

Special School Provision Descriptors



Federation of Old Hall and Mary Elliot Schools

Old Hall (Primary, Nursery, EYFS – Yr6) and Mary Elliot School (Secondary, Yr7 – Yr14) have joined together in a federation of schools which share senior leadership and have a joint governing body. Both schools work closely with Oakwood School (Primary, Nursery, EYFS – Yr6) to provide education for the children and young people in Walsall with severe or profound learning need, autism, HI, VI and a range of complex medical needs. At present both Old Hall School and Mary Elliot School do not offer provision for students with Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties (SEMH).

The Federation of two schools allows for quality transitions to be planned across all age ranges and into adulthood. The schools work closely with each other to share staffing, resources and expertise for the benefit of all of our children and young people.

Mary Elliot School

Mary Elliot School is a special school for students aged 11-19 with severe, profound and complex learning difficulties. We have 116 commissioned places. Our focus is on three key areas of learning:

Communication and Interaction: where children with speech language and communication needs have difficulty in communicating with others. Our young people with autism spectrum conditions (ASC) are likely to have particular difficulties with social interaction.

Cognition and Learning: our support for students with severe learning difficulties (SLD) covers a wide range of need; our students are likely to need support in all areas of the curriculum and may have associated difficulties with mobility and communication ranging to profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), where students are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical difficulty or sensory impairment.

Sensory and/or physical need: some of our students require specialist support and equipment because of a visual impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) or multi-sensory impairment (MSI). Students with MSI have a combination of vision and hearing difficulties.

The school is divided into three teaching departments led by an experienced and well-qualified senior teacher:-

Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD Department)

Profound Multiple Learning Difficulties (SET - Sensory, Engagement, Transition Department)

Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC Department)

Our approach enables students to be grouped in classes based principally on learning need and therefore appropriate teaching approach, although account is taken of each student's age, social and emotional need.

Qualified teachers and experienced support staff work alongside each other to form Department teams using a mix of class teaching, specialist subject teaching, group and individual work.

In turn each department is divided into three main areas:-

- Key Stage 3 – Ages 11-13 yrs.
- Key Stage 4 – Ages 14-15 yrs.
- Key Stage 5 : Post 16 Ages – 16-19 yrs.

Many staff working within the school hold additional specialist qualifications and have a wide range of experience in working with students with SEN. Through INSET training and opportunities for external accreditation, staff have access to current education initiatives in order to further develop their skills.

Admission criteria

All admissions will be determined by the Local Authority in accordance with the 'SEN and Disability code of practise: 0-25years', July 2015. Consultation with the school will be in accordance with this document before the Local Authority makes a decision about placement. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an Education Health and Care plan (EHCP). Placements are determined by the Local Authority in response to preferences expressed by parents. Our young people live in Walsall and travel to school by school transport, though a small number of our young people come from further afield: Staffordshire, Birmingham, Sandwell and Wolverhampton. Prior to finalising the placement; parents and carers will have the opportunity to visit school so that they can make an informed decision. Transfer to Mary Elliot School can occur at any age starting from the term in which the child enters Key Stage 3 (Year 7).

School resources

The School has state of the art facilities and offers spacious and well-designed educational accommodation. Our two storey building is set within large grounds which are used for all aspects of learning outside the classroom. Every classroom is spacious and light and we have designated rooms for Art; Food Technology; Design Technology; Science; Music and ICT. We have our own hydrotherapy pool; multi-sensory room; medical suite, specialist hygiene rooms for personal care; library and sports hall which incorporates a climbing wall and dance studio facilities. The school also has the use of a dedicated training flat within the local community where students learn 'independent living skills' within a realistic setting. The school is equipped with 2 lifts; overhead hoisting, modern teaching aids, including extensive ICT equipment and a fleet of Minibuses for accessing learning in the community. Preparation for school leaving takes place throughout our student's time in school; parents are fully involved and consulted throughout the process. Information about post-school options are provided and visits to possible placements are arranged

Curriculum

Mary Elliot School follows a skill-based curriculum, with most learners following either a semi-formal curriculum or an informal/engagement curriculum. Communication is a priority for all learners.

Learners in our ASC and SLD provisions follow a semi-formal curriculum. In Key stage 3, learners are encouraged to explore and develop skills in a variety of areas from the 'Equals' curriculum including Communication, Creativity, Independence, Play & Leisure and Thinking & Problem Solving. Core Maths and English skills as well as a Personal Social & Health Education (PSHE) programme are included. As learners move into Key Stage 4, an increasing emphasis is placed upon preparing for adult life. Post 16 offers an outwards facing life skills curriculum including opportunities for community access, transition visits to college and social care providers and supported work experience.

Learners in our SET provision follow an engagement curriculum which prioritises sensory and therapeutic learning. The curriculum aims to develop pupils' ability to engage in learning activities and to communicate with those around them. This curriculum is highly individualised with pupils working towards individual targets derived from their Education Health and Care Plans.

In all departments, pupils aged 14-19 work towards OCR Life & Living Skills qualifications which are awarded at a level appropriate to the individual learner.

Assessment

All statements of Special Educational Needs or EHCs are reviewed annually, involving parents, school staff and other professionals. The meeting includes a review of educational progress, placement opportunities, transition, transport and opportunities for inclusion activities.

Progress is regularly assessed and recorded, and reported through the annual review report, and further assists the setting of new targets and objectives. On-going progress and assessment through the year takes place using a wide range of detailed assessment tools. Where appropriate Personal Education plans (PEPS) are in place.

Transition reviews take place in Yr 9, Yr11 and Yr14. These reviews take into account local and national guidance and include working with other agencies i.e. Connexions, further education colleges, social care or other schools as appropriate. The school is included within the Local Authorities monitoring cycle and works with the LA School Improvement Partner (SIP). The SIP will work with the school to monitor and challenge our practice to ensure a high quality

provision is available to students. A report is written and shared with governors who also have a programme of school monitoring to hold senior leaders to account for the quality of provision.

Future plans

Mary Elliot is continually striving to enhance and improve the education of and environment for the students in our care so that all can achieve to their full potential and achieve quality transitions into their adult lives. A detailed School Development Plan focussing on improving the quality of Leadership, Teaching and Learning, Behaviour, Safety and Personal Development as well as Outcomes for students can be found on the school website.

We are working with the Local Authority to expand the number of school placements available to Walsall students and aim to open an additional four class spaces equipped for the most complex young people in our borough in September 2019.