

Introduction to the School

Harry Watts Academy is a Special Free School in Sunderland for children and young people between 5 and 16 years with autistic spectrum conditions. All pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs/ Education Health and Care Plan or are in the assessment process. They have a range of learning difficulties; some will require a high level of adult support to access the curriculum, whilst others achieve close to age-related expectations in some areas. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum across the Primary and Secondary age ranges. Pupils are supported by autism specific strategies and approaches to meet their individual needs and learning styles. The school will cater for 96 pupils.

At Harry Watts Academy we aim to enable each pupil to:

- communicate and interact effectively with others and the world around them
- become independent learners
- value themselves and their own achievements and accept and show tolerance of others
- enjoy being part of the school community
- participate in and contribute to the wider social community
- lead a safe, happy and fulfilling lifestyle

Core to these aims is the development of outstanding teaching and learning, an excellent partnership between home and school, positive relationships and networks within the multi-agency setting and the commitment to sharing of our expertise on autism with the wider community.

Harry Watts Academy is a purpose built school and all classroom based staff have relevant teaching qualifications or other appropriate qualifications in education. All staff participate in a continuous programme of autism specific training. A wide range of professionals support pupils' education and well-being at school. The school motto 'Support & Success Together' reflects the individualised approach we adopt and our high aspirations for each pupil.

How does a child get a place at Harry Watts Academy?

Parents and carers are welcome to contact school to arrange a visit. They will have an opportunity to view the school and to talk with a member of the Senior Leadership Team about their child's SEN and the provision available at the school.

New admissions to our school will have either a Statement of Special Educational Needs, an Education Health and Care Plan or be undergoing the statutory process towards an Education Health and Care Plan. Sunderland Local Authority is the Admissions Authority for Harry Watts Academy and parents/carers interested in a place for their child should consult with the SEN Office at the Civic Centre in Sunderland..

Prior to commencing at Harry Watts Academy, we endeavour to set up a transition plan appropriate to the child/young person's needs. The transition plan may include: a home visit, a visit to the child's current placement, the child visiting Harry Watts Academy and a phased admission where appropriate.

How much support will my child receive?

All pupils are taught in small classes with the usual class size being eight pupils. Each class has a teacher and usually two teaching assistants. This helps to ensure that all pupils receive a balance of whole class, small group and individual teaching.

The class teacher ensures that all staff that work with pupils in their class enjoy positive relationships and the staff meet regularly to ensure that they are using consistent and effective approaches for the education and care of each pupil.

If a child's needs are assessed as exceptional, even within our specialist school setting, the School Leadership Team will ensure that appropriate strategies and support is available to them.

How accessible is the school?

Our building is light and spacious with large well equipped classrooms and a number of specialist teaching rooms.

The site is safe and secure. All external and many internal doors have 'maglocks' that are unlocked using a fob.

What resources are available to the school?

All classrooms have high quality ICT facilities to support pupils' learning including interactive whiteboards and personal computers (PCs). Pupils also have access to laptops and I Pads.

Each classroom has a small 'quiet' room that can be used when pupils need somewhere that is distraction free.

Pupils have regular access to specialised teaching rooms such as sensory, soft play, occupational therapy room, food technology, music, art.

Small and large outdoor spaces and play equipment is available to all pupils.

How do pupils travel to school?

The majority of pupils of statutory school age are eligible for free home to school transport which is provided by Sunderland Local Authority.

Pupils may travel on a minibus or a taxi with other children. In addition to a driver all home to school transport have an escort who is employed to support the children throughout their journey.

At an appropriate time in the secondary department we discuss with parents/carers whether their child may benefit from Independent Travel Training. This will depend on the individual child and can range from learning how to cross the road or experience different modes of transport to travelling from school to home independently.

What specialist services are available at the school?

A number of professionals work at the school to support our pupils' health and education including; Speech and Language Therapists; Occupational Therapists; School Health Advisor.

Clinics are also held in school for pupils and their families- Medical appointments with the Consultant Paediatrician, dental clinics etc.

Specialist musicians, artists and sports coaches visit school in order to enrich the curriculum.

What will my child learn at school?

Our curriculum is based on the subjects of the National Curriculum and a broad and varied curriculum which offers Functional Skills (English, Maths ICT), Personal and Social Development, Creative Arts, Sport and Leisure, enterprise and work related learning.

Every child is offered a broad and balanced curriculum that is appropriate to their age and stage of development. The curriculum is personalised and differentiated for each pupil to take account of their needs and abilities.

All pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and life. There is a strong emphasis on giving the pupils the skills and knowledge that will allow them to contribute to society and live a good quality of life as young adults and in the future.

Specialised approaches are used to support pupils' individual learning needs:

Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)

TEACCH (Autism specific teaching and learning environment)

Visual supports such as timetables to aid understanding of concepts in lessons.

Intensive Interaction

Makaton Signing by adults to support a pupil's understanding of spoken language

Speech and language programmes as advised by the speech therapist

Occupational therapy programmes as advised by the occupational therapist

A sensory based curriculum for some pupils

Music therapy

How will I know what progress my child is making at school?

Teachers assess pupils' attainment three times per year in October, January and May using 'Performance Indicators for Value Added Target Setting' (PIVATS) which is a system to inform target setting for pupils of all ages whose performance is outside national expectations. As well as being linked to National curriculum, PIVATS are linked to P Scales which are used nationally. P Scales give a set of performance descriptions which have been written for use with pupils who have a range of special educational needs. There are eight descriptions from P1 to P8 that lead up to Level One of the National Curriculum. Pupils working beyond P Levels in our school are assessed on National Curriculum Levels using

SCERTS (Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Supports) is an autism specific approach that we use across the school. The SCERTS® Model is a research-based educational approach and multidisciplinary framework that directly addresses the core challenges faced by children with ASD, and their families. SCERTS® focuses on building competence in Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support as the highest priorities that must be addressed in any programme, and is applicable for individuals with a wide range of abilities and ages across home, school and community settings. At Harry Watts Academy, SCERTS targets are set three times per year. Each target is worked on at home and school. Progress towards the achievement of the target is monitored daily. A multidisciplinary team set targets. These processes allow us to monitor the progress of pupils and provide us with a yearly measurement of added value, which in turn informs the setting of new targets for pupils. A pupil's progress is discussed with parent/carers at

