

## **The Charter School East Dulwich**

Dear Parent/ Carer,

Welcome!

At TCSED, we are incredibly proud of our SEND provision and of the inclusive, collaborative culture we believe in and strive to embed within our school community. Our students are creative, courageous, curious, caring and an asset to our school. We aim to provide a supportive, inclusive environment for all of our students; however, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge that we do have limitations.

We are a mainstream, community secondary school which specialises in a GCSE curriculum in Key Stage 4 and A levels in Key Stage 5. We do not have an alternative curriculum for students who cannot access this curriculum. We are also unable to provide support or lessons in life skills or aspects of day-to-day functioning that may be necessary for young people with acute levels of need. The School does not yet have a Specialist Resource Base for Autistic students or staff with specialist training.

Last year, we received over 50 applications for students with an EHCP and we receive hundreds of calls each year requesting a chat and discussion about prospective students. Whilst we would like to be able to support you in your decision making, we are unable to offer such a personal service to such a high number of parents and carers each year. I would suggest that you discuss your child's needs with the SENCo at your current primary school. They will be best placed to advise you on an appropriate secondary setting. I would also recommend that you choose at least three schools that you would be happy with in order to support a smooth transition for both you and your child.

Due to the current restrictions imposed by Covid-19, we are unable to run our Open Days and Evenings as we would have so we have put together a list of frequently asked questions and hope these support you in the lead up to your decisions for scenery transfer.

With very best wishes,

Amy Barlow,  
Assistant Headteacher: SENCo

1) When will the Autism Resource Base base open?

Unfortunately, we are unable to confirm a completion date for our planned Autism Resource Base. It is unlikely that the Base will open until at least September 2022. Building work has been disrupted due to the disruption from Covid-19.

2) What is in place socially and pastorally for autistic students that are doing well academically? How do you support socialisation?

The majority of our students with an autism diagnosis function well in a mainstream environment. They require little tweaks to support them to navigate the systems and structures. We work closely with a specialist SaLT who offers some small group work and sessions primarily working on and supporting with friendships and social communication difficulties and/ or misunderstandings. We also run a small lunch time group for the most vulnerable students.

3) What is your autism provision?

As above. The majority of our students attend and thrive in mainstream lessons. We do not currently have capacity or resources to provide high levels of support for students outside of the mainstream. Those that need this, often find the transition to secondary school very challenging; the increase in academic and social demands is difficult as it is without them being fully reliant on the SEND department. For students to succeed in our setting, they need to be able to access the lesson content and learning of a KS3 and KS4 curriculum. We support students with higher levels of need by offering forms of support that can be delivered in-class, e.g. learning support assistants, transition passes, toilet pass and some uniform amendments.

4) What arrangements do you have for children that require 1-2-1s or small group work?

TCSED is a mainstream secondary school. We do not currently have any arrangements in place for students who need 1:1 support. Students who attend our setting do not need such high levels of support to access the curriculum. If students require this level of support, typically we would recommend parents/ carers look into a specialist setting.

The School does offer some opportunities for small group work but students are not withdrawn from core subjects or GCSE subjects so opportunities are limited. This may be in the form of a weekly reading group but most interventions and support happen within student's mainstream classes, as per the SEND Code of Practice.

5) What support and intervention do dyslexic children receive?

Students with dyslexia are supported in the first instance by subject teachers through Quality First teaching. In secondary school we do not automatically withdraw students in the first instance. The SEN Code of Practice states that high **quality** teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the **first** step in responding to pupil needs.

6) Do you have any provision for pre/post teaching?

No. In Year 9,10 and 11, some students have the opportunity to drop their Modern Foreign Language but this is only in instances where students have a significant need. The Government has made it clear that students should have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and that any narrowing of their curriculum offer should only take place in rare circumstances and in consultation with the school, students and parents/ carers.

7) Do you have any provision for homework assistance?

Pre Covid-19, we ran a homework club for a small group of selected students every Monday and Wednesday after school. This is not happening at present but we hope to resume soon.

8) Do you stream and if so are there groups for SEN or is it level based? Do you have a nurture group?

For the most part, we believe in mixed ability teaching and do not stream in Year 7 or Year 8. The only exceptions to this are that we have a small nurture class for Maths. This is a provision for students who scored lower than 85 in their SATS exams and is designed to support them to acquire the skills to access the learning in mainstream class. We do not have nurture classes for any other subjects. We take a more streamed - though not a setted - approach in Maths and Science from Year 9 onwards.

In tutor time, we offer some 1:1 or small group reading but we do not withdraw students from any other lessons.

9) How do you support those with hearing difficulties?

Our building is supportive of those with hearing aids. Our laptops and computers have the speech to text facility too and are able to access subtitles.

10) Are there rooms available for peripatetic services to work with SEND children i.e. speech and language therapists, Southwark teachers for the deaf?

Yes - we have rooms available for this.

11) We would like to find out what type of extra help, if any, would a student with working memory issues receive?

We do not offer any specific intervention for a student's working memory. Strategies to support this are embedded into schemes of learning and taught through subject specialisms or in students' study skills lessons. We have a whole school policy that prioritises working on and supporting student's metacognition skills which in turn supports their working memory. This combined with direct teaching through study skills sessions supports their working memory. There are some apps parents can use at home to support students such as Jungle memory if you are interested.

12) Communication with parents came across as vital in your Head's presentation. How do you communicate with parents of SEN children?

We do believe that communication is key; we also believe that our students with SEND should be supported across the curriculum by their subject teachers and year group leads. All teachers are teachers of SEN' so all of our staff are equipped and able to answer questions with regards to students in their classes. For students with an EHCP or with more complex needs, the SENCo will support students and parents to ensure consistency and collaboration across the curriculum. All students with an EHCP are allocated a designated person who should be your first port of call. All other students should contact their child's form tutor in the first instance. If they are unable to answer your query, they will direct it on to the relevant member of staff or the SEND team.

13) What training do the staff receive regarding ASD?

All staff attend mandatory training with regards to individual categories of SEND. The SENCo and SEND team are responsible for providing and delivering specific training with regards to individual students, their needs and advising how their needs can be met through Quality First Teaching.

14) What does the school do to encourage areas of interest and passion for children?

Our School is very proud of its inclusive and varied Enrichment programme. Previously, we have offered over 50 different clubs or activities. We encourage students to advertise and run their own clubs centred around their interests and we have a very talented team of skilled and enthusiastic teachers willing to offer after school provision for our students. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, this has had to be put on hold temporarily. Every year, Mr Crossman also leads on supporting students to complete a Powerful Knowledge Project - this encourages students to complete an essay - or exploration - in a subject of their choice.

Previous entries have included how synesthesia affects classical music composition, the origins of the Middle East conflict and why England do so poorly in international football.

15) How is the school organised in terms of breaks/lunches/movement between rooms for children with ASD?

Some of our students request a transition pass which allows them to leave a lesson or arrive at a lesson up to three minutes either side of the start/ end. This supports them to move around the building and through corridors before other students have been dismissed. This enables them to avoid large crowds but also provides them with a clear timeframe so they don't dawdle!

16) What speech and language provision do you have at the school? What does support look like?

We pay an annual fee to Southwark for our Speech and Language Therapy. We also buy in some private sessions for students who we feel could benefit from working on their social communication skills. We follow the social thinking curriculum devised by Michelle Garcia Winner.

17) How big are the classes?

Most of our classes have between 25-27 students. We have some Nurture classes in Maths which have a significantly smaller number of students.