

SEND Information Report

Uffculme School

Headteacher: Charlotte Stubbs

Local Offer Contribution: <https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/localoffer>

Mission: To support all students to live enjoyable and meaningful lives

Uffculme Special School is a specialist provision in Birmingham for autistic children and young people aged 11–19. We are proud to embrace a social model of difference, recognising autism as a natural variation in human experience rather than something to be 'fixed' or 'managed'.

Our ethos is rooted in meeting every child where they are — emotionally, cognitively, and developmentally. We do not seek to train students to behave in prescribed ways, but instead empower them to make the best choices for themselves, with the right support, guidance, and trust.

We believe that:

- Every student has the right to be understood, respected, and included.
- Behaviour is a form of communication, and our role is to listen and respond with empathy.
- Learning should be personalised, meaningful, and built around each student's strengths and interests.
- Relationships, consistency, and co-regulation are the foundation of progress.

Our overall aim is to achieve the very best for our students and to support them to reach their potential in their communication, pastoral, and academic lives. We look to the potential that a child has when they leave Uffculme, and what adulthood holds for them.

We also seek to further develop practice and provision within the school through in close partnership with our local community, other special schools and local mainstream partners within Birmingham and wider national organisations.

We aim to ensure that our students' access the best learning environments in order that they make progress and that their curriculum provides highly positive, memorable experiences as well as rich opportunities for high quality learning.

We maintain our belief in the importance of creative and personalised pedagogy and a diverse curriculum for our students and to take advantage of the opportunities our local community offers. We intend that Uffculme School will continue to be known as a place where staff care and nurture our children and young people, in an environment where all can grow and thrive.

All staff are responsible for every child in their care and the impact that they can have on a child development.

Student profile:

The abilities and needs of our students at Uffculme School are diverse. Whilst all of our students have a diagnosis of Autism, we recognise that for some, this is not their only or indeed their primary need. Many of our learners have additional learning difficulties, we cater for learners with Moderate Learning Needs across the school. Some of our learners display cognitive development difficulties and we work to support their attention, engagement, communication, and independence skills as priorities.

We recognise that the majority of our learners will have challenges with communication and so this is a priority area across the school.

We believe in working in partnership to with parents and carers to achieve the best outcomes for students and their families. Before becoming a student at Uffculme you will have the opportunity visit the school. School will provide social stories and scripts to explain where your child will be and the names of the staff in your child's class. You will also be contacted by staff to ask questions about your child, including detailed information about their communication, this is also an opportunity for you to ask to questions / share important information.

As students move through the school, we support them and families to understand and overcome some of the challenges they face, but to appreciate the opportunities on offer as they leave the school.

We work with Educational Psychologists and other external specialists to understand the best way to support learners at all points in their development.

SEN Needs: Children and young people's SEN are generally thought of in the following four broad areas of need and support:

1. Communication and interaction

Many of our students do not use their voice to communicate, instead they use a range of Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) tools. Each young person has a communication plan that details the range of strategies available to them to support their communication. Our communication system is based on many years of experiences underpinned by research and theory. We are increasingly evolving our Communication protocols to ensure that we are hearing and responding to each child's voice and their preferred method of communication. Teachers and support staff work closely with our speech & language therapists to ensure the best possible outcomes for our young people.

2. Cognition and learning

All of our young people have some form of learning disability. The staff have an in depth understanding of need supports carefully planned differentiation and scaffolding in lessons. Many of our students across the school are working below Year One of the National Curriculum, with an increasing number working at very early developmental levels – age 9-18 months. Students at secondary who are able to access a subject specific curriculum are typically working at least four years below their peers. These students access accreditation at Entry Level in KS4 with some achieving GCSE in English, Maths and Science. We have a growing number of students at Secondary who have more significant learning needs, these students will work towards personalised accreditation programs eg ASDAN.

Students at KS5 following a Life Skills and Accreditation program with some students accessing Functional Skills Accreditation in English and Maths. Vocational Pathways are in development in readiness for relocation of the site.

Our curriculum is designed with 3 pathways following on from foundation stage and Key Stage 1. These pathways help us to deliver a curriculum to best meet the needs of each child. Careful consideration is given to the pathway each child will follow and progress and appropriateness of pathways is reviewed regularly by teachers and senior leaders.

3. Social, emotional and mental health

Where appropriate we will offer 1:1 or small group support sessions for students. This is delivered through a range of sources including Play Therapists, Forward Thinking Birmingham referrals and independent counsellors. We additionally have ELSA trained staff who support identified students during weekly sessions. Our Student and Family Wellbeing Lead is also available to work with families.

We use our school developed emotional wellbeing rating scale to track students' emotional wellbeing and offer targeted support where needed.

Internal Alternative Provision is offered for a small number of students, where appropriate.

4. Sensory and/or physical needs

Some of our students have physical needs, often with one or more additional sensory impairments or sensory regulation issues. Across the school we have a multi-sensory approach to curriculum delivery for children and young adults with complex learning difficulties and disabilities who are working at a very early cognitive and sensory level. Our complex needs curriculum pathway includes the use of our sensory rooms and specifically developed break out spaces with sensory and gross motor activities. We commission the services of sensory therapists (OTs) who work with our school staff to support the students' needs. Where necessary we support parents to self-refer to Occupational Therapists (NHS).

Consulting with children, young people and their parents

We encourage regular communication between parents and carers and school staff (and with other professionals) from the day a child's place is confirmed.

We do this through:

EHCP Review - Students (where appropriate), parents, class teacher, therapist, community professionals, LA SEN officers (for out of borough students)

Parents' Evenings - Students (where appropriate), parents, class teacher, school based therapists.

Home school Communication - via home school link book and Evidence for Learning parent APP, phone conversations, meetings with parents and, where appropriate, professionals working with the student.

Other communication/meetings on request with class staff, Senior leaders or SALT and communication team.

We are continuing to develop our parent/carer communication. We regularly update the School Website with news, both in school and within Birmingham. We publish a half termly newsletter sharing the achievements of the students. Our Facebook page is used to publish events in school and locally.

Assessment & Measuring Student Progress:

Throughout school, teachers continually assess students to inform their planning for future learning.

Upon entering school our priority is to make sure children are happy and settled, we will use information from previous settings to ensure work is matched to student ability and need. Our communication team may also carry out some school-based assessments, students may be seen by an OT. Our approach is personalised to meet individual student needs.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, students are assessed against Developmental Matters and progress levels.

In Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, students are assessed against our school developed Uffculme Frameworks, National Curriculum expectations, statutory assessments and EHCP targets.

Evidence of progress is recorded using Evidence for Learning against Personal EHCP objectives,

In Key Stage 4, students not accessing a subject specific curriculum follow our transition curriculum using the ASDAN Transition Challenge to inform the curriculum delivered to these students. Students working within the National Curriculum gain accreditation in the core subjects either at Entry level or, where appropriate, in English and Maths, at GCSE level. Students are regularly assessed against the criteria of these specifications including the use of end of module tests. In addition, students in KS4 gain accreditation in the Arts Award programme using the course criteria for assessment.

In KS5, our sixth form students will gain accreditation through either ASDAN Diploma in Personal progress, Aim qualifications, or Open College Network Diploma in Skills for Living and Work and Mathematics.

Students are assessed on a termly basis in English, Maths, Science, PSE and towards their EHCP targets. These summative assessments inform our termly target setting, which is monitored by the senior leadership team in termly student progress meetings.

Students' progress is shared with parents in termly parents' evenings. In the Summer term, parents and carers have the opportunity to discuss their child's end of year report.

Individual students may have additional aspects of their development assessed by the speech and language therapist or OT, for example their AAC or sensory development.

Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP)

Plan:

Each student has an Annual EHCP review during which their Education, Health & Care Plan (EHC Plan) is reviewed. During this review, progress from the previous year and short term objectives for the coming year are agreed by the school, parents and other professionals involved with the child. At the end of the Key Stage, or if long term objectives are met early, we will re-set objectives for the next phase of learning. The meetings are chaired by the student's class teacher, a member of the senior leadership team may also be in attendance.

Students' progress is formally reviewed at this meeting where students, parents and professionals are invited to submit a written or verbal report. The class teacher and Senior leader monitor the progress each student is making in any targeted work, while also monitoring the effectiveness of the provision or interventions.

Do:

The goals from the EHC Plan and knowledge of the student, shape the student's short-term goals.

These are negotiated with parents and any professionals working with the child from health and/or care, to enable students to work towards their goals both at home and school.

For some young people these goals may include additional work at home, however we realise that this can cause difficulty for some of our students. Staff may also set termly personal targets which support the achievement of the short-term goals. Significant progress towards achieving these goals is recorded and shared with parents in the home school link book and using the Evidence for Learning Parent APP.

Review:

The outcomes related to each child's/young person's agreed goals are reviewed during the EHCP review. Having consulted with children, young people (where appropriate) and their parents, all our additional provision is based on an agreed outcomes approach.

Our curriculum offer is built upon this consultation and is available on our website.

Staff development

We are committed to developing the ongoing expertise of our staff. Currently expertise in our school includes: communication, nurture and wellbeing, ELSA, Development of Early Reading, Forest Schools etc.

We provide all staff with the following training: Safeguarding and Child Protection (inc. CSE, Prevent, Protective Behaviours), Team Teach.

We are working with external partners to support staff into a teaching career if it is appropriate. Staff are initially employed as UnQualified Teachers and supported towards QTS via the Assessment Only Route./

Training using a range of therapies has been offered to staff working with students at a sensory level.

Staff deployment

Considerable thought, planning and preparation goes into utilising our support staff to ensure students achieve their best outcomes, gain independence, and are prepared as appropriate for adulthood from the earliest possible age.

We currently have two reception classes, nine classes at Woodlands (primary), thirteen at our Chamberlain site (secondary) and three at our Russell Road site (sixth form).

The staffing ration in classes varies depending on student age and need.

Staff Training:

All staff receive staff induction with a package which includes training on Autism, communication and behaviour management. Training requirements are also monitored to ensure our staff have the skill base to meet the changing needs of students and to support the introduction of new initiatives.

School Partnerships and Transitions

Our assessment in all subjects for children and young people with special educational needs is moderated with the other Special Needs schools in Birmingham and where appropriate with mainstream schools. We are also part of a moderation group of Special schools.

We are keen to further develop our links with mainstream schools to support smooth transition of our students into mainstream where appropriate. Students may go back into mainstream schools when they are emotionally and academically ready. Some of our KS4 students leave at the end of Year 11 to go to the local Further Education Colleges or Sixth Forms. We have a careers advisor who is based in school one day a week and who works very closely with young people and their families to support the transition. We closely monitor children and young people's destination data.

Therapy Services

Therapy and health services are not employed directly by the school - but are commissioned by the school. There are some children who attend our school from other boroughs, and in these cases health and therapy services are arranged separately from the school. Students attending from other boroughs will be entitled to a basic offer including an annual review, general training for staff and assessment for equipment to meet essential needs. Any health or therapy needed in addition to this is negotiated with the child's Local Authority.

Activities outside the classroom and residential

All students have access to learning opportunities and activities outside the classroom including forest school, trips into the local community such as the park, café's, shopping, cinema, trips to places of interest e.g. Warwick Castle, Theatre.

An increasing number of students across school also have the opportunity to experience a residential trip staying away from home for 3 to 4 nights. These experiences also allow students to practice key independence and life skills in real life situations.

Evaluating Effectiveness

The schools most recent Ofsted (Oct 2024) confirmed School Leaders views that Uffculme had maintained standards. Provision at Uffculme School was judged to be good and, in some areas, outstanding. This is reviewed by Senior Leaders at the school and presented to Governors regularly through the Self Evaluation Framework.

The Senior Leadership regularly reflect on the school's performance through lesson observations, learning walks and reviews of outcomes. This is then included in the School Evaluation and the School Development Plan. These are reviewed at least termly. The school leadership team and teachers work to regularly review their understanding of each child's needs and what intervention is required to secure better outcomes. Parents are asked to comment on their child's progress and agree future targets throughout the year.

Complaints

Our policy is to deal with parents' concerns and complaints as quickly as possible. Matters will be resolved mostly by the class teacher or Head of School. Parents are advised to contact the Headteacher or if they wish to make a formal complaint. The Headteacher will work swiftly to resolve matters in the best interests of the child and family. Our full complaints policy is available on our website.