



**Dawn
House
School**

A specialist school for
communication and interaction

Prospectus

ICAN

helps children
communicate

Part of I CAN, the children's
communication charity

An 'Outstanding'
specialist school
for children and
young people
aged 5-19





Welcome

At Dawn House School, we strive to be outstanding by offering a caring, cheerful and safe environment in which pupils and staff feel valued. We want to be a place where pupils are encouraged to reach their full potential, fulfil their ambitions and where evidence-based learning is key. We are motivated to ensure that all our students leave us with the skills and confidence to be independent.

Dawn House School is a non-maintained specialist school for up to 95 children and young people. Aged between 5-19 years, all our children have severe and complex communication difficulties as their primary need.

Promoting effective communication is central to everything we do. Education, therapy and residential care is integrated in a highly specialist environment.

Ofsted 2017 (residential) and Ofsted 2018 (education) judged Dawn House School to be 'Outstanding' in all areas, which we are very proud of.

Dawn House School is run by I CAN, the children's communication charity. I CAN is committed to enabling every pupil to achieve personal, academic and social success and to empower all of our pupils to realise their full potential.



At Dawn House School we provide an inclusive, innovative and collaborative learning experience to ensure all our pupils are given the opportunity to thrive.

Ofsted rate us as an 'Outstanding' day and residential specialist school. Through working together to increase pupil engagement, we can support our children to overcome the barriers to their learning. Children are enabled to develop the confidence and ability to express their views, influence decisions and challenge issues that affect them.

Our staff teams work collaboratively with our parents/carers to develop our children's language and communication skills so that they can fulfil their potential, achieve their aspirations and become valued and valuable members of their communities.

We give a voice to those who do not always have the words.

Jenny McConnell
Principal



You lead a very motivated and committed team who consistently promote good and often outstanding progress to meet the outcomes identified for pupils. Staff have a clear sense of pride in the school and understand their role in contributing to its continued success."

Ofsted, 2018

Our Culture

We are committed to providing:

- Outstanding education, therapy, interventions and care for all our pupils
- A broad, balanced and personalised curriculum to meet the needs of all our pupils
- Stimulating learning experiences that have an appropriate mix of challenge and support which promotes effective learning
- A breadth of opportunities and experiences across the day and extended curriculum which support the philosophy of inclusive practice
- A partnership approach towards working with families, professionals and other stakeholders
- A safe environment where members of the school community can achieve their potential and grow in confidence and self-esteem
- A community that supports and understands mental health and the wellbeing of our pupils, families and staff
- The opportunity for pupils to take an active role in their community, in and out of school. They are supported to become aware of and understand the wider world and their place in it.



The school is outstanding and absolutely amazing. We can now live as a normal family."

Parent interview, Ofsted, 2018 (Education)



Dawn House and its staff have provided a nurturing and supportive environment which has given my child back his enthusiasm to learn, self-belief that he can achieve and the confidence to speak and communicate with others which he previously lacked."

Parent interview





Inside Dawn House School

We know that by providing a stimulating, caring and orderly environment, we get the most out of our students and they are able to get the most out of their education.

We focus on the needs of every child by offering them personalised support through therapy and individualised programmes, whilst delivering the national curriculum within small class groups. The enhanced curriculum is an enriching experience for our pupils, enabling them to transition through school and into adulthood, post-16.

Set in a beautiful 10-acre site in Nottinghamshire, students enjoy a range of specialised modern facilities, including:

- A science lab
- Indoor swimming pool
- Sports hall
- Media suite
- Craft, design and fine arts studio
- Dance/drama room
- Food technology room.

At Dawn House we encourage environmental learning using our outside classroom set in the surrounding woodland area and our students enjoy our extensive playing fields and hard play area. They are encouraged to partake in outdoor activities all year round.

We have an alternative and enhanced resource centre called 'CHIMES'. This supports children with SLCN and social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) and provides bespoke learning in personalised spaces for pupils aged 5-19 years.

“

All groups of pupils enjoy school and make good-outstanding progress from their individual starting points. A precise 'small-steps' approach to assessment, tracking and evaluation is in place for each pupil. The impact of this ensures that the curriculum is personalised and leads to strong progress for all pupils. Disadvantaged pupils receive very effective support. Consequently, there is no measurable difference between how well these pupils achieve compared to others.”

Ofsted, 2018



Entry to Dawn House School

Dawn House School is open to any child with SLCN. Parents are welcome to come and visit the school to see if it is the right environment for their child.

Dawn House School Assessment Service

Once referred to Dawn House School, we have a simple procedure to ensure that potential pupils are appropriately assessed and placed.

Prior to admission pupils will meet with the Dawn House School Assessment Team.

This team consists of:

- Head of the Assessment Service (a specialist teacher)
- Speech and Language Therapist (SLT)
- Occupational Therapist.

The assessment involves formal and informal assessments, conducted over two consecutive mornings, so that we are in an informed position to understand your child's needs.

Learning and Achieving

Transition

Changing schools and routine can cause anxiety for any child or young person but we know this can be especially difficult for children with SLCN. To build confidence and trust in our new students, we have dedicated resources for the transition into Dawn House School:

- We have Learning Mentors who specifically work to make sure their needs are understood by teaching and support staff.
- We offer a gradual period of transition for students who need the extra time to adjust – before building up to attending for full days.
- We facilitate a placement meeting for each student that covers everything from educational and therapeutic needs, wellbeing, transport and support with friendships.

Primary Department (5–11 years)

We deliver the National Curriculum, enriched with a language development focus. Each pupil is supported by a core team of staff which includes a teacher, speech and language therapist and teaching assistant.

Morning lessons focus on literacy, numeracy and personal, social and health education (PSHE) whilst traditional subject based learning takes place in the afternoon. Specialist subject teachers deliver science, art, design and technology and PE.

Secondary Department (11–16 years)

During the secondary years, we begin to see our students focus on their interests and participate in national exams. Students have access to the same support as in primary and they can start

to make realistic and informed choices as to which subjects they would like to take and start developing ideas about their futures.

Courses leading to external accreditation include GCSE in:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Art
- Design and technology.

Vocational Options at Key Stage 4 include subjects such as:

- Horticulture
- Motor vehicle maintenance
- Catering
- Media.

Sixth Form (16–19 years)

Sixth Form is the time we see our students become young adults preparing for the world beyond the school gates. We offer a full range of qualifications either delivered on site or at one of our college partners. We are well-known in the area and have fostered strong partnerships with local colleges, local businesses and training providers to set up opportunities and ongoing learning and development for our students.

We recognise the importance of students having qualifications in English and maths, therefore all young people are given additional support as required.

All our young people have the opportunity to attend a work placement or a longer work experience. Additionally, all students have one to one careers interviews.

To allow the successful transition into adulthood and the world of work there is ongoing access to all therapies available in the school. We work with all stakeholders and parents to ensure that transition from Dawn House School at 19 is both successful and relevant to the area in which they live.



This rich curriculum, coupled with personalised targets for success, enables pupils to thrive."

**Ofsted, 2018
(Education)**



Set for **independence**

Residential Trips

At each key stage, pupils have the opportunity to experience a residential trip where they are given the opportunity to try new activities like camping, water sports and visits to historic sites.

Careers

For any young people, looking ahead at what they're going to do with the rest of their lives can be a daunting prospect. At Dawn House School we think that good career guidance is vital for our students to be able to understand their opportunities and make the most of their potential.

Our careers programme is overseen by a member of the senior leadership group and our dedicated careers officer. Our careers provision is informed by the Department for Education (DfE) and tailored to the needs and circumstances of our pupils.

We keep the 'careers' conversation going throughout the school. Pupils receive careers guidance at the end of Key Stages 3, 4 and throughout their time in sixth form. We ensure all pupils from years 7-13 have completed work experience or, if more appropriate, a work placement opportunity.

Pupil voice

Pupils are encouraged to play an active part in the school community, shaping their own experience. Students get to learn what it's like to be heard in a meaningful way and are encouraged to stand and participate in elections to the School Council, representing students on the School Governing Body. Obtaining student views are important to the running of the school. They also give pupils the confidence to participate in democratic mechanisms, similar to what they'd experience in later life.



Therapy

Speech and language therapy

Communication is the fundamental life skill for all children. Good communication is key to ensuring children get the best start in life. This is why supporting speech and language development is at the heart of everything we do. Dawn House School provides this through a curriculum based approach and development targets are integrated into pupils learning experience. Speech and language support is delivered one-to-one, in class or through small specialist groups. Many lessons are jointly planned by the teacher and the SLT.

We embrace the techniques and technologies that are proven to work. Communication and learning are enhanced by high-tech and low-tech Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). This may be through the use of signs and symbols or using software programmes on an iPad to support functional communication and interaction where appropriate.

SLTs play a pivotal role in providing ongoing professional development across the school, ensuring that all children's complex needs are understood and supported.

Sensory Integration

Many of our students have difficulties in processing and interpreting sensory information. This can lead to them finding experiences unusual or uncomfortable to their senses resulting in them not being able to focus on learning opportunities.

At Dawn House School, we have a dedicated sensory integration room and we teach our students their own sensory integration strategies to modulate their sensory needs.

This continues in the classroom where all staff are trained in the individual student's sensory strategies such as putting on a weighted jacket, using ear defenders or having tactile toys and objects.

Occupational therapists and SLTs collaboratively plan and deliver specialist groups including activities which encourage independence. The occupational therapist routinely advises staff on managing sensory issues that may impact on behaviour and access to learning.



Wellbeing

With the clear links between SLCN and mental health, student wellbeing is always more than just an after-thought. We have taken a revolutionary approach that has ensured student mental health and positive well-being is woven into the very culture of the school and always at the fore-front of our minds.

Our Wellbeing Team includes a Child and Adult Psychotherapist, a Wellbeing Lead for pupils and

a Wellbeing Lead for families, so that we are fostering healthy behaviours and attitudes in all areas of our student's lives. Mental health needs are identified during the initial assessment process and pupils can be referred to the wellbeing team at any time. The team plan appropriate interventions, taking holistic approaches, which are delivered to individuals and small groups.



The school has a very strong focus on emotional wellbeing. They have a highly skilled 'wellbeing team'. The team identifies pupils who require extra support or interventions to prevent escalating concerns. The team provides a dedicated service to support pupils with their emotional and psychological health. The team rigorously tracks behaviours. This means that progress is measured. The need for additional resources is identified early and this includes timely referrals to specialist child and adolescent mental health services."

Oftsed, 2017 (Residential)



Staying at Dawn House School

Dawn House School boarding facilities accommodates children & young people from 10-19 years.

For the children who come to stay at Dawn House School, we know that this can often be their first time away from home. We have created an environment that is welcoming, comfortable and fun for our boarders. Our childcare staff are trained to meet the specific speech, language and communication needs of the boarding pupils and to support them in developing their social and independence skills.

Involvement in the community

We keep our boarders stimulated with a range of activities throughout their stay – a typical weekly programme will include physical sports and games, e.g. football, cricket, basketball and swimming in addition to activities such as cookery, arts and crafts, board-games, drama, going to the cinema or out for a meal.

Older pupils have additional opportunities to develop their independence and life-skills by managing budgets, planning meals and using public transport systems.

A number of pupils attend youth and swimming clubs in the local community and are members of the local leisure centre, gym and library.





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