



WESTHEATH SCHOOL

Rebuilding Lives Through Education



OUR VISION

REBUILDING LIVES THROUGH EDUCATION

To support and empower every member of our community in the process of developing the capacity to accept and exercise responsibility; to demonstrate respect for themselves and others; to build and maintain relationships based on trust, respect and integrity; and to be courageous enough to continue to build the resilience necessary to flourish.

OUR VALUES

RESPECT

Having respect for others, for ourselves and for our environment.

RESPONSIBILITY

Having the courage to accept responsibility for our own actions and their consequences, and taking the necessary action to do what's right.

RELATIONSHIPS

Being open to the vulnerability that comes from building trusting and respectful relationships, knowing that through connection comes so much of what gives life value.

RESILIENCE

Developing the courage to live life, accepting failure as part of learning and growth, and building the capacity to respond positively to adversity.



WELCOME

West Heath School is an Independent Special School that supports young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities from the age of 10 to 20 years old. Our school educates students with Social, Emotional, Mental Health Needs as well as those with enduring Mental Health Needs.

It is a unique educational environment set in 32 glorious acres of Kent countryside, on the outskirts of the town of Sevenoaks. Our staff passionately believe in the transformative power of education to change the lives of the young people in our care.

Our philosophy is to create a nurturing environment, centred around a holistic approach, whereby young people are welcomed, accepted for who they are, and their educational needs are balanced with an understanding of their therapeutic requirements. Our intuitive staff are reflective practitioners who work collaboratively with the students' families and external professionals, to ensure that our students make sustained progress and develop a resilience that will be their mainstay in their future lives. Our next step in our development is to become a Therapeutic Community.

I look forward to welcoming you to our extraordinary community that I am privileged to lead. I am so proud of our remarkable young people, whose individual journeys have been a triumph of hope, patience, perseverance and courage.

Mrs Photini Bohacek BA (Hons), MA, CPE, FRGS
PRINCIPAL

THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITY

A therapeutic community is a planned environment which exploits the therapeutic value of social and group processes. It promotes equitable and democratic group living in a varied, permissive but safe environment. Interpersonal and emotional issues are openly discussed and members can form intimate relationships. Mutual feedback helps members confront their problems and develop an awareness of interpersonal actions.

Therapeutic Community practice is underpinned by a set of Core Values and a specific theoretical and philosophical position regarding treatment and care.

ATTACHMENT: Healthy attachment is a developmental requirement for all human beings, and should be seen as a basic human right

CONTAINMENT: A safe and supportive environment is required for an individual to develop, to grow, or to change

RESPECT: People need to feel respected and valued by others to be healthy. Everybody is unique and nobody should be defined or described by their problems alone

COMMUNICATION: All behaviour has meaning and represents communication which deserves understanding

INTERDEPENDENCE: Personal well-being arises from one's ability to develop relationships which recognise mutual need

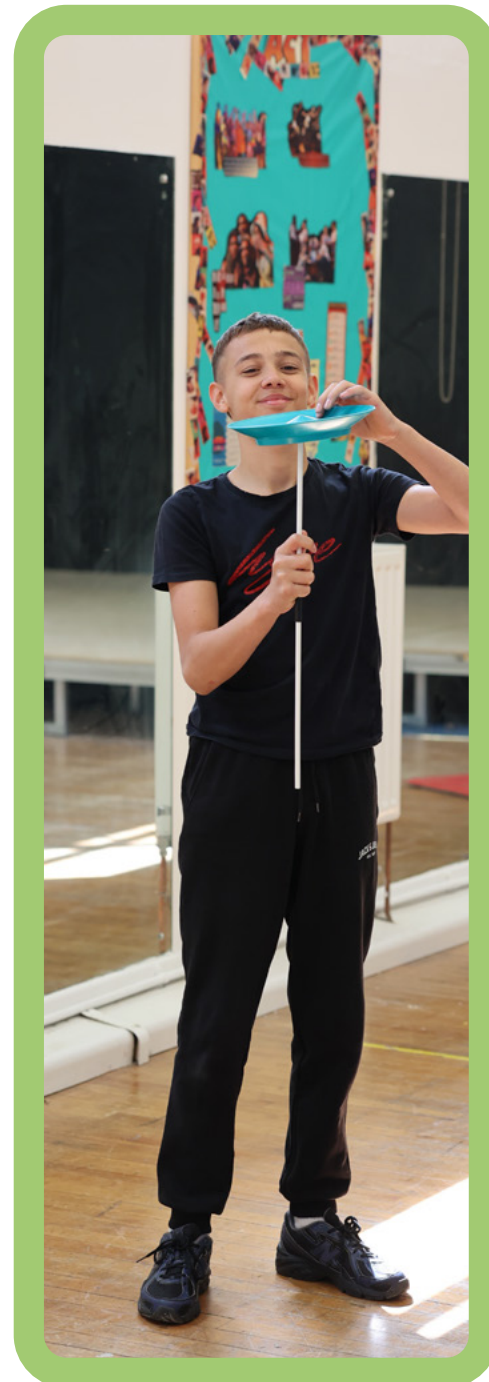
RELATIONSHIPS: Understanding how you relate to others and how others relate to you leads to better intimate, family, social and working relationships

PARTICIPATION: Ability to influence one's environment and relationships is necessary for personal well-being. Being involved in decision-making is required for shared participation, responsibility, and ownership

PROCESS: There is not always a right answer and it is often useful for individuals, groups and larger organisations to reflect rather than act immediately

BALANCE: Positive and negative experiences are necessary for healthy development of individuals, groups and the community

RESPONSIBILITY: Each individual has responsibility to the group, and the group in turn has collective responsibility to all individuals in it



THERAPY

At West Heath School, we are dedicated to providing a comprehensive and specialised therapeutic programme. The Therapy Department is integral to supporting the social, emotional, mental health, behavioural, and physical well-being of our students. Our approach is rooted in trauma-informed practice, ensuring that all interactions contribute to therapeutic outcomes.

This philosophy informs all aspects of school life, from curriculum development to behaviour management. We recognise that each child presents unique needs, necessitating personalised and attentive support. Progress, therefore, is viewed as multifaceted but always underpinned by safe, secure relationships. The therapy team delivers individual and group interventions and collaborates closely with the broader school staff, fostering a holistic and consistent response to each student's challenges.

While many students have specific therapeutic requirements detailed in their Education, Health and Care Plans, the majority will access the Therapy Department at some stage. Our services encompass traditional individual and group psychotherapy as well as creative therapeutic modalities such as play and art therapy. We also facilitate social skills and friendship groups, provide assistance for sensory and motor difficulties, and address physiological responses to stress and trauma through massage, relaxation, and mindfulness techniques.

Our therapeutic approach remains flexible and adaptive. Although we value traditional confidential sessions, we acknowledge that some students may find these settings challenging. Consequently, we tailor interventions to meet individual needs, incorporating activities such as outdoor walks, gardening, sports, and creative arts to engage students effectively.

Our therapeutic offer consists of:

- Clinical Psychology Services (Cognitive and Psychological Assessments, Psychological formulation and Psychotherapy)
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Talking Therapy (Integrative, CBT, Counselling)
- Play Therapy



THE CURRICULUM

At West Heath School we ensure a trauma-informed curriculum that balances the need for students to thrive and achieve academically as well as improve their social, emotional and mental health. The values of the 4R's are woven into the fabric of our curriculum and our teaching staff work closely with our Speech and Language (SALT) and Occupational Therapy (OT) teams to ensure that there is a tangible synergy between therapy, safeguarding and education.

The curriculum promotes personal growth, good health and wellbeing as well as appropriate academic challenges, to secure the best future outcomes for our students. There is also a vast range of effective interventions available across the school. We deliver outstanding lessons based on the National Curriculum that then lead to opportunities to study a range of nationally recognised qualifications that enable students to access further education. Our curriculum offer is continually revised so that we can meet the individual needs of our students, achieved by listening to the aspirations of students, parents and carers. At West Heath School we believe in supporting and educating the student holistically. Therefore, we provide a challenging academic programme alongside structured learning of life skills and PSHE, whilst prioritising their social, emotional, and mental health needs.



An active Student Council ensures that the voice of the young person is always heard.

The curriculum is very broad and rich; at KS3 the curriculum places equal emphasis on the core subjects (English, Maths and Science); fitness and wellbeing (PE, Swimming, Duke of Edinburgh, Forest School and Outdoor Education lessons); creativity and expression (Art, Performing Arts, Textiles, Catering, Creative Media and Hair and Beauty) as well as our bespoke suite of personal development subjects (ASDAN, Self-Science, Votes for Schools, Social Skills and PSHE). At KS4, students can access a vast array of different qualification types from Functional Skills and ASDAN pathways to GCSE, NCFE and BTEC Level 2/3 qualifications. Our focus on preparation for adulthood in all subjects ensures that students can thrive and succeed in the world beyond West Heath.

West Heath School also offers an exceptional range of interventions to engage students, from Literacy and Numeracy to dog-walking, dungeons and dragons and bike riding sessions. There are also extensive offsite learning opportunities in our Educated Offsite Provision (EOS) such as animal care, horse riding, equine therapy, farm visits and skills for employment, which help students to develop areas of interests, strengths and skills that contribute to students forming a balanced and productive life of purpose. Our exceptional range of day to residential trips which include visits to the theatre, museums, escape rooms and Cadbury's World as well as further afield to Cornwall, Rome, Normandy and Krakow, builds students' cultural capital and develops their sense of independence. All of the above, help to re-engage our students and supports our mission statement to 'Rebuild Lives Through Education'.



"The school offers pupils a very broad and rich curriculum."

OFSTED 2025

LOWER SCHOOL

The Lower School consists of a Junior provision (Year 5 & Year 6) and a KS3 provision (Year 7 & Year 8) to allow a collaborative approach in supporting the students transitioning from Primary to Secondary. This successfully provides an environment where students display less anxiety regarding the change; a sense of belonging to our community; access to trusting and familiar staff; and a smooth transition that is manageable for the needs of our students.

The Lower School provides students with a flexible curriculum where students can access a variety of different onsite and offsite provisions, depending on their needs and interest. In the Junior provision, students will have therapeutic intervention intertwined within their curriculum where they will have weekly access to a variety of different therapies such as Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language, Play Therapy and Body Massage. The Junior provision, which is based on our 32 acre site has access to all the school's facilities, such as the Swimming Pool and the Forest School site, which again further supports their transition from Primary to Secondary and allows them to access specialist teaching in key areas of the curriculum.

The KS3 provision follows a 'Primary Model' in Year 7, where students will again be able to experience a wide range of resources and provisions, whilst having regular pastoral support. The presence of consistent adults in Year 7 provides the students of West Heath that daily care and security during their first year of Secondary School, as well as reducing the number of transitions they would experience in a Secondary School. All students will explore a diverse curriculum where they will have sessions like Self-Science, Catering and Life skills, along with their traditional core subjects of English, Maths and Science. A strong emphasis is placed upon promoting the student's resilience within education, their respect and manners within the community, and their capacity to embrace challenges and opportunities within the school and local community.

YR 5, 6, 7 & 8
AVERAGE CLASS SIZE 6 STUDENTS



MIDDLE SCHOOL

Middle School follows a traditional secondary school model in the preparation of GCSEs, Functional Skills and Entry Level examinations, Art Award, DofE, NCFE and BTEC courses. Preparing and guiding our students through this transition is a key focus.

There are Numeracy and Literacy interventions and in Year 9, our students are assessed for specific access arrangements in preparation for public exams. In year 10, students will choose a further four subjects to study within the optional curriculum from a total of 16 subjects including a wide variety of practical, creative and academic courses. This will be the start of a two year programme.

Our students thrive in the safe, secure and comfortable environment that we promote which allows them to develop their talents and achieve their aspirations.

YR 9 & 10
AVERAGE CLASS SIZE 6-8 STUDENTS



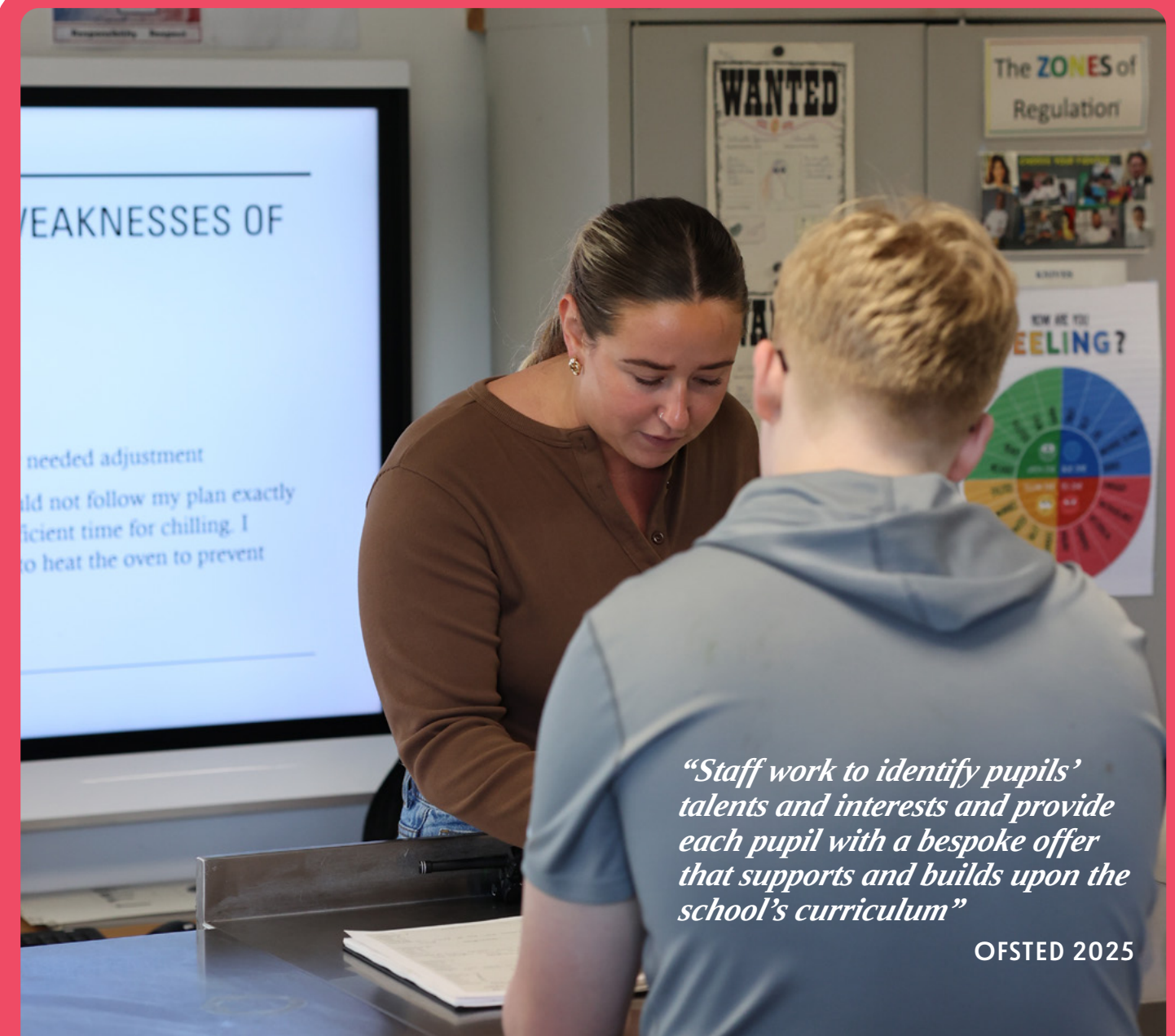


UPPER SCHOOL

Upper School has a key focus on supporting and preparing our students for their examinations, vocational courses and further education to ensure a smooth and successful transition. Within Upper School we promote work experience alongside their studies.

Upper School encourages independent learning and the development of resilience, so students are prepared, ready to tackle the challenges and rigour of 6th Form study and adult life.

YR 11
AVERAGE CLASS SIZE 8 STUDENTS



“Staff work to identify pupils’ talents and interests and provide each pupil with a bespoke offer that supports and builds upon the school’s curriculum”

OFSTED 2025

6TH FORM

Prior to a student joining the Sixth Form, discussions are held between the school, the student and the parents/carers to ascertain the most suitable education route for post 16.

Within the Sixth Form at West Heath School, we offer bespoke programmes of study through a phased transition over one, two or three years, focusing on offsite learning and preparation for adulthood. Within Sixth Form we place a large emphasis on pastoral care and support which is provided by our designated Sixth Form tutors located both onsite and within our offsite provisions. Regular communication between the tutors and parents/carers ensures they are involved throughout our students' journeys.

With our chosen partnership providers, we are able to provide a variety of courses and qualifications that are fitting yet academically and professionally challenging for our students.

YR 12, 13, 14 & 15

EDUCATION OFF-SITE (EOS)

EOS provides a structured and supportive learning environment tailored to the individual needs of students who find it challenging to engage in the main school setting. This six-week programme is designed to help learners rediscover their confidence, develop essential skills, and build a pathway back to success.

Students enrolled in the EOS programme will follow a bespoke timetable that adapts to their progress and aspirations, ensuring a personalised approach to learning. Key components of the programme include:

- Students receive tailored support to achieve an appropriate level of English and Maths
- EOS offers flexibility for students to work in a safe and supportive environment where they can focus, reflect, and complete their studies

Students also follow West Heath Awareness Courses designed to address individual behavioural challenges. These courses support students in understanding their neurodiverse needs with guidance from therapeutic staff and teachers from our Self Science team.

EOS uses the school's core values in the form of the four R's to foster personal growth through courses structured around Respect, Resilience, Responsibility, and Relationships. These elements work together to empower students, enhance emotional regulation, and prepare them for reintegration into the main school setting.

"Support and preparation for pupils' next steps is very effective. The school provides all pupils with effective careers guidance and support."

OFSTED 2025



OUTDOOR EDUCATION

At West Heath we are fortunate to have 32 acres, which includes woodland, gardens and open playing fields. There is ample room for our students to experience the natural environment in the safety of their school grounds. Our Forest School provides weekly opportunities for all year groups to explore the outdoors, in a tranquil and stimulating environment, where they learn to manage risks, develop skills physically, socially and emotionally. These life skills empower students to become better learners.

We facilitate this through the discovery and participation in a wide range of Forest School activities. Forest School is learner led and the process of learning itself is of greater importance than the end product.

Each year group has a session of Forest School on their timetable (Years 5 to 8), with the exception of Year 9 who can access it through intervention. Years 10 and 11 have the opportunity to take the John Muir Award in Conservation, to further access and develop skills discovered in Forest School.

“For many pupils, the school’s approach to supporting behaviour is transformative. This results in long-term, positive change for many.”

OFSTED 2025



HEART

HEART, our Health, Education, Assessment, and Revitalising Therapy Department, was redefined in September 2016 to support our students further and to meet an ever increasing need from Local Authorities to find school placements for young people with significant and enduring mental health difficulties. HEART now comprises approximately 35 of our most vulnerable students, who for one reason or another, require a greater need for particularly close monitoring and supervision, where extensive access to our therapeutic services may be needed, or where a great deal of additional managerial input is required. Our young people in HEART have access to, and benefit from, the following provision that goes beyond that generally available to students funded on our basic fees.

We offer our HEART students the following:

- A calm and nurturing environment with access to a designated suite of rooms that allows them to study in areas where they can feel secure and relaxed
- Prompt access to specific therapeutic support as and when necessary. This includes Counselling, CBT, Play Therapy, Integrative Child Psychotherapy, Occupational Therapy, and Speech and Language Therapy
- A key worker who is given dedicated time to ensure close and effective liaison between all those involved in their care and support
- All provision is overseen by the Head of HEART and Therapy who leads communication with other professionals both within and outside of school
- The day-to-day smooth running of the department is overseen by the HEART Manager and the Assistant HEART Manager
- Access to a fully flexible curriculum which is designed specifically to meet individual needs and interests. This is overseen by the Curriculum Lead HEART, supported by the designated HEART teachers
- In addition to the core subjects and options, all HEART students have the opportunity to develop a range of life skills such as cooking and using public transport. They also have the opportunity to gain a qualification in ASDAN
- Our older students have a choice of attending college whilst either remaining under the HEART umbrella or transferring to our 6th Form if they are ready; alternatively, we offer BTECs (Levels 2 and 3) in Art/Textiles, Creative Media, and ICT on-site



"They learn how to keep themselves safe and how to look after their own mental health and well-being."

OFSTED 2025

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Developing the 'whole' child at West Heath is at the centre of what we do. Much of this happens through the relationships that are built with staff and the numerous opportunities that are part and parcel of life at West Heath school from a varied curriculum to day trips, residential stays and a multitude of off-site opportunities via our Education Off Site provision.

However, our personal development suite of timetabled subjects, also ensures that we are supporting all students to thrive and be ready for their next steps towards adulthood and independence, within their timetabled lessons.

The aim of our Personal Development curriculum is that all students are **HEADS: Healthy - Engaged - Aspirational - Diplomatic - Safe**

The below bespoke Personal Development lessons make up five timetabled slots across every week and are therefore seen in line with the importance we place on core academic studies.

PSCHE – Our statutory component where students study a spiral curriculum under the topics:

- Being me in my world
- Celebrating Difference
- Dreams and Goals
- Healthy Me
- Relationships
- Changing me

Learners look in an age relevant way at topics from managing transitions, drugs, sex and relationship education amongst many others and signposting for where to seek help.

Social Skills is an opportunity for students to practice and apply skills that will help them to form positive relationships and an understanding of how to interact and cope with different social situations.

Preparation For Adulthood West Heath has a fully equipped Preparation for Adulthood house for students to practise life skills that they will need to live independently. Students undertake a week of work experience and in Year 9 and Year 11 they meet with an independent careers advisor who offers tailored advice on future options.

Self-Science encourages students to foster a culture of understanding and empathy across the school.

Votes For Schools is a national initiative that introduces students to the British values of democracy, respect, liberty, tolerance and the rule of law.

“Pupils’ personal development is constantly championed. Pupils learn to better understand themselves and others.”

OFSTED 2025

“Pupils’ personal development is exceptionally strong.”

OFSTED 2025



WHO WE SUPPORT

Our designation is to provide for students with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. We welcome students, from age 10-20 years, with an EHCP who are exhibiting mild to moderate levels of one or more of the following:

MAIN SCHOOL

- Neurodiversity (ASD, ADHD)
- Mental health diagnosis underpinned by anxieties (i.e. generalised anxiety, separation anxiety, phobias, OCD, EBSA)
- Mental health diagnosis related to mood dysregulation (i.e. depression)
- Mental health diagnosis related to trauma (i.e. PTSD, attachment disorder, developmental trauma)
- Mental health diagnosis related to eating (i.e. ARFID)
- Difficulties which can be supported through Occupational Therapy (i.e. dyspraxia, difficulties with fine and gross motor skills, sensory difficulties)



- Difficulties which can be supported through Speech and Language Therapy (i.e. social and communication difficulties, friendship and relational difficulties)
- Difficulties related to cognition and learning (i.e. dyslexia, slow processing disorder, difficulties to focus and concentrate)
- Medical conditions (i.e. chronic fatigue syndrome)

HEART

We welcome HEART students, from Year 9 onwards, with an EHCP who are exhibiting moderate or advanced levels of one or more of the following:

- Neurodiversity (ASD, ADHD)
- Mental health diagnosis underpinned by anxieties (i.e. generalised anxiety, separation anxiety, phobias, OCD, EBSA, selective mutism, non-epileptic seizures)
- Mental health diagnosis related to mood dysregulation (i.e. depression, bi-polar disorder)
- Mental health diagnosis related to trauma (i.e. PTSD, complex trauma, attachment disorder)
- Mental health diagnosis related to eating (i.e. anorexia, bulimia, ARFID)
- Mental health diagnosis of psychotic nature (i.e. schizophrenia and hearing voices, psychosis)



HEART (Cont'd))

- Difficulties which can be supported through Occupational Therapy (i.e. dyspraxia, difficulties with fine and gross motor skills, sensory difficulties)
- Difficulties which can be supported through Speech and Language Therapy (i.e. social and communication difficulties, friendship and relational difficulties)
- Difficulties related to cognition and learning (i.e. dyslexia, slow processing disorder, difficulties to focus and concentrate)
- Medical conditions (i.e. chronic fatigue syndrome, PoTS)



FINDING THE RIGHT SCHOOL

If you are looking for a school for your child, we would advise the following:

Do your research, visit the school and ask as many questions as possible. Make sure they have the right balance of support. Education should be at the appropriate level with specific support where needed. Therapy should not stand-alone and should inform school staff in their practices and approach.

If you are considering an independent school, check how they are funded and explore their fee structure. If the Local Authority is funding the placement, you will need to also research your local maintained mainstream and special schools to see if they have appropriate provision. Local Authorities will want to place with the most appropriate and cost-effective provision.

Talk to your Local Authority about the school you have selected. Some schools, like ours, will support the application process and will work proactively with you and the Local Authority to find the most appropriate provision.

Ensure any assessments are up to date and relevant. This is the evidence that will enable professionals to make the right decisions around provision and any associated costs. If you disagree with the identified provision or placement, you can appeal the decision through a tribunal process.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

To help get a better understanding of how to join us, we have summarised the application process. We understand that it can be a daunting step, especially if this your first experience of researching specialist provisions.

- Have a look around our website for information on the school and read our literature
- Contact us and discuss your child's needs
- Send us Local Authority details and EHCP papers for review
- Once these have been reviewed and we think we may be a suitable provision, our Admission Officer will contact you to arrange a tour, if however, we are unable to meet your child's needs we will contact you with an explanation
- Visit the school with or without your child and see how it feels, ask questions and review provision
- For Juniors and Main School provision, if appropriate, your child will be offered either an online or face to face Speech and Language assessment. For HEART they will be offered a face-to-face interview



- Following this, they may be invited to attend at least one taster day which will include a psychological assessment and academic assessments
- An interview will then take place on a separate occasion if applicable
- If we feel we can meet your child's needs, you and your Local Authority SEN case officer will be informed of a placement offer
- You liaise with your Local Authority on placement — please advise of developments
- We will provide supporting documentation to the Local Authority as required
- Upon funding approval, a start date will be confirmed
- We will liaise with you regarding an appropriate transition to the school
- Further assessments will take place during the initial transition period

INFORMATION FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

We pride ourselves in the proactive and collaborative way in which we work with Local Authorities. Below is some information which is the first step to understanding a little bit about us and some of the benefits to our structure and approach. We always welcome visitors and would encourage our current and future partners to come and see us to get a full understanding of who we are and what we do:

- A rural and peaceful environment set in 32 acres of lawns and woodland
- Sports, swimming and tennis facilities
- College-based 6th Form provision
- Juniors provision
- Therapeutically informed teaching and support practice
- Regular communication and updates
- Support across key transition stages
- Range of psychometric and cognitive tests onsite
- In house therapy included in fee*
- Member of NASS
- Charity status
- Set fee structure
- Clearly defined entry criteria
- 12-week new placement review
- High-quality Annual Review process
- Training opportunities and outreach
- Cost-effective provision
- Participation in procurement platforms
- Good transport links

*When meeting the entry criteria and assessment process, provided that the therapeutic needs can be met with our existing provision resource and constraints



STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND OUTREACH

High quality and effective staff development is central to fulfilling our mission and purpose, which is to create the conditions in which young people can flourish. West Heath Outreach commits both time and significant resources to ensuring that our staff are fully supported. We do this not only in terms of equipping them with the skills and resources required to perform their roles to a high standard, but also in having the opportunity to themselves demonstrate the commitment to lifelong learning that we want to cultivate in our children and young people.

Having, as we do, a specific charitable objective to; “provide training and support for teachers and other professionals working in the field of education for children with special educational needs” we are determined to share our insights and our expertise with other educational professionals.

To fulfil this objective, through West Heath Outreach, we have embarked on an ambitious training and support programme that sees us deliver a variety of structured courses alongside individually designed, bespoke interventions. Whatever the provision, the aim is to support those working with children with SEND to do so more effectively, and hopefully to make a positive contribution to children and young people being successful in their existing placements.

Our Outreach offer includes accredited Mental Health First Aid training, with half-day, one-day and two-day courses available. We are able to offer both Youth courses, focusing on specific issues facing young people from 8 – 18, as well as Adult courses. As such, we contribute to supporting the wellbeing and positive mental health not just of children and young people, but of those who support them too.

Feedback from courses demonstrates the positive impact our training and support programme has had.



DESTINATIONS

West Heath is extremely proud of our students’ achievements both academically and as confident and well rounded young citizens, equipped to take the next stage in their life.

Some of the further education destinations include:

Guildhall School of Music
Mid-Kent College
University of Cambridge
Central St. Martins &
Camberwell College of Arts,
University of Arts London
The Brit School
SupaJam
University College London
Hadlow College
Plumpton College
London South East College
University of Plymouth
University of Exeter
Aberystwyth University

King’s College London
University of the Creative Arts,
Farnham
Christ Church Canterbury
University of Staffordshire
East Sussex College
University of Suffolk
Capel Manor College
John Ruskin College
Carshalton College
Orpington College
Wolverhampton College
New City College
Charlton Academy
Harper Adams University

“This has been more than a school to me. It has been a home and a shelter, a family, a web of connections, a journey, an exploration and discovery into the human spirit. It has been a place where safety from harm and freedom to be myself co-exist. At this school, I have experienced a second childhood and then grown. I have forged friendships which I will remember as long as I live”

*Rosie Greco
Former Student*



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