



SCHOOL PROSPECTUS



THE ORCHARD SCHOOL

EVERYONE MATTERS, EVERYONE CARES

WELCOME FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Welcome to The Orchard School.

Choosing the right school for your child is one of the most important decisions you will make. At The Orchard School, we understand that many of our pupils arrive having faced significant challenges in education. Our role is to rebuild trust, create a strong sense of belonging and support every child to move forward positively.

We are a maintained special school for pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, serving children and young people from Year 2 to Year 11. Many of our pupils have experienced disrupted education, anxiety, trauma or difficulty managing relationships in previous settings. At Orchard, relationships come first.

Our approach is therapeutic and relational. We believe behaviour is communication and we respond with care, consistency and understanding. Every pupil is known as an individual, valued for who they are and supported to develop confidence, resilience and aspiration for the future.

At The Orchard School, Everyone Matters, Everyone Cares.
This is not just our motto. It is the principle that underpins everything we do.

Alistair Hammond
Headteacher





ABOUT THE ORCHARD SCHOOL

The Orchard School is a co-educational, maintained foundation special school located in Kent. We cater for pupils aged 7 to 16 across Key Stages 2, 3 and 4. All pupils attending The Orchard School have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), agreed through the Local Authority.

Our pupils present with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs and may also have associated learning difficulties, communication needs or neurodiverse profiles. Many have found it difficult to thrive in mainstream settings and require a more specialist, nurturing and structured approach to education.

We offer:

- Small class sizes
- High staff-to-pupil ratios
- Clear routines and expectations
- Consistent relational support
- A calm, safe and purposeful learning environment

Our school is built on the belief that pupils learn best when they feel safe, understood and supported.



OUR MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

Our Mission

At The Orchard School, Everyone Matters, Everyone Cares. Our ethos is rooted in the belief that every child has the potential to grow, thrive and succeed when provided with the right environment, relationships and support. The Orchard Way guides everything we do, ensuring our approach is therapeutic, inclusive and centred on understanding behaviour as communication.

Our Vision

We aim to create a school where every pupil feels safe, valued and empowered. Through strong relationships, high expectations and a culture of care, we support pupils to develop the skills, confidence and resilience they need to succeed in education and beyond.

Our Values

Our values shape our daily practice and expectations:



Trust – building safe, consistent and respectful relationships

Belonging – ensuring every pupil feels part of our school community

Aspiration – encouraging pupils to believe in themselves and their future

Voice – listening to pupils and valuing their views

Pride – taking pride in ourselves, our school and our achievements

Curiosity – encouraging learning, exploration and personal growth



THE ORCHARD WAY

Our Therapeutic Approach

The Orchard School follows a Therapeutic Thinking approach across all areas of school life. We understand that behaviour is a form of communication and that pupils' actions often reflect unmet needs or emotional difficulty.

Rather than focusing on punishment, we focus on:

- Understanding what a pupil is communicating
 - Teaching emotional regulation skills
 - Supporting reflection and repair
 - Strengthening relationships
- Helping pupils make positive choices

Our Relational and Therapeutic Behaviour Policy reflects this approach and supports pupils to learn from mistakes, rebuild relationships and move forward positively.





CURRICULUM INTENT

Our curriculum is designed to meet the academic, social and emotional needs of pupils with SEMH, recognising that many have experienced disrupted learning, anxiety and difficulty engaging in education. It is ambitious, broad and balanced, while remaining flexible and responsive to individual needs.

Our curriculum is underpinned by Therapeutic Thinking and our belief that behaviour is communication. We prioritise readiness to learn, emotional regulation and strong relationships as the foundations for progress.

The Orchard School curriculum places a strong emphasis on:

- Reading as a gateway to learning, confidence and independence
- Spoken language, communication and vocabulary development
 - Secure and functional mathematics
 - Writing for purpose and self-expression
 - Emotional literacy, wellbeing and regulation
- Personal development, life skills and independence
- Preparation for adulthood, further education and employment

Learning is carefully sequenced and structured to ensure pupils experience success, build confidence and develop positive learning behaviours over time. Teaching is adaptive and personalised, with clear routines, high expectations and consistent support.



CURRICULUM & PHASE MODEL

At The Orchard School, pupils access a broad and balanced curriculum through personalised pathways. These pathways are shaped around each pupil's strengths, needs and Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) outcomes, and are reviewed regularly in partnership with families.

Rather than placing pupils into fixed tracks, we adapt learning so that pupils can re-engage, build confidence and make meaningful progress over time. Our curriculum is:

Inclusive: tailored to each pupil through personalised pathways and EHCP outcomes

Therapeutic: built around emotional safety, regulation and restorative relationships

Ambitious: high expectations for every learner, with flexible and creative teaching approaches

Skills-based: focused on academic progress, communication, independence and resilience



How it works

Primary Phase (Years 2–6)

The Primary Phase focuses on early recovery, routine, emotional literacy and core skills in reading, writing and maths. Learning is structured and predictable, with strong relational support so pupils feel safe, understood and ready to learn.

Secondary Phase (Years 7–11)

The Secondary Phase builds on these foundations and offers a mix of subject learning, PSHE, life skills, enrichment and accredited outcomes. This includes pathways such as Entry Level, Functional Skills and GCSEs where appropriate, alongside wider curriculum experiences that build independence and aspiration.

Early Reading, Phonics and Fluency

Reading is a priority across the school. In the Primary Phase, we use Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised to support pupils to develop secure foundations in reading and writing through structured, consistent teaching that is carefully adapted.

In the Secondary Phase, phonics and reading intervention continues where needed, with a strong focus on fluency, accuracy and comprehension. Pupils are supported to build stamina, confidence and independence as readers through targeted intervention and opportunities to apply reading skills across the wider curriculum.



KEY STAGE PROVISION

Key Stage 2 and 3

In Key Stages 2 and 3, the focus is on rebuilding confidence, developing core academic skills and establishing strong routines for learning. Pupils benefit from a nurture-informed, primary-style model with fewer transitions, strong relationships with key adults and consistent expectations.

Teaching prioritises reading, communication, mathematics and emotional literacy, alongside the development of positive learning behaviours and self-regulation.

Key Stage 4

In Key Stage 4, pupils follow carefully planned pathways that reflect their needs, strengths and aspirations. Learning becomes increasingly personalised and focused on preparation for adulthood.

Accreditation routes may include:

- GCSEs where appropriate
- Functional Skills in English and mathematics
 - Vocational and practical qualifications
- ASDAN and other accredited programmes

The curriculum supports pupils to develop independence, employability skills and confidence, with a clear focus on next steps into further education, training or employment.



PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT & WELLBEING

Personal development is central to life at The Orchard School. We support pupils to develop emotional awareness, resilience, independence and positive relationships.

Pupils access:

- PSHE and Relationships and Sex Education
 - Emotional regulation support
- Careers education and guidance
 - Opportunities for pupil voice
 - Enrichment activities

PUPIL VOICE AND SCHOOL COMMUNITY

We believe pupils' voices matter. Pupils are encouraged to share their views through School Council, regular discussions and informal feedback. Their opinions help shape school life and decision-making.

We also value a strong sense of community through events, celebrations and shared experiences.



SAFEGUARDING AND PASTORAL SUPPORT

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility at The Orchard School. We have a trained Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy DSLs, clear procedures and strong partnerships with external agencies.

Pupils are encouraged to speak to trusted adults and know that their concerns will be taken seriously.

Pastoral support is provided through strong relationships, consistent routines and close communication with families.

WORKING WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

We believe strong partnerships with parents and carers are essential to pupil success. We are committed to open, honest and supportive communication.

We work closely with families through:

- Regular communication
 - Review meetings
- Collaborative problem-solving
- Support during transitions



ADMISSIONS

Admissions to The Orchard School are managed by the Local Authority through the Education, Health and Care Plan process. Placement decisions are made following consultation and careful consideration of each pupil's needs.

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

We support pupils to transition positively to their next stage of education, training or employment. Transition planning begins early and is tailored to each individual.

Our aim is for pupils to leave The Orchard School with increased confidence, skills and aspiration for the future.

CONTACT US

The Orchard School
Kent

Website: www.orchard-school.com

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