

SEN INFORMATION REPORT

NOVEMBER 2020 (SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE)

LEARN TO BELIEVE – LEARN TO ACHIEVE

What types of SEN do we provide for?

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.

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.

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.

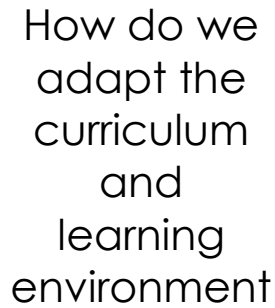
Our pupils learn in small groups with other pupils whose needs are similar. We focus on literacy and mathematics to support a wider curriculum.

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. This provides us with a wealth of strategies that are used to identify and overcome barriers to learning.

All of our staff are trained in Hertfordshire STEPS and are skilled in using a range of strategies related to behaviour for learning.

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, which are cultivated as part of Outdoor learning. Horticulture is a curriculum subject area and we are able to enjoy our own produce.

What is our approach to teaching pupils with SEN?



How do we adapt the curriculum and learning environment

In years 7 & 8, known as Lower School, we have a model that is based on good primary school practice, with a single teacher delivering the majority of the learning.

In the Upper School, you will see a model that is more akin to recognised secondary school practice, with specialist teachers for core subjects. Our pupils have the opportunity to take part in courses leading to GCSEs, BTec, Arts Awards and City & Guilds.

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 within their Outdoor Learning curriculum to landscape areas of the school, build decking and steps, re-plant areas and build safe areas for animals.

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 sensory spaces and also a targeted team within "Interventions", to meet a range of needs and for pupils who struggle to access their learning with other pupils. "Access" offers individual programmes to support removing barriers to learning.

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. There is a consultation evening for each year group, the yearly progress report and an Education, Health and Care Plan annual review, which fully involve the pupil and their family.

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.

Regular communication between home and school is encouraged, using Class Dojo, emails, phone calls or face-to-face.

Parents/carers are invited to events throughout the school year to celebrate achievements, foster our caring family ethos and enjoy our school performances.



How do we consult parents/carers and involve them in their child's education?

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.

We have very close links with parents and carers to support pupils' wider needs. 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.

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.

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. Regular progress meetings are held, inform future planning and to implement any necessary support. EHCP outcomes are a part of the ILP and shared with all relevant staff.

How do we assess and review pupils' progress towards outcomes?

How do we support pupils preparing for adulthood?

Youth Connexions Hertfordshire (known as YC Herts) are actively involved in Upper School plans for preparing for adulthood. There is a Transition Support Worker employed by North Herts College, who 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 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 wellbeing and to cope with setbacks) and Protective Behaviours (which teaches them how to keep themselves safe).

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.

We have a range of expertise and strategies that are used effectively. This includes a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing, Pupil Listener, access to the Mental Health Schools Team and the use of external agencies, such as Counselling for Schools.

The school has a significant focus on communication, as many situations arise out of frustration at not being able to identify or express emotions clearly.

How do we support our pupils to improve their emotional and social development?

What expertise do our staff have to support our pupils?

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 accreditation from the National Autistic Society. 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, Relationships and Sex Education and the use

of ICT and Technology to support learning for pupils with Special Educational Needs, are 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.

We have trained safeguarding officers to ensure that all pupils are effectively protected from harm and all of our staff are aware of their duty of care to keep children safe.

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.

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.

How will we secure specialist expertise?

We have our own expertise that we share as good practice to develop our staff.

We offer individual and group instrumental lessons from our own team of musicians.

How do we involve other organisations in meeting the needs of our pupils and supporting

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.

We work extensively with Health and Social Care professionals, CAMHS and voluntary support organisations. We have engaged with the Mental Health Support Team and have a team member allocated to us. We have strong links with Angels and regularly share information from DSPL2, about courses, workshops and support groups locally.

The Headteacher reports on all aspects of the school to the governing body and named governors are links to specific areas of the school. These governors monitor the provision and meet regularly with members of staff.

The school buys external monitoring to provide an independent view of the school's performance.


How do we evaluate the effectiveness of our provision?

How can parents/carers raise a concern or make a complaint?

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 highly-skilled and experienced, easily accessible via the school office. If necessary, we have formal complaints and appeals processes which you can access from the website.

Pupils are encouraged to talk to a member of their year group team or any member of staff.

Who can pupils contact if they have concerns?

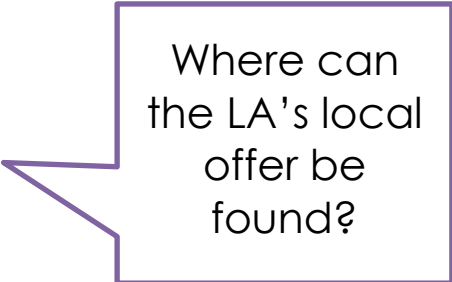


What support services are available to parents?

As the school is a specialist provision, everything we do provides a level of support. Our website has a dedicated area with links for parents to access support outside of school. Information is held by the SENCO that is shared at appropriate times and an integral part of the EHCP annual review process is providing information that is available to support specific areas of need and supporting with parent referrals to external support.

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

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/local-offer/the-hertfordshire-local-offer.aspx>



Where can the LA's local offer be found?