

## LOCAL OFFER



## THE LINK PRIMARY SCHOOL

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### About the school

The Link Primary School is an outstanding primary school (Ofsted 2019) and is part of The Orchard Hill College and Academy trust.

It is a small school with 57 pupils on roll. The school provides education for pupils mainly with speech, language and communication needs. A growing number of pupils have social communication difficulties due to their autism spectrum conditions. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an EHCP. Pupils mainly present with a primary and significant delay or disorder in speech, language and communication. The speech, language and communication impairment will usually be the primary concern. Any other difficulty such as hearing impairment, sensory integration needs or emotional and behavioural difficulties will be secondary to the language and communication impairment. Increasingly children accepted at the school have a dual diagnosis with both diagnoses presenting as significant barriers to their learning. Priority for entry depends on the child's Education, Health and Care Plan and initial assessment.

As a specialist school for children with speech, language and communication difficulties there are small classes with a high ratio of adults to children. We have seven classes, the majority of which have mixed ages and are grouped by learning style and ability. This ensures children work within a suitable peer group and that work is differentiated consistently to enable sustained progress.

A teaching block with facilities for enhanced occupational therapy was completed in 2015. This facility provides the children with larger classrooms and additional outdoor learning opportunities.

### Supporting children

Classes have up to 10 pupils. High adult to child ratio allows for some 1:1 work for each child across the school day. An individual learning pathway is devised and monitored by a collaborative team including teacher, speech and language therapist, occupational therapist and support staff.

The environment is modified to provide minimal distractions. Occupational Therapy sessions take place on an individual basis and in small groups across the week. The curriculum offers challenge with language practised and generalised across the school day.

Pupils are given opportunities to work independently on achievable and manageable tasks. A structured visual timetable and individualised schedules are used as a matter of course and for 'different' days or outings. Opportunities to practise emerging personal and social skills are given priority across the curriculum. Speech and language therapy is integrated into all aspects of the curriculum. Opportunities for small group work and 1:1 work takes place with the teacher and therapist to concentrate on IEP, therapy and curriculum targets.

OFSTED 2019 reported:

*Pupils thrive at Link Primary School. Staff are expert in communicating with pupils. They work tirelessly to develop pupils' confidence and their ability to interact positively. Pupils feel safe and happy. They play and learn together with minimum disruption despite their many varied needs.*

#### Assessing child progress

Following a baseline assessment a schedule of on-going assessment takes place throughout the year. A highly differentiated curriculum is delivered with opportunities to over learn and re-visit areas of the curriculum to ensure consolidation. IEP targets are linked to EHCP outcomes and are planned, monitored and reviewed by the school's multi-disciplinary team. In addition short term curriculum 'next steps' are planned and monitored by the whole team. Partnership working between teachers, parents, carers, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and external agencies provide an informed and accurate picture of the children's strengths, difficulties and progress. Parents, teachers and therapists contribute to the children's Individual Education Plans ensuring that aspirational goals are incorporated into their targets and reports on progress towards meeting targets are discussed.

#### Informing parents and carers

Formal and informal information sharing methods are used on a regular basis. We recognise the need for home school books and these are used in addition to Parent Mail across the school to inform parents/carers of day to day events. Bespoke support packages are in place for parents who want or would benefit from a more individualised approach to supporting their child's needs.

Formal progress review meetings take place termly and thorough reports are prepared for the Annual Review of progress towards EHCP outcomes.

Ofsted 2019 reported:

*Parents and carers appreciate the approach the approachable staff and the way in which the curriculum is planned to meet pupils' needs. Parents are real partners in their children's education at school and leaders work closely with them to ensure the best for all pupils. Parents are very happy with this relationship and with the school.*

#### Progress updates

Termly progress meetings that may include IEP or Annual review monitoring take place for each child to discuss progress towards meeting their EHCP outcomes. Informal meetings and telephone contact can be made at the convenience of staff and parents.

Parents will receive IEPs/class teacher/speech and language therapy and, where relevant, occupational therapy/music therapy and or drama therapy reports.

#### If a child is not making progress

Rigorous monitoring and evaluation takes place in order to review the effectiveness of every child's plan. If a child is not making the progress they should then programmes are reviewed and specialised interventions put into place in a timely way to ensure that children overcome any additional barriers so they begin to make at least the progress that would be expected.

#### Curriculum

We believe that children learn best when they enjoy and value coming into school to participate in an exciting, practical and relevant learning curriculum. Lessons and activities are planned to give children new experiences and to help them embed learning through hands-on approaches.

The curriculum offer supports the vision of the school "Linking hands to reach every child's potential" by giving pupils the opportunity to learn and develop with the support of collaborative team practice. We offer a lively and vibrant curriculum which studies core discrete subjects as well as cross curricular based topics in conjunction with individual educational outcomes from EHCP's. Our spiral Relationship and Health Education (RHE) Curriculum offers discrete topics which help our pupils develop their social skills and emotional regulation at their appropriate levels. A Curriculum of additional priorities called "The Link Priorities" underpin the National Curriculum offer. The use of child centred planning from individuals' EHCP long term targets help tailor the goals that we believe will make a difference to our pupils' achieving their full potential.

OFSTED 2019 reported:

*Leaders have well-designed plans for how subjects are taught so that the needs of all are met. As a result, pupils achieve well. Leaders show clear ambition and vision for the school. Staff are relentless in ensuring that pupils achieve their potential.*

#### Adapting for a child's needs

An individual learning pathway is devised by a collaborative team including teacher, speech and language therapist, occupational therapist and support staff. All staff are experienced in teaching pupils with speech, language and communication impairment and/or autistic spectrum condition.

Therapists work closely with children, parents, class teachers, occupational therapists, learning support assistants and external professionals to provide a whole school approach to improving the children's communication skills. A high level of visual support is offered including symbols and signs and Makaton. These methods support concepts and understanding.

#### Learning strategies

Small classes and high staff ratios mean that all children have a high level of individual support. Our school vision statement 'Linking Hands to Reach Each Child's Potential' embodies what we believe as a school which is that collaborative practice and additional support results in a quality offer where "children overcome barriers today so that they and their parents can look forward to a bright future tomorrow".

Language therapy is integrated into all aspects of the curriculum. Therapists work closely with children, parents, class teachers, occupational therapists, learning support assistants and external professionals to provide a whole school approach to improving the children's communication skills and attitudes that prepare them for the future.

A high level of visual support is offered including pictures and signing to support concepts and understanding. Pupils are provided with regular, planned opportunities to use and apply their skills across all subjects and settings. Children have regular planned access to community environments so that they can generalise their skills and learning.

Ofsted 2019 reports:

*Staff promote all pupils' personal development exceptionally well through a variety of additional activities and opportunities. Leaders firmly believe in the importance of pupils' understanding and experiencing life in the wider community as this helps them educationally and to learn how to keep safe.*

### Safeguarding

Ofsted 2019 reports:

*There is strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders make sure that all safeguarding checks are carried out efficiently and in a timely manner. Staff are trained well and kept up-to-date with the latest information about how to keep pupils safe. Staff demonstrate awareness and understanding of safeguarding around the school. All staff are vigilant about keeping pupils safe. Staff use all opportunities to teach pupils how to stay safe. Staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil.*

### Mental health and Emotional well being

We have an emphasis on whole person learning. We see difficulties and barriers as opportunities. We focus on developing quality relationships that will help us build resilience. Self -regulation of emotional and sensory needs is a priority area of personal development. The zones of regulation framework is embedded across the school and has impact with supporting children to manage their emotional regulation well.

Ofsted 2019 reports:

*Pupils behave well at this school. Classrooms are calm. Staff ensure that day to day routines are clear and easy to understand, so pupils know exactly what they need to do. This clear communication helps pupils behave well and reduces any anxiety.*

### Bullying

Please see our Behaviour and anti- bullying policies on the school website

### Accessibility

The school has undergone a period of improvement in terms of building and the surrounding school environment. The school is now more spacious and comprises of an OT room, assembly hall, sensory room, computer room, cookery room and a number of smaller rooms used for individual or small group work.

The increased outside space has expanded and learning beyond the classroom in the form of a sensory garden and fruit and vegetable growing is now able to take place. The children benefit from a large sunken trampoline in the outside environment. There are a number of small classroom areas for pupils who experience high levels of anxiety and require an individual curriculum offer.

### We work with

The local authority caseworkers and EP services are also involved in children's education.

Additional support services external to the school include physiotherapists, the visual and hearing impairment service, a behaviour consultant, CAMHS and parent in partnership or independent charities such as IPSEA.

### Specialist services and expertise

- Special support assistants
- Sensory processing support
- Speech, language communication support
- Autism spectrum disorder support
- Occupational therapy support
- School nursing services
- Access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
- Protocols for informing, engaging and empowering parents/carers
- Music Therapy
- Drama Therapy
- Yoga and Dance
- RDA Horse riding

Ofsted 2019 reports:

*Pupils gain valuable knowledge and experience of the wider world. They take part in an excellent range of activities. They learn through real life experiences such as local visits or specialist sessions like horse-riding. These activities promote pupils' increasing confidence and self-esteem.*

### Parental involvement

At the Link School, establishing and developing relationships with parents, carers and the local community is a central part of our philosophy. Children learn best when school and parents work together. We value the contribution that parents and carers make to our school and endeavour to provide many opportunities where parents are involved in school life. We have an active PTA called

The Link Association. They organise many fundraising and social activities such as children's discos and summer and winter fairs.

### Policies

A full range of our policies can be viewed on our website.

### A bright future

Our values of being child centred, nurturing, ambitious and team working are at the forefront of everything we do. They direct us to make good decisions and drive our commitment and behaviour.

Ofsted 2019 reports:

*Staff are extremely knowledgeable about their school community and are always seeking new, better ways to maximise learning for all. They ensure that pupils get the right help at the right time. Staff aim high for pupils.*