

# Firwood School

## Local Offer

### **Firwood School**

Stitch-me-Lane, Brightmet, Bolton, BL2 4HU

Head of School: Mrs Dawn Evan

Executive Head: Mrs Debbie Coburn

Chair of Trustees: Mrs Heather Scott

## **What is the school ethos/approach to SEN and Disability?**

(Reg 3c: In general, how do school approach the teaching of students with SEN/D?)

Firwood School is a Good Special School (Ofsted Jan 2018) with a committed ethos which encourages the development of a young person's confidence and self-esteem within a safe and caring environment where the views of all are sought, respected and reflected. The culture of Firwood School is one of "learning Without Limits", this recognises the significance of developing each young person's individual strengths and thus equip them for their future life whether through involvement with Firwood School:

- Firwood School caters for secondary aged and Post 16 young People with complex learning difficulties and, or autistic spectrum disorder. At Firwood School our young people are given the very best support to ensure that they gain the most from the educational experiences offered. Firwood staff work in partnership with parents and the wider professional community to enable each young person's learning journey to be fun yet challenging and therefore contribute to their successes in later life.
- Our commitment is to prepare our students for adulthood and their world beyond Firwood School.

Within Firwood School, the team recognises the importance of individual learning styles. We have a creative, dynamic and multi-sensory approach to learning. Our curriculum delivers the full range of skills to enable our young people to become life-long learners. Students are encouraged to explore talents and have opportunities to generalise and transfer these skills through integrated learning opportunities. Wherever possible students have the opportunity to engage with learning through first hand experiences, this may be during an educational/residential visits out of school, real objects to handle and explore or meeting invited visitors. Very small classes ensure we can actively engage in personalised learning. Lessons and activities are carried out in small groups or on a one to one basis to ensure that the focus is appropriate for each young person. Learning is highly differentiated to ensure all young People make progress. At Firwood the curriculum is based on the personalised and bespoke needs of our students and takes elements from the National Curriculum, EQUALS schemes. MAPP and other curriculum philosophies that exist. Our curriculum evolves as new theories, research and practices come into practice.

As a school we constantly enhance our curriculum offer through inclusive opportunities. These can be organised to meet individual academic learning needs as well as developing social skills. In addition, young People at Firwood feature highly in borough wide celebration events such as the Bolton Music Festival.

The Trust Board and Trustees of Firwood offer a high level of support through their involvement in school policy, practice and wider education priorities. Trustees are familiar visitors to classrooms and school events and so ensure accountability for school initiatives and development plans.

## **How will I know how my child is doing in school?**

(Reg 3b: School arrangements for assessing and reviewing the progress of young People/young people with SEN)

Regular contact with home is made to provide parents and carers with an account of progress in school. Staff at Firwood are skilful in recognising and celebrating every young person's progress and achievement both at class and whole school levels.

Ongoing assessments of each young person's progress ensures that teaching staff make informed decisions about the education of each child at an individual level and shape their future learning. Learning intentions that reflect the uniqueness of every child are recorded on profile documents held in school. These documents demonstrate progress year on year and develop into a record of attainment for individual students through the course of their education at Firwood School. The recorded results are shared with parents at their young person's EHCP review which provides an opportunity to discuss rates of progress, individual strengths/successful strategies and identify any potential barriers to learning whilst agreeing appropriate next steps.

The Speech Therapy Team and Nursing team which are based within school are also available to discuss a young person's needs. Appointments to meet with these teams can be made through contacting the main school office.

Individual class teams establish systems to reward achievement e.g. token-charts, class dojo and stickers. Consistent attendance has a high priority and is discussed with parents as appropriate. The efforts of individual or small groups of young People are celebrated at the whole school assemblies and postcards are sent home.

## **How will I be involved in discussions about, planning for, and involvement in, my child's education?**

(Reg 7: School arrangements for consulting the parents of children and young people about, and involving them in, the education of their child)

Firwood School is fully committed to including parents and carers in every aspect of their young person's life at school. Procedures in place for sharing information regarding the social and academic progress of all young People include:

- Parents' evening in the Autumn Term and Summer Term of each academic year.
- EHCP cycle including end of Key Stage reviews for young people in Year 9 and Year 10 and year 14 when transitioning into Post 19 provision.
- Home school contact
- Phone contact and face to face meetings with staff as required.
- Individual Learning Plans with objectives for learning are shared on a termly basis.
- Staff available to share, demonstrate and explain resources and approaches used in school to support learning and behaviour.
- New parents meeting held in the summer term of each academic year for admission the following September.
- Transition visits for young People, parents and carers available with senior member of Firwood staff throughout the academic year.
- Parents Group activities organised in school on a regular basis.
- Parent's questionnaire

- Paediatric appointments held in school
- Signposting and communication with wider professionals.
- School Blog
- School Website

### **What support will there be for my child's overall well-being**

(Reg 3g: in particular the development of their social and emotional skills)?

At Firwood we know that if we believe in our young people they will achieve their potential. This helps our young People develop a growth mind-set, develop their independent learning skills and their resilience. All staff provide high quality educational, social and dignified personal and medical care as required. High adult to student ratios ensure that all individual needs are met and all young people have access to an individualised broad and balanced curriculum. We are committed to multi-agency working to ensure that the needs of the whole person are met. Staff at Firwood liaise closely with professionals from other services including Speech and Language Therapy, School Nursing Team, Social Care, Educational Psychology Service and Physiotherapy/Occupational Therapy which provides a range of expertise to support our young people in becoming independent individuals with a high level of personal confidence. Staff at Firwood are committed to supporting students with ongoing medical needs in line with the school's Medical Needs policy. Developing independence is essential and throughout school, students are encouraged to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe, to manage and self-regulate their behaviour and develop a range of key skills to support their successes. The importance of Firwood as a total communication environment where all forms of communication are valued is significant in the school's commitment to the overall well-being of students. Communication systems in school include:

- Speech
- Signalong
- Symbols / Widget
- Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
- Augmentative communication systems

The curriculum at Firwood delivers a diverse range of learning opportunities, which prioritise not only academic learning but also the development of life skills and skills for life. These include independent functional skills such as being able to dress, cross the road safely and prepare simple foods. The development of essential life skills are weaved through the connected curriculum themes that are offered. In addition a focus on skills for life also feature very highly, supporting all young People to have positive relationships, learn about healthy choices, develop emotional intellect, solve problems, develop their own morals and values and develop citizenship.

In addition for those young people who may have difficulty engaging with learning, due to a social and emotional, communication or sensory need, we offer a personalised curriculum pathway. Support may include specific intervention, further training and/or strategy support from pathway leads.

Transition at all stages of a young person's educational career is a priority. Staff use a range of strategies to prepare and support our young people for any changes that occur whether it be from one session to another, one class to another, between key stages and transition into/from Firwood, including Secondary transition.

At Firwood School we do all that is possible and reasonable to safeguard our students. Clear policies and strategies are in place to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of young People especially those relating to child protection, behaviour management, Anti-Bullying, safe recruitment of staff, health and safety, harassment and discrimination. The Trustees and all those who work at Firwood put the safeguarding of young people as their highest priority to ensure that all young people are free to learn without worry or fear of harm.

### **How does Firwood school involve young people in their education and in the decision making process?**

(Reg 8: School arrangements for consulting and involving young people in their own education)

Staff of Firwood School are committed to providing opportunities for students to have a voice and comment on their experiences both of formal planned learning and social interaction such as playtime and lunchtime experiences.

The Firwood Learning Wall is a key tool that is utilised to capture student's interests and enables the young people to guide elements of their learning. Learning targets are communicated to an individual child through a variety of means – text/symbol. Staff are skilful in these strategies and use them to extend learning into following sessions. As an assessment for learning tool students are encouraged to comment on whether they feel able to complete a task independently or require continuing support "I can do it" and "More help please". Students are given the opportunity to comment on their own learning experiences on a daily basis. Staff are sensitive to every young person's opinion and ensure that there is always the opportunity for them to comment on whether they feel safe and what to do if they don't feel happy or need help. These principles are extended to the development of child questionnaires which are completed in the Summer Term.

There is an active school council whose members are selected by other young people in school. It is the responsibility of school councillors and supporting staff involved to identify areas of school that the students believe can be improved. School councillors have made formal representation to the Head of School and Trustees to request funds to improve resources and equipment available at playtime. The school councillors are also encouraged to identify community projects to support.

Student contributions in Annual Reviews/ End of Key Stage reviews are a crucial tool within Firwood to ensure their views are included in future teaching and learning experiences. Their voice must and will be heard.

All students will complete a 'my voice' questionnaire which asks them about their favourite things about school and their future aspirations. These are completed using photos, symbols or written, dependent on the young people's needs. Some students, where appropriate, have the opportunity to attend their Annual Review and can offer their opinions verbally or just take time to celebrate their achievements within the meeting.

During End of Key Stage Reviews students create a multisensory poster outlining elements such as; who is important to them, what they like/don't like, their aspirations and celebrate what things they believe they are good at or need more help with. It is a wonderful way to showcase our young people's voice alongside the personalised photographs outlining their achievements throughout their year.

### **Who, outside of school, can I turn to for advice and support?**

(Reg 11: Contact details of support services/groups for parents of students with SEN, for example parent partnership)

SEND Assessment Service 01204 333121 Email: [ea.sen@bolton.gov.uk](mailto:ea.sen@bolton.gov.uk)

Together Trust: 0161 2834874

Information Advisory Service: 01204 848722

### **Where can I find information about Local Authority provision for young people with SEN?**

(Reg 13: Details of where the Local Offer is published)

[www.mylifeinbolton.org.uk](http://www.mylifeinbolton.org.uk)

[www.localdirectory.bolton.gov.uk](http://www.localdirectory.bolton.gov.uk)

### **How should complaints regarding SEN provision be made and how will they be dealt with?**

(Reg 9: Detail the arrangements made by the Governing Body relating to the treatment of complaints)

Any concerns requiring clarification should be directed to the Head of School, these will then be shared with appropriate members of staff and the Trustees.

Complaints can also be directed to the Chair of the Trust Board via Firwood School.

### **Who do I contact for further information?**

(Reg 4: Contact details of the SENCO)

For parents/carers of Firwood School the first point of contact is the young person's class teacher. If you are considering the school for your child, please contact the school office who will liaise with members of the Senior Leadership team regarding a visit into school or a telephone conversation to discuss anything further. Information about the school can also be found on the school website.

If you would like further information than that provided above please contact:  
Mrs Dawn Evans (Head of Firwood School/SENCO) 01204 333044

### **How do I get a copy of the school SEN policy?**

A copy of Firwood School's SEN policy can be obtained by contacting the school:

By Telephone: 01204 333044

By Email: [office@Firwood.bolton.sch.uk](mailto:office@Firwood.bolton.sch.uk)

