

Birchwood Community High School 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 who may be considering their children attending the school. 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

As well as supporting students in mainstream, we also have a 16 place Exceptional Provision for students aged 11-14 in Key Stage 3. Places here are allocated by the Local Authority (LA) and are for students with autism who have an Education, Health and Care Plan and whose needs cannot be met within a mainstream setting.

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 provide for?

At Birchwood Community High School, 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, mental health difficulties, 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 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. If your child is transferring from primary school to secondary school, to apply to Birchwood Community High School, you should follow the same procedures as applying for any other state funded school through the LA. In the event of over-subscription, a young person with SEND will not be given lower priority than another applicant.

The school follows the procedures set down at national and local level for admitting students with, or being assessed for, an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). 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.

Mid-year admissions

If a student currently attends secondary school, parents/carers should contact the School Admissions Department at Warrington Borough Council for a mid-year admission form. All admission enquiries and applications must be made via Warrington Borough Council and not Birchwood Community High School directly. If your child has an EHCP, then an amendment will need to be made naming Birchwood Community High School as the identified provision following the LA Annual Review procedures.

Admissions to the Exceptional Provision

Places at the Exceptional Provision for autism based at Birchwood Community High School are allocated by the LA and not by the school itself. To arrange a visit to the Exceptional Provision please contact the Lead Teacher, Mrs Jo O'Brien via the school office or email: jobrien@birchwoodhigh.org

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, Occupational Therapy Service, external Mental Health Services or the Educational Psychologist. Key pastoral staff and Heads of Faculty can also refer to the school's weekly Inclusion Panel if they have concerns that a student is failing to thrive and may have a special educational need that requires assessment.

The school maintains 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 meet young people's needs?

The school adopts a graduated approach to meeting young people's needs. High quality adaptive teaching, addressing individual needs, is the school's first step in responding to students who have or may have SEND. Work is appropriately planned and scaffolded to meet the needs of individuals, and their progress is carefully monitored. Subject teachers are responsible for maximising progress in their academic area. Following further assessment, should additional support be required, a plan will be discussed between parents/carers, the student and the SENDCo which will be shared with all staff working with that individual. The plan will be monitored regularly. Assessment of needs forms the next stage of the planning.

For students who require additional support and are funded through an Education, Health and Care Plan, a team of Teaching Assistants (TAs) provide in class support. This is often shared between students.

As far as possible, students stay in the classroom but sometimes it is necessary to withdraw them for individual/small group intervention, e.g. to develop literacy/numeracy skills, speech and language skills, social skills or emotional wellbeing. Programmes are delivered by trained TAs. The work of the TAs is allocated and monitored by the SENDCo. Progress of students receiving intervention is reviewed at regular intervals. Where possible, intervention sessions take place during tutor time or enrichment time and any interventions that take place during curriculum time are arranged to ensure that students miss as few lessons as possible. We do not believe in students missing their break and lunchtimes to complete intervention activities as these are the times when they can socialise and reduce sensory and cognitive overload. The Support Department also runs 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 TAs, 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 within the Salus Suite 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 to conduct 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 an individual 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 personalised 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. With the consent of parents/carers, the school can request advice

and support from other agencies, including Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, the Orthoptist, the Speech and Language Service, Children and Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS), specialist teachers for the Visually and Hearing Impaired, Paediatricians, 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 LA. The process and implications for this will be fully discussed with parents/carers and their views, as well as those of their child, will be paramount. The school also draws upon the advice given by other professionals, as well as evaluating the impact of targeted support already received by the young person. 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 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 LA 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 English, Maths, Science, EPR, History, Geography, Computing, Modern Foreign Languages and Reading in Key Stage 3. They will have the opportunity to take Entry Level Certificates in Maths and English in Year 9 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 Stage 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 needs.

The Auxilium Centre, our new Alternative Provision, is designed to provide comprehensive support and opportunities for a small number of identified students who have significant social, emotional and mental health needs who may require additional assistance in their learning and behaviour development. The curriculum encompasses a wide range of activities tailored to address both academic and behavioural needs. Some of the activities students in the Auxilium Centre engage in include: core subject lessons in English, Maths and Science and academic skill-building exercises; behavioural interventions delivered individually and within small groups to support them to demonstrate positive behaviour and social-emotional development; enrichment and rewards activities which enable them to explore their interests and talents through a variety of creative and sporting team-building tasks beyond the traditional classroom setting. The progress of students in the Auxilium Centre is evaluated regularly and if sufficient improvement has been made, students can return to their usual classes or adopt a hybrid approach where they attend some lessons in the main school and some in the Auxilium Centre. Some students with the most significant levels of need may move to external special provision following their time in the Auxilium Centre so their needs can be met most effectively.

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 in the Ancora building if they are in Year 7-10, or in the Study Room in the One Community Trust Building if they are in Y11. They will complete classwork or revision set by teachers.

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

Some students with SEND may need special arrangements to ensure they can fairly access public examinations and internal assessments. The measures put in place 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
- A prompt
- A smaller room

Please note that not all young people with SEND qualify for exam concessions – a rigorous testing process is implemented, evidence is needed that the access arrangements are the usual way of working and young people need to meet a threshold set by the exam boards to access this support. The SENDCo liaises with the exams officer to ensure that necessary applications to the Joint Council for Qualifications are made and Access Arrangements are put in place.

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?

Parents/carers receive three reports during the year. The first, sent home in the autumn term, will report on Attitude to Learning and Attendance while the other two, sent home in the spring and summer term, will also feature clear assessment and progress information. In addition, there is an annual Parents' Evening for each year group 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. The SENDCo reviews all assessment data of SEND students to monitor progress and amend levels of support if needed. The SENDCo attends all Parents Evenings and is contactable by phone or email at any point during the academic year.

For some students with additional needs and specific plans, further meetings will take place with the SENDCo, sometimes with other external professionals too, 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. For students with an Educational Health Care Plan there will be a statutory Annual Review meeting at which the EHCP will be formally reviewed. A representative from the LA may attend this review.

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

The school has 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. Students 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.

The Polaris Centre is the pastoral base 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 Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) 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. Assistant Heads of Year also deliver structured mentoring programmes if additional support is required.

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 CYPMHS 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 CYPMHS 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. Some staff have been trained on how to teach Mindfulness and can support students to self-regulate.

Students who might feel overwhelmed by the busy nature of school life during unstructured times and who need a quiet, supervised environment at break and lunchtime are invited to go to the Salus Suite 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 the One Community Trust building, 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.

The school has additional policies for Behaviour, Standards and Discipline, Child Protection, Anti-Bullying and a Safeguarding Statement to ensure that all students are kept safe. These can also be found on the school website.

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

Training is a high priority within our school. SEND training is a regular feature on the school's Continuing Professional Development calendar. We offer training and self-help opportunities through access to in-house or private courses, provision of guidance outlining strategies to support particular types of need or signposting towards useful websites. We believe that young people with special educational needs require highly trained teachers to meet their needs. The SENDCo regularly attends LA 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 and Speech and Language Therapists, 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, De-Escalation Strategies 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. Several members of the pastoral team and SEND team have received Mindfulness training and some members of the pastoral team have completed a training programme on how to support students who are experiencing

Emotionally Based School Avoidance. The school has been awarded the ADHD Friendly Schools Award following a training programme for all staff delivered by the ADHD Foundation in Autumn 2022. Refresher training is available for staff who joined us after this.

How does the school 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. The SENDCo and/or key pastoral staff attend Annual Reviews, Child in Need meetings and Early Help meetings where appropriate during the year prior to transition. Assessment data and SEND information is passed to our staff. All students experience two transition days in the summer term of Year 6, where they can familiarise themselves with the new setting 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. Representatives from post-16 education providers attend the EHCP Annual Reviews for Year 10 and Year 11 students to support and discuss post-16 pathways. The school then plans a series of transition events where necessary (such as additional visits and taster sessions) to support the move to post-16 provision. Student Passports and any additional information (for example Access arrangements, specialist reports etc.) are shared with post-16 colleagues prior to students starting at college.

If students 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. Students with SEND are included in all trips and residentials following appropriate risk assessments to ensure safety is maintained. 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 majority of the school buildings are situated at ground floor level. There are lifts available in the two-storey teaching blocks. The buildings are accessible to wheelchairs and wheelchair ramps are also available. There are handrails fitted on steps and stairways. There are 8 disabled toilets across the school 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 and high visibility paint on stairs for 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 4 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 does the school support young people with medical conditions and disabilities?

The school recognises 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.

We have comprehensive policies to deal with medical issues, based on current good practice and accepted guidelines. Systems and policies are in place for the administration of medicines and individual care plans are in place where appropriate.

How are parents/carers involved in the school?

Parents/carers can ring the school 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 Parents' 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.

Parents/carers are also invited to take part in an annual survey where their feedback will be used to inform school improvement. They are invited to attend end of year celebration Awards Evenings, SEND coffee mornings/afternoons, whole school assemblies and Sports Day.

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 Reverend Stuart Nixon. 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

Useful websites

www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

Offers advice, information and help to families, professionals and dyslexic individuals.

www.autism.org.uk

Offers autism advice, support & services

www.adhdfoundation.org.uk

Offers ADHD advice, support & services

www.advancedsolutions.co.uk

Offers support for young people and their families living with neurodevelopmental conditions, learning difficulties and associated mental health needs.