

Birchwood Community High School and Birchwood College Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Information Report

This information report is written for parents /carers who have children at Birchwood Community High School or Birchwood College, or who may be considering their children attending the school. (Birchwood College is closing at the end of this academic year, so will not be taking any more admissions). It explains how we identify and support young people with special educational needs and disabilities. This supports our SEND policy, which can also be found on the website. If you would like to discuss any of the information included in this report, or in the school SEND Policy, or if you have any further questions, please contact Jo Roscow (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator) via the school office or e-mail:

jroscow@birchwoodhigh.org

What is a special educational need (SEN)?

A young person is considered to have a special educational need if they:

- Have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her which is additional to or different from the provision made for other young people of the same age.
- Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age or have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age within the school.

The SEND Code of Practice (2014) identifies 4 different areas of special educational need. These areas are:

1. Communication and interaction.
2. Cognition and learning.
3. Social, mental and emotional health.
4. Sensory and/or physical need.

The purpose of identification is to decide upon the best action required to support the young person, not to fit them into a category. Some young people may have needs that relate to two or more areas. We feel that it is important to consider the needs of the whole person as part of the identification process.

Other factors which may impact on progress and attainment, but are not considered SEN are;

- Attendance and Punctuality
- Health and Welfare
- English as an Additional Language
- Being in receipt of Pupil Premium Grant
- Being a Child in Care

Which special educational needs and disabilities can the school and college provide for?

At Birchwood Community High School and College, we aim to meet the needs of all young people, with the support of outside agencies providing specialist advice when required. We are currently providing for

young people who have special educational needs arising from dyslexia, cognition and learning, dyscalculia, speech and language difficulties, autism spectrum, attention and hyperactivity, dyspraxia, sensory processing, visual and hearing impairments and specific medical conditions.

What are the admission arrangements for SEND students?

As the school provides for young people with a wide range of SEND, with support from the Local Authority (LA) where appropriate, the arrangement for the admissions of the majority of young people with SEND are consistent with the school's general arrangements for all other young people. In the event of over-subscription, a young person with SEND will not be given lower priority than another applicant. At the Year 6 annual review of Education, Health and Care Plans, the name of the school the young person wishes to go to is named on the final document. In deciding where this shall be, the LA takes into consideration the ability of the school to meet the young person's specific needs, the provision of effective education for other young people in the school and the most efficient use of resources. In line with the LA's admission arrangements, young people who have an Education, Health and Care Plan will be admitted to our school if it is named in the document, even if this is over and above the published oversubscription criteria.

Birchwood College, our sixth form provision, is no longer admitting any students as it is closing in July 2024.

How do we know if young people have SEND and need extra help?

The SENDCo works closely with primary school staff to identify students who will need additional support when they start High School. Information is provided about SEND students transferring from other schools at a later stage by their previous educational provider.

Student progress is monitored closely through regular assessment and observations by staff to identify any possible areas of need. Parents/carers and young people themselves can raise concerns with teachers or other members of staff at any time or approach the SENDCo directly. If necessary, the SENDCo and parents/carers will agree to refer students for more specialist screening and intervention from external agencies, e.g. from the Speech and Language Service, or the Educational Psychologist. Key pastoral staff (Heads of Year) and Heads of Faculty can also refer to the school's weekly Inclusion panel if they have concerns that a child is failing to thrive and may have a Special Educational Need that requires assessment.

The school and college maintain an up-to-date SEND Register, which is reviewed at least termly. Young people are removed from the SEND Register if they no longer fit into the definition given within the SEND Code of Practice 2014, and if their needs can be met through inclusive, adaptive teaching within the classroom. For monitoring purposes, they remain on the school's Additional Needs Register, which is fully

accessible for all staff to refer to for further information about individuals. SEND information for individuals is also accessible through Class Charts, the school's main information management system.

What do parents/carers do if they think their child has special educational needs?

If parents/carers think their child has special educational needs, they should contact the SENDCo (details above). Following these discussions, outside agencies may be consulted for further advice.

How will the school and college meet young people's needs?

The school and college adopt a graduated approach to meeting young people's needs. High quality teaching, addressing individual needs, is the school and college's first step in responding to young people who have or may have SEND. Work is appropriately planned to meet the needs of individuals, and their progress is carefully monitored.

Where necessary a young person may be placed into an additional intervention group for specific targeted support. This may be led by a teacher or Teaching Assistant (TA) however it will be planned and carefully monitored by the subject teacher. Where possible, the intervention will take place in the classroom and in-class Teaching Assistant support might be shared between individuals. However, it is sometimes necessary to withdraw students for individual/small group intervention, for example to develop literacy and numeracy skills, speech and language skills, or to receive support around emotional well-being. The work of the TAs is allocated and monitored by the SENDCo. Progress of students receiving intervention is reviewed at regular intervals. The Support Department run a homework club after school three times a week for students with additional needs.

The Ancora Centre is the base for the Support Department. It provides a safe, calm learning environment for a range of students with additional needs. Ancora is staffed by a team of specialist teachers and teaching assistants, led by the SENDCO. The key purposes of Ancora are:

- To provide multisensory lessons in literacy and numeracy as part of the curriculum for targeted students, taught by specialist teachers, to develop basic skills.
- To provide additional spoken and written English lessons for our EAL students.
- To provide a safe, quiet place in a nurturing environment at break and lunchtimes for students who may find break and lunch in the main building overwhelming.
- To support students who may need a temporarily or permanently reduced timetable
- To provide a base for external specialists for individual assessments and meetings with parents/carers, facilitating effective communication between partner professionals and school staff

Students who have an Educational Health and Care Plan, or who have been identified as having needs which cannot be met through quality first teaching alone, have a Student Passport. This is visible for staff on Class Charts and can be accessed online by parents/carers. The Student Passport outlines more personalised strategies which support the student and details any additional interventions they receive beyond the classroom, whether with school staff or external agencies. Where a young person needs highly individualised support an individual provision map may be written. It will contain the specific targets identified for the young person to work on, as well as details as to how these targets will be met. If a Child in Care has SEND, the details of how their needs will be met will also be included on their Personal Education Plan (PEP).

In some circumstances, where the young person is not making progress despite carefully planned support, further investigation needs to take place. The SENDCo is a qualified specialist teacher and assessor for Dyslexia and can assess children with whom there is a concern and write recommendations based on detailed cognitive assessments. These recommendations are placed into a report and shared with the students and their parents/carers. The recommendations are also shared with all staff working with that young person and form the basis of the planned support given.

With the consent of parents/carers, the school also obtains advice and support from other agencies, including Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, the Orthoptist, the Speech and Language Service, the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service, specialist teachers for the Visually and Hearing Impaired, Paediatricians and specialist nurses and the Educational Psychologist. All recommendations given are put into place and reviewed.

If a young person needs support which is significantly 'additional to' or 'different from' the provision made within the school, and it is felt that they would benefit from further additional resources not normally available within the school, the school may put in an application for an Educational, Health and Care assessment to the Local Authority (LA). The process and implications for this will be fully discussed with parents/carers and their views will be paramount. The school would draw upon the advice given by other professionals, as well as the impact of targeted support already received by the young person, and the opinions of parents/carers. Following this assessment, the LA may issue an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which will contain a series of outcomes, which would form the basis of provision within the school. Progress towards these outcomes would be evaluated regularly on an informal basis, and formally with parents and child, as part of a person-centred review, at least annually.

Having a diagnosis (e.g. of ASD or ADHD) does not necessarily mean that a young person will be given an EHCP, if their needs can be met with resources available within school. Each young person and family's needs are different and require individual consideration.

How is the decision made about what type and how much support young people will receive?

The Headteacher and SENDCo, with appropriate advice from external agencies where required, will allocate resources and support. Recommendations from appropriate professionals will be taken into account. Plans will be discussed with parents/carers and reviewed regularly. Our own internal assessment procedures will also inform the process and measure the impact of support provided. If a young person has an EHCP, the school has a statutory duty to ensure the support outlined in this document is provided.

How are the school and college resources allocated and matched to young people's special educational needs?

SEND provision within the school is funded through the notional SEND budget, which forms part of the wider school and college budget. The budget is managed by the Headteacher, in liaison with the SENDCo. Young people with an EHCP may receive additional money directly from the LA to meet the outcomes specified in their plan. Resources are allocated on a fair and consistent basis dependent on: the extent of available funds; the recommendations of external agencies; the availability of targeted Local Authority funding and priorities established within the annual school improvement plan.

How will the curriculum match young people's needs?

All young people have entitlement to a full curriculum providing that their difficulties do not detrimentally affect the entitlement of others. In the first instance, lessons will be adapted and scaffolded to suit a variety of learning styles and needs. A small number of students who arrive in school with the lowest Key Stage 2 Standard Scores for English and Maths, or those who have very specific Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs or Social Communication needs, will be placed in a smaller class with access to increased adult support and targeted in-class interventions. These students are taught in the same small groups for Science, EPR, History, Geography, Computing, Music and Drama in Key Stage 3. They will have the opportunity to take Entry Level Certificates in Maths and English as a preparation for their GCSE exams in Key Stage 4. The groups have been given the name of Parvis Magna, which means 'Greatness from small beginnings.'

In Key Stages 4, students are guided by staff to follow appropriate courses. There are small Parvis Magna groups for Maths, English and Science in Years 10 and 11 for students with the most significant learning needs. Y13 students are completing the final year of their courses and the low teacher to student ratio within this year group enables SEND students to access high quality, personalized teaching and feedback within a nurturing environment.

Some students with additional needs may require a reduced timetable for a short period or for a longer time as appropriate. Students who suffer from severe anxiety or who have been out of school due to emotional or medical needs, may need a slow integration back into the classroom. In the longer term, a small number of students may have reduced option choices due to either learning, medical or emotional needs. These students can have supervised study in the Inclusion Room and will complete classwork or revision set by teachers.

What happens if young people need extra help to access examinations and assessments?

Measures are put into place to ensure that some young people with SEND fairly access examinations and assessments. These will depend on the level and type of needs and include:

- Extra time for assessments
- The use of a reader/computer reader
- The use of a scribe or a computer for word processing
- Adaptations to the font or colour of the assessment paper for young people with visual difficulties.
- Rest breaks

Please note that not all young people with SEND qualify for exam concessions – a rigorous testing process is implemented and young people need to meet a threshold set by the exam boards to access this support.

How do parents/carers, young people and staff know how young people are doing and how are parents/carers helped to support their child's learning?

Assessment data is sent home twice a year, once in the spring term and once in the summer term. There is also an annual Performance Review with form tutors or subject teachers, along with specific information events designed to help parents/carers support their children at key points, e.g. Information Advice and Guidance Evenings for each year group and The Futures Evening for Year 9. For some students with additional needs and specific plans, further meetings will take place with the SENDCo to discuss progress and identify next steps. The young person's views will be part of this process. Part of the plan will include any advice on how parents/carers can support their child's learning.

What support is provided for young people's overall emotional health and wellbeing?

The school and college have strong pastoral structures. A range of strategies is put in place to improve attendance and promote positive behaviour, including the whole school Attitude to Learning system and rewards procedures. Young people in Key Stages 3 and 4 have a form tutor who is primarily responsible for their care, guidance and support in the school. Each tutor group belongs to a year group, led by a Head of Year and supported by an Assistant Head of Year. Each tutor group also belongs to one of four Houses and each House is led by one of the Heads of Year. House competitions and charity projects contribute to the school's community values and commitment to positive wellbeing. Birchwood College students have access

to support from the Head of College and a Higher-Level Teaching Assistant who works closely with targeted post-16 SEND students.

The Polaris Building is the pastoral centre of the school. The Pastoral Manager (Amanda Crompton) is also the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and is the Designated Child Protection Officer. A full time Emotional Health Mentor and a Behaviour Support mentor provide individual and small group intervention related to emotional health and wellbeing. They contribute to pastoral support plans if students are displaying particularly complex behaviour patterns related to their emotional and mental health needs.

The school is part of the Warrington 'Future in Mind' project, which aims to protect and improve young people's mental health and wellbeing and provides access to support from a CAMHS Senior Mental Health Practitioner who is a Cognitive Behavioural Specialist. As part of this project, the school is able to refer students who may be struggling with their emotional health to the Mental Health Support Team if they do not meet the criteria for a full CAMHS assessment and intervention.

The school has several members of staff who are trained Mental Health First Aiders. Posters are displayed around school and there is advice on the school website to explain how young people can get support for emotional and mental health issues from key staff in the school and outside agencies. The profile of positive emotional and mental wellbeing is being raised through assemblies and the PSHE curriculum; young people will explore different coping strategies and be better informed about sources of support. All staff have received training on basic approaches to use for students with fragile emotional and mental health and they know how to signpost them towards more specific types of support.

Students who might feel overwhelmed by the busy nature of school life during unstructured times and who need a quiet environment at break and lunchtime are invited to go to Ancora during these periods of the school day and enjoy their leisure time there with a small number of other students. They have the opportunity to eat with some of the Teaching Assistants and play games with each other. For students in Y11 who find unstructured times difficult, there is a quiet room allocated for them in Birchwood College, which is supervised by the Assistant Head of Year 11.

Student Voice is strong in the school and there are a variety of ways young people can share their views. Young people who have formal reviews with the SENDCo around their particular needs are asked to contribute their opinions about how they wish to be supported and to reflect on the progress they are making. Their views are also reflected in their Student Passports.

We have comprehensive policies to deal with medical issues, based on current good practice and accepted guidelines.

What training are the staff supporting children and young people with SEND had or are having?

Training is a high priority within our school. We offer training and self-help opportunities through access to in-house or private courses, provision of help sheets outlining strategies to support particular types of need or guidance towards useful websites. We believe that young people with special educational needs require highly trained teachers to meet their needs. The SENDCo regularly attends network meetings in order to keep up to date with local and national developments. All new teachers and support staff undertake induction on taking up a post, and this includes meeting with the SENDCo and members of the Support Department to explain the systems and structures in place around the school's SEND provision and practice, and to discuss the needs of individuals. Training is provided according to the needs of young people in the school. Training needs are reviewed regularly and adapted accordingly. Specialists, such as ADHD nurses, are invited into school to run training sessions for staff working with particular students. Staff who support students with visual or hearing impairments have had specific training on these areas. We currently have staff trained to deliver Speech and Language programmes and to deliver specific Literacy programmes to develop phonic skills. Recent whole school SEND training includes ADHD, Memory for Learning, Inclusive Teaching, Scaffolding and Trauma Informed Practice. Training has also been delivered on the development of strategies to support EAL students and those with Speech, Language and Communication Needs.

The school is currently undertaking the ADHD friendly school's status following a training programme for all staff delivered by the ADHD Foundation in Autumn 2022.

How do the school and college prepare and support young people at key transition points and moves between educational settings?

Before young people join the school in Year 7, discussions take place between primary and secondary school staff to identify the strengths and needs of individuals. Assessment data and SEND information is passed to our staff. All young people experience two transition days in the summer term of Year 6, where they follow a typical timetable and engage in team-building activities. Young people who have been identified as needing enhanced transition are invited to additional visits where a more tailored programme is delivered in smaller groups. Where necessary, students can also have individual visits.

The transition from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 is considered carefully and additional support is given to SEND students when choosing their options. The school's Careers Adviser meets with students who have an EHCP at several points in Year 9, Year 10 and Year 11 to ensure they are planning thoughtfully for the next

stage of their education and for adulthood. If students plan to transfer to a post-16 college, the SENDCo from their chosen college is invited to their Y11 Annual EHCP review so a suitable transition programme can be implemented. This may involve additional visits supported by TAs from our school.

The school's Careers Adviser works closely with students in the College who have additional needs to help them with applications for Higher Education, Apprenticeships or employment. This supplements the general programme of Information, Advice and Guidance delivered as part of the College curriculum. The Higher-Level Teaching Assistant attached to SEND students in the sixth form also provides bespoke support to individuals where needed.

If young people with additional needs leave the school at any point to join another establishment, the SENDCo discusses individual needs with the SENDCo at the new setting and passes files on. All moves to and from other schools / settings are managed by the school or college to ensure that transition for young people is as smooth as possible.

How will young people be included in activities outside the classroom including school trips and provision for access to after school clubs?

Our school and curriculum are fully inclusive and accessible to all young people. Any particular needs will be taken into account when planning trips and after-school clubs to ensure that all students are able to take a full and active part in school life. Parents/carers of young people with additional needs will be consulted to ensure optimum provision at all times. We track engagement of SEND students within all extra-curricular offers.

How accessible is the education setting environment?

The building is accessible to wheelchairs. There are 8 disabled toilets across the school and College site and access to disabled changing facilities. The physical environment is reviewed regularly to ensure full accessibility for all. We endeavour to remove any barriers to communication through regular review of need. Some adaptations to the physical environment include flashing bells to support students with hearing impairments, lifts in buildings with more than one storey, ramps for wheelchair access and high visibility paint on stairs for young people with visual impairments. The school has an Evacuation Chair to support young people with physical disabilities during fire evacuations and training is provided annually for this. The school employs two tutors to come in for a total of 3 days a week to support students whose first language is not English. These members of staff also help the school to communicate with parents/carers whose first language is not English. These tutors provide small group, individual and in class support.

How do the school and college support young people with medical conditions and disabilities?

The school and college recognise that young people with medical conditions should be properly supported so that they have full access to education, including school trips and Physical Education. Some students with medical conditions may be disabled and where this is the case, the school will comply with its duties under the Equality Act 2010. Some students may also have special educational needs and may have an Education, Health and Care Plan, which brings together health and social care needs, as well as their special educational provision. The SEND Code of Practice (2014) is followed. The school has an accessibility plan, which it updates annually. This details the school's specific targets with regard to increasing accessibility to children and parents with disabilities. These include access to the curriculum, the physical environment and written information. The plan is part of the school's constant drive to remove barriers to any people with a disability.

How are parents/carers involved in the school and college?

Parents/carers can ring the school or college office to ask the relevant member of staff to contact them about specific concerns they may have. In addition, parents/carers are routinely invited to discuss the progress of their children, either as part of Performance Review Evenings or individually with particular members of staff, such as the form tutor, subject teacher, Head of Faculty/Department, Head of Year, Assistant Head of Year, Pastoral and Deputy Pastoral Manager or the SENDCo. This strong communication should ensure that it does not come as a surprise to a parent/carer to learn that their child is being identified as having SEND.

Who can parents/carers contact for further information?

For general school-based information, parents/carers should initially contact their child's form tutor. Form tutors may be able to answer questions themselves but will refer them to the relevant colleague if necessary. If parents/carers have specific questions relating to special educational needs and disabilities, they should contact Jo Roscow, the SENDCo, via the school office or by email jroscow@birchwoodhigh.org or via the Teaching Assistant who is the young person's Keyworker. The SEND governor is Kelly Leonard. Messages for the SEND governor can be passed on via the school office. If parents/carers wish to make a complaint about any aspect of SEND provision, they should follow the usual Complaints procedure, which can be found on the school website.

Parents/carers can also seek advice from the Warrington SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (www.warringtonsendiass.co.uk). The service is based in New Town House, Buttermarket Street, Warrington, WA1 2NH. It is led by Iain Macdonald (Tel: 01925 442978; imacdonald@warrington.gov.uk). Warrington Local Authority's Local Offer for SEND can be found on their website: www.warrington.gov.uk