



TOGETHER FOSTERING ACHIEVEMENT

## **THE FOREST ACADEMY SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) INFORMATION REPORT**

This SEND Information Report describes the arrangements we make that are 'additional and different' for pupils with SEND. This information has been produced together with parents/carers, carers and our children and young people, and will be reviewed annually.

### **Aim**

At The Forest Academy (TFA), we recognise that some students may require additional support and/or resources to reach their full academic, personal, and social potential. The Inclusion department works closely with the senior leadership team, heads of year, heads of department, parents/carers/carers, and external agencies in responding to pupils' educational needs and providing pathways to success.

### **An overview of the school**

The Forest Academy is a mixed academy for students aged 11-16, committed to excellence for all and to improving the life chances of every student across the ability spectrum, irrespective of background or religion. We have a shared-site 6<sup>th</sup> form with Beal High School, with approximately 200 students educated in the sixth form at TFA.

We provide a learning environment that challenges, supports, and inspires, where all students are entitled to a consistently high-quality experience within a harmonious community. ***Ofsted says 'The Forest Academy is a good school that has improved rapidly since it was opened in January 2012, there is a positive atmosphere in and around the school'; 'pupils are self-assured, polite and speak warmly about being part of this school community and the good support they receive from their teachers'.***

We are a smaller than average sized secondary school and are part of the Beacon Multi-Academy Trust. The proportion of students with special educational needs is above the national average.

The Beacon Communication School (BCS) is an Additionally Resourced Provision that supports students with an EHCP for Autism Spectrum Conditions and/or social communication needs. The provision is suitable for students whose needs cannot be met solely within mainstream schools but for whom a special school placement would limit their potential. The aim of the provision is to develop independence, prepare for adulthood and access enough level 2 courses at KS4 with a view to progress to level 3 courses at KS5. Currently there are twenty four students in the provision, six in each year group.

## **The approach to teaching children and young people with SEND.**

We strive to ensure that all students are fully included in school life and at the end of their experience at The Forest Academy, all students have the skills and qualifications that will allow them to progress and fulfil their ambitions by making the most of their talents and abilities. At TFA we are committed to equality and adopt a holistic whole-child approach, helping students to overcome the barriers that may or may not yet be identified.

The following information outlines the support and provision pupils with SEND can expect at The Forest Academy.

**ALL** pupils will access:

- Quality First teaching and learning
- A differentiated curriculum
- Reasonable adjustments to the environment and equipment for pupils with disabilities
- Assessment for learning
- Personalised target setting
- After school clubs and educational visits
- Access to careers advice

**Some** pupils with Additional SEND needs will access:

- Targeted interventions and support matched to their need
- Individualised target setting
- Personalised progress tracking and assessment of need
- Access to flexible working groups
- Access to additional adult support for specific tasks
- Intervention from external agencies
- Link worker, mentor, or ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant).

**A few** pupils with complex or significant needs will access:

- A personalised timetable
- Access to evidence-based specialist programmes
- Access to specialist services and therapists
- High levels of adult support and small group work

In line with the SEND Code of Practice we ensure that the SEND provision has regard to the views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person and their parents/carers/carers, and recognise the importance of the child or young person participating as fully as possible in decisions, and the need to support the child or young person and their parents/carers to help them achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. How will the school know if my child needs additional help and how will the school share information with me?**

#### **Identifying children's additional needs**

The Forest Academy identifies students who have additional needs in several ways and at a number of different times during the school year. The principle of early intervention underpins the approach taken at The Forest Academy, this works alongside the emphasis on Quality First Teaching which involves all teachers and Teaching Assistants having a responsibility to identify and support all students. The responsibility of staff for identification of students is supported through student focused meetings including weekly Link worker meetings and termly meetings with Heads of each year group.

Parents/carers/carers are involved in any assessments as the impact school life has on home must be taken into consideration when looking at possible steps to take. At The Forest Academy we take the view that the support and involvement of parents/carers is often essential if significant progress is going to be made. Parents/carers can contact tutors, Heads of year or the SENCO at any time during the year to arrange a meeting. Progress of students is assessed through monitoring of academic levels, reading ages, friendship groups, behaviour in class and behaviour around the school site. All these indicators can prompt a member of staff to begin further investigation. This can include assessments carried out by the school staff or outside agencies that support the school.

#### **Early Identification**

The Inclusion staff work with primary colleagues to ensure a positive transition so that the provision for students on arrival is timely and effective. At the beginning of Year 7, all students are assessed using the LASS Lucid assessment. This battery of 8 computer-based assessments allows staff to identify which students may need additional support and helps identify what the nature of the students need is. This information is shared with relevant staff, tutor and head of year.

#### **Staff Concerns**

Where form tutors or teaching staff have concerns regarding the progress (academic or social) of students, they contact the Inclusion (SEND and English as an Additional Language) team directly or through the students' Head of Year.

### **2. How will the school involve parents/carers/carers and our child in meeting our SEND needs and in general school life?**

#### **Planning Support**

- Planning meetings
- Target setting for Individual Educational Plans
- Advice on how to support learning at home
- Regular contact between home and school
- Coffee mornings

- Mentor meetings with tutors
- Annual parents/carers evening
- Individual pupil-teacher conversations
- Mentors and link worker updates
- Review meetings

### 3. What different kinds of support are available to children with SEND?

#### Range of support provided.

- Tailored and differentiated curriculums
- Individual and group support for students with literacy difficulties
- Individual and group support for students with numeracy difficulties
- Support for students who are struggling with their behaviour
- Support for the visually impaired
- Support for the hearing impaired.
- Specified individual support
- Support for health needs
- Grouping of pupils
- Specialist teaching groups
- Social and emotional support (individual and group)
- Support during unstructured time
- Support for students with social communication difficulties
- Mentoring
- Counselling

#### Range of support available to my child

Teaching staff are aware of the need to adapt the curriculum and differentiate schemes of work, lessons and tasks depending on the learning needs of the students they teach. Support is personalised, where groups of students have similar needs, they may receive support as part of a group.

The primary method used for social skills development is through the involvement of students in activities in the Inclusion Centre at break and lunch times, where staff support students in developing friendships and their social skills during unstructured time. The school provides access to counsellors in the school, students can self-refer, parents/carers can refer, and any member of staff can refer a student with all referrals going through Heads of Year. Teaching staff are aware of the need to adapt the curriculum and differentiate schemes of work, lessons and tasks depending on the students they teach. In exceptional circumstances a new curriculum may be considered where this is key for the students in reducing their barriers to learning and progressing successfully. During break, lunch, before school and after school support is provided not only to help students with academic work but also to help students with feeling settled in school and help them in managing any concerns that may be barriers to them enjoying and achieving during their school day. It is essential that parents/carers consider whether the curriculum on offer is correct for their child before deciding on a school, and welcome visits to the school.

## **Interventions**

Interventions are specific, targeted, structured, 1:1 or small group lessons that involves withdrawal from normal timetabled lessons.

Interventions from mainstream lessons for small group or 1:1 lesson only takes place where staff are confident that the withdrawal will have a significantly greater impact on the progress of the student than compared to their progress in a mainstream lesson. The expectation is that at least twice expected progress is made in withdrawal lessons for them to be justified. The Inclusion department currently run interventions for:

- Lexia and Reading Plus (computer-based reading programmes)
- Literacy (focused on developing literacy skills through reciprocal teaching methods)
- Numeracy (mainstream topic focused)
- Handwriting (focused on the speed of handwriting and legibility)
- Expressive Arts (regulating emotions)
- Nurture groups (developing friendship and self-esteem)
- Lego Therapy (for communication skills)
- Social skills
- Transition

If students have been identified as in need of additional support or in need of further assessment, parents/carers/carers are informed and the opportunity to discuss the nature of the support in detail is offered.

## **Working with external professionals and agencies**

The Forest Academy works with health and social care organisations including voluntary organisations to access services that we feel can be of benefit to our students. We recognise that parents/carers/carers know their children best but also that professionals outside of the school can provide expertise in different contexts and that it is important to involve people with this experience. Students who are looked after by the local authority are given specific consideration and support.

Where the SENCo feels additional support is required, with the consent of the student and parent/carer, a referral will be made to Redbridge Specialist Education and Training Support Service (SEaTSS).

SEaTSS offer a wide range of support, advice and training opportunities for schools and settings to enable them to deliver high quality support for individual children to ensure that the people who work with them and their families are equipped to understand and meet their individual needs.

SEaTSS is made up of 4 teams that will support -

- Team 1 - Autism/Social Communication/Social Emotional Mental Health
- Team 2 – General learning difficulties (GLD), including medical syndromes, Language and Communication needs
- Team 3 – Physical and complex needs, Specific literacy difficulties (SPLD)
- Team 4 – Sensory needs (including Vision and hearing)

The referrer and appropriate settings, schools or professionals will be contacted following the referral to agree support packages and to create individual support plans.

### **Further assessment**

Where the school want the needs of a student clarified or if there is a complexity in the assessment of students' needs, the school will request an assessment by the school's educational psychologist (EP). In this case, written consent is required from parents/carers/carers. Reports from the EP are sent to parents/carers/carers and the way forward is discussed with parents/carers/carers.

### **Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP)**

If the school feel an EHCP may be required, with parents/carers/carers' consent they will begin the process with an assessment by the school's Educational Psychologist. Parents/carers/carers are invited to meet with the EP and SENCo to discuss the process and their part in the process. The SEN and Disabilities (SEND) team knows that parental support and involvement in their children's learning is important, endeavour to keep parents/carers/carers informed and are happy to meet with parents/carers/carers at convenient times.

## **4. How will the school know how well my child is doing and how will they inform me about this?**

### **Termly reviews**

Heads of Year meet with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) each term. Progress of all students is reviewed, and students are identified for additional support based on the academic progress they are making and how well they are included in the school community. Parents/carers/carers receive termly reports from the school and can contact the school if they have concerns regarding the progress of their child (see below).

### **Measuring progress and the effectiveness of support**

Progress of all students is measured against their starting point and compared to the progress of students nationally. In interventions, the indicators used will depend on needs of the student. All students will have levels of progress and reading ages monitored by the SENCo. If reading is a concern an assessment that allows staff to pinpoint where the specific need is will be administered allowing staff to identify what type of intervention is required. All assessments used will allow standardised scores to be obtained and progress to be monitored. Feedback from students is also used to monitor the effectiveness of additional support. If emotional or social development is the purpose of the additional support standard assessments are used where these can be administered (the Boxall profile for example) and supported with reports from staff and the student's opinion gathered. Extracurricular activities and clubs are available to all students, these are supported by Inclusion staff where students with SEND require support to ensure they can be included.

### **Partnerships with parents/carers**

Communication with parents/carers and pupils also provides information regarding how well the support is being received and how parents/carers/carers and pupils feel about the way that support is provided. This information is gathered consultations with

parents/carers/carers and pupils, questionnaires, and group discussions. Inclusion staff strive to ensure that open and regular communication with parents/carers/carers and pupils takes place, through this we can identify any difficulties (including potential bullying), reduce anxieties, communicate how well your child is doing at school (including achievements and progress in many forms) and ensure that the focus is on enjoying their learning.

## **5. How is the school accessible to children with SEND?**

The school site is not fully accessible for wheelchair users. Where students have temporary mobility needs, arrangements are made to ensure that they do not miss lessons or work from lessons if they are not able to attend. The Inclusion Centre in the school is an area specifically for students with SEND. The area is maintained by staff as a nurturing and quiet environment where students feel safe and understood and can seek support. The area is used by students from years 7-13.

## **6. Have any staff received specialist training in SEND?**

### **Staff training**

The SENCo and head of BCS is an experienced qualified teacher with QTS, has a Masters in Special and Inclusive Education, completed the National Qualification for SEN Coordinators and a Level 7 Certificate of Competence in Educational Testing using psychometric tests, and is currently registered with the British Psychological Society.

Training is provided to staff on a weekly basis and when required. In some circumstances training is offered to targeted staff and, in where necessary essential training is provided to all staff.

Inclusion staff support all colleagues across the school by providing advice, strategies and working with teachers in the classroom. Members of the Inclusion team have been involved in the following external training:

- Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) Training
- Hearing Impairment Training
- Visual Impairment Training
- Hand writing and fine motor skills
- Social and Communication Needs training - Practical strategies to support learning in mainstream
- Autism Training
- Exam Invigilator - Reader and Scribe Training (JCQ requirements)
- Psychometric Testing and Exam Access Arrangements (Real Training).

The Inclusion team continues to grow with midyear admissions and increasing numbers of students with SEND. The team consists of the SENDCo who is also in charge of the BCS provision, BCS teacher with QTS, an Instructor of SEND, behaviour support mentor and link

workers of which three are trained as Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs). The department is overseen by the Assistant Principal, who is a deputy designated safeguarding leader and pastoral team leader.

## **7. How will the school ensure that my child will be included in all activities at school, after school clubs and on school trips?**

The Forest Academy ensures that all students attending The Forest Academy are offered the chance to participate in school activities. Only where activities are advised against by medical professionals or it is not possible to ensure the health and safety requirements can be met, will students not be offered places on activities. In this case the school will look at how partial participation may be possible.

## **8. How will the school support my child to change classes and/or move on to a new school when they reach the appropriate stage(s)?**

### **Primary to secondary transition**

Ensuring that students' transition to us successfully in year 7 is very important. The work begins with Inclusion staff meeting with staff at primary schools during the spring term of year 6. Visits are arranged to the school and a transition group is established made up of students from different primary schools. By the time the students arrive at the start of year 7, they are already familiar with the school and feel confident. This transition work allows us to make sure that your child makes a positive start to secondary school. Staff from across the school do a lot of work with local primary schools, a variety of activities such as hosting primary events and taster lessons are provided to support students in making a smooth transition.

### **Key stage 3 to 4 transition**

In order to ensure a hundred percent progression for all students, when students with SEND move from year 9 to year 10 their transition is supported by a careers mentor in addition to the Inclusion staff. The careers mentor helps students understand how their choices will help them in progressing towards a possible career or in developing an interest. Students also receive a 1:1 meeting with a senior leader who oversees transition choices for all students. After year 11 Connexions advisors and the school staff support students with SEND in making the right choice at the end of year 11. Many of our students choose to stay on at The Beacon Academy Trust and enter the Beal Sixth Form which is taught across two campuses (Beal High School and The Forest Academy). Wherever students apply; staff and Connexions support with the application process, arrange visits, and ensure that students are well informed so they can make the right choice. Parents/carers are involved throughout the process. For students with EHCP, 'Preparing for Adulthood' themes are introduced as early as key stage 3, with the ultimate goal of ensuring all students become independent, socially skilled, caring and contributing citizens.

### **Life after 6th form**

At the end of students' school experience, whether students want to enter the world of full-time work, study, or other types of training, we work with students to ensure that they are



prepared for the next step. For some SEND students (and non-SEND students) preparation for this may have included life skills or employability qualifications that will have set them up to make the next step. The long-term goal we have for our SEND students is for them to become independent adults with the skills and confidence necessary to make a positive contribution to their community and the ability to succeed in the workplace.

## 9. What support and training within the school is available to parents/carers and carers?

- Link workers attached to year groups and students are available to meet in person at the end of each day and will make half-termly contact with parents/carers to review support. Parents/carers/carers will be able to contact the link worker to discuss the student's needs. Staff work closely with students with SEND and their families to ensure that parents/carers are well informed and the barriers to learning are reduced, removed, or managed.
- A termly coffee morning/afternoon allows families and key staff to develop a support network, whilst providing opportunities to feedback their views through a survey.
- For Beacon Communication School (BCS), a half termly newsletter celebrates the successes, notifies of upcoming events, and provides key messages and ideas of how to support from home.
- Access to joint support and advice from outside agencies that work with the school such as SEATSS and Educational Psychology Services.

## 10. Who should I contact if I have any questions or concerns about my child's SEND?

Parents/carers can contact their children's Tutor or Head of Year at the school via the main reception. To visit The Forest Academy at a time that is convenient to you please email or call us asking to arrange a visit. Visits usually run at 11am on Thursdays and Fridays.

Telephone: **020 8500 4266**

Email: [admin@theforestacademy.co.uk](mailto:admin@theforestacademy.co.uk)

Address: **The Forest Academy, Harbourn Road, Ilford, Essex IG6 3TN**

Alternatively, you can contact the following key staff:

- Ms Miah (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) on [smiah@theforestacademy.co.uk](mailto:smiah@theforestacademy.co.uk) or extn 648/690
- Ms English (Assistant Principal with responsibility for Inclusion) on [admin@theforestacademy.co.uk](mailto:admin@theforestacademy.co.uk)

Date of report: February 2022