



The Oaks Secondary School

A Secondary School for students aged 11-19 years.



Please note – The term Parent will be used throughout the document to signify parents, guardians and carers





The Local Offer

- The Local Offer was first introduced in a Green Paper (March 2011) as an outline of all local services available to support children and young adults with SEN and their families. A new framework will allow the Local Offer to provide parents/carers with information about how to access services in their area, and what they can expect from those services.
- With regard to education, it will let parents/carers and young people know how school and colleges will support them, and what they can expect across the local settings including apprenticeships and supported internships.
- The Local Offer is published on the Durham Families Information website. The current link can be found at <http://www.durham.gov.uk/localoffer>





The Oaks Secondary School – Local Offer

The following pages outline the educational provision we offer to the young people with special educational needs who attend The Oaks Secondary School.

All pupils at The Oaks have a Statement of Special Education Need and/or an Education Health and Care plan. All admissions to the school are via Durham County Council ([SEND Casework Team](#))

Contents include information about

The school

Support available to pupils

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The School



The Oaks Secondary School is a mixed day school catering for pupils aged 11 – 19 that have either moderate, severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties, an Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) or other moderate learning difficulty alongside complex needs. Some pupils may also have additional physical, sensory, linguistic or emotional difficulties.

The building at The Oaks Secondary offers excellent fully accessible facilities with all classrooms well equipped for ICT. The school has a sports hall, hydrotherapy pool, therapy room, medical room, meeting room, library, ICT suite, lunch / assembly hall, soft play active zone, fitness room, separate sixth form building and a multi-sensory interactive room.

In our recent [OFSTED](#) inspection May 2023 we were awarded 'Outstanding', we also achieved this grade in our previous inspections.

Summary of the key findings include:-

'Pupils flourish at Oaks Secondary School. Staff develop strong, caring relationships with pupils.'

'Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Many expressed their appreciation by making similar comments that praised the school and staff.'

'Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They move around school calmly and with great respect. Inspectors saw consistently positive interaction between pupils in all areas of the school.'

'The school's curriculum is highly ambitious for all pupils. Leaders have thought carefully about the important skills and knowledge they want pupils to learn.'



How will The Oaks School meet the needs of my child?

All pupils at the Oaks Secondary School have an Education Health and Care Plan. All pupils have some type of learning difficulty. Some pupils may also have additional physical, sensory, linguistic or emotional difficulties.

EHCP (education, health and care plan) meetings are held annually to discuss any changes to the plan. Educational outcomes and pupil aspirations are also considered and any additional support identified. Progress towards targets, outcomes and Preparation for Adulthood aspirations are confirmed at these meetings. Parents/carers and other professionals involved with the child are invited to attend. It is vitally important that parents/carers attend this meeting, so that we can work in partnership to ensure that the child's EHCP fully meets their changing needs. Pupils are encouraged to attend the meetings. They have the opportunity to discuss their likes, dislikes and future aspirations by providing an all about me document, written or visual information and a verbal response in the meeting.

Each pupil's Individual Education Plan/ My Plan is drawn up on a termly basis. It will be differentiated accordingly to suit an individual's needs. A copy of educational targets are given to parents. Other information may be included such as additional general or focused support by a teacher or teaching assistant and/or use of particular resources (e.g. a writing slope, laptop, Dynovox).

If a pupil has specific needs, for example related to behaviour and social skills or literacy, speech and language then the pupil could have the opportunity to be part of a small focus group for regular intervention sessions.

Teachers differentiate through their planning and by using a variety of teaching and learning styles. Staff are skilled at identifying an individual child's abilities and learning needs. Learning support and supervisory assistants are allocated according to a particular class's needs.

Parents are able to discuss their child's progress at parents evenings. We hold parents evening on a termly basis. For further information look at the following document , [Information about SEN](#) Parents are welcome in school at any time.



How can I support my child's learning?

All pupils at the Oaks Secondary School will have access to the [National Curriculum](#). They will be taught in small class groups and we promote a wide use of ICT. Teachers are flexible in their approaches and sensitive to the differences in learning styles and pupils' rates of learning. You are welcome to discuss your child's learning and progress with staff at school at any time.

Teachers will suggest ways of supporting all children's learning during the autumn term. This will include any additional English, Maths and Science support work through the use of [Education City](#), [Lexia](#), [Accelerated Reading](#) and [Conquer Maths](#). Teachers may also suggest additional ways of supporting your child's learning through an email, note in the home/school diary, during parents evening or by arranging a face to face or Teams meeting with you.

Outside agencies e.g Speech and Language Therapist or the Educational Psychologist may give advice or present programmes of study that can be used at home.

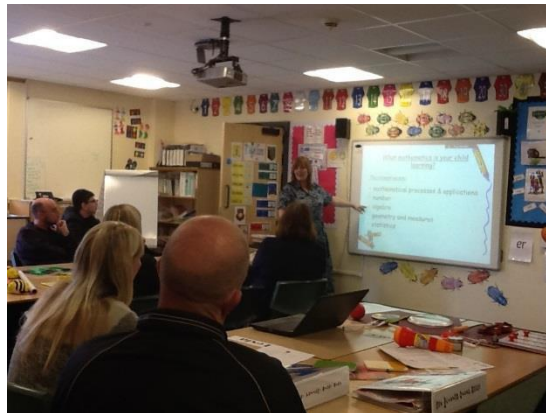
Parents/Carers workshops and coffee mornings are arranged throughout the year to encourage an open and relaxed forum where advice and ideas can be exchanged.





How will I know how my child is doing?

- You will be able to discuss your child's progress at parents evenings. We hold parents evening on a termly basis, in addition you are welcome to make an appointment to discuss your child's progress at other times.
- Prior to the EHCP meeting your child's school report is sent home.
- An EHCP meeting is held every year for each child. Parents/carers and other professionals involved with your child are invited to attend. It is vitally important that parents/carers attend this meeting to ensure that your EHC plan fully meets their changing need.
- Depending upon your child's level of communication there are a range of methods available to give a more regular update. Some parents prefer to use email to keep in close contact with teachers. We post pictures and information regularly on the [school website](#) in the form of a blog
- We hold literacy and numeracy information nights (see photograph below) for parents and carers to explain the approaches and methods used when delivering these subjects. We encourage parents to attend to that they can support their child at home. It is also an opportunity to inform parents of intervention homework software that can be used at home.





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

The school offers a wide variety of pastoral support for pupils to meet their educational, emotional, social, behavioural and physical needs. Members of the staff team such as the class teacher, learning support assistants and senior leaders are readily available to discuss issues and concerns. Pupils are offered a peer mentor when they join the school and there is continued student to student support.

The Behaviour Support Unit (BSU) offers the Listening Matters program to discuss pupil concerns and anxieties on a 1 to 1 basis. Pupils who find whole school lunchtimes a struggle are able to join a variety of clubs and activities. These include the 'quiet room', reading club and computer club. Social interaction, Lego therapy, Mindfulness sessions, friendship and communication groups also take place regularly. Staff will make referrals to other agencies such as Health, CAMHs and Social services as appropriate in partnership with families.

Some pupils have medical needs which require a Care Plan compiled by their medical team. These are discussed with all staff who are involved with the pupil. Only medication which has been prescribed by a doctor can be given in school. This can only be administered to a child once a medication form has been completed by parents/carers. The completed form together with the medication, in its original box, should be brought to school by parents/carers. All medicines are locked away in the medical room for health and safety purposes. Emergency medication is carried securely by staff on educational visits. Most of the staff at The Oaks are trained in first aid and the administration of emergency medication. Staff are also trained regularly in behaviour management, moving and handling and child protection.

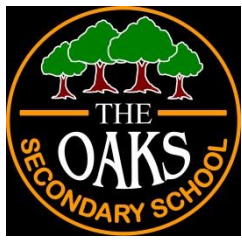
The school offers a very wide range of educational, social and leisure opportunities in order to engage and enthuse every child. We strive to ensure that school is a safe, supportive, stimulating and fun place to be.



Transition

The Oaks Secondary School offers transition support to parents and pupils during the spring and summer term prior to your child coming to the school. Parents are welcome to visit the school at an arranged time and are invited to attend a parents evening to look around the school and meet the head teacher and senior leadership team. Pupils are invited to at least three transition sessions. They will have the opportunity to tour the school, meet their buddies, meet their form tutor and class and participate in enrichment activities. Pupils receive a prospectus and additional information about the school, there is a dedicated area on the school website for New Starters. Transition staff contact all parents during the first week to check that your child is settling well.

The Oaks School works closely with primary schools to establish the individual pupils needs and support or equipment that is required when your child starts the school in the Autumn term of year 7. We work closely with pupils and parents in year 9 when they attend their 14+ EHC (Education, Health and Care) meeting to discuss their option choices and thoughts about post 16 education.



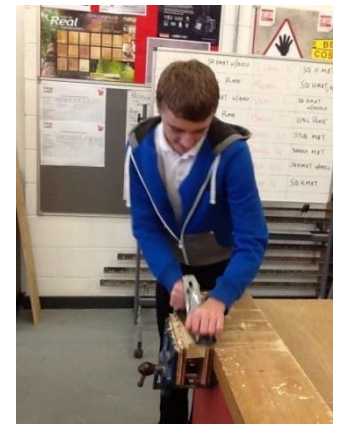
Transition

Throughout KS4 and 5 pupils receive independent advice and guidance about post school options. This is done in careers lessons, Preparation for Adulthood (PFA) lessons and assemblies. In years 11 and 14 pupils have the opportunity to meet with personal advisors and visit a range of post school providers. A comprehensive transition plan is written by school staff in partnership with the pupil and their family.

Help is given to fill in appropriate paper work and to facilitate communication with your chosen provider. We work closely with the Improving Progression Team and Social Services to ensure that each pupil's needs are met

The Oaks has a sixth form which can provide a life skills based programme for up to three years. Only pupils with severe and/ or profound and complex needs are offered a sixth form place at The Oaks.

It is most appropriate for pupils with moderate learning difficulties to move onto a local college, training or specialist placement. The school facilitates this transition through work experience placements, college link courses, PFA and careers lessons





Extra-Curricular Activities and Holiday Clubs

The Oaks School provides extra-curricular club two nights per week from 3.25pm. Activities include sport, cooking, arts and crafts, ICT, sensory activities and use of the interactive room.

One afternoon per week we offer Enrichment Activities to every child. These include a wide range of inclusive activities which pupils choose on a termly basis. The activities, which are accredited, enable the pupils to develop key skills, mix with a wider range of staff and pupils, try something new and develop appropriate leisure skills.

Pupils have regular access to educational visits and reward trips and activities. We also offer a range of residential trips both home and abroad to meet the needs of a range of pupils.

In addition to the above we provide social evenings, work experience, inter school sports, enterprise activities and community work.

As part of our enriched curriculum everyone in school is a member of a house team and a family group. There is a family group lesson on a weekly basis during which students are taught knowledge and skills based on the UNICEF Rights of the child articles





Rewards and Sanctions

We celebrate pupil achievement through the use of praise and positive reinforcement. Pupils collect 'acorns' which can be traded for prizes and fun activities. Golden 'acorns' gain bigger rewards.

Pupils' achievements are acknowledged in assemblies when medals and certificates are given out. A friendship award is also given out to pupils who are supportive of their peers and polite and helpful around school. Pupils who show a mature attitude can take positions of responsibility.

Many classrooms have their own instant reward system and the whole school works towards taking part in the end of term reward activities many of which are off site.

Pupils are taught to make 'good' choices, to self regulate and suggest strategies which will help them to progress well in school. The potential consequences of different courses of action are explained to pupils so that they can decide what they would like to do. The consequences of inappropriate behaviour, poor attitude etc can include loss of privileges, break or lunchtime detention, time in the Behaviour Support Unit (BSU). Pupils will be supported to manage their negative behaviour

Some pupils have individual behaviour management plans and others have short term report cards. All pupils who have spent time in the BSU will have the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and are given help to develop alternative strategies.

Pupils can self- refer to the BSU at anytime





Promoting Equality

The overall objective of our Equality Policy is to provide a framework for the school to pursue its equality duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; promote equality of opportunity; and promote good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds in all its activities.

We allow access to all pupils through:

- A purpose built school designed to accommodate the educational, emotional, physical and social needs of all our learners.
- A curriculum designed to meet the needs of all pupils with a variety of SEN, including a Sensory Curriculum and access to External Accreditation, access to specialist rooms, technology and therapies where required.
- Support from highly trained staff, sensitive to the needs of pupils with SEN and their families
- Supplying information to both children and parents in both written and symbol form. Many notices around the school are written in both symbol and written formats and Braille.

The principles of this policy applies to all members of the extended school community – pupils, staff, governors, parents and community members. We also have an accessibility plan.

Partners and contractors are also expected to abide by the Equality policy.

Friends Of The Oaks School (FOTOS)

The Friends of The Oaks School began in February 2006. A small group of staff and parents came together to discuss ways in which they could support our pupils. We adopted the name 'Friends' because we wanted the organisation to be open to anyone with a connection to The Oaks. A willingness to work together for the benefit of young people with a special educational need and their families is all that is needed. The group became, affectionately known as FOTOS.

Our motto is to 'Have Fun, Fund Raising' and we aim to provide social events, support and specialist equipment for pupils and their families. We host regular coffee mornings, pie pea and bingo, quizzes and barbeques to name a few. We also try to raise the profile of the school within the community and liaise with other charitable organisations. We fund raise through a range of activities and apply for grants. We are always ready to support families and are willing to share our advice and experiences.

We have adopted a formal constitution which enables us to have good links with the NCPTA which is the national organisation for parent teacher associations. We have a chairperson, vice chairperson, treasurer, external events coordinator and secretary who are appointed each year at the AGM and Mrs English is our 'president'. We achieved Charity Status in April 2009.

You can become involved with FOTOS by asking to be on our mailing list and attending a meeting or by telephoning Mrs Dobinson at school 01388 827380, sending a note or an e mailing theoaks@durhamlearning.net

We look forward to meeting you!





External Agencies and Partnerships

At times it will be appropriate to consult with outside agencies to receive specialised expertise and support. The agencies used by the school may include:

- Educational Psychologist
- Autism Outreach Team
- Social Workers
- Behaviour Support Team
- CAMHS (Child Adolescence and Mental Health Service)
- EWO (Education Welfare Officer)
- Children's Therapy Team (Speech & Language/Occupational Therapy)
- School Nurse
- Paediatrics Service
- Improving Progression Team

We also work in partnership with Communities of Learning, Universities and Colleges, primary and secondary schools, Sedgefield Sports Partnership and County Durham Parent Partnership (SENDIASS)





Finance

- We are a maintained special school and therefore receive our funding from the government via the local authority.
- We receive capital funding to maintain our building and its facilities
- We receive funding for groups of pupils according to their individual needs (audit banding)
- Pupils in the sixth form are funded individually following the completion of a costed provision map by school staff
- All our funding is used to support the education of pupils with SEN
- We receive additional funding in the form of the Pupil Premium and Y7 Catch up grant. You can see how this money is spent on our website.
- More information about finance and personal budgets can be found on the [local offer website](#)



Key Contacts and Further Information

Mr. M Tweddle	Executive Headteacher
Mrs. F Tweddle	Head of School
Mr. C. Hubery	Chair of Governors
Mrs. R Farrow	SENCO

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