period of four years. Elected governor vacancies are always well advertised.

The following people are the governors at Oaklands and can be contacted via the Head Teacher, the Chair of governors or the LA:

Mrs Sonia Barnes

Co-opted **Chair of Governors**

Mrs Sarah Osborne

Head Teacher

Mrs Nisha Stuart

Staff Governor

Mr Ahmad Khwaja

Local Authority Governor

Mrs Hilary Garnett

Co-opted Governor

Mrs Angela James
Ms Christine Lang
Mr Kulbinder Rai
Mrs Mahjabeen Gangat
Mr Daniel Spillane

Co-opted Governor
Co-opted Governor
Co-opted Governor
Parent Governor
Parent Governor

School Links

Our school is a very active member of the **City of Leicester Association of Special Schools (CLASS)**. This organisation aims to share expertise and resources to promote the progress, wellbeing and achievement of all Leicester city children with SEND.

We are also part of the **Inclusion & SEND Hub** and support the professional learning of colleagues across the city and county through their network and beyond. Vicky Bland, one of our Assistant Heads, is an SLE (Senior Leader in Education) for special education for the city and so is able to offer advice and training to mainstream schools.

DISCLAIMER: The information within this prospectus was accurate at the time of publishing; however, it may be subject to changes throughout the year as a result of legislative changes or school development work.