Prospectus



Woodlands Secondary School

Interim Head Teacher: Caroline Lowry
Address: Northwell Drive, Luton, LU3 3SP
Telephone: 01582 572880
Email: schooloffice@woodlands.luton.sch.uk
Website: www.woodlands.luton.sch.uk
Facebook Page: Official Woodlands Secondary School www.facebook.com/woodlandsluton/

Message from the Head Teacher

I hope that this prospectus will give you an insight into our school and will give you a sense of our values and ethos.

Woodlands Secondary School is a community special school in Luton, providing specialist education for students aged between 11—18 years, with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Many pupils have additional complex needs including autistic spectrum disorders, epilepsy, physical and sensory impairments. Some students have additional medical needs. All the students have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

We aim to inspire and support our children and young people to achieve their full potential. Our curriculum offer is tailored to the individual needs of the young person and focuses on functional learning, incorporating life-skills to support and promote independence. We aim to provide a vibrant, fun and inclusive educational community where all members, students, their families and staff, are continuously learning together.

We believe that children and young people learn best when they are happy; emotional well-being has a high priority at the school.

Students work in small class groups and are well supported by their class teachers and teaching assistants. The school is supported by NHS speech therapists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists; we employ our own speech therapist and sensory integration specialist and we buy in counselling, art, and music therapy services, to meet the needs of students as identified in their EHCPs.

The school has excellent facilities including a hydrotherapy pool, a dance and drama studio, a soft play room, a gym, a café (run by the students), a rebound therapy room with a sunken trampoline and a horticulture area.

At Woodlands we keep the young person at the centre of everything we do, working closely with parents, professionals and other stakeholders to ensure that every opportunity is maximised. We are committed to supporting students as they transition into Woodlands and when they are moving on to their post school destinations. Preparation for adulthood underpins our curriculum planning decisions.
We are always delighted to receive enquiries and all visitors to Woodlands can be assured of receiving a warm welcome.

Caroline Lowry

Interim Headteacher

Safeguarding

Woodlands School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all our pupils; our governors and staff all share this commitment. The school has policies and procedures in place for safeguarding our students, in line with national and Local Authority guidance. The Safeguarding Policy is available on our website. The school also adheres to Safer Recruitment guidelines.

We also work in close partnership with other agencies like the Health Authority and Social Services, who share our commitment to protecting children and young adults. The people in these agencies can include health visitors, the school doctor and nurse and social workers.

Our first concern is your child's welfare and therefore there may be occasions when we have to consult other agencies before we contact you. Should this be necessary, we want to reassure you that any concerns we have about your child will always be fully discussed with you, after we have talked with the other agency. All staff are trained in Keeping Children Safe in Education and have regular training on different aspects of safeguarding.

Vision and Mission Statement

At Woodlands we believe that learning is a lifelong journey and we aim to inspire and support our students to achieve their full potential. Our curriculum offer is tailored to the individual needs of the young person. Our broad and balanced curriculum focuses on functional learning and incorporates life skills to support and promote independence. Woodlands Secondary School provides a vibrant, fun and inclusive learning community where all members, students, families and staff are continuously learning together.

We believe that children and young people learn best when they are happy and emotional wellbeing is a high priority for all members of our community.

At Woodlands we keep the young person at the centre of everything we do, working closely with parents, professionals and other stakeholders to ensure that every opportunity is maximised.

Empowering young people to become successful adults

Admission to the School

Students who attend Woodlands Secondary School have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan. On rare occasions a child may be placed at the school whilst an assessment for an EHC Plan is carried out; this will only occur following a request from the Special Educational Needs Assessment Team.

Most commonly the students attending the school will have learning needs associated with Severe Learning Difficulties and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties; occasionally students with Moderate Learning Difficulties and very complex needs may be granted a placement. Within this range we are resourced to meet the learning styles of students with a wide range of needs including autistic spectrum and communication disorders, hearing impairments, visual impairments and physical disabilities. Students admitted to Woodlands are likely to achieve within the range P1 to Entry Level 1 or 2.

Placement at the school is agreed by the local authority Provision Panel, following detailed assessment of student needs and full consultation with all partners in the process. The panel will take account of parental and student preference. For full details on the Provision Panel criteria—please contact sendat@luton.gov.uk

Formal negotiations about placements are the responsibility of the local authority but we are always pleased to show parents round and to talk about the provision we have to offer. Choosing the right school for a young person is one of the most important decisions a parent makes in order to secure the best possible learning opportunities and supporting them to be prepared for life as an adult.

Transferring from one school to another can be a worrying time for young people and their parents. To ease this process, Woodlands operates a transition procedure for new admissions. This is organised in negotiation with parents and professionals working with the child. The Assistant Head and SENCo is the main point of contact for this.

When admissions to our school happen during the year, we usually arrange for the student to have short term, part-time attendance, initially, in order to support their transition into their new learning environment. There are always exceptions to this as some children manage change better without prior visits.

As with any secondary school provision we always have an annual intake of young people transferring from Year 6 to Year 7. Planning for these admissions starts early in the Autumn Term preceding the transition. Parents of students in Year 6 in the primary sector will be invited to visit in September or October, prior to expressing their preference to the local authority. Once placements have been agreed, Woodlands staff will visit the feeder schools and meet you, your child and their current staff. During each summer term, most students who will be transferring will visit Woodlands to help them get to know their new school and the new staff who will be working with them, before they start in September. New class teachers will also visit the primary schools on several occasions.



To empower children and young people with the skills and attributes they need to become successful adults.

Our Curriculum



At Woodlands we believe that learning is a lifelong journey and we aim to inspire and support our students to achieve their full potential.

Our broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum offer is tailored to the individual needs of the young person and focuses on functional learning, incorporating life-skills to support and promote independence. Communication underpins all areas of our curriculum. At Woodlands we ensure that all students are fully included in learning activities by utilising a wide range of styles of communication. Spoken communication is supported through the use of signing, visual cues such as photographs and symbols, as well as high or low tech communication aids.

Learning at all levels is designed to be fun, purposeful and relevant to individual needs. Pupils learn from each other as well as from the adults and we place great emphasis on students recognising, respecting and valuing first themselves and then their peers.

We offer three bespoke curriculums that have been carefully designed to meet the needs of the different cohorts of students in our departments. The curriculums we offer are:

- **PMLD curriculum**
- **WISERRR and WISERR SLD Curriculum**
- **SLD Curriculum**

Our SLD Curriculum



Lower School SLD

The Lower School SLD curriculum is designed to provide a smooth and supportive transition from primary to secondary education.

By aligning closely with the schemes of work used in students' previous schools, we ensure continuity in learning and help to build confidence during this important stage.

Students are carefully grouped according to their individual needs, and timetables allow for targeted support and challenge, ensuring that each learner can make meaningful progress.

In addition to core subjects such as English, Maths, and Computing, students engage with Science, Music, Art, PE, RE, and PSHE through an integrated Creative Curriculum that promotes curiosity, engagement, and cross-curricular learning.

Weekly community visits are a vital part of the lower school experience, providing students with opportunities to develop early life skills, apply classroom learning in real-world settings, and begin building the independence they will need in later years.

Upper School SLD

In Upper School we endeavour to build on the skills students have developed in Lower School SLD. All students will access English, Maths, Computing, PSHE, RE, Careers, PE, Art and Music. Some students will work towards their Functional Skills Entry Level exams in English and Maths and AQA accreditation in ICT. All students will work towards achieving OCR Life and Living Skills accreditation.

Our priority is to equip students with the personal, social, and independent living skills necessary to help them achieve their individual goals and aspirations, and to ensure they are well prepared for adulthood. Classrooms are equipped with specialist facilities designed to support the development of practical life skills, and students are encouraged to apply their learning in real-world contexts. To this end, they regularly access local community facilities beyond the school grounds, enabling them to gain valuable, hands-on experiences that enhance their readiness for life after school.

Some students will also be working on their employability skills both in school and in the wider community. The school employs a part-time work experience coordinator, who supports students to access meaningful work placements.

Students will have opportunities to participate in college link course opportunities and visits to post school providers including a range of options funded by both Education and Social Care.



Our PMLD Curriculum

Our PMLD curriculum provides opportunities for all of our students with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) to fulfil their potential and to participate in all activities, as independently as they can. Each of our students are individuals and the degree of independence that they will demonstrate will vary accordingly. It is vital that students with PMLD have their complex medical, physical, sensory and therapeutic needs addressed and timetables are adapted accordingly to ensure these needs are addressed, to keep the students safe and well and to place them in a position of readiness to learn.

Our PMLD curriculum aims to:

- Promote functional communication skills, including the use of alternative and augmentative communication (AAC).
- Facilitate student voice and listen to what students say, what matters to them and what makes them feel safe.
- Ensure that learning is functional and is focused on developing skills which will support transition to adulthood.
- Focus on individual wellbeing by supporting students to develop confidence and positive self- esteem.
- Meet students' physical, sensory, medical and therapeutic needs, in collaboration with other professionals.
- Promote physical wellbeing and a healthy lifestyle.
- Equip students with the tools which will enable them to successfully develop their resilience (dealing with disappointment and managing change) both in school and into adulthood.
- Encourage independence, confidence and involvement in the school and wider community.

Our WISERR Curriculum



WISERR stands for:

- **W**ell-being
- **I**ndependence and Co-operation
- **S**ocial Communication
- **E**njoyment
- **R**esilience
- **R**egulation

The WISERR and WISERR SLD curriculums prioritise the development of functional skills that are transferable outside and beyond school. It is hoped that the development of these functional skills will enable our young people to be as independent as possible in activities of daily living and to develop and maintain relationships that are significant to them.

In the WISERR curriculum, Maths, Literacy and PSHE are not taught as discrete subjects, instead, opportunities to develop an understanding of key concepts from these areas is practised throughout the day in activities that could also be experienced in a home or supported living environment.

In the WISERR SLD curriculum, discrete reading, writing and maths lessons are taught.

On a daily basis we aim to provide a "work life balance" as the balance is necessary to well-being in life.

Students who follow the WISERR curriculum may also have communication difficulties, sensory difficulties and/or health issues. Some students may also present with a considerable level of challenging behaviour.

Careers Education



At Woodlands, careers education is an integral part of our curriculum, designed to prepare students for life beyond school and support their transition into the world of work. Careers learning begins, where appropriate, in Lower School SLD and continues throughout a student's time with us, growing in depth and relevance as they progress.

Our approach focuses on developing essential employability and life skills such as confidence, communication, creativity, and problem-solving. Teachers and support staff work collaboratively with students to help them recognise the skills they are gaining and encourage them to reflect on and record their achievements in meaningful ways.

Students take part in a structured programme that includes information on work placements and opportunities, starting with enterprise activities in Lower School. As they move into Upper School, they engage in practical work experience within the school community, such as working in the school café, and may access external placements with support from our dedicated work experience coordinator.

The aim of our careers education programme is to ensure every young person develops the knowledge, understanding, and confidence needed to make informed choices about their future.

Our careers education is underpinned by three key aims:

- **Self-Development** – Helping students understand themselves, recognise the influences around them, and build a record of experiences and achievements.
- **Career Exploration** – Enabling students to investigate and evaluate opportunities in education, employment, and training.
- **Transition** – Supporting students to plan for their future and adapt those plans in response to their strengths, needs, and aspirations.

Behaviour

At Woodlands we believe that all students feel more secure and learn more successfully if clear boundaries, based on high expectations, have been set for their behaviour. This is particularly crucial when working with children with learning difficulties who need consistency and clear unambiguous messages in order to understand what is expected of them. We believe in encouraging pupils to develop all their positive abilities and qualities, this includes helping students learn to behave in positive ways. By being positive, consistent and rewarding good behaviour, we can create an environment in which there is an incentive for behaving well. It is our belief that rewards are preferable to sanctions when working to modify challenging behaviour,

Some students have difficulty in managing aspects of their behaviour at times. For these students we devise and implement Behaviour Support Plans which are drawn up in consultation with parents and, where appropriate, other professionals. These plans support staff working with a child to employ a consistent approach to supporting students with aspects of their behaviour. These plans may be shared with other agencies, with parental permission.

A copy of the school's Behaviour policy can be found on the school website.

Transition to Adult Life

All our work at Woodlands is designed to prepare our students for life as successful adults in the community and to build their skills and confidence to be able to make informed choices about the future.

From Year 9, until the students leave school, the local authority Transitions Team start working with students and their families, to help plan for the transition to life beyond school. The Transitions Team includes a personal adviser (education), a social worker and a special needs nurse.

The Transitions team regularly visit school and meet with our young people in order to build relationships and support students to identify their aspirations and hopes for the future.

Students in Upper School will have the opportunity to attend college link courses to work out if they would like to go to college when they leave school.

Parents are invited to attend information sessions at the school, to participate in the local authority transitions fair and to visit possible post 16 placements in order to form their views about the next steps to support their young person move towards their longer term goals.

Voluntary Contributions

Nothing in legislation prevents a school governing body or local authority from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the governing body or head teacher should make this clear to parents at the outset. The governing body or head teacher must also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution.

It is important to note that no child should be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, or the school cannot fund it from some other source, then it must be cancelled. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit.

The Governors at Woodlands School have agreed that voluntary contributions may be requested for the following:

- Education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours.
- Transport provided in connection with an educational trip.
- Swimming
- Life Skills lessons involving pupils cooking and eating lunch. This will be the same cost as a school meal.
- A half termly contribution towards learning resources.

A copy of the Woodlands Charging and Remissions policy is available on the school website.

Feedback from Parents

At Woodlands, we like to be told about how we are doing, whether we are doing well or if there is an area we need to improve. Parents are invited to submit their views via the annual parent survey usually sent out in autumn term.

If you have a concern or complaint you need to take it up with the school initially and we will always try to deal with it helpfully and reasonably. If we need to, we try to put things right as quickly as possible. The local authority would not usually get involved in a complaint about a school unless the school had completed its own procedures first.

This complaints procedure is for general complaints. The school must follow other procedures for complaints or appeals about the curriculum, special educational needs provision, exclusions and admissions. Staff disciplinary action, child protection issues or criminal investigation will also need to be handled differently. We shall tell you which the right process is when you discuss your concern with us.