

SEND Information report

Acorn Park School



Updated September 2026

Our School



Acorn Park

Our School Vision

At Acorn Park School our vision is for every child to be safe, nurtured and supported to succeed. Our ethos is underpinned by a guiding principle that the young people are placed at the heart of everything we do. Our aim is to care for and educate our children, empowering them to reach their full potential, to think big and dream bigger!

Care: we are courageous, in advocating, educating and caring for every child, confident in our purpose to promote kindness and respect.

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

Grow: We help our young people fulfil their personal development goals and build positive relationships. Our young people are empowered to reach their full potential.

Thrive: We uphold the belief that by being reliable and consistent in our therapeutic practices; by advocating for our young people and promoting the setting's values each of our young people will thrive on the next step of their life journey.

September 2026 Information

Acorn Park currently has 178 children on role.

100% of our children and young people have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

We currently meet the needs of children and young people aged 4-19 from reception through to year 14 who have a diagnosis or are on the pathway for a diagnosis of Autism.

We provide day placements only

The majority of students have an identified significant and complex need that requires specialist support from the clinical team over and above in class, universal or enhanced provision. (specialist need)



Meet our SENDCo

The SENDCo is Paula-Marie Leech

If you would like to contact Paula-Marie, please call school on **01953 888656** or email paula-marie.leech@acornpark.org.uk



Special Educational Needs

(Reg 1, 13, 6.81)

At Acorn Park School we support children with Autism and a variety of co-occurring special educational needs and we pride ourselves on being a highly inclusive school with an ethos which encourages and celebrates diversity and difference.

SEND is categorised into the following areas in the SEN code of practise 2014:

	Communication and Interaction
	Cognition and Learning
	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
	Sensory and Physical



Identifying and Assessing Need

At Acorn Park we work closely as a team and if a member of the team have a concern about a child, they complete an Internal Pupil Referral form and discuss concerns with parents. The Internal Pupil Referral will be triaged and action the next steps. This could be a meeting with the SENDCo and the class teacher, a Therapy consultation, an ITAC (Internal Team Around the Child meeting), observations to gain more information or a Therapy or Provision referral to provide an assessment or intervention. Whatever action is taken we begin to follow the Graduated Response approach of 'Assess, Plan, Do and Review'.

Some children may require more support than is ordinarily available and we may ask outside agencies to support us in ensuring that we are offering the best support we can.



Our approach to teaching children with SEND

We are an inclusive school. Wherever possible children are taught alongside their peers in flexible teaching groups.

Teachers adapt their high-quality teaching to cater for their pupils' needs and plan individual timetables where necessary. When appropriate, staff are deployed to give children additional interventions in small groups outside the classroom, or to provide one-to-one support.

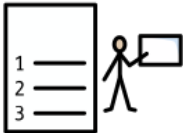
We embed the key principles of the EEF guidance 'Five-a-day' into our teaching.

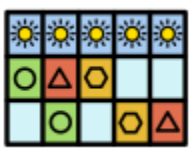
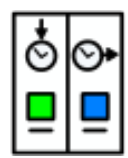
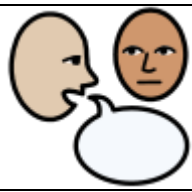
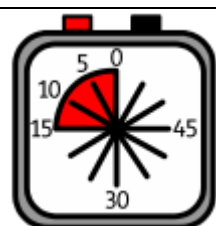


How do we assess progress?

We assess progress on an ongoing basis through observation, achievement of targets and in some cases using assessments. All small step progress is recorded and shared with pupils. We use a variety of methods to record the evidence of progress including photos, videos, written work, drawings and diagrams, as well as speaking and listening tasks. The assessments that we use are: GL Science, Cat4, IDL English and Reading Plus. This is without specialised inhouse testing to identify barriers to learning.

All targets are derived from pupil's EHCPs with long term targets set from identified needs in the areas of Cognition and Learning, Communication and Interaction, Social, Emotional, Mental Health, Sensory and Physical (including Independence). These overriding

(Reg 3a, 6.82)	targets then feed into medium term (termly) targets based on current assessment. Pupils are encouraged to engage with target setting and outcomes for their next step of learning.
 Curriculum and Learning Environment (Reg 3c, 3d, 6.81, 6.82)	All pupils have access to a range of learning experiences that reflect and meet their needs. We have two adjacent pathways enabling our young people depending on their differing level of need. The formal curriculum is based on the National Curriculum, but with a high degree of differentiation and personalisation to ensure it meets the needs of each student. The teaching approach is underpinned by autism strategies, such as visual supports and structured teaching. Emphasis is placed on the core skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening, maths, science, humanities and computing skills. We recognise that for some children with additional needs a formal curriculum is not always appropriate. At Acorn Park we have identified an alternative pathway, a semi-formal curriculum which follows the nationally successful Equal's curriculum. This curriculum is aimed at young people with moderate and severe learning difficulties and has been specifically written for pupils working consistently and over time below age-related expectations, especially those who struggle with English and Maths. There are 7 areas of learning which pupils access depending on their individual ability, interests and learning journey. Whichever pathway we feel is appropriate for our young people they will be taught in class groups, small groups and on an individual basis depending on the activity/task to be done and the needs of the pupils. Class sizes are small with a high ratio of adult support. Throughout the education setting, we have static classes where most lessons are taught within the tutor base by the class teacher. When pupils following the formal curriculum move further on in KS3 and into KS4, they will experience different learning environments and subject teachers around the school. All classes display a visual timetable and other personalised visuals, together with the education expectation statements which underpin our ethos. These help to support a total communication environment to ensure children can fully access each learning environment at each Key Stage, as appropriate. Learning experiences are structured to the individual pupils, enabling pupils to have a sense of achievement and recognise that they are making progress. Both the formal and semi-formal pathways can lead to accreditations for pupils if appropriate. Accreditations include GCSE's, functional skills qualifications Gateway and ASDAN's. All lessons use a variety of teaching methods to develop individual

	pupil needs. We use multiple approaches as our student's needs are as individual as they are, and do not suit a standardised approach. We work closely with families and students to develop independence and social resilience. We monitor the site to ensure accessibility for pupils is a priority.		
 Curriculum adaptations	We use a range of strategies across our lessons to ensure we		
			
	Visual timetables	Task boards	Peer mentoring
			
	Assistive technology	Talk partners	Peer marking
			
	Self-assessment	Word banks	Positive behaviour
			
	Ear defenders	Timers	Explicit instructions
	offer an inclusive approach to learning and allow all children to access the classroom environment. We also seek advice and equipment from outside agencies as and when the need arises.		
How does the school adapt to meet the needs	Each pupil has an individualised learning plan, demonstrating the progress made towards the short-term targets set from their Education, Health and Care plan outcomes.		

of our pupils?

Each student will have a one-page profile which includes the view of the pupil, an AAD (Ask, Accept, Develop) communication profile, a Pupil Enablement Support Plan and a possible risk reduction plan if needed.

These documents are personalised to include any adaptations to the curriculum or school environment that need to be put in place.

Acorn Park ensures that any specialist needs are met by training and accessing professional expertise.

Our education and Clinical teams work closely together to ensure we support the needs of our pupils. This development is supported by assessment, our School Development Plan, Governor Monitoring and appropriate medical training. A strong Induction programme and continual Professional Development (CPD) opportunities ensure staff are trained with current information and up to date practice. Our training matrix means we can make targeted decisions around training linked to Acorn Park's needs and development plan. Staff attend annual statutory safeguarding awareness and training which is monitored through Keeping Children Safe in Education.

We encourage all pupils to be as independent as possible. Each pupil has opportunities to get involved with extra activities to support their interests or educational targets.

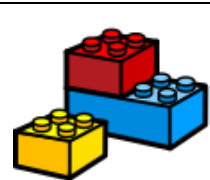
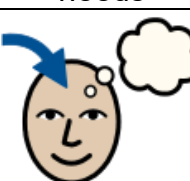
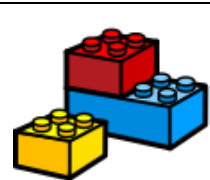
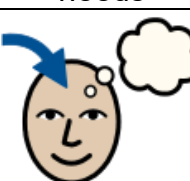
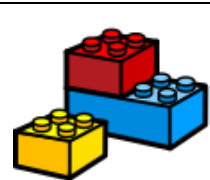
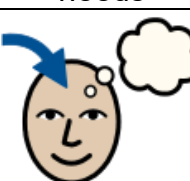
At Acorn Park the designated teacher promotes the educational achievement of all LAC children (Clause 1 and 3(a)) It is vital that we consider the whole child. Therefore, staff, families and pupils work closely and collaboratively to ensure this is central to our planning and considers the pupils and their families. The Designated teacher also works with the school's safeguarding lead on attendance, the EHCP coordinators, from a range of county Local Authorities as well as other professionals such as Children's Services to ensure that a joined-up approach in supporting pupils and their families is at the heart of all that we do in promoting positive outcomes.

At Acorn Park we identify pupils who are on roll as looked after, previously looked after, have special guardianship orders and those pupils who are adopted to enable us to track and monitor the progress of specific groups of pupils ensuring that pupils are given the best opportunity to achieve their full potential. In addition to the annual Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) review, a Pupil Education Plan (PEP) meeting is held termly.

The PEP meeting is attended by members of education, therapy and other staff pertinent to that young person to attend. During this meeting appropriate targets are discussed and set in line with

(Reg 3d, 3e, 6, 6.82) LAC (Reg 6.80)	outcomes from the young person's EHCP. Targets and progress for pupils who are within any of the groups as identified above are discussed ensuring that all staff are aware, trained and supporting pupils appropriately. As for all young people at Acorn Park, LAC pupils are supported by the school's Attendance Policy. Plans in place to support attendance are discussed at appropriate Attendance, EHCP Annual Review and PEP meetings. Exclusion is not seen as an effective form of consequence for many pupils though it has a limited use in reinforcing the inappropriateness of some behaviour, particularly physical violence, and ensuring that other pupils feel both protected and safe within the school environment. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on Safeguarding, Action Against Bullying and Social Interaction policy. All interventions are tracked and monitored, and outcomes are evaluated appropriately for that intervention. Interventions are discussed at the annual EHCP Review meetings. The Senior Education Leadership Team (SELT) reviews the progress of pupils during pupil review and works collectively with staff to improve outcomes for those individuals.
 Parent Consultations (Reg 7, 11, 6.81)	At Acorn Park we work closely with parents and carers and recognise that they have much to contribute to our support for children with SEND. We believe that good communication is vital and are happy to facilitate communication with parents at any time to discuss progress or any other issues. We consult with parents in the following ways: - Daily/Weekly handovers - Phone calls, Teams meetings and email (outside of learning time) - Termly opportunities for parent consultation - End of Year Report at the end of the summer term. We also hold times during the year where parents can meet up and support each other in a safe environment. We gather parent feedback on SEN provision at Acorn Park, run parenting courses, support parents with DLA or PIP applications, the tribunal process and offer opportunities to meet up with outside agencies where applicable.

	During the year a parental questionnaire is sent out to gain views on the school and the SEND provision.								
 Pupil voice	Pupil's views are very important; they have a right to be involved in decisions about their education and they are made aware of the support that surrounds them in school. We believe strongly in the importance of pupils having the skills and confidence to express themselves, either through speech or alternative means of communication. All pupils have numerous opportunities throughout their day in education to develop these skills and to use them in the following ways: - Lots of opportunities for pupils to talk informally to staff – Breakfast club, break and lunch times, during interventions or debriefing time. Pupil feedback in lesson - Lots of opportunities to make choices - EHCP reviews, Pupil passports, Programmes adapted through Widget. All students are invited to attend their annual review. We also have a School Council and LGBTQ+ group that reports to the senior leadership team and Governors on a termly basis and plays a key role in school. All areas of the school are represented, and pupils are keen to be involved and the emphasis in class discussions is that everyone's thoughts and opinions matter. Pupils are given regular opportunities to: <table><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Self-assess how they are doing</td><td>Attend meetings and help decide the support needed.</td><td>Feedback and Review progress/interventions.</td></tr></table>						Self-assess how they are doing	Attend meetings and help decide the support needed.	Feedback and Review progress/interventions.
									
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(Reg 8, 6.81)									
 Evaluating Provision	Review progress in SELT meetings and discussing next steps. Discuss and share ideas in SELT meetings to ensure up to date research and policy is in place. Reviewing children' individual progress towards their goals at regular intervals, as a minimum every term. Establishing children's baseline before receiving interventions and reviewing the impact of interventions at regular intervals. Asking our children if they feel the adjustment or intervention is helpful and makes a difference. Monitoring by the SENDCO.								

	Regularly using a tracking tool to update targets and measure progress. Holding annual reviews for children with Education Health and Care Plans and those requiring specialist support.																								
 Staff Training	At Acorn Park, we believe in professional development and aim to ensure all our staff have the understanding they need to enable them to support your child. When a new member of staff joins the school, we ensure they understand the systems within school, and they are given information about the children they are working with. The senior leadership team within school are constantly moderating needs within the school and, where an area of concern is highlighted, whole school training could be organised to ensure all staff understand specific learning difficulties and appropriate teaching or support strategies that could be utilised. If your child needs specialist support from our clinical team or an outside agency, such as the Speech and Language Service (SALT), Educational Psychologist (EP), Occupational Therapist (OT), we will always discuss this with you first. Some of our staff have completed training in the following areas. When staff go on a course, they have an opportunity to give feedback to the rest of the staff during staff meeting sessions. <table><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>De escalation</td><td>Lego Therapy</td><td>Child Development</td><td>Bucket time</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Sensory needs</td><td>Makaton</td><td>Phonics</td><td>Attachment</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Specific Learning</td><td>Complex Needs</td><td>Reading for those who</td><td>Speech and Language</td></tr></table>					De escalation	Lego Therapy	Child Development	Bucket time					Sensory needs	Makaton	Phonics	Attachment					Specific Learning	Complex Needs	Reading for those who	Speech and Language
																									
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	Difficulties	training	struggle	
Social, Emotional and Mental Health Support				
	We have several Mental Health Champions at Acorn Park including our Wellbeing Lead Oscar Porter. Having members of staff who have the knowledge to support both staff and young people with Mental Health challenges is integral to promoting a culture of holistic care and integrated working between education and therapy.			
	Our SWIFT team work to promote knowledge and awareness for staff, families and our young people around mental health issues. They also provide training and advice for pupils, staff and families to support this. All consequences for negative behaviour are educationally or therapeutically based. Where a pupil is finding it hard to cope in a class situation we will work with parents and other agencies to put in appropriate support, therapies and/or change the curriculum. We believe that all pupils have the right to learn and should not be disrupted by the dysregulation of others. Bullying is recognised and addressed promptly by talking through the issues and understanding the effect on others.			
	The SEND team use the Boxall profiling system which enables us to create personalised emotional development targets for each pupil, underpinning our young people's ability to learn more effectively.			
	Working on these personalised targets informs our practice to offer mental health and wellbeing and support to meet individual's needs.			
	We have high expectations of both work and behaviour. We believe in respecting, valuing and listening to our pupils. We adopt a Restorative Practice approach when supporting our young people at Acorn Park.			
	We believe this powerful tool that uses human emotions and feelings to encourage empathy and emotional literacy helping to build a culture of caring for one another. Behaviour is said to be the silent voice of the child or adult and restorative practice allows that voice to be heard in a supportive and safe manner. ELSA programmes and our bespoke curriculums support the development of Social and Emotional education, and this is delivered in a whole class, small group or individual basis as appropriate or linked to external CAMHS professionals where necessary.			
	We foster a whole site approach to inspiring and motivating young people to feel valued and to value those around them; working within our two Acorn Park expectations: to always be kind and to always try our best.			

(Reg 3e, 3g)	We recognise that, for some of our young people regulating our feelings and behavioural responses is a barrier to learning, therefore, our curriculums and environment need to support and reinforce positive behaviour models. We give pupils clear choices and responsibilities to enable and encourage them to develop appropriate social skills.
Transition Support	Transition to Reception, and then into each successive year-group, is supported by meetings, information leaflets and taster sessions in each new class. <u>End of Year transition</u> When children move up a year, we provide transition sheets which include photos of the teacher, TA and classroom environment if possible. We hold a transition day during the summer term allowing the children to go up to their new classroom and meet their teacher. Some children may require extra transition visits to their new classroom to help reduce their anxiety and ensure that the transition is successful and positive. Class teachers and TAs meet with each other during the summer term to discuss the needs of the children and share Individual Learning Plans. <u>Mid-Year new starters</u> When we are aware that pupils joining us from other settings have identified special educational needs, we arrange a meeting with the family to enable us to gain a greater understanding on the support we need to put in place.
 Outside Agencies	As an Independent special needs provision, we work closely with a wide range of professionals and can access services where appropriate. Parents will be made aware if their child is accessing any of these services and in most cases will be involved in the referral process. These include the following services: • Educational Psychologist • Clinical Psychologist • Psychotherapy/Learning Disabilities Team • Speech and Language Therapy • Occupational Therapy • Sensory Support At Acorn Park, we promote integrated working between education and therapy to ensure the best outcomes. We access Speech and

(Reg 3e, 5, 6, 11, 6.82)	Language and Occupational Therapy who are based on site, they ensure that appropriate therapeutic interventions are planned and delivered across the school day. We may also provide additional therapies such as Play or Art therapy for children if required. We will ask your permission before we arrange for any outside agencies to come in and work with your child. Once the feedback has been received, we will contact you to share the advice.
 Activities and Trips	All our school activities and visits are available to all our children. All children are encouraged to go on our trips such as educational trips, heartbeat trips and residential. All children are encouraged to take part in sports day, school competitions, school assemblies and performances, workshops, etc. All children are encouraged to apply for roles of responsibility in school e.g. school council. No child is ever excluded from taking part in these activities because of their SEN or disability. Please read the school's accessibility plan for further information about the steps we have taken to prevent disabled children from being treated less favourably than other children and the arrangements we have made to help children with SEND access our school.
How do we know we are getting it right?	We know this because of the following: - Reporting to Governors through our committee structure and termly full Governor meetings – we share reports with respect to attainment and progress, provision mapping, interventions, attendance, exclusions, behaviour, impact of pupil. They also review policies, attend school meetings and monitor and challenge provision through talking to staff, pupils and parents. - The Co-Headteachers and Deputy heads carry out regular learning walks and lesson observations, data analysis and book monitoring as do curriculum leads. - EHCP reviews when we discuss and report on progress and provision with parents and pupils. - Through external accreditation – Recognised affiliation with Autism and Emotional development specialist such as: NAS, Nurture UK and regular specialist meetings with designated advisors. - Our Self Evaluation Form which is calibrated alongside regular

(Reg 3a, 3b, 7, 8, 10)	external opinions of Local Authorities and through Governor monitoring. -Regular audits from relevant Local Authorities, and termly visits from OFG School Improvement Partners.
 Complaint Procedure (Reg 7, 9)	Your first point of contact is your child's Form tutor/class teacher. If you are not satisfied that your concern has been addressed, then you may make an appointment to speak to the Deputy Head Teacher or SENDCo. If they cannot solve your issue, then an appointment can be made to speak to one of the Co-Headteachers If you are not happy with the response, then you are able to make a formal complaint following the guidance in the complaints policy found on the website
 Local Authority SEND Local Offer	The Norfolk Local Authority SEND Local Offer can be found at: SEND Local Offer - Norfolk County Council The Suffolk Local Authority SEND Local Offer can be found at: Home - Suffolk SEND Local Offer (suffolklocaloffer.org.uk) Other Local Authority SEND Local Offers: The Essex Local Authority SEND Local Offer can be found at: http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/ The Cambridgeshire Local Authority SEND Local Offer can be found at: https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/local-offer/local-offer-identifying-special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-0-25
 Feedback Parent comments	'We are happy he seems emotionally more regulated and academically more stretched. Progressing a lot and the teachers are recognising his potential. I like the fact he is forward thinking and mindset is set towards independent living.' 'Compared to how he was he is a different little boy. He is now signing at me, so now I am learning the signing.'



Outcomes
First Group