

Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Woodcroft School pupil policy 01.11.23

This policy aims to outline our provision for pupils with special needs and disabilities. It is approved by the school's board of directors and is due for review in Autumn 2024.

Introduction

Woodcroft School is an independent primary day school registered with the Department for Education for up to fifty pupils with a variety of complex special educational needs, including Autism. Pupils generally have an Educational Health and Care plan, although occasionally pupils are placed at Woodcroft whilst a statutory assessment of their needs is undertaken. The spectrum of pupils' needs at Woodcroft ranges from children who do not consistently use their voice and have learning difficulties, to children who exhibit almost age appropriate cognitive skills, but do not apply their skills functionally in an academic context.

Woodcroft aims:

- To offer a safe and supportive environment within which pupils can develop to their full potential and live healthy, satisfying and independent lives within society.
- To maintain a positive school culture where pupils are motivated and challenged by high expectations and success is consistently celebrated.
- To support parents and local authorities by providing innovative and flexible services that ensure each pupil's education is adapted to their needs.
- To be widely recognised as a specialist centre of excellence where information, training and support is shared with parents; other schools and professionals; and the wider community.

Curriculum

At Woodcroft we believe that our curriculum should be broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of all our pupils, whatever their abilities. The curriculum is built around the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum, with all pupils accessing core and foundation subjects, delivered at an appropriate level and in a style suited to their individual needs and abilities. Pupils access a range of learning experiences that challenge, stimulate and promote thinking and learning. Many of our pupils benefit from learning broken into very small achievable steps and need lots of opportunities to repeat and practice each skill before becoming independent with it. Our curriculum is the totality of our pupils' learning experiences and is highly differentiated for each pupil. It includes communication and social skills, sensory experiences, self help, problem solving, independence and self management of behaviour and emotions. Please see our *Curriculum policy* for more details.

Staff

Woodcroft has a dedicated, experienced and well trained staff team made up of teachers, a speech and language therapist, an occupational therapist, two therapy assistants, a music teacher, wellbeing mentors, Team Teach tutors and teaching assistants.

The speech and language therapist and occupational therapist work with all the pupils, usually on a class group basis and provide specialist on-site programmes and advice. (See our *Multi-sensory curriculum policy* and *Communication policy*).

Staff holding first aid certificates are available to each class group.

The school also benefits from the occasional services of a behaviour advisor, a football and tennis coach, a yoga instructor and a physiotherapist.

Accommodation

Woodcroft is housed in former residential premises and is able to provide homely accommodation in seven class bases. Each class is made up of between two and four rooms, allowing ample opportunity for pupils to work individually or in small groups, as needs require. For many pupils the smaller, less institutional like nature of the setting helps them to put aside previous difficulties experienced in more formal schools.

Accessibility

The school operates a low arousal approach to the decoration of classrooms, minimising the risk of sensory overload through too much visual distraction. School staff utilise visual strategies such as schedules, gestures, signs, sand timers and cue (symbol) cards to assist the pupils with processing information and supporting transitions.

The school is partly housed in two storey accommodation with access via stairs. These areas are not accessible to wheel chairs or those requiring other mobility aids. Similarly, due to the school's situation on a sloping site, it is not suitable for those with limited mobility.

ICT

Each classroom is fitted with an interactive whiteboard or large plasma touch screen and a generous array of technological aids ranging from laptops and desktops to iPads.

Physical education

Pupils engage in a varied range of sports and recreational activities using local community facilities. These include adventure playground and outdoor adventure centres, football, pony riding, softplay, swimming, tennis and trampolining / rebound therapy.

The school adjoins Epping Forest and the pupils undertake frequent walks in the forest as part of their weekly programme.

Pupils also regularly visit the local library and shops as part of their PSHE and community links programme.

Inclusion

Woodcroft is actively involved in the local Project Ability initiative and takes part in a range of 'sports experience' opportunities with neighbouring primary schools.

Where appropriate, weekly attendance programmes can be arranged for pupil participation in wider inclusion experiences in settings either near Loughton or closer to the pupil's home.

School lunches and snacks

All pupils are entitled to a school lunch, which includes a meat or vegetarian option. Meals are made with fresh ingredients and fruit and healthy snacks are available to pupils both in the morning and late afternoon. Pupils are encouraged to frequently sip from their water bottles to maintain their hydration.

Woodcroft's *Food policy* supports the healthy living goals of the school curriculum.

Annual reviews

Pupil's progress is reviewed on an annual basis. In keeping with the direction of the 2014 Children and Families Act and Education, Health and Care plans the voice of each pupil is actively sought through a person centred approach. This increasingly includes the use of video footage.