

South Downs Community School

Local Offer

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1. How does the school know if children need extra help and what should I do if I think my child may have special educational needs?

South Downs Community School is based on two sites in Eastbourne and provides education for pupils aged 3 to 11 years who have a wide range of complex learning difficulties and special educational needs. The West site in Beechy Avenue is the base for the Early Years department and Key Stage 1 pupils. The East site in Shinewater Lane, Langney, is the base for the Key Stage 2 pupils and the school's outreach service.

All pupils who attend South Downs Community School have a statement of special educational needs. These statements outline the provision and support we must make in order to meet each child's needs. In addition to this, the school undertakes a broad range of formal and informal assessments to enable us to constantly review the needs of our pupils and respond accordingly.

We have excellent systems in place to discuss progress with parents and carers that allow any emerging issues to be discussed promptly and, where necessary, change support or provision within the school. All pupils have an annual review where we discuss needs, progress and provision with parents and carers.

2. How will school staff support my child?

There are a maximum of around ten pupils in each class who are supported by a teacher and at least two teaching assistants (TAs) which allows for a high level of support for learning within the classroom. The class teacher is responsible for each child's individual learning plan; personal learning and social and communication targets are set and reviewed regularly throughout the year.

Staff formally assess pupil progress three times a year. In cases where a pupil makes less than expected progress, their individual plan is reviewed and, in consultation with members of the senior management team, arrangements are made for additional support or strategies to be implemented to help pupils overcome their barriers to learning. The school's Governing body are actively involved in the life of the school and receive reports on all aspects of pupil progress and whole school performance.

3. How will the curriculum be matched to my child's needs?

Teachers plan their lessons to enable all learners to make progress and to be challenged. All lessons are highly differentiated which includes planning different tasks for pupils of differing abilities, allocating increasing amounts of support or setting open ended tasks and allowing pupils to respond according to their level of understanding.

Our pupils access the national curriculum, the content and approach of which may have been altered to meet the children's needs. Emphasis is placed on communication, language

development and personal and social development. Each of our pupils has an individual learning programme, which is delivered in a variety of approaches and contexts. A pupil's individual programme is derived from a combination of sources: - their statement of special educational needs, observations, assessments by teachers, discussions with parents, inputs from therapists and other professionals.

This information is then combined to produce objectives for each pupil, which are discussed with parents at annual reviews and parent consultation meetings. Each pupil's objectives allow us to individualise their learning programme as they provide individual focus within the group and individual teaching sessions that the pupil takes part in.

Pupils are taught in small groups or individually in contexts that allow them to develop and practise their learning priorities and other skills. Teaching and learning takes place in age appropriate and realistic contexts using the resources of the school and community as necessary.

There is an emphasis on learning outside the classroom and pupils participate in a broad range of activities that take them into the local community and beyond in order to develop their learning.

4. How will both you and I know how my child is doing and how will you help me to support my child's learning?

The school uses a variety of complimentary methods to assess the progress and attainment of the pupils here. We use a small steps assessment system called B Squared to track pupils' progress as they move through the school and to ensure that they are always moving forward whenever possible. Our younger children's progress is judged against the early learning goals as set out in the Foundation Stage curriculum.

All pupils may also have a home / school book, which enables parents and teachers to make contact should something relating to an individual pupil occur or to give information about what has happened in school that day. Parents are invited to the school three times per year to discuss their child's progress and agree targets for individual learning plans.

In addition you can contact the school at any time to make an appointment to see your child's class teacher.

5. What support will there be for my child's overall well being?

South Downs Community School has a very strong ethos based on our core values. We have strong pastoral systems in place and we promote self-belief and encourage aspirational personal achievements. Personal, social, health and emotional education (PSHE) is a key feature of the curriculum. Through social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) education we aim to enrich and expand the lives of our pupils while developing their values, attitudes and beliefs.

Minor accidents are treated by one of the appointed first aid staff and appropriate entries made in the accident book. Parents / carers are asked to complete a medical information form before requesting the school to administer medication. Medical protocols are written for pupils with complex medical needs. Teaching assistants are trained to deal with all personal care needs.

All non-attendance is followed up on a daily basis and we work very closely with our pupils, parents and carers to ensure high attendance is maintained and celebrated and that any emerging attendance issues are dealt with promptly. The school keeps attendance records by computer

programme and fills in the government return annually as required. The school informs parents of absence percentages as part of the annual review process.

The school is committed to promoting acceptable and positive behaviour from all members of the school community. It is totally opposed to bullying in any form and it will not be tolerated in school. The school follows an assertive code of practice which is adapted by individual teachers to suit the needs of their class groups. Unsocial behaviour is discouraged by the use of positive reinforcement for good behaviour.

We believe it is every child's right to have a voice and express their thoughts, needs and feelings and we have developed our own communication charter. Staff strive to support each child to communicate to the best of their ability, recognising that communication can take many forms and is both verbal and non-verbal. At South Downs we adopt a Total Communication Approach, where pupils can access a range of communication systems, in a variety of social situation. Through this, pupils are given every chance to understand and be understood, allowing them the best support to communicate and express their opinions. We believe that communication should be at the forefront of the curriculum. Through enabling our children to communicate, they are given the ability to make choices, become confident and independent and prepare them for their future lives.

6. What specialist services and expertise are available at or accessed by the school?

-South Downs Community School works in partnership with a broad range of services and agencies in order to meet the needs of our pupils. Our Head of School co-ordinates the intervention of specialist services that are accessed by pupils and these can include: speech and language support, Occupational Health, Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services, school nurse, art therapy and social care.

7. What training have the staff supporting children and young people with SEND had, or are having?

South Downs Community School is federated with The Lindfield School (for pupils aged 11 -17). Staff across the Federation share best practice and there are opportunities for all staff to develop their expertise in response to pupil's learning, social and communication needs. All staff access regular professional development through our 'in-house' programme; this provides staff with the opportunity to keep their practice fresh and up-to-date. We also commission specialists to provide additional training in specific areas, such as autism, speech, language, communication, literacy and specific behaviour needs. All staff have regular access to training in behaviour management, positive handling, health and safety, child protection and first aid.

8. How will my child be included in activities outside the classroom including school trips?

South Downs Community School offers pupils in all age groups ample opportunity to learn outside the classroom and we hope to achieve a quality mark for this by September 2014. Learning outside the classroom can include accessing local facilities such as sports centres and libraries, or going further afield to visit other places of interest such as museums, art galleries and historical or religious buildings.

In addition we have an extensive physical education programme including regular use of our swimming pool. At Key Stage 2, pupils are offered a range of residential trips, including camping

and short breaks at an outdoor activity centre. These off-site activities are planned well in advance and this gives parents and carers opportunity to consult with us on any issues that arise. Our expectation is for all learners at South Downs Community School to access opportunities to learn outside the classroom and each term all classes go on educational visits to support the curriculum.

9. How accessible is the school environment?

The West site has a number of separate buildings dating from 1920 which have been substantially altered and adapted over the years to meet our pupils' needs. The East site is a single two storey building dating from 1950 with significant adaptations.

Both sites have:

- tracking and hoist systems with adapted slings
- several disabled toilets
- height adjustable changing beds in adapted rooms
- a range of adapted play equipment
- a designated sensory suite
- two tail lift 17 seater minibuses
- complex medical provision including oxygen (secured) and suction machinery
- blood testing equipment
- access to hydrotherapy: a hydrotherapy pool is located on the East site and is used by pupils from both sites (swimming sessions are highly supervised, in line with E.S.C.C. Health and Safety Guidelines).

Where parents or carers do not have English as their first language, it is not considered appropriate to ask pupils to interpret for them. If interpretation services were required we would commission these from local authority approved providers.

10. How will the school prepare and support my child to join the school, transfer to a new school or the next stage of education and life?

Transition into the next phase of education is a particularly traumatic time for young people, and is often associated with high levels of anxiety. Therefore pupils at the South Downs School are supported during all transitions by the use of visual support, visits to new environments and staff liaison. There are thorough year 6 to year 7 programmes which include taster lessons, individual transition booklets and school and college familiarisation activities.

Transition information, such as independent learning plans, is shared for students moving classes or changing schools and there are frequent opportunities for students to visit their new environment prior to their transfer.

Where it is appropriate we support pupils to return to mainstream education. This is planned with great care and always in collaboration with pupils, parents and carers and the receiving school. Pupils who return to mainstream education are supported by South Downs Community School staff during their transition period. We share relevant information and strategies with the receiving school to ensure pupils experience a smooth and successful transition to their new mainstream school.

Securing transition to secondary phase provisions is extremely important and we plan carefully for this with each pupil according to their needs and their destination route. Support for this transition starts early and we have a comprehensive transition programme in place. Most of our pupils move on to either our federated special school – the Lindfield, or Hazel Court special school.

11. How are school's resources allocated and matched to children's special educational needs?

The South Downs Community Special School is funded according to the number of pupils that we have on role, and this is called base funding. In addition each pupil will be allocated funds from the Local Authority Special Education Needs budget and according to a banding system which reflects their needs. In addition, the school receives a number of other funding elements including pupil premium.

12. How is the decision made about what type and how much support my child will receive?

We use a comprehensive range of assessment data to ensure all aspects of your child's progress are carefully monitored on a regular basis throughout the year. Decisions about the type and amount of support your child needs will be primarily based on their rates of progress and how we can best meet their needs within our school environment. Support may be delivered by school staff within the class on an individual basis or in small group setting, or may be delivered by specialist staff who visit the school.

We will consult with you about how we support your child if we need to access expertise that is not already in the school. If your child accesses additional support from a specialist, we will agree specific targets to measure the success of the extra support. Following this, support is discussed and monitored at annual reviews are held to ensure that progress is being made and to judge whether the intervention should continue.

13. How are parents involved in the school? How can I be involved?

The South Downs Community Special School is a school that believes in working in partnership, where staff, parents, carers and governors work together to provide the best possible learning experience for each child: where parents feel valued and welcomed and where all adults care for the children and each other. We try to involve parents in the school as much as possible. Some parents will accompany groups on educational visits, or support swimming sessions. Parents are always welcome to come into school when it is their child's class assembly.

As a parent or carer you have a tremendous influence on your child's education; we value this and welcome your involvement to help secure the best possible educational outcomes for your child. While many pupils attending South Downs Community School live outside the immediate location of the school, this does not limit the opportunities we offer for you to be included and informed about school life.

We have regular parent and carer consultation afternoons/evenings to keep you informed about your child's progress and achievements. There are regular newsletters and we host a range of annual events, including sports day where parents and carers are warmly invited. Pupils take great pride in sharing their work and thoroughly enjoy showing their parents and carers around their school. We will give you as much notice of events as possible so you can plan ahead. If there are any transport related issues that may hinder your attendance to any school event, we will do our best to help you resolve these.

14. Who can I contact for further information?

As a parent or carer, the first point of contact for you would be with your child's class teacher. The Head of School, or a member of the senior management team will make contact with you if the class teacher is not able to help you with your initial enquiry. If there are issues you would rather discuss in person you can make an appointment to see a member of staff in school.

Please speak to us if there is anything you are unclear about or if you have any worries about your child's education. All enquiries should come through the East or West site reception on the school's main number. While many staff will be teaching we do aim to return calls on the same day. All personal information about pupils is treated carefully, if you have urgent information to pass on about your child, this can be shared in the strictest of confidence with a member of our reception team.

If you are a parent of a child with a statement, who is not yet at the school but may be considering it as an option, you can call to arrange a visit to the school to see what we offer here.

East Site

Shinewater Lane
Langney
Eastbourne
BN23 8AT

Tel: 01323 761061
Fax: 01323 763158

E-Mail: office2@downs.e-sussex.sch.uk

West Site

Beechy Avenue
Old Town
Eastbourne
BN20 8NU

Tel: 01323 730302
Fax: 01323 640544

E-Mail: office@downs.e-sussex.sch.uk

This offer is accurate now, but services are regularly reviewed and could change. All information will be updated as soon as possible to reflect any new service offer.

An invite for feedback

'This offer is intended to give you clear, accurate and accessible information.

If you would like to comment on the content of the offer, or make suggestions to improve the information, please email office@downs.e-sussex.sch.uk