

The aims of this policy are to:

- Ensure that adequate information is available to all parties involved so that decisions made are based on knowledge of the pupil concerned and awareness of their needs.
- Ensure the maintenance of effective communication with LAs so that through a working partnership the quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs may be enhanced.
- Provide a means of support for families and to encourage contact from them and voluntary support groups.
- Ensure, where possible, the child is involved in the process.

Pupils considered for placement at Woodcroft School

Children considered for placement at Woodcroft are those who would not benefit from mainstream education at this point in time. They may have varying degrees of communication and sensory disorders, behavioural difficulties, have uneven developmental progress or have been failing in school.

Pupils at Woodcroft either have an Education Health and Care plan (EHC plan), are undergoing an EHC assessment or have a statement of special educational needs, and are between the ages of five and eleven years. Consideration is given to referrals from Essex, neighbouring London boroughs and from counties within reasonable travelling distances.

The admissions procedure

Enquiries are welcome at any time and arrangements can be made for parents, representatives from parents' support groups and from LAs to visit the school by appointment.

After consideration of various reports, the statement, annual reviews and parental representations, the school liaises with the authority and begins the formal procedure.

The formal procedure includes:

- Meeting with the parents.
- Meeting the child in a familiar environment.
- Inviting the parents to visit the school if they have not already done so.
- In some cases, arranging for a representative from the LA to visit the school (particularly if the LA have not previously placed pupils at the school).
- Discussions with other professionals, including contributions from the school's own therapists.

Based on the information received through discussions, written reports and consideration of the following criteria, a decision is made on the referral by the head teacher.

Admission procedure

Stage 1 – LA referral

- The LA makes a formal referral or sets up a consultation with the head teacher regarding a potential pupil. The school endeavours to respond to the LA within five working days.
- If the referral meets the school's admission criteria the admissions procedure will be instigated.

Stage 2 – Pre-admission preparation

- The school will contact the child's parents within ten working days.
- The head teacher or nominated deputy makes an informal visit to the child's home, with a colleague (usually the potential class teacher) or a therapist. The admissions process is explained.
- An appointment is made for a formal discussion with the parents, without the child present. This may take place at the school or in the home. Key information will be given to the parents, including a parents' handbook.
- The child is observed at his current school, if applicable, and discussions set up with involved professionals. These observations may take place over a period of up to half a term if the child is to be on dual placement, or immediately if he is to join a class without gradual inclusion.
- Other Woodcroft staff members meet the parents and child. This may include the speech and language and/or the occupational therapist, the care manager and the potential class teacher.
- The child and family make an informal visit to the school. This visit is focused on the child's needs when transferring to a new school, and the information given may be supported with photographs.

Stage 3 – Assessment of admission needs

Procedure

- Consultations will take place within the school and with the LA regarding the admission procedure and proposed inclusion programme. Staff involved at stage 2 may be invited to contribute to these consultations.
- The key inclusion strategies will be defined. (See notes at the end of this stage and specific options outlined in stage 4).
- Woodcroft staff are identified and key professionals from the LA involved.
- If there is to be a dual placement then this will be identified and discussion held with the partner school.
- Dates are proposed by the head teacher for a gradual inclusion programme. The LA and the child's parents are consulted. Transport is arranged by the LA.

Whole school awareness

- Staff will be informed of the child's needs and invited to attend a dedicated meeting prior to the child starting. Representatives from all classes and other involved staff may be included, if appropriate.
- Relevant information will be shared and details of the proposed inclusion programme will be made available. Additional support staff will be identified, including a designated member of staff in the class which the child may ultimately join.

Class involvement

- The class teacher and/or the designated member of staff will be involved in consultations at regular meetings, inclusion opportunities and informal discussions.

Therapies

- All information collected during the pre-admission procedure will be made available to therapists prior to admission. Therapists will be involved in the pre-admission procedure as appropriate.
- During the integration programme ongoing consultations with therapists will determine the level of their participation at this stage and their input into the baseline assessment.
- These discussions will be co-ordinated by the senior therapists and multi disciplinary team and may also be the subject of therapists meetings.

Stage 4 – Inclusive schooling

Transition to school

- The class group is chosen with the involvement of key staff.
- Some pupils may enter the school directly using a gradual inclusion programme.

Criteria for admission

The specific criteria for admission are:

- The pupil's specific needs can be met at Woodcroft School.
- In meeting the needs of the prospective pupil, the needs of the pupils already at the school continue to be met.
- That effective liaison and close communication between school and home can be established and maintained so that a consistent approach in the education, care and management of the pupil can be applied within the home and school environment.

Once a decision has been taken to offer a place a formal offer is forwarded to the LA in writing and parents are advised. The school then requires formal written acceptance, on the appropriate form, from the sending authority as confirmation that funding is available and transport arrangements have been met. Further discussions will then take place with the LA to assess the most effective way of preparing and introducing the pupil to the school.

Every effort will be made to complete the admissions procedure as quickly as possible but the school is sometimes in the position of considering several referrals at the same time. This may cause some delay. However, the school undertakes to keep all parties informed of developments if this is the case.