

# HERITAGE HOUSE SCHOOL



## Heritage House School

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Headteacher: Suzanne Pennington



# PROSPECTUS 2008-2009

Heritage House School is twinned with Special School No.486, Moscow

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## Introduction

Heritage House School is a community special school, currently catering for pupils with severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties. In addition, we have a very successful TEACCH unit which caters for pupils on the autistic spectrum who have significant learning difficulties. Although we would like to be able to offer residential accommodation, we remain at present a day school.

The school is situated in Chesham on a site which was recently described by the Department for Education and Skills as “attractive but challenging”. We have recently undergone a major rebuilding programme which has doubled our floor area.

## Aim

The AIM of Heritage House School is:

through quality teaching and learning experiences, to promote in each pupil the development of the knowledge, skills and understanding which will allow them, throughout their lives, to have maximum autonomy<sup>1</sup> while still enjoying a satisfactory quality of life.

## Curriculum

The school has developed – in consultation with all parts of the school community – a curriculum which is relevant to the needs of all our pupils and which aims for them to leave school with the range of knowledge, skills and understanding which will best prepare them for adult life in their community. Progress in these core areas (*Effective Communication, Practical Skills of Independence, Personal and Social Development, Problem Solving, Physical Fitness, and Leisure: sports and arts*) is monitored using our *Skills for Life* assessment materials.

A fuller description of the curriculum was published in the Spring 2005 issue of *the SLD experience* and there is a link on our website to an electronic version of the article. Paper copies are available from the school.

## How to Complain

We hope that you will have no reason to complain, but recognise that from time to time you may be unhappy with the curriculum that is on offer to your child. On such occasions, please try and resolve these with the Headteacher and his staff. If you remain unhappy, the next course of action is for you to contact the Chairman of Governors (Peter Thomas) as the Governing Body has adopted a “General Complaints Procedure”.

The procedure is devised with the intention that it will:

- Usually be possible to resolve problems by informal means
- Be simple to use and understand
- Be non-adversarial

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<sup>1</sup> Our pupils will require – as we all do – a balance between independence and quality of life. Some will remain totally or almost totally dependent in order to have a satisfactory quality of life. Even for our most independent students, their “independence” will not approach the norm for our society.

- Provide confidentiality
- Allow problems to be handled swiftly
- Address all the points at issue
- Inform future practice so that the problem is unlikely to recur.

Full details of the procedure can be obtained from the School Office, or from the Clerk to the Governing Body.

### Organisation

The school has an Early Years Department, for pupils aged 2-7 years; Main School Department, for pupils 7-14 years and an Extended Education Department which caters for pupils aged 14-19. The TEACCH Department caters for pupils from 5-19 years; with varying degrees of integration to other parts of the school. Groupings for particular lessons are made for a variety of reasons (e.g. groups of pupils at roughly the same stage of learning in a particular subject, groups which ensure a balance across a department or for particular sessions such as MOVE).

### Specialisms, Initiatives, Priorities.

- **TEACCH.** We introduced, at Easter 1999, the TEACCH approach for working with students who, in addition to their substantial learning difficulties, are identified as being on the autistic spectrum or as having social communication difficulties. As well as the four classes which follow the approach exclusively, some classes cater for one or more pupils whose interaction with their environment is mediated by the TEACCH framework. All teachers and some assistants have been formally trained in the TEACCH approach. This is proving to be a successful and popular approach. The parents' support group is looking at ways to adapt the approach to the home setting.
- **Safety in the community.** This challenging and comprehensive test (at each of its three levels) gives the student the opportunity to demonstrate their competence in a variety of potentially hazardous situations. (We have a small band of brave volunteers whose only contact with the school is to approach individual students to see how effectively they react to the approach of a plausible stranger.) It is one of our successes that parents have recognised the comprehensive nature of this test and been able to allow successful students new levels of responsibility and independence.
- **Art.** The quality of artwork around the school is evident to all visitors. We employ a specialist teacher who has assisted all senior pupils to develop their artistic skills and some pupils to show real talent.
- **Music.** Again, we employ a specialist teacher for most music lessons throughout the school. A more therapeutic approach is available according to agreed criteria. The contribution of music to the development of effective communication is one of our interests. We also have also introduced Taiko Drumming sessions to the school curriculum and the pupils are very enthusiastic about this.

## Resources and facilities

- **Hydro-therapy Pool** The astonishing fund-raising successes of our PTA has provided us with a first rate hydrotherapy pool. In addition to its advantages for the individual pupils whose physical (physiotherapy) needs can best be met in this setting, the school governors have decided that swimming will be a priority for all and that pupils in Early Years and Main School will have a weekly swimming lesson. (Some pupils have 2 or 3 sessions per week.) For pupils in Extended Education, lessons are arranged at the local swimming pools for part of the year.
- **Sports College** In order to facilitate the development of suitable courses, we have joined a consortium of 6 local schools to form a Sports College. This allows us to promote physical fitness among our pupils; to develop a specialism in Dance; to give our pupils access to resources and specialist teaching which it would have been difficult to provide within Heritage House School; and to allow the opportunity for individual pupils to receive specialist coaching and to develop particular skills. {We are also part of a consortium based on Chesham Park Community College which has specialist status in **Performing Arts**.}
- **Sensory room** This room, named in memory of Roy Castle (who was for many years the President of our PTA), provides surroundings and activities appropriate to pupils with visual impairment or other sensory difficulties. It has recently been re-equipped and updated.
- **Therapy input** Health Trust staff work in the school. Physiotherapists are present for the equivalent of four days per week. Speech and Language Therapy staff (including a therapist employed additionally by the school) are present throughout the week. Other professionals make less regular input (e.g. occupational therapist, wheelchair service).

## Communication

The communication and reporting systems of the school are detailed in the information pack which parents of new pupils receive. A diary which travels daily between school and home provides a first level of communication which can be supplemented as appropriate by phone calls and visits. (All class teachers are directed to visit each pupil at home at least once per year.) There is a formal annual meeting to review the pupil's statement of special educational needs. Achievement is reported annually and a parents' evening is held in July to discuss these reports.

## Safeguarding our pupils

At this school, the health, safety and well-being of every child are our paramount concern and our recruitment and selection of staff reflects best practice in this area. We listen to our pupils and take seriously what they tell us. Our aim is that children will enjoy their time as pupils in this school.

We want to work in partnership with you to help your child to achieve their full potential and make a positive contribution.

On rare occasions our concern about a child may mean that we have to consult other agencies even before we contact you. The procedures which we follow have been laid down by the Buckinghamshire Area Child Protection Committee, and the school has adopted a Child Protection Policy in line with this for the safety of all. If you want to know more about our procedures or the policy, please speak to the Headteacher or your child's class teacher.

We would like parents to understand that as part of "safeguarding our pupils" we will send pupils home who we feel are unwell and should not be in school for the protection of the other very vulnerable pupils.

This ("health, safety and well-being") is also the reason why we insist on following the recommended guidelines about school attendance when ill. We have in school a number of very vulnerable children for whom every illness is life threatening. So, although we do sympathise with the complications caused to families whose child is ill and cannot attend school, we continue to insist that the recommendations from the health authority are followed to the letter.

## Statutory information

### **Pupil Achievement**

All pupils are disapplied from NC end of key stage assessments.

We do assess pupils against the national P-scales in English, Maths, Science and Personal and Social Education; and using our own *Skills for Life* Assessment.

Our participation in the voluntary national p-scales project provides us with interesting comparative data which allows us to compare the progress of our pupils with others of similar age and special educational needs across the country.

No pupils sit public exams. Pupils in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form follow courses published and accredited by ASDAN.

### **Authorised and Unauthorised Absences**

During the school year 2007-08 the number of registered day pupils was 47 which does not include Nursery or Sixth Form students. The figure for authorised absences was 9.1%. This is a little lower than in the previous year.. Traditionally our attendance rates have been higher than other similar schools locally. Unauthorised absences were 1.4%.

## **Teaching Hours**

In keeping with current recommendations, each Key Stage has teaching equal to or in excess of:

Key Stage 1 (5-7 years) – 21 hours

Key Stage 2 (7-11 years) – 23 hours

Key Stage 3 (11-14 years) – 24 hours

Key Stage 4 (14-16 years) – 24 hours

The school day starts at 9.00 a.m. and finishes at 3.30 p.m. Lunch breaks vary between key stages.

## **Post-16 Leavers to Further Education**

In 2007, One of the Sixth Form leavers went on to Further Education at the local College, and three went on to further their education at adult provision.

**Religious Education** R.E. is taught using the Buckinghamshire County agreed syllabus. The main strands of the religious education syllabus are taught in relation to the six main religions. Pupils are assisted to learn about and from different religions. In addition, R.E. is used as the vehicle for promoting the spiritual, moral and cultural development of the pupils. The whole school comes together each week to share, celebrate, reflect and perform. Pupils are encouraged to treat each other with respect and value the beliefs of others. Many of the main festivals are celebrated according to a two-year plan of whole school events. Parents who do not wish their child to be included in this aspect of the curriculum are advised to contact the Headteacher.

**Sex and Relationships Education.** Pupils of all ages follow a comprehensive scheme of work in Personal Social and Health Education. This includes a course in sex education that supports pupils as they grow up and promotes their emergence as confident young adults. Parents are kept fully informed of the content of any sex education programme and the way in which the information is presented to the pupils.

Contact details & admissions procedure
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The admissions authority for the school is Buckinghamshire local education authority. Requests for admission should be addressed to the Pupil Support Team at County Hall.

Admission to the TEACCH classes, and movement out of them, is governed by a set of criteria. Admissions from outside the school are subject to the same criteria and to the above procedure

Visits by parents who are considering applying for admission to Heritage House School are welcome. Three days per half term are set aside for parent visits. Please contact the school to make an appointment.

## Heritage House School Challenges

In 1998, 25 pupils took part in the Three Peaks Challenge. Divided into three teams and supported by teams of parents, staff and friends as well as by army officer cadets from Winchester, pupils climbed Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon. It was a day of great achievement for the pupils.

In 1999, eight pupils and their support team walked the 85 miles of the Ridgeway from Avebury to Ivinghoe Beacon. On the first day, a Saturday, there was a general air of disbelief that they were going to walk all the way back to school! Eight days later, after many blisters had been treated by Mark, our friendly paramedic, it was a very elated group which celebrated with champagne on the top of Ivinghoe Beacon.

Between January 2002 and July 2004 the HHS Walking Club covered much of the 200km of the *Chiltern Way*.

## Heritage House School Accreditations and Partnerships



*The information contained within this prospectus was correct at the time of going to press. It is possible that as part of the ongoing development of the school that information contained herein may change. There a range of illustrated flyers that focus on particular aspects of school life. These are available from school. Please do not hesitate to contact the school for further information.*

## APPENDIX 1

### **SCHOOL GOVERNORS 2008-09**

Mr. B. Bennett	Chairman
Mrs. S. Pennington	Headteacher
Mrs. P. Wilkinson	LEA Nominee
Mrs. A. Coney	Community Governor
Mrs. A. Forsyth	LEA Nominee
Mrs. J. Golding Clarke	Teacher Representative
Mrs. S. Slater	Staff Representative
Mr P.D. Thomas	Parent Representative
Mr A. Davison	Parent Representative
Mr D Rooke	Parent Representative

Each Governor is adopted by a class, which then invites them to join the class for coffee mornings, outings, specific lessons and so on. This helps the Governors to get an overview of what happens in school on a day to day basis.

The Governing Body presents an Annual Report to parents during the Autumn Term. Parents are encouraged to attend this meeting to update themselves on recent developments and to use the meeting as a forum for raising questions and exploring issues relating to school life.

Governors may be contacted via the school.