



Prospectus 2020

A large, mature tree with a thick trunk and a wide, spreading canopy of white blossoms dominates the foreground. The tree is set against a light blue sky. In the background, a wooden school building with large windows is visible, partially obscured by the tree's branches. The overall scene is bright and clear.

Welcome to Our Place School

Our Place School provides a caring and safe environment for children up to the age of 19 of mixed gender with special educational needs and Learning Disabilities (including Autistic Spectrum Disorders) and the associated challenging behaviours.

Set in rural Worcestershire, overlooked by the Malvern Hills but within 4 miles of the centre of Worcester City Our Place School provides our young people with a first-hand rural experience as well as access to all the facilities of city life.

It is accepted that children and young people with learning disabilities flourish best in small, family style schools like ours.

The education provision and the care facilities are in a fully converted 1920's house with modern extensions, and this ensures there is a welcoming and homely atmosphere.

The extensive grounds, formally an orchard, provide for all manner of outdoor activities, giving our young people access to a patio area, work shed, vegetable and fruit patch, play equipment, all weather paths, Forest School and nature area with a pond.



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Our Place Schools Vision Statement

Our Vision statement 'Opportunity, Potential, Safety' reflects our ambition and beliefs. We believe every young person deserves to feel safe and secure, receive an excellent education and the chance to fulfil their potential, whatever their background or needs. Young people who are Looked After deserve these opportunities too.

Opportunity

Potential

Safety

At Our Place Schools we believe that a young person who feels safe and secure is a successful one. We are committed to providing our young people with a place of safety and security, where their individual needs are met, and they are seen and valued as the unique and wonderful individuals they are.

We know that when humans feel safe and secure and their needs are met, they will function at their optimum level, ready to engage with the world around them and learning will take place.

Our school strives to provide a holistic, progressive, individually bespoke and creative curriculum which has our pupil's wellbeing (as defined by Section 10(2) of the Children Act, 2004) at the centre of all we do. We believe that education should take place in a fully inclusive environment with equal opportunities for all and that children should learn to value religious and cultural differences.

Opportunity: We want to give all our young people the opportunity to flourish and feel the joys that learning can bring as well as gaining knowledge of differing cultures, beliefs and opinions. We want to give our young people opportunities that they may not have had access to or experience of before.

We want our young people to have the opportunity of enriched lives and develop a zest for life and learning, through our curriculum we will also teach them the daily living skills they require for their journeys into adulthood

For some of our young people we can offer opportunity to begin to address what has happened in their past to shape them for the bright futures that lie ahead. We can support our young people in this.

Potential: Our young people are full of potential, for some, this is un-tapped potential. It is through our belief in our young people that they discover their potential and realise their dreams and aspirations.

Our curriculum is evolving and flexible in nature to ensure we meet the Social, Emotional and Mental Health, Communication and Interaction, Cognitive and Sensory needs of our cohort. We seek to lower anxiety levels and respond to the unique talents of our pupils, building their self-esteem, worth and confidence as they develop.

Our curriculum is designed to influence our young people so that they can aspire to achieve their full potential, and as they transition into adulthood they will be as positive, happy, skilled and as independent in their lives as possible.

Safety: We know that being safe is a paramount requirement for being human. We also know that many of our young people were not safe in the past, and many have not had long-sustaining healthy emotional bonds with care-givers. In missing these healthy emotional bonds, some of our young people have not learnt feelings of safety, love and comfort. Through our ethos and safeguarding culture we aim to provide our young people with an environment that is physically safe but also one of emotional and physiological safety.

Our Aims

We help children, regardless of their Special Educational Needs or Disabilities, find a way of expressing themselves using positive functional communication to enable them to develop their receptive and expressive communication skills.

We ensure that each child's individual communication system is developed and used consistently. This includes assistance for parents/carers. We work closely with Speech and Language Therapists, and the child's Key Worker and teacher are the primary contacts to ensure specialist provision is implemented.

Our Place School aims to provide:

- the children and young people with an education setting in which they feel cherished and secure, happy and safe, clean and healthy, fulfilled and content
- individual curriculum for all 'our' children that promotes independent learning
- short term care and full time residential and educational placements designed to suit the individual young person's needs
- high quality personalised care and education focused on developing the young person's abilities, skills and interests
- a supportive and nurturing environment that, through a developing THRIVE approach, encourages positive behaviour patterns, cooperation and mutual respect
- an education that is relevant, outward looking and prepares 'our' young people for the world of work.

At Our Place every child has:

- an Education that will help them: - communicate effectively through a Total Communications approach - access and participate in their local and wider community - learn how to manage their own behaviour appropriately and safely - achieve a degree of economic wellbeing by earning pocket money and selling their own produce.
- opportunities to participate in enjoyable activities and experiences where progress and effort are rewarded and celebrated
- a choice of healthy and appetising food and opportunities to shop and cook their own food
- privacy, dignity, freedom from abuse and bullying in any form
- regular multi-disciplinary reviews of their progress and wellbeing
- the opportunity to flourish and become active citizens in their community

Education

Personalised Teaching

Our approach to teaching is based on staff developing a close, trusting relationship with pupils through one-to-one contact between the child and one of their teachers, teaching assistants or support workers.

Our pupils are supported with a staffing ratio appropriate to their needs and determined by their Education Health Care Plan.

It is important that the young person feels safe first and then, once settled and happy, they will begin to learn.

Teaching methods used include Free Flow, interactive learning programmes, Intensive Interaction, Sensory Integration, Social Skills Training, Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), Total Communication, Makaton, Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication related handicapped Children (TEEACH) as well as more traditional methods.

The methods we use are designed around what works best for our young people and our staff are skilled at adapting their approach to achieve the best possible results.

Curriculum Policy

All pupils at Our Place School are offered choices and opportunities within the context of a relevant education. We constantly strive to make learning accessible, meaningful and transferable to all aspects of our pupils' lives, enabling them to achieve their full potential. It is our philosophy that we teach the way each young person learns.

All young people at 16 are enrolled into an appropriate accredited pathway and they will work towards gaining a National recognised certificate.

At Our Place School, we are fully aware that learning is an on-going process and that good education is not confined to the classroom. We believe in the development of the "hidden" curriculum and our team promote and foster the development of trust, co-operation, self-esteem, confidence and motivation through our fully integrated approach to education and care.

Each teacher follows a curriculum map linked to creative curriculum themes and subjects within the National Curriculum (2014). Planning within the themes includes all foundation subjects within the curriculum, i.e. Art, Computing, Design Technology, Languages, Geography, History, Music, PE.

Each theme ends with an expected outcome for the pupils. In Key Stage 4 and 5 subject content links to accreditation routes and developing skills for life. All pupils are also taught PSHCEE, RSE, Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship, Economic, Relationships and Sex Education.

Learning through a creative curriculum approach allows our pupils to immerse themselves in a theme and therefore gain a wider understanding of knowledge, skills and understanding. We believe that learners need to build a secure foundation in English and mathematics, as a basis to support all other understanding. Our priority is to build a secure foundation in literacy and numeracy as the basis for all other learning. Pupils are taught to read, write (if applicable) and work with numbers fluently and confidently. Where pupils need extra support, it is provided to ensure that every child reaches their own potential.

Education for Life, British Values and the World of Work

At Our Place School we want our learners to go on to live happy, safe and successful lives in their wider communities. We want them to leave our school prepared for life as young adults, ready to meet the next phase in their lives, whatever that may be. We also recognise that many of our pupils are vulnerable and will need support in engaging in and developing an understanding of learning experiences within the wider world.

The aim of our curriculum is to support our young people to:

- be able to communicate and interact effectively with others
- understand their bodies and emotions and how to promote their physical and mental wellbeing
- form and sustain positive, healthy relationships and to recognise when a relationship is not healthy and where they can seek support
- understand the importance of equality, the benefits of diversity and the British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and Mutual Respect and Tolerance of those of Different Faiths and Belief

Embedded within this curriculum and across all subject areas, Our Place School staff will promote careers and the world of work and students will have opportunities to engage in and experience aspects of employment and explore further education options.

At the appropriate time our young people will undertake the accredited ASDAN Short Course in PSHE which provides real life scenarios, discussion points and challenges in which to apply knowledge and skills in practical ways. They will also undertake accredited courses in Employability Skills and Enterprise to further prepare them for life after school.

How we assess Learning

“Schools need to ensure the terminology and the language they use to both pupils and parents celebrates progress even if they are not working at the expected standard” Peterson, L. (2015).

Assessment should be set in the context of the plan (intent), do (implement), and review (impact) process, when in this cycle it is seen to be informative and directly linked to learning experiences, in and out of the classroom.

At Our Place Schools we see assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning, and it is inextricably linked to our curriculum.

Assessment includes achievements socially and emotionally, not just academically.

This is done on a daily and lesson by lesson basis and takes account of the unexpected as well as the intended learning outcomes.

Progress is also checked on a termly basis.

Every child will receive a written report during the year summarising their progress.

The school uses SchoolPod to track our pupils progress and will help us create a platform for whole site evidencing and target setting.

Rewards



We work hard, to support the development of the self-esteem of our pupils. We focus on their successes and positive achievements and recognise that for some of our pupils 'small steps' represent huge challenges. Our team create an environment of positive praise and use class DoJo's as points to recognise and reward individual achievement.

Each week a different one of our pupils is highlighted in our special 'Gathering' where the whole school comes together, as a 'family', to celebrate the personal contributions 'our' young people make. We are able to share with parents the DoJo system in order that they too can see how well their child is behaving, learning and contributing.

Educational Visits

Our curriculum is outward looking as we know that for learning to be long lasting it needs to be set in a real-life context. The team plan off-site visits for our young people to enhance classroom learning, expand their horizons, provide different experiences and extend the Social, Moral, Cultural and Spiritual education. Visits are also planned to provide our young people with experiences of different workplaces to expose them to 'the world of work' and support them to make choices around future careers. In preparing for these opportunities the team plan carefully, complete risk assessments and ensure appropriate staff ratios.



Thrive



As a school we are now using an approach called 'Thrive'.

Thrive supports children with their emotional health, well-being and social skills, all of which are needed for learning to take place. Thrive is based on up to date brain science and research into child development and helps staff in school adapt their approach to individual children to build self-esteem, well-being and behaviour.

The Thrive approach begins with a detailed assessment. Once we have parental consent, teachers use a computerised screening programme where they answer a series of questions about 'our' young people. This assessment in turn generates ideas, activities and strategies that can be used to support individual students and groups.

We know that this approach can be of huge benefit to all our young people and it enables our staff team to work together to provide consistent support to build self-esteem and equip them for managing the stresses of life in Britain today. We have fully trained 'lead' members of staff supporting teachers and teaching assistants with the implementation of the Thrive approach across our school.

Forest Schools

We have two trained Forest Leaders to lead weekly Forest School sessions. We use our Forest school and outdoor learning area to inspire individuals through education in the outdoors.

We are fortunate to have an extensive Forest Area where all learners can access a range of activities from bug hunting, shelter building, making rustic items and learning to cook on an open fire. We promote Forest School because we know it supports our young people with:

- Self esteem and well being
- Speech, language and communication
- Teambuilding and friendships
- Safe risk-taking and resilience
- Independent learning

Advocacy and Self Expression

We ensure the young people have 'a voice' that is respected, supported and understood, allowing for the expression of individual opinions, views and requests.

This ensures the staff provide an environment that is fair with equal opportunities for all those cared for within the home.

It is important that their individual needs are recognised. Staff work hard to support the children to make their desires and requests known.

This will be done through a variety of methods from:

- teaching basic communication skills – like/don't like, yes/no, good/not good
- provision of a Key Worker for each of our young people
- provision of an external advocate service

Developing New Relationships

Our Place encourages the development of friendships and positive relationships however, in acknowledging the emotional vulnerability of our young people appropriate support and guidance is provided to avoid unnecessary upset or distress.

Self-Expression

Our Place encourages self-expression and to support this provides the following:

- Access to computers with web cams, email, internet with nanny service, letters, phone calls and photos or videos to their parents subject to written parental authority
- Careful induction planning and preparation e.g. visits, sleepovers, personalised information packs
- Access to on-site qualified staff and external therapists including Mental Health nurse, psychologist, psychiatrist, speech and language therapist, occupational therapist, music, art, dance, drama therapy and other health or psychiatric services as required as well as local NHS services.



Contact

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