

ACORN PARK SCHOOL



Acorn Park

Post 16 Prospectus





Welcome to Acorn Park

We provide students with a supportive learning environment, whilst preparing them for adult life.

Student wellbeing is a high priority – this helps our students to reach their full potential.

This prospectus tells you about the learning opportunities we provide in Post 16 at Acorn Park School.

Meet our School Leaders



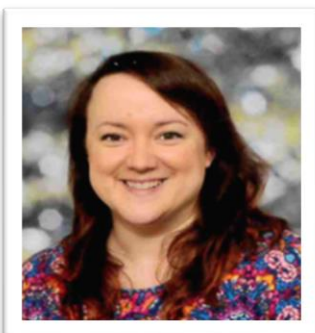
Tracy Walker
Head of Sixth form

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Karen McAtear
Deputy Head (Formal Pathway)

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Emma Willis
Head of School (Formal Pathway)

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"This is an Outstanding school"

Ofsted 2024

Our Mission

We will care for and educate our young people, empowering them to reach their full potential, to think big and dream bigger!

Our Values

Our values are the central principles that impact our practice, how we work as a team, how we build our core methods and how we achieve our mission.

We Care

We are courageous in advocating, educating, and caring for every young person, confident in our purpose to promote kindness and respect.

We Strive

We are striving for a better future by always doing our best with the children we work with. Our inventive efforts support young people at Acorn Park to aspire to healthier futures.

We Grow

We help children fulfil their personal growth and build positive relationships. Young people are empowered to reach their full potential.

We Thrive

We believe that by being reliable and consistent in our therapeutic practices; by advocating for young people and promoting our values, young people will thrive on the next step of their journey.

“When we had meetings before starting Acorn Park, we were asked what we wanted for him. We always replied for him to be happy and have a life. Thanks to you and your wonderful team, this has come true.”

Parent Feedback

Our Goals for our Students

- Gain qualifications or accreditations.
- Keep themselves safe and healthy.
- Have skills to live independently.
- Develop as good citizens.
- Be ready for their next step to work or further education.

Our Post 16 students access a wide range of personalised learning, extracurricular and enrichment opportunities. Each student has an individual learning plan.

Recent plans have included:

- Practical & community learning:
 - ✓ Travel training
 - ✓ Work placement
 - ✓ Communicating with others
 - ✓ Life skills
- In house Learning:
 - ✓ Portfolio course work
 - ✓ Blended Learning
 - ✓ Class and group work
 - ✓ Communication and teamwork
 - ✓ Subject specific learning from specialist teachers

In summary, we provide a highly personalised supportive learning environment that helps students achieve their future aspirations, underpinned by our focus on student well-being.

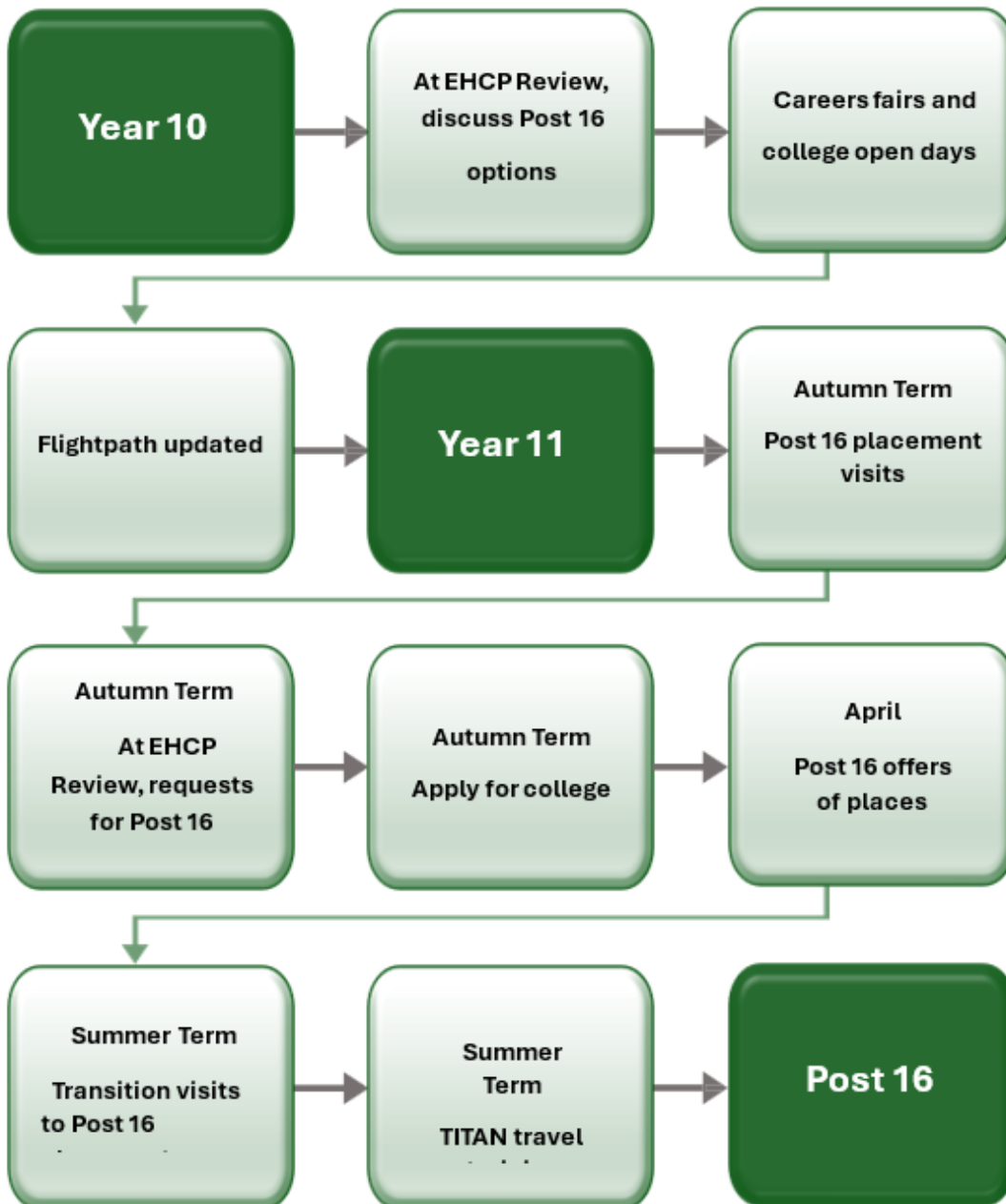
“This offer is transformative in helping students to be fully prepared for life when they leave Acorn Park”

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Applying to Post 16

Applications are welcome from Y10 and any time after this to discuss a personalized learning offer for you.

You can register an interest using our form and at your Y10 or Y11 EHCP review year (please ask us for a Registration of Interest form).



"Pupils want to be the best they can be"

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Growth, Resilience, Independence and Talent

We know that some of our students need flexibility within their curriculum and significant support to develop as independent and resilient citizens.

For this reason, we have created an approach that underpins our entire curriculum and supports our pupils' futures.

What is the G.R.I.T approach?

1. An approach to learning that supports the National Curriculum.
2. A flexible programme from 14+ that leads to relevant qualifications and experiences preparing students for adulthood.
3. Focus is on a core offer in all areas of academic and personal development which include areas of individual interest and meaning for pupils.
4. Supports pupils to make excellent progress so that they can:
 - ✓ Read, write, calculate to functional levels.
 - ✓ Use ICT to functional levels.
 - ✓ Keep house.
 - ✓ Eat healthily
 - ✓ Manage their finances.
 - ✓ Stay safe and well.
 - ✓ Go to work.
 - ✓ Understand the law.
 - ✓ Be included in the community.

"The school has carefully crafted a curriculum"

Ofsted 2024

Growth

- The core subjects – maths and English for everyday life is taught daily and embedded in cross curricular learning.

Qualifications that Link to...

- Skills for life and work.
- Further education, and work delivered with a formal approach.
- G.C.S.E. qualifications in subject specific options and English and maths. (For example, G.C.S.E business studies, I.C.T, and science).
- An expectation that all students will be working towards a L2 in English and maths. (for example, functional skills English and maths).
- Vocational learning from entry level through to A level.

Resilience

- PSHE / RSHE – taught as discrete lessons weekly.
- SMSC / British Values
- Forest School
- Becoming
- Mindfulness
- Kooth
- Careers guidance

“Provides our pupils with access to ongoing education in a therapeutic environment and small community of their peers.”

School Psychotherapist 2025

Independence

- Financial Skills
(e.g., Wages and budgets for the home).
- Healthy living
(e.g., Cooking, exercising, accessing services).
- Home skills
(e.g., Doing the laundry in the life skills house).
- Careers
(e.g., C.V. writing, job fairs).
- Living within the law
(e.g., Rules and consent).

Talent

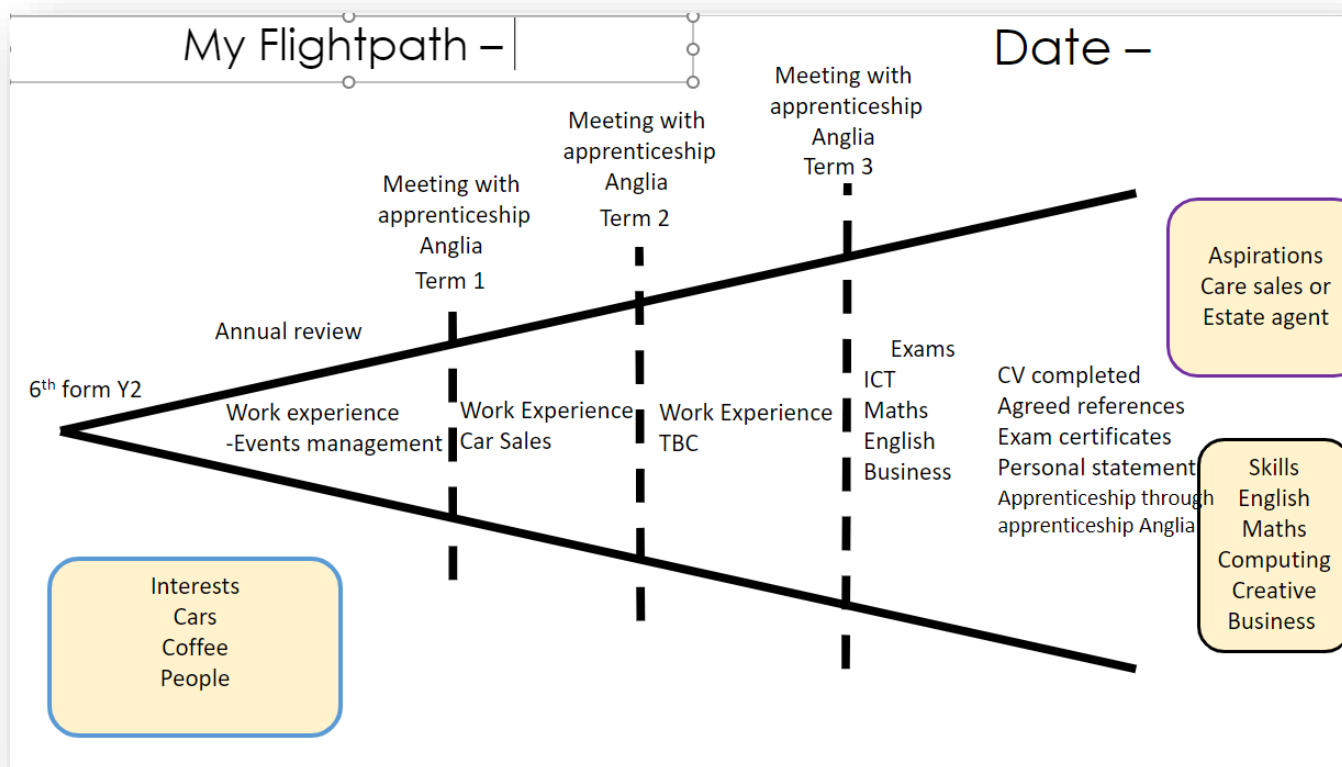
- Work Experience (e.g., Bespoke internships, volunteering, and work experience).
- Work-related qualifications and taster sessions.
- Trips and visits.
- Special Interests (e.g., fostering links to careers and further education).

All our Post 16 routes have some overlap because GRIT underpins each route. However, learning is always tailored to meet each student's level of needs.

“helps pupils to secure the important independent skills they need to keep themselves healthy and safe as they move towards adulthood.”

The Mpanga Sixth Form Centre

Here is an example of our personalised flight paths that inform progression routes...



All students will receive personalised careers advice and guidance from in-house and external advisors. All students will leave with evidence of work-based learning, with an agreed reference and a Curriculum Vitae that showcases skills learnt.

Pathways

There are three different routes of learning offered within Acorn Parks, sixth form centre, curated to the needs of the individual and based on their aims for further education; our routes 1-3.

"A comprehensive enrichment programme ignites new interests for pupils. Whether tending to the herbs in the polytunnel, or visiting the birthplace of Shakespeare, pupils engage exceptionally well in what the school provides for them."

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Route 1

Route 1 is ideal for students working towards *Entry Level 1-3*.

This route combines both qualifications and awards. Students work towards an *Entry Level ASDAN Qualifications in Employability*. This helps to prepare them for further education and work.

This is a flexible and engaging course that helps students develop skills for learning, work, and life. It includes maths and English at a functional level.

Personal Progress spans a wide range of successes, from trying new experiences to applying basic skills in a range of familiar contexts.

Students complete a portfolio of work, which is externally assessed.

This course is delivered using a rich mixture of practical, class-based and therapeutic learning.

Units support the four *Preparing for Adulthood* (PfA) strands:

- **Employment:** Students develop work-based skills that link to internal and external work placements.
- **Independent living:** Students explore a selection of units that support them with skills for independent living, including key skills for managing a home (e.g. cooking, cleaning, and budgeting).
- **Good health:** Students explore topics of personal care, mental wellbeing, using medical services and safe and happy relationships.
- **Community inclusion:** Students explore the local community, whilst gaining skills for shopping, how to act safely and using transport. They also develop skills for sport and leisure. This is all done with an extra focus on developing communication.

Find out more about the four PfA strands at: preparingforadulthood.org.uk

What can it lead to?

This course helps students to advance their learning, become ready for work and develop skills for a fulfilling adult life.

“The school works with parents to provide the bespoke curriculum pupils need to prepare them for their next stages.”

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Case Study Route 1

Student 1...

Had previously struggled with communication and presented at lower than age rated expectations.

They required quite a lot of adult support to engage in learning and had limited social skills and no awareness of danger.

They struggled to maintain focus and would often disengage from learning.

Through the route 1 pathway, they were able to develop skills to support communication, independent living.

This enabled opportunities to develop skills for further education and employment.

They were able to secure a place at a local college and have continued their studies.



"Students come with a range of challenging needs. I'm proud of our team and the amazing work they do for students every single day."

Deputy Head & SENDCo

Route 2

Route 2 is ideal for students working at *Entry Level 2* up to *GCSE (Grade 4)*. These students typically need a course that is designed to enhance their:

- Skills for the workplace
- Personal and social skills
- Life skills
- Independence
- English & maths

This route leads to externally assessed qualifications.

Students work towards *ASDAN Qualifications in Employability*. The route contains a blend of formal learning and practical life skills. They consist of core units, that all students complete, and optional units – linked to the student’s interests and work goals. Students are given the opportunity to develop skills for the workplace through bespoke work placements both in school and the wider community. All students are supported to achieve English and maths qualifications from Entry Level 2 to GCSE.

Examples of Core Units

- English
- Maths
- ICT
- Learning to Learn
- Employment
- Personal Development

Examples of Optional Units

These optional units allow learners to check out their abilities and preferences before choosing their employment routes.

- Animal Care
- Administration
- Performing Arts
- Art and Craft
- Sport
- Childcare
- Gardening
- Car Maintenance
- Customer Service
- Enterprise

This route will be of particular benefit to students who:

- Would like to progress onto other further or higher education courses.
- would benefit from an alternative approach to teaching and learning.
- Would like to test out vocational routes to inform their career choices.
- For whatever reason, have not previously achieved in education and need to develop their English and / or maths.

The course allows learners to achieve the size and level of qualification that is most suited to their stage of learning. One key benefit is that students can work towards qualifications in smaller steps.

“helps pupils to achieve a range of qualifications, including, where appropriate, GCSEs.”

Ofsted 2024

Case Study Route 2

Student 2...

Due to their ASD diagnosis, they struggled with behaviour at school and at home, this had impacted their communication and learning skills.

Because of their previous academic experiences, they had high levels of anxiety, and this had significantly impacted their ability to make and maintain friendships.

This meant they had missed significant amounts of schooling and had little interest in education and no clear idea for future employment. Making them high risk of becoming NEET (*Not in Education or Employment*).

Through the route 2 pathway they were able to develop confidence in their personal and academic abilities.

They were able to explore their love of sport and use this to support their academic studies. They took part in weekly gym sessions to support them to develop their independence whilst developing their sporting ability and improving their communication skills. This enabled them to pursue their chosen career pathway.

At the end of their studies, they developed the confidence to apply to local colleges and secure a place studying for a sports coaching qualification.



"I kind of wasn't bothered and wasn't doing any work. Then I came here, and the staff here helped me change all that."

Post 16 Student

Route 3 GCSE – level 4 to A Level

Route 3 is ideal for students who already have their GCSE's and want to develop and extend their academic studies.

The programme of study is provided in small groups with specialist subject teachers. To develop further knowledge of subjects. This enables access to further education at Level 3 and above. Alongside this, students develop skills for FE. and the workplace.

This is a careers-based programme that helps students to extend their academic knowledge whilst developing skills for further education and the workplace.

Case Study Route 3

Student 3...

Arrived at Acorn Park their paperwork detailed that they could not tolerate holding a pen or English lessons. Student 3 achieved Grade 7 in English alongside GCSE's in Maths and Science, going onto study computer Science at Suffolk new college, finally moving onto study a degree at UEA.



“A comprehensive enrichment programme ignites new interests for pupils.”

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Life Skills

Our life skills lessons take place both on and off site. Lessons include learning in our onsite house, where students practice vital skills for running their own home.



"a clear focus on the specific and individual needs of pupils"

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Work Experience

All students have access to work experience tailored to the individual needs of the student. Students learn skills and resilience for the workplace and gain valuable skills for their C.V.S.

Students are also given opportunities to talk to our onsite and external careers advisors about possible apprenticeship and employment opportunities.



"students in the sixth form secure valuable work experience placements with outside employers."

Ofsted 2024

A Cafe Park, our purpose-built Coffee shop, and Horse Box initiative.

For some, work experience out in the community is not something they are ready for. If this is the case we can offer a range of onsite options, including positions in our purpose-built coffee shop. The coffee shop also offers support to those already working in the community to further develop skills following feedback from their existing placements.

The aims of the project are to:

- Develop an innovate differentiated in house resource in the form of a coffee shop that can provide meaningful vocational learning.
- To provide opportunities for communication and positive social interactions.
- To develop a workable business model.
- To develop the business to enable students to transfer skills and qualities learnt to access vocational learning in the community.
- To support students who access a bespoke pathway to have access to learning that provides functional English and maths, allowing them to develop confidence to develop skills and interests.
- To support students to gain skills and qualities to access FE and training.

Students whilst working in the coffee shop develop transferable skills by completing accredited hygiene certificates.

They will learn about opening and closing checks, HACCP, deep cleaning, rotation of stock, expenses, record keeping, ordering, till use, dietary requirements and allergens, money management, and invoicing.

They will also learn how to use the equipment and take part in learning about coffee and how to become a barista.

They will look at communication and customer service, and host both internal and external events through the cafe / horse box. The cafe /horse box initiative has strong curriculum links to *English, Maths, Science, Food, ASDAN, PSHE and Business studies.*

Acorn Park Student's New Enterprise

Students from [Acorn Park School](#) have opened a new school coffee shop, a project that aims to provide them with the opportunity of setting up and running a business.

They created a logo and menus, conducted product research, and took a Level 2 food hygiene certificate. They also presented business plans and applied for positions within the coffee shop.



The project has been fantastic in enabling students to develop workplace skills and providing cross-curricular links with subjects like money, English, IT, and DT.

David Discusses Article March 2024



"The significant in-house offer, such as working as baristas running the school café. This offer is transformative"

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Travel Training

All students are provided with TITAN travel training.



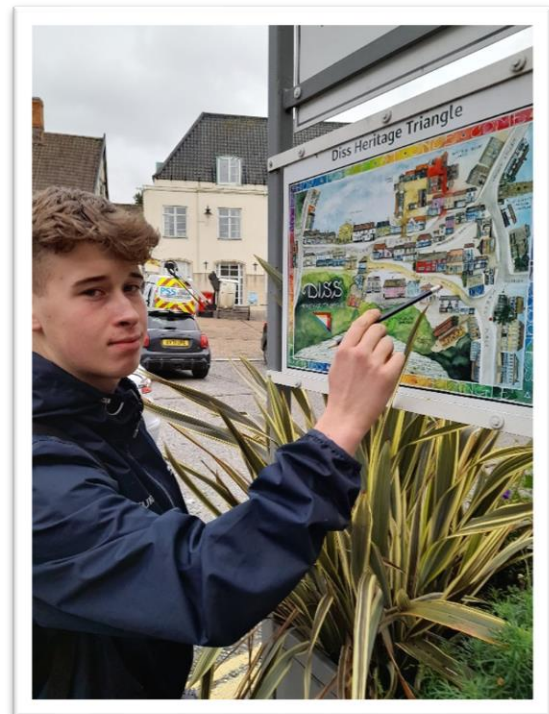
TITAN is an excellent programme that offers training, both in schools (for SEND students) and in the community.

It opens a world of new opportunities for further education and employment as well as becoming more socially active.

Students will complete a programme of study working across six core modules to achieve red, amber, and green levels.

Once they have successfully demonstrated that they have mastered each of the six modules.

We will support them to transition to independent travel enabling them to independently travel to and from their school or college.



" Sixth-form students act as positive role models"

Ofsted 2024

Our Enrichment Activities

- Community sports and leisure facilities
- Duke of Edinburgh
- Forest Schools
- School farm
- Residential trips



“Trips provide opportunities for pupils with SEN to develop in a number of ways, from increasing communication and social skills to developing key life skills, confidence and independence.”

SEN Magazine,

A Summary of Qualifications we Offer...

- Maths - Functional skills or GCSE
- English-Functional skills or GCSE
- Computing and computer science
- Science single double or award
- PE
- History
- Classics
- Geography
- Animal care
- DOE
- Psychology
- ART DT
- Citizenship
- Horticulture
- RE and world views
- Childcare
- Health and Social care
- ASDAN -Employability
- ASDAN -Personal Progress (*bronze silver and gold*)
- TITAN
- LAMDA (*drama awards*)
- A levels
- EPQ

Working Together

Acorn Park School has a multi-disciplinary team who can support our Post 16 team. This helps us ensure a holistic approach and includes Speech & Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy.

We also work with the local authority and families as they are both a vital part of the team. Finally, we work with the students so that their voice is at the Centre of any decisions made about their life.

“Staff value working at Acorn Park and are rightly proud members of the school community.”

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Meet the Team

Tracy Walker Head of Sixth Form

I am passionate about supporting young people to develop independence, gain meaningful experiences, and build the skills they need for future careers and adult life. I believe every student should have the opportunity to recognise their strengths, grow in confidence, and develop aspirations for their future.

As Head of Sixth Form, I played a key role in improving the provision and supporting the Sixth Form in moving from 'Special Measures' to an 'Outstanding' judgement. During this time, I developed a programme of learning that supports students in preparing for employment, independent living, and successful transitions into adulthood.

I have recently taken on the role of Careers Lead for the whole school. In this role, I work to ensure that students are supported throughout their education by developing a careers programme that promotes aspiration and equips them with the skills and experiences needed for life beyond school.

I am committed to ensuring that students access a curriculum that delivers the best possible outcomes. This includes supporting them to develop strong academic foundations alongside independence and employability skills for the world of work. My aim is to help students develop the confidence and skills needed for lifelong learning and to ensure they are well prepared for their next steps, reducing the risk of them becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

For the past 15 years, I have worked in the special education sector, teaching and supporting students with additional needs, including Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH). I find great reward in helping students recognise and showcase their strengths, enabling them to achieve their potential and move forward with confidence.



'Passionate and Kind Staff'

Ofsted 2024

Emma Taylor – Work experience instructor and life skills coach.



As the Work Experience Café Instructor, I am passionate about supporting young people to develop the practical skills, confidence, and independence they need for adult life and future employment. Through the café environment, I work closely with students to help them gain hands-on experience in teamwork, communication, customer service, and workplace routines, preparing them for their next steps beyond school.

I have previous experience in behaviour management and supporting adults with learning disabilities. In this role, I helped individuals develop important daily living skills, maintain routines, and manage behaviours within a supportive and person-centred environment.

I have also worked with a leading charity where I was responsible for recruiting and supporting volunteers. This included interviewing potential volunteers, coordinating placements, and managing their day-to-day roles. I ensured volunteers received appropriate training and guidance so they could carry out their responsibilities confidently and effectively.

More recently, I have been working at Acorn Park School, supporting students across a range of age groups. This experience has enabled me to build strong relationships with learners at different stages of their education and adapt my approach to meet their individual needs.

I particularly enjoy working with pre-college students and supporting them as they prepare for their next steps. I am committed to helping young people build confidence, develop life skills, and gain the experience they need to move successfully into further education, training, or employment.

Josh Hallam – Employability Teacher



My name is Josh and I have worked at Acorn Park School for nearly 11 years, including 9 years as a qualified teacher. During this time, I have gained experience across a range of areas within the school, including primary, secondary, and semi-formal settings.

I have a strong passion for Special Educational Needs (SEN), which has been a key part of my professional journey for almost 20 years.

I am currently based within the sixth form provision as an Employability Teacher, where my focus is on preparing students for life beyond school. In this role, I support students to develop employability skills such as teamwork, communication, time management, and problem-solving, alongside practical life skills including budgeting, travel training, cooking and personal organisation. My aim is to help students build confidence, independence, and resilience so they are fully prepared to transition successfully into further education, supported living, or employment. By combining hands-on experience with personalised guidance, I strive to equip students with the tools they need to thrive in both their personal and professional lives.

“Staff are experts and provide pupils with exceptional support”

Ofsted 2024

Want to know more about other local Post 16 options?

The Help You Choose website has info on local colleges, sixth forms and apprenticeships in Norfolk. Check it out at helpyouchoose.org.

Questions or Comments?

We welcome your questions or comments. Please get in touch with the admin team (email on back) who will be happy to help.

"We always knew he is capable of so much and going by his positive school reports, we have been proved right. The school team do so much with him, and we are really thankful."

Parent Feedback



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Acorn Park

OptionsAutism
Your World is Our World™

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