

# SEN INFORMATION REPORT

APPROVED OCTOBER 2018 – SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

## OUR PUPILS

### LEARN TO BELIEVE – LEARN TO ACHIEVE

At The Valley School, we welcome pupils with a range of Special Educational Needs (SEN). All of our pupils have learning difficulties and a large majority also have autism and/or speech, language and/or communication needs. We believe in “different for different”, so our aim is to treat every pupil according to their individual needs, preferences and the barriers that get in the way of effective learning.

Each of our pupils has an Education, Health and Care Plan naming The Valley School as the right place for them to learn. From time to time, pupils from The Valley School are able to join their peers in mainstream schools for some of their lessons.

Every pupil has an Individual Learning Portrait (ILP), which identifies their main barriers to learning and gives very specific and highly individualised ways of helping them to learn. Pupils, parents and carers help with writing the ILPs, which all staff use when planning lessons, setting targets and deciding on the strategies to help them learn.

Our pupils learn in small groups with other pupils whose needs are similar. Some of the classes span more than one National Curriculum year group. We focus on literacy and mathematics to support a wider curriculum. All pupils engage in “Learning 4 Life”, which combines the skills for independent living and the personal skills for becoming caring and compassionate members of the wider community.

Our pupils learn self-care, basic finance, home skills, cooking and the value of developing strong personal and work relationships. In KS4, pupils have the opportunity to take part in courses leading to GCSEs, BTec, Arts Awards and City & Guilds. Many of our pupils gain Arts Award accreditation and we are the only special school to have become an Arts Award Good Practice Centre in 2014-15. The following links will take you to the Arts Award website and an article about The Valley School.

Gives me space to concentrate,  
Respects others' right to learn.  
Everything is simply mad.  
Asks me what I think  
Tells me anything is possible.

Morgan

So I learn better in all lessons,  
Can help me to work  
Hope is always here  
Opens up our minds  
Opportunities are always here  
Listen to people

Ellie

<http://www.artsaward.org.uk/site/?id=2575>

[http://arts-support.trinitycollege.co.uk/pluginfile.php/5038/mod\\_glossary/attachment/235/The%20Valley%20School%20Arts%20Award%20case%20study.pdf](http://arts-support.trinitycollege.co.uk/pluginfile.php/5038/mod_glossary/attachment/235/The%20Valley%20School%20Arts%20Award%20case%20study.pdf)

Achieve

Calm

Humble

Intelligent

Eco-friendly

Very special

Energetic

Mathew

We encourage our pupils to become independent travellers and we work with families to make this a gradual and supported process. We also offer programmes in both Resilience (which helps pupils to develop a sense of well-being and to cope with setbacks) and Protective Behaviours (which teaches them how to keep themselves safe).

Our pupils have used social networking and recycling sites to fully furnish a "flat" to support their understanding of living independently and enjoying positive family and social time. Our year 11 pupils enjoy putting together a leavers' book and hosting a Leavers' Supper and Summer Ball. Other year groups host tea parties and a variety of other events throughout the year. We have an annual prize-giving and award ceremony, our Celebration Evening, allowing us to celebrate the wide range of externally accredited awards that our pupils receive.

## OUR STAFF

We have a very talented and passionate staff team. All our teachers have full Qualified Teacher Status or are on recognised routes to achieve this, and they are supported by a large team of highly-skilled Learning Partners. Our staff represent a wide range of ages and experience and come from Primary, Secondary and Special School backgrounds. Staff lists and responsibilities are available from our home page. We have a full-time business manager and a team of office staff to support the smooth running of the school. Our site staff work hard to maintain a very large school site. We are situated on a large and pleasant site with enclosed quads to house a range of animals, including our 2 school dogs, Doris and Alfie.



All our staff have gained Level 1 of the Autism Education Trust's Autism training and some go on to Levels 2 & 3. Some have also undertaken the 3 or 5 day TEACCH training in Autism. We are delighted to have been awarded full accreditation from the National Autistic Society. Staff have also been trained in the principles of Elklan, which is the best-known provider of courses for supporting pupils who have speech, language and communication needs. As a school, we use our training time to ensure that our staff fully understand specific syndromes and other conditions, such as attachment disorders. In addition, Sex and Relationships Education and the use of ICT and Technology to support learning for pupils with Special Educational Needs, is part of our staff training programme. As the needs of our pupils present us with new challenges, we embrace new learning and we are currently developing our use of signing to communicate with those pupils who need us to do so.

The best school to work

The most awesome school to go to

Jack

We have very close links with parents and carers to support pupils' wider needs. Our Senior Learning Leader ensures that we

plan carefully to support the medical needs of our pupils and we are committed, as

an entire staff, to support pupils to self-care and to become physically resilient and healthy. Pupils are able to access creative support for all health and emotional needs.

We have a dedicated area for our Speech and Language Therapists to provide excellent support for our pupils, with individual and group therapy in place. As essential members of the school team, they offer advice and support in the classroom. We offer individual and group instrumental lessons from our own team of musicians.

Occupational and physio therapists are welcomed into the school and help us to provide programmes for our pupils. We have on-site and remote technical assistance to run our extensive computer network and to develop mobile technology.

## OUR ENVIRONMENT

The size of our site means that there is plenty of space for pupils to develop skills for unstructured time and for keeping fit. We have external gym equipment and an outdoor play area with climbing and balancing activities. Pupils have been able to influence decisions about the school environment and are involved in looking after the animals. They have worked with "Groundworks" to landscape areas of the school, build decking and steps, re-plant areas and build safe areas for animals.

Horticulture is a curriculum subject from year 9 and we are looking forward to our own produce.

Gives me time to think with my friends

Treats others with respect

Hayden

We have created a calm and cohesive colour scheme for the corridors, involving staff, pupils and parents. "The Pit" houses the Performing Arts suite and "The Globe" has replaced the library as a vibrant and exciting place for pupils to access books, resources and Apple Mac computers. We have "The Sensory Room" and also "The Hub", to meet a range of sensory needs and for pupils who struggle to access their learning with other pupils. "The SpLD Base" offers individual programmes to support language and literacy development.

We have a full-size indoor gymnasium and extensive playing fields. In addition, all of our pupils in year 7 have horse-riding lessons.

## OUR PATHWAYS

Our curriculum model allows us to offer a variety of appropriate pathways for our pupils. Some are able to concentrate on academic progression and others are able to follow vocational routes. All of our pupils attend the local college in KS4 and are also involved in work experience placements. Over the last few years, all of our pupils have moved on to college courses and we work closely with the local college to make the transition positive and well-prepared.

Friendly

Unique

Nothing to fear

Mathew

All of our pupils access a broad and varied curriculum, with some topic-based work and integrated learning across a range of subject areas.

Progress Trackers are used to break down learning into very small steps so that progress is easy to track and teachers can plan carefully for each pupil's need. There is internal and external moderation of progress to ensure that target-setting is both aspirational and achievable.

## OUR PARENTS AND CARERS

We welcome frequent contact with our parents and carers. This begins before pupils start at the school and the relationship is central to each pupil's journey through the school. A full written report is compiled once a year and feeds into the annual reviews. They allow us to work together to ensure that we continue to provide the right learning experience for every pupil. Throughout the year, there are opportunities to meet every one of the teachers to discuss progress and to share successes.

We also invite families to join us for various musical events and a yearly School Production involving the majority of the school. There is a vast range of other regular events. We host parenting courses, workshops and visiting speakers. A strong team of volunteers support many activities during the year and help to raise money. In addition, parents and carers are welcome to contact the school as often as they wish and we try to ensure a swift and effective response at all times.

## OUR PARTNERS

We have very strong and established links with Woolgrove, which is our main feeder school. There is a full and responsive transition programme starting in year 5, to ensure that all our pupils are ready to come to The Valley School. We work well with other primary schools and an increasing number of secondary schools so that our pupils settle very well in a short time. Not all of our pupils join us in year 7, so links with other schools and with other agencies are crucial.

There is a Transition Support Worker employed by North Herts College but based principally at The Valley School. He is able to support our most vulnerable pupils to ensure that they are able to access learning and make the transition from school to college life.

We work extensively with Health and Social Care professionals, CAMHS and voluntary support organisations. We have strong links with Angels, The National Autistic Society and other specialised groups.

All of our pupils take part in work experience and we have strong links with a number of local businesses.

Teachers help pupils

They know what they're doing

And they know what you're struggling on.

Six

Cool

Hours

Of

Our

Lives

Tobey

## OUR FINANCES

Our budget priorities are aligned to the needs of our pupils and we ensure that our pupils have access to the equipment and facilities they need. Many of our pupils are eligible for the Pupil Premium.

## OUR LINK TO HERTFORDSHIRE'S LOCAL OFFER

For the Hertfordshire local offer of what is provided for young people with Special Educational Needs, follow this link

<http://directory.hertsdirect.org/kb5/hertfordshire/directory/localoffer.page>

## IF IT'S NOT WORKING...

We encourage anyone with a concern to contact us as soon as possible. We have a team of Learning Leaders and Senior Leaders who will work with you to solve any problems. Our Governing Body are easily accessible, highly-skilled and experienced. If necessary, we have formal complaints and appeals processes which you can access from the website.