



**Birchwood**  
THE CREDO SCHOOL



Specialist Provision  
at Birchwood Community High School

**MELIORA | CONSILIUM**



**Ut unusquisque  
viam inveniatur”**

*“So that each one may find their way”*



**We believe that every child deserves to feel safe, supported and understood.**

**Our approach is centred on strong relationships, personalised support and helping each child find their own path.**

Welcome to The Credo School, a specialist provision within Birchwood Community High School, part of One Community Trust.

We would like to offer you a very warm welcome to our school community. Birchwood Community High School is a vibrant, inclusive mainstream secondary school built on the core values of aspiration, knowledge and kindness. We are proud to be an OFSTED-rated “Good” school. Our most recent inspection (December 2024) recognised that *“the school has a strong sense of community spirit. Pupils are warmly welcomed into the Birchwood family... Pupils are confident to display their individuality in a place where difference is celebrated.”*

The Credo School is a specialist micro-school within Birchwood, designed to support students with a range of special educational needs. Our provision is built around strong relationships, personalised support and a deep understanding of each child as an individual.

The Credo School is made up of two distinct provisions: Meliora, our autism (ASD) provision, and Consilium, our social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) provision. Together, they enable us to provide both structure and guidance, ensuring that every student is supported in the way that works best for them.

Our vision is simple: to create a school where every child feels safe, supported and valued. Through guidance, care and clear pathways, we help every child develop confidence, build independence and find their own way.

# AIMS & VALUES

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## The Credo School was created “To guide, to support and to help every child find their direction.”

At The Credo School, our approach is rooted in care, clarity and a deep understanding of each child as an individual. We are committed to creating an environment where every student feels safe, supported and able to succeed. Through strong relationships and personalised pathways, we help each child grow in confidence and find their own way.

### Our Aims

At The Credo School, we aim to:

- Provide a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment where every child feels valued
- Support each student’s social, emotional and academic development
- Deliver personalised learning that reflects individual strengths and needs
- Build confidence, independence and resilience
- Prepare students for successful futures beyond school

### Our Mission

Our mission is to provide specialist support through guidance and structure, ensuring that every child is understood, supported and empowered to succeed. Through the nurturing approach of Consilium and the structured pathways of Meliora, we work alongside students to develop the skills, confidence and independence they need to navigate both school and life.

### Our Vision

Our vision is to create a school where every child feels safe, valued and able to thrive. We strive to ensure that each student is supported to develop academically, socially and emotionally, enabling them to grow in confidence and independence and to find their own path.



**Often the most vulnerable need the adults to step up. Lots of schools shy away from this, but some embrace their social responsibility and deliver.**

Gary Cunningham, *One Community Trust CEO*

## Our Aims

At The Credo School, our values underpin everything we do. They shape our environment, our relationships and the way we support every child on their journey.



## MEET THE TEAM

### **Samantha Rigby-White**

Sam is one of the deputies at Birchwood and has worked across a range of schools and phases for the last 25 years. Originally trained as a primary school teacher, Sam honed her skills in mainstream secondary education, supporting students with special educational needs and spending 10 years as a Special Educational Needs coordinator (SENDCo).

After twelve years in mainstream, five as a senior leader, Sam moved into alternative provision, leading an AP that had some of the strongest outcomes in the country. After six years, she returned to the mainstream sector as deputy head at Birchwood High. Her passion and commitment for supporting the hardest to reach students has never waned and the development of specialist SEND resourced provisions is something she has huge passion and belief in. Sam is also a Specialist Leader in Education (SLE) in the area of Special Educational Needs but is also a mum to an autistic daughter so understands the challenges as a parent.

SO EACH MAY FIND THEIR WAY



# THE FACILITIES

The facilities at Credo School are thoughtfully designed to provide every child with the best possible support for their individual needs. Purpose-built spaces - including calm rooms, sensory areas and outdoor environments - enable staff and pupils to work collaboratively to overcome barriers to learning in a safe and nurturing setting.

Our versatile multipurpose space is used to deliver occupational therapy, including sensory circuits, and offers opportunities for children to co-regulate alongside skilled staff.

In addition to our classrooms, a range of dedicated intervention spaces support personalised programmes tailored to each pupil. These include opportunities to work with our school therapy dogs, take part in social skills groups, and access targeted speech and language support, ensuring every child can thrive and reach their full potential.



**This provision is exceptional and that's from the heart. From the staff, the environment, the place has been life changing to us! Madison is completely thriving and enjoying school for the first time.**

**I would seriously recommend this provision to anybody; it's just such an amazing place!**

Andrea Mason, Parent





We help students understand themselves and navigate their own path.



SO EACH MAY FIND THEIR WAY



THE  
**Meliora**  
CENTRE

At Meliora, we provide a structured and supportive environment where students can develop confidence, independence and understanding. Through personalised pathways and clear guidance, we help each child navigate their own journey.



## The Meliora Centre

The Meliora Centre is a specialist resourced provision for up to 16 students across Key Stages 3 and 4. All students have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) with a primary need of autism.

Each class is carefully structured, with up to 8 students supported by a minimum of 3 members of staff, including subject specialists at Key Stage 4. This ensures a high level of support, consistency and understanding for every student.

Within Meliora, students follow a bespoke curriculum designed to meet their individual needs. Alongside academic achievement, the curriculum focuses on key areas of development including social communication, social interaction, sensory processing, anxiety management and flexible thinking.

We recognise that autism exists on a spectrum and that every student experiences the world differently. Our approach is therefore centred on adapting to each individual, providing the structure, support and understanding they need to thrive.

At Key Stage 3, students access both an academic curriculum and a specialist programme tailored to their needs, including occupational therapy and the development of essential life skills.

At Key Stage 4, pathways are personalised and flexible, offering a combination of formal qualifications and vocational opportunities. This supports students in developing independence and preparing for life beyond school.

**We provide structure, clarity and support to help every student navigate their own journey.**



## MEET THE TEAM

### Joanne O'Brien

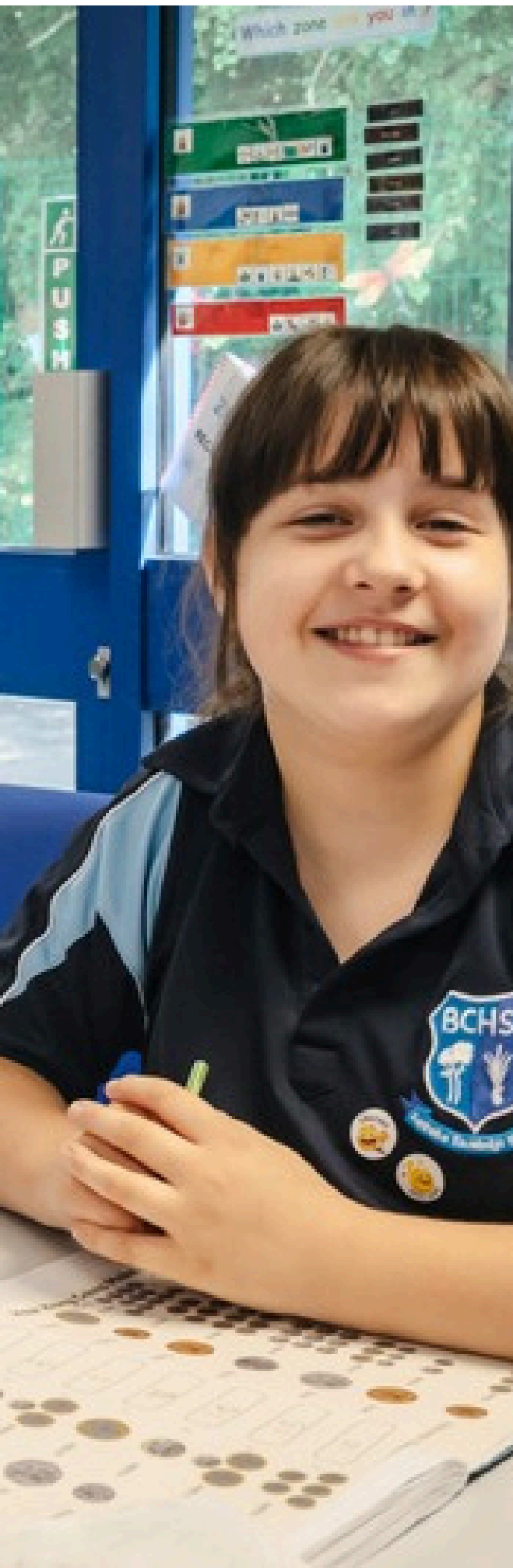
Jo is the Special Educational Needs coordinator for the Credo School and is also the Provision leader for the Meliora Centre. Jo brings over 20 years of experience working across a wide range of educational settings and phases. Originally trained as a secondary Physical Education teacher, she then honed her leadership skills in pastoral care when she took on the role of Head of Year, where she developed significant expertise in supporting both vulnerable students and those with special educational needs.

After 19 years in mainstream education, Jo moved to Birchwood and played a key role in the establishment of Meliora, where she continues to demonstrate her strong commitment to supporting students with autism. She is trained in 'Autism Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (AuDHD), and Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA)'. Jo's professional practice is further enriched by her personal perspective as a parent of a nonverbal child on the autism spectrum, giving her a deep, empathetic understanding of the challenges faced by families and a compassionate approach to supporting students.

SO EACH MAY FIND THEIR WAY







**SO EACH MAY FIND THEIR WAY**



## **Our Approach and Ethos**

Within our specialist provision, we create a calm, inclusive environment where each student is recognised for their strengths and supported in their development. Our approach is built on a flexible curriculum that responds to individual learning styles, interests and goals.

We prioritise regulation strategies and adaptive policies that promote positive behaviour, emotional well-being, and a sense of security. Our approach to behaviour, uniform, attendance, rewards, and trips is designed to be responsive and respectful of each child's needs, ensuring a supportive and consistent environment.

Developing social understanding and communication is central to our work. Students benefit from a range of structured opportunities, including 1:1 support, small group work and personalised learning, helping them to build confidence and form meaningful relationships. Access to a dedicated calm and sensory space further supports both regulation and targeted learning.

Our bespoke timetables run separately from mainstream classes, and are carefully designed to provide a low-distraction environment, allowing students to focus and engage at their own pace. Learning is enriched through access to specialist facilities across the school, broadening experiences and supporting a well-rounded curriculum.

Student voice is an important part of our provision. We regularly gather feedback to ensure that what we offer remains dynamic, responsive, and truly centred on the students' needs and preferences.

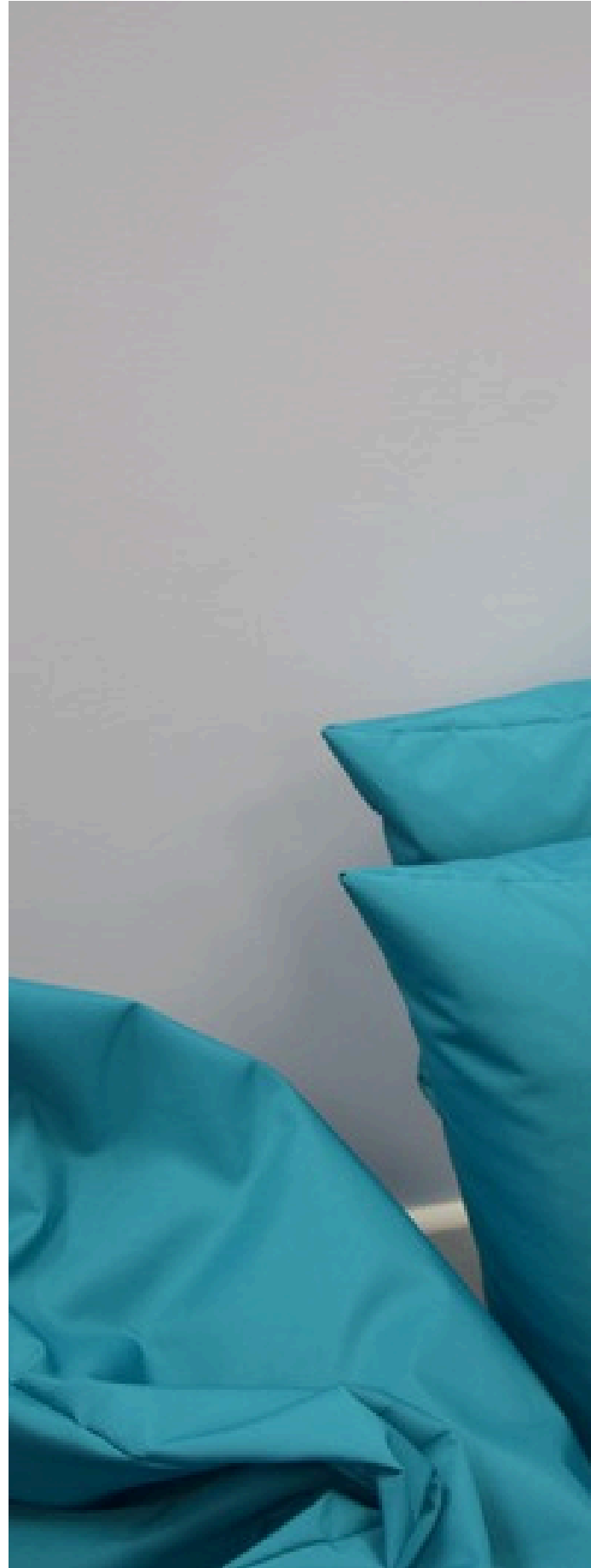
Together, we foster a respectful and empowering community where students can develop academically, socially and emotionally, and move forward with confidence.

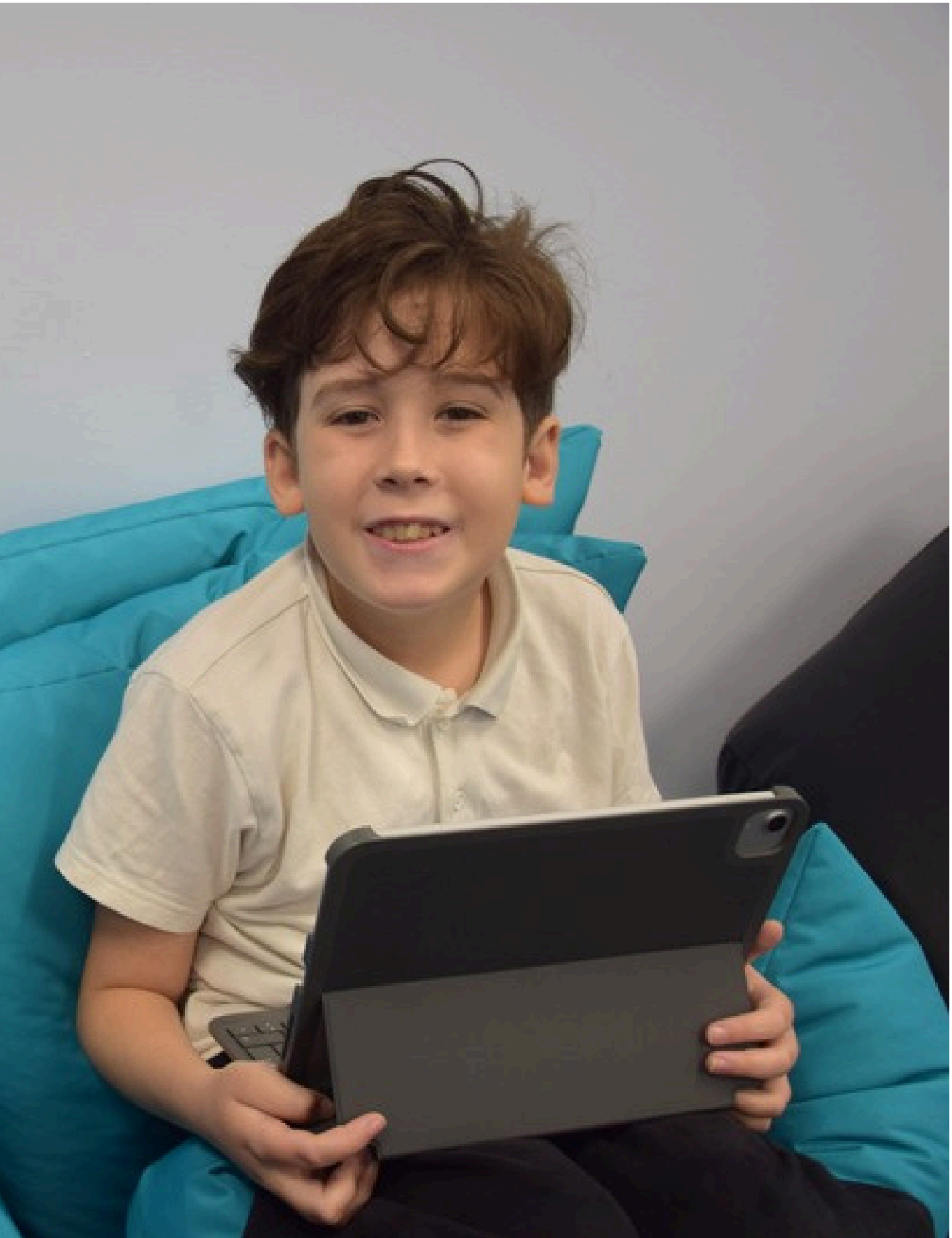


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I like doing stop animation, cooking lessons and going on trips. My favourite trip was Lego Discovery. I like my teachers. My teachers help me. I like the calm room, sensory room and playing outside.

Eden, Year 7







## Curriculum Offer and Assessment

The curriculum within Meliora consists of core subjects, English, Maths and Science and a range of other appropriate areas of study.

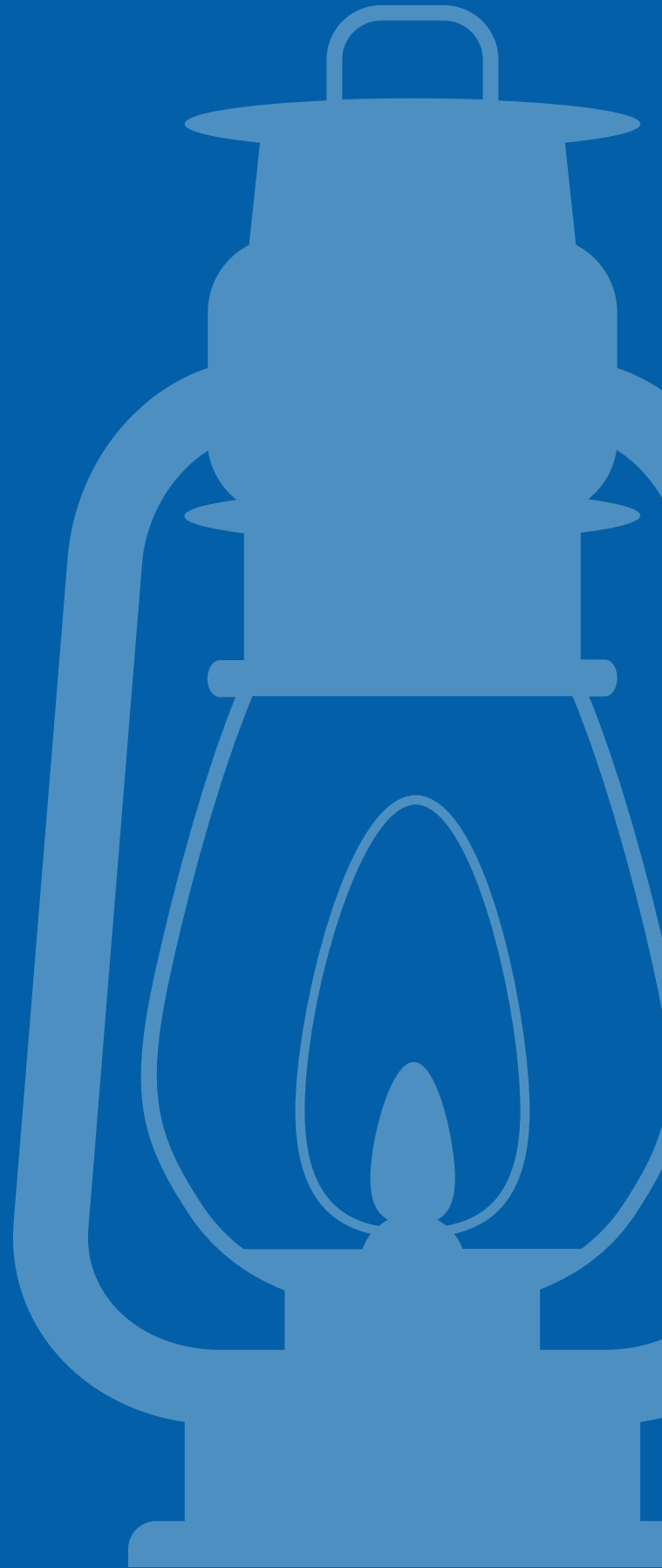
Subject Allocation (Fortnightly)	KS3	KS4
English	8 lessons based on pathways curriculum. 2 lessons Comprehension box/1-1 reading	6 lessons taught by subject specialist – Entry Level/Functional skills/GCSE considered 2 Lessons Comprehension
Guided Reading	2 lessons	
Maths	10 lessons based on white rose or KS3	6 lessons taught by subject specialist – Entry Level/GCSE considered
Science	4 lessons KS3	6 lessons taught by subject specialist – Entry Level considered
Geography	2 lessons	2 lessons - Entry Level considered
History	2 lessons	
RE	2 lessons	
AQA Unit Awards		1 per half term bespoke topics (examples; environment)
PE/Sport	4 lessons core PE	4 lessons core PE
PSHE/RSE/PD	2 lessons	2 hours year includes careers education, work experience
Creative Learning/Technology	2 hours Art   2 hours DT (once per half term food tech)   2 lessons ICT /Computing   2 lessons music 2 lessons LRC (offsite)	2 hours Art   2 hours DT (once per half term food tech)   2 lessons LRC (offsite)
Social skills	2.5 lessons	2.5 lessons
Nurture/Mindfulness	Daily Intervention	Daily Intervention
Enrichment	3 lessons (can be off sight)	3 lessons (can be off sight)
ASDAN Personal Effectiveness Qualification (PEQ)		6 lessons
Personalised intervention	4 lessons: Spelling, Timetables, Motor skills, Phonics, Speech and Language	2 lessons, Spelling, Timetables, Motor skills, Phonics, Speech and Language
Life Skills - travel, shopping, buying tickets, looking at timetables, menus, diet		3 lessons

*This is an example timetable. Please note individual timetables may differ and be subject to change.*

Upon entry, students are assessed to establish a baseline that reflects both their academic abilities in English and Maths, as well as their holistic development. Holistic progress is formally assessed at key points throughout the year enabling staff to track personal, social, and emotional growth. Academic progress is monitored through regular assessment, providing ongoing insight into student understanding. End-of year assessments include a repeat of the initial baseline tests to clearly demonstrate individual progress and development over time.



**We walk alongside every child, providing guidance, care and stability.**

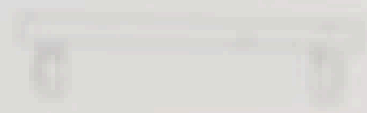


# THE Consilium CENTRE

At Consilium, we recognise that learning can feel challenging at times. Our approach is rooted in care, consistency and strong relationships. We walk alongside every child, helping them feel safe, supported and ready to succeed.

ARE VALUED  
ARE AMAZING  
ARE LOVED

MATTER!



which



## The Consilium Centre

The Consilium Centre is a specialist provision for up to 24 students across Key Stages 3 and 4, all of whom have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) with a primary need of social, emotional and mental health (SEMH). The provision includes two Key Stage 3 classes and one Key Stage 4 class, offering a structured and supportive environment for learning.

At Key Stage 4, students may follow a personalised pathway, which can include a blended approach with access to selected mainstream lessons where appropriate. All students benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum, with opportunities to study a range of academic and vocational subjects, alongside meaningful qualifications and targeted support in line with their EHCPs.

Our approach is rooted in a trauma-informed understanding of behaviour and emotional development. We use the principles of regulate, relate, and reason to support students in developing self-awareness, positive relationships and the skills needed to succeed both in school and beyond.

Classes are supported by a consistent and experienced team, with a minimum of three staff members, including subject specialists at Key Stage 4 and a dedicated provision leader. This ensures that students are supported within a stable, nurturing environment where they can feel safe, understood and ready to learn.

**Through strong relationships and consistent support, we help students feel safe, understood and ready to succeed.**



## MEET THE TEAM

### **Daniel Gibbons**

Dan is the Inclusion Manager within the Credo School and operationally leads SEMH support across the Consilium Centre.

Dan completed a degree in Sports science before gaining employment as a Youth Engagement Mentor in Alternative Provision (AP). He spent seven years working in AP across Key stages 3 and 4 and then took the skills he had mastered into mainstream education.

Dan spent three years designing, then leading a mainstream in-reach AP before moving to Birchwood. He passionately believes that every student can succeed, is trained in Neuro Linguistic programming and uses this in his daily practice to support our hardest to reach students.

SO EACH MAY FIND THEIR WAY







## SO EACH MAY FIND THEIR WAY



### Our Approach and Ethos

Within the Consilium Centre, we create a safe, nurturing environment where students feel understood, supported and able to rebuild confidence. Our approach is rooted in strong, trusting relationships and a commitment to supporting each young person both emotionally and academically.

We view all aspects of our provision through a trauma-informed lens, recognising that behaviour is a form of communication. Through consistent routines and clear expectations, we support students to develop emotional awareness and self-regulation, creating a sense of stability and security.

Our work is guided by the principles of regulate, relate and reason, enabling students to feel calm, build positive connections and begin to reflect on their experiences and choices. This relational approach underpins everything we do and supports the development of respectful behaviours and meaningful relationships.

Opportunities for personalised support, small group learning and targeted interventions allow students to re-engage with learning at a pace that works for them. We place a strong emphasis on developing confidence, resilience and the ability to manage challenges both in and beyond the classroom.

Student voice plays an important role within Consilium. We listen carefully to students' experiences and perspectives, ensuring that our provision remains responsive, supportive and centred on their needs. Together, we foster a calm, respectful and supportive community where students feel safe, valued and empowered to move forward with confidence.



# THE STUDENT

## Le’Naya D’aguilar-Stevens

When I first joined the provision, I felt like Mr Gibbons was the only teacher I could really trust. He speaks to me like a young adult and always tries to understand how I’m feeling by putting himself in my shoes. Now, I feel like the unit is a safe space for everyone, even with more students.

Staff are fair, honest and reasonable, and that makes a big difference. If I ever feel overwhelmed, I know I can ask for a few minutes to step outside and calm down without getting into trouble, which really helps me manage my emotions. I enjoy the variety of subjects we study, and it’s good having different staff to talk to. If Mr Gibbons is busy, Miss Brown is always there, and we get on well - she has a similar sense of humour to me. I always feel valued and respected here.

## Selina Nelson (Le’Naya’s Mother)

Lenaya was diagnosed with severe ADHD at the age of six, and at the time, we received very little support in understanding what that meant. Instead, I was often made to feel like I was the problem.

Her transition from primary to high school was, in all honesty, a disaster. The demands of school completely overwhelmed her. She began forming unhealthy friendships, getting into trouble outside of school, and things quickly became very difficult both at home and in school. In many cases, a child like Lenaya may have been permanently excluded - but not at Birchwood. They never gave up. They worked tirelessly to understand her needs and to put the right support in place, not just in school, but at home as well.

The alternative provision has been life-changing. Lenaya is now thriving -- not only in school, but in her life beyond it too. For the first time, I feel like we are truly understood and supported. I have never come across a school that ‘gets it’ in the way Birchwood does. They never made me feel judged or blamed. Instead, they worked alongside me, always focused on finding solutions.

If you saw Lenaya today and compared it to where she was just a year ago, you wouldn’t believe it was the same child. I cannot express enough gratitude to Birchwood and the staff who supported us. They have made a real difference to our lives.”



## Curriculum Offer and Assessment

The curriculum within Consilium consists of core subjects, English, Maths and Science and a range of other appropriate areas of study.

Subject Allocation (Fortnightly)	KS3	KS4
English	10 lessons	8 lessons taught by subject specialist (Entry Level/GCSE considered)
Maths	10 lessons	7 lessons taught by subject specialist (Entry Level/GCSE considered)
Science	6 lessons KS3	6 lessons taught by subject specialist (Entry Level/GCSE considered)
Project Based Learning (Humanities)	4 lessons	
AQA Unit Awards/ASDAN		6 lessons
PE/Sport	4 lessons core PE	3 lessons core PE
PSHE/RSE/PD	2 lessons including careers education	2 lessons including careers education & work experience
Creative Learning/Technology/ICT (Arts and Technology subjects)	4 lessons	4 lesson
Personalised intervention/Behaviour intervention (EHCP related)	4 lessons	Daily Intervention
Nurture/Mindfulness	Daily Intervention	Daily Intervention
Enrichment	4 lessons (can be off site)	4 lessons (can be off site)
Life Skills - travel, shopping, buying tickets, looking at timetables, menus, diet	2 lessons	1 lesson

*This is an example timetable. Please note individual timetables may differ and be subject to change.*

Upon entry, students are assessed to establish a baseline that reflects both their academic abilities in English and Maths, as well as their holistic development. Holistic progress is formally assessed at key points throughout the year enabling staff to track personal, social, and emotional growth. Academic progress is monitored through regular assessment, providing ongoing insight into student understanding and progress. End-of-year assessments include a repeat of the initial baseline tests to clearly demonstrate individual progress and development over time.

## Policies and Procedures

Most of the policies we follow in the provisions are the same policies as the mainstream school.

There are separate policies for:

[Assessment & Reporting Policy](#)

[Attendance Policy](#)

[Behaviour and Relationships](#)

[Restrictive Interventions and Reasonable Force](#)

[Confiscation/Searching/Screening](#)

[Therapy Dogs](#)

[Uniform](#)

[Wilful Damage and Vandalism](#)



**Please arrange a visit so you can truly experience what makes the Credo school so special. A very warm welcome awaits.**





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