



ARC OAKBRIDGE SCHOOL

Arc Oakbridge School in the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham, is a new independent special school providing education for young people who are on the autism spectrum and have complex needs.

We are able to offer places to young people with autism, including Asperger's Syndrome and higher functioning autism. Autism with co-existing social emotional and mental health difficulties, moderate learning difficulties, ADHD and other challenges may also be considered for placement. The age range at the school is between seven and 16 years and we plan to gradually offer up to 40 places.

The School

The school provides Birmingham, and the surrounding areas, with a specially designed state of the art learning environment created to meet the needs of young people with autism. It is a calm, low arousal, safe, positive and nurturing place where young people can learn and grow.

Class sizes are very small and classrooms are 'enabling environments' with sensory lighting, muted colours, individual work stations and visual timetables. The curriculum is designed to meet the specific academic, social, emotional and sensory needs of each individual young person. Through close partnerships with families, professionals and the wider community, Arc Oakbridge School ensures that all young people thrive.

Arc Oakbridge School Curriculum

In Key Stages 2 and 3, young people follow an adapted National Curriculum aimed at meeting their individual needs. This includes English, Maths, Science, Humanities, Physical Education and PSHE. Practical sessions such as Food Technology, Drama and extensive opportunities to develop social skills will also form a fundamental part of the curriculum. This involves frequent off-site activities to promote learning outside the classroom, as well as regular educational visits.

In Key Stage 4 young people work towards formal qualifications. These qualifications are based on the individual needs of each young person. The range offered include Functional Skills, BTECs and GCSEs. We offer a core curriculum of English, Maths and Science at various levels, and also include qualifications such as Land-Based Studies and Home Cooking Skills aimed at greater independence.

The curriculum evolves as the school and its young people evolve; the focus will remain young person-centred, allowing the curriculum to be adapted to meet the needs of individual young people.



Therapeutic Support

Education and support staff work alongside and collaborate with therapeutic staff, mirroring the diverse and creative staff team of the Kedleston Group's other Arc schools. All young people benefit from a range of whole school approaches including sensory friendly spaces, a visual communication system and individual and personalised programmes designed by therapeutic specialist staff.

The therapeutic team grow to match the needs of the young people, but we aim for it to offer the following:

- Occupational Therapy
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Therapeutic Arts Facilitation
- Educational Psychology

Outcomes

Arc Oakbridge School supports young people to gain the knowledge, skills and qualifications at various levels up to and including GCSEs along with an increasing range of vocational qualifications as the school develops.

At every stage of their education we focus on preparing young people for the next stage, putting the development of their independence at the heart of everything we do. Our ultimate goal is for all our young people to be confident and capable young people who leave school equipped to lead fulfilling lives in this rapidly changing world.

The Kedleston Group works successfully with young people who may have been reluctant learners, those who may have been out of school for a time or those have found it hard to engage in education. Staff support young people to gain a range of meaningful qualifications, have a positive schooling experience and gain the self-confidence to continue on their journey in to adult life.

Facilities include:

- Separate, small and specially lit and decorated classrooms
- A science lab
- An art studio
- Main central area for dining, assemblies, drama, movement and social time
- A safe outdoor play area

The Staff

Phil Petch

Phil is the Head Teacher of Arc Oakbridge School. He qualified as a teacher in 2000 and went on to complete extensive post graduate training in Special Education, Educational Psychology, and Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy. He moved to the UK from South Africa upon completing his training and subsequently converted his teacher training to be awarded Qualified Teacher Status and later the nationally recognised Special Educational Needs Coordinator qualification.

Since 2004, Phil has worked in a range of schools in the UK, but predominantly in special educational needs settings (SEND). He steadily worked his way from being a class teacher to being the head teacher of an independent SEND school. This progression included teaching and supporting young people with an Autistic Spectrum Condition and eventually heading a school for young people who had experienced significant abuse.

In June of 2018 Phil was recruited by the Kedleston Group to develop a stand-alone provision for young people with autism and additional and complex needs in Birmingham.

Staff Team

Phil has recruited a diverse, creative and nurturing staff team. They are qualified teachers with special educational needs experience and specialist autism spectrum condition support staff who can deliver a wide range of subjects and who will have continuous professional development plans in place.



Families

Teaching and support staff work directly with families to encourage a positive relationship between the family, student and the school. The school wants to develop strong relationships with families, local groups, NASS and other external stakeholders. We welcome families and carers who would like to be a part of the new Arc Oakbridge School Parent Teachers and Families Association (PTFA), including those for whom English is an additional language. It is important that everyone's voice is heard in the Arc Oakbridge School community. We are hosting regular events, such as coffee mornings, fayres and training sessions, all of which are open to the wider school community.

Governance and Safeguarding

Arc Oakbridge School is part of the Kedleston Group which has a governance body consisting of a senior team who oversee: Safeguarding and Compliance, the Quality of Education and the Quality of Care, Health, Safety and Estate Management, Human Resources and Training, Financial Management and Strategic Partnerships.

The Senior Team are experienced education and care professionals who provide the organisation with the scrutiny and challenge required to ensure that the young people we support are educated and cared for in a safe, supportive and caring environment. Following recent (2018) Ofsted inspections, the ARC schools have all been rated 'Good' in Leadership and Management – "Governors monitor and evaluate provision, reacting swiftly to needs. They do not hold back from making significant changes that provide more effectively for pupils." Ofsted May 2018 (Arc School Old Arley)

A Safeguarding Overview Committee, a sub-committee of the main board of directors meets monthly and is chaired by a non-executive Director who reviews all safeguarding across the group. In addition the committee comprises of a second non-executive director with extensive management experience working within the independent specialist schools sector, the Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer and Group Safeguarding Lead. These robust arrangements ensure that lessons learnt and examples of good practice are shared across the group.

We continually review our systems in order to strengthen staff awareness and protect the young people in our care.

Training

As part of the Kedleston Group, Arc Oakbridge School is supported by a national and local training programme. The organisation offers both new and existing staff specialist training in addition to the induction and mandatory training which all staff complete.

All professional staff working directly with young people are trained in Team-Teach and during the 2018/2019 academic year will also be trained in Positive Behaviour Support (PBS). In addition to this, Arc Oakbridge School provide staff with training in Prevent, FGM, Keeping Young People Safe in Education, Attachment Disorder, Speech and Language, Occupation Therapy awareness, Autism and Mental Health. The school is working closely with the Autism Education Trust and Birmingham's Communication and Autism Team in order to best support its young people and their families.

Arc Oakbridge School has undergone significant building work and a total refurbishment so that we are ready to welcome visits from families and young people, professionals and other stakeholders.

At Arc Oakbridge School we would always seek to meet the needs of the young person and their family before any decision is made on a placement.

The school has excellent travel links with easy access to the local community and going forward we hope to forge strong links with further education colleges and potential employers.

For further information please contact:

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