School Prospectus

Woodlands Secondary School

Head Teacher: Debbie Foolkes

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Welcome to Woodlands School. It is my pleasure to introduce our prospectus. I hope you find all the information you need and it helps you to gain an insight into the school. As governors we are very proud of our school and the achievements of the students. I hope this document will help you to decide if Woodlands is the right choice for your child.

Chair of Governors

Message from the Head Teacher
I hope that this prospectus will give you a broad insight into the school and a sense of our values and ethos.

Woodlands Secondary School is a special needs provision for pupils from 11 – 18 situated on Marsh Farm in Luton. It is the only secondary special school provision in the town so the children come from all catchment areas of Luton.

At Woodlands we believe that learning is a life-long journey and we aim to inspire and support our children and young people to achieve their full potential. Our curriculum offer is tailored to the individual needs of the young person. Our broad and balanced curriculum focuses on functional learning and incorporates life-skills to support and promote independence. Woodlands School provides a vibrant, fun and inclusive educational and therapeutic community where all members, students, their families and staff, are continuously learning together.

We believe that children and young people learn best when they are happy and emotional well-being has a high priority. Woodlands prides itself on the therapeutic support it provides for young people struggling with adolescence. This includes Play, Art and Music Therapy, Forest School, School Counselors and a therapeutic base where pupils have one to one and group support.

Children work in small class groups (6-10) and are well supported by the class teacher and teaching assistants. The school has excellent facilities including a hydrotherapy pool, a dance and drama studio, a soft play room, a gym, a café (run by the students), a Tuck shop, a multi-sensory room, a rebound therapy room with a sunken trampoline and a horticulture area.

At Woodlands we keep the young person at the centre of everything we do, working closely with parents, professionals and other stakeholders to ensure that every opportunity is maximised. The school has an outreach service for students and colleagues in other Luton schools providing training and school based placements. We are committed to a rigorous transition programme that aims to ensure a seamless transition for learners entering into and moving on from Woodlands.

I am always delighted to receive enquiries and all visitors to Woodlands can be assured of receiving a warm welcome.

Debbie Foolkes—Head Teacher
Safeguarding

Woodlands School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all our pupils; our governors and staff all share this commitment. The school has policies and procedures in place for safeguarding our pupils in line with Local Authority guidance. The Safeguarding Policy is available on our website. The school also adheres to Safer Recruitment guidelines.

We also work in close partnership with other agencies like the Health Authority and Social Services, who share our commitment to protecting children and young adults. The people in these agencies can include health visitors, the school doctor and nurse and social workers.

Our first concern is your child's welfare, and therefore there may be occasions when we have to consult other agencies even before we contact you. Should this be necessary, we want to reassure you that any concerns we have about your child will always be fully discussed with you, after we have talked with the other agency. All staff are trained in Safeguarding Vulnerable Children and Young People.

Vision

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At Woodlands we aim to:

- Provide a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual student and helps prepare them for their life both in school and in the wider community.
- Ensure that learning is functional and is focused on developing skills which will support transition to adulthood.
- Create a learning environment that encourages students and staff to strive to be the best they can be.
- Promote functional communication skills including alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) skills.
- Encourage independence.
- Meet students’ physical, sensory, medical and therapeutic needs in collaboration with other professionals.
- Focus on individual well-being by providing therapeutic opportunities to support the development of confidence and self-esteem.
- Work closely and in collaboration with parents and carers, the Local Authority, professionals and other stakeholders.
- Ensure a successful and positive transition to post school provision through liaison with the Transition Team and by providing parent training and support.

We promote British Values by:

- delivering a curriculum which is fun and challenging at every level.
- creating a school and service ethos firmly based on mutual trust, respect, empathy and understanding.
- encouraging caring and thoughtful attitudes.
- providing an environment where students feel safe in order to thrive and learn.
- developing work related learning opportunities (where appropriate) through the school café, tuck shop, work experience and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.
- creating an environment of high expectations and positive attitudes.
- encouraging pupil voice by working with the School Council to implement suggestions and ideas.
- nurturing confidence, promoting independence and empowering our students to make good decisions and choices.
- embracing diversity and celebrating difference.
Admission to the School

Any child who comes to Woodlands School must have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan or a Statement of Special Educational Need. Most commonly the children will have learning needs associated with Profound and Multiple Learning disabilities, Severe Learning disabilities and complex Moderate Learning disabilities. Within this range we are resourced to meet the learning styles of students with a wide range of needs including autistic spectrum and communication disorders, hearing impairments, visual impairments and physical disabilities. Students admitted to Woodlands are likely to achieve within the range P1 to Year 1/2 of the National Curriculum.

Placement at the school is agreed by the local authority Special Needs Assessment Group (SPAG) following detailed assessment of pupil needs and full consultation with all partners in the process. The aim is to ensure that parents are well informed as parental choice is paramount.

Formal negotiations about placements are the responsibility of the local authority but I am always pleased to show parents round and to talk about the provision we have to offer. Choosing the right school for a child is one of the most important decisions a parent makes in securing the best possible learning in preparation for life as an adult.

When serious interest is shown in Woodlands, and the LA has identified us as a suitable school, parents will be encouraged to bring their child for a visit. The receiving teacher and/or the Deputy Head will visit the child in their present school and, if it is considered to be beneficial, arrange a home visit.

Transferring from one school to another can be a worrying time for children, and their parents. To ease this process, Woodlands operates a transfer procedure for new admissions. This is organised in negotiation with parents and professionals working with the child. The Deputy Head is the main point of contact for this.

When admissions to our school happen during the year we usually arrange for a child to have short term, part time attendance, initially, in order to support their transition into their new learning environment. There are always exceptions to this as some children manage change better without prior visits.

As with any secondary school provision we always have an annual intake of young people transferring from Year 6 to Year 7. Planning for these admissions starts early in the Autumn Term of each academic year. During each Summer Term most students who will be transferring make a number of visits to Woodlands to develop their confidence in their new school and give us the opportunity to know every child well before they start in September. Class teachers will also visit the primary school on several occasions.

The majority of children attending Woodlands use transport provided by the Local Authority, otherwise parents arrange for dropping off and collecting their children at the beginning or end of the day. Not all students will be entitled to special needs transport and each case is assessed individually by the local authority.
The Curriculum
Communication underpins all areas of the curriculum. At Woodlands we ensure that all pupils are fully included in learning activities by utilising a wide range of styles of communication. Spoken communication is supported through the use of signing, visual cues such as photographs and symbols as well as high or low tech communication aids.

Learning at all levels is designed to be fun, purposeful and relevant to individual needs. Pupils learn from each other as well as from the adults and we place great emphasis on students recognising, respecting and valuing first themselves and then their peers.

The Curriculum in Key Stage 3
The curriculum in Key Stage 3 is closely linked to the schemes of work followed by the students in their primary schools. Students are grouped to ensure their individual needs are met and timetables are personalised to maximise learning opportunities. All students will access Literacy, Numeracy and ICT at an appropriate level. Science, music, art, drama, PE, RE and PSHCE are all taught through the themes in our Creative Curriculum. Key stage 3 student access the community each week and begin working on life skills, cooking their lunches once a week.

The Curriculum in Key Stage 4
Building on skills acquired in Key Stage 3, the focus for students in Key Stage is promoting independence. This is delivered through a broad, balanced and Creative Curriculum which offers both traditional subjects such as English, Maths, and ICT and a more practical approach to learning. This is taught in a fun but age appropriate learning environment.

Accessing local community facilities enables students to gain new and real life experiences, preparing them for Post 16 and life beyond school.

Accreditation is varied and available to all students in Key Stage 4 such as ASDAN Personal Progress and AQA Unit Awards. Accreditation is tailored to the student’s individual needs and underpins our Creative Curriculum. It is an important way of recognising achievement, celebrating student progress and lays solid foundations for further development in Post 16 provisions.
Further Education (FE) – 16-19 Curriculum

In the FE Department at Woodlands School we endeavour to build on the skills developed by students as they have moved through Key Stages 3 and 4.

We continue to use our well qualified and experienced staff to provide high quality education and to support our students to pursue meaningful and challenging qualifications, including the OCR Life and Living Skills qualification and, for some students, functional skills qualifications for English, Maths and/or ICT.

Our focus is on enabling students to develop the necessary personal, social and independence skills so they can achieve their goals, aspirations and ambitions and to ensure they are well prepared for adult life. Students take on regular responsibilities in the area of meal preparation and all that is involved (shopping, cooking and clearing up!). The upstairs classrooms provide specialist facilities to support these activities. It is important that students continue to develop their safe and independent travel training skills and access community facilities beyond the school grounds to apply their in school learning.

Some students will also be working on their employability skills. We have started working with New Horizons, who support adults with needs to enter the workforce. This link is facilitating meaningful work experience for some of our students.

Students will have opportunities to participate in link course opportunities and visits to Post school providers including a range of options funded by both Education and Social Care.

PMLD Curriculum

Woodlands Secondary School aims to provide opportunities for all our students with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) to have opportunities to fulfil their potential and to participate in all activities, as independently as possible. Each of our students are individuals and the degree of independence that they will demonstrate will vary accordingly. It is vital that students with PMLD have their complex medical and physical needs addressed and timetables are adapted accordingly to reflect the need to address these needs, to keep the students safe and well and to place them in a position of readiness to learn.
The Pathways Department

The Pathways department follows the WISERR Curriculum

WISERR stands for:

- Well-being
- Independence and Co-operation
- Social Communication
- Enjoyment
- Resilience
- Regulation

The WISERR curriculum prioritises the development of functional skills, that are transferable outside and beyond school. It is hoped that the development of these functional skills will enable our young people to be as independent as possible in activities of daily living and to develop and maintain relationships that are significant to them. Maths, Literacy and PSHE are not taught as discrete subjects, instead, opportunities to develop an understanding of key concepts from these areas is practised throughout the day in activities that could also be experienced in a home or supported living environment. On a daily basis we aim to provide a "work life balance" as the balance is necessary to well-being in life.

Students who follow the WISERR curriculum are generally ambulant and assessed at being at level P4 or below. Students in addition to their severe learning disabilities may also have; communication difficulties, sensory difficulties and/or health issues. Some students have been assessed at a higher level but it will have been agreed by the school leadership team and parents that their learning needs will be best met following the WISERR curriculum because either; they present with a considerable level of challenging behaviour or they do not apply their cognitive skills when presented with everyday challenges in activities of daily living.

The Loft

The ‘LOFT’ is Woodlands therapeutic provision designed to provide structured activities for learners who have been identified as needing extra support to address their additional needs, whatever they may be, including social, emotional, behavioural, mental health and ASD needs. The provision is designed to ensure that the identified learners are enabled to experience the joy of learning and progressing by accessing critical teaching and learning situations in school.

The ‘LOFT’, helps to supported young people in a therapeutic environment enabling them time to talk through their emotions and anxieties immediately after events within a small group setting. The students are able to express themselves in a therapeutic non-restrictive environment where they are given self-regulated strategies.

The ‘LOFT’ therapeutic team will provide the link between therapeutic support/social skills development and the academic learning environment through addressing the personal, social and educational needs of learners, some of whom might otherwise be excluded from school.

Where needed we provide students with the correct therapeutic input that they may require, these include Music Therapy, Art Therapy, Play Therapy, Counselling and reflexology.
Religious Education and Collective Worship

Religious Education is part of every child’s curriculum and we follow the Luton Agreed Syllabus. Collective worship is an important feature of our school’s culture and takes place through circle time and assemblies.

We hope that all students will share in our acts of collective worship, which promote and encourage British Values and incorporate religions and beliefs from around the world and enjoy festivals and celebrations from a variety of cultures throughout the year.

Sex Education

We recognise that as our students develop into young adults, help and guidance on the many aspects of growing up are important. This is incorporated into Personal, Social and Health Education throughout the school and is offered to those students for whom the school and parents feel it is appropriate.

All students are supported in building their knowledge and understanding about their body changes, puberty and responsibility for themselves and others as they become adults.

As with all areas of the curriculum, sex education is fully differentiated to respond to the learning needs of individuals. In most cases lessons will be taught in mixed classes and within the context of the wider personal, social and health education curriculum. Some students, however, need very specific guidance and individual and small group work will take place as necessary.

In a rapidly changing world our students are taught about safe use of the internet, social media and mobile phones. Where appropriate we deal with difficult topics such as grooming, radicalisation, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation to ensure our students stay ‘safe’.

Parents will be informed when a specific element is about to be taught and will have the right to withdraw their child from particular sections of the sex education curriculum after full consultation. We always encourage parents to ask questions about any aspect of sex education that may be of concern so that, hopefully, all young people will be involved in all aspects relevant to their needs and circumstances.

Transition to Adult Life

All our work with students at Woodlands is designed to prepare them for life as an adults in the community and to build their skills and confidence to be able to make informed choices about the future.

From Year 9, until the students leave school, at the end of Year 11, 12 or 13, the local authority Transitions Team start working with students and their families to help plan for the transition to life beyond school. The Transitions Team includes a personal adviser, social worker and nurse.

Each autumn term we hold a Transitions fair where students and their families can meet some of the post school providers and begin fact finding about available services from both education and social care.
Behaviour

At Woodlands we believe that to enable students to acquire knowledge and skills, then we need to empower all our young people to develop a positive self-image.

Our fundamental approach is that learning and behaviour are closely linked. Learning affects behaviour and vice-versa. Teaching a pupil to learn will improve the way they behave. Equally, teaching a pupil to behave will improve the way they learn. In planning lessons, behaviour is as important a factor to be taken into consideration as any other.

Some students have difficulty in managing aspects of their at times. For some students we devise and implement Behaviour Management Plans which are drawn up in consultation with parents. These plans support staff working with a child to employ a consistent approach to supporting students with aspects of their behaviour. These plans may be shared with other agencies, with parental permission.

A copy of the school Behaviour policy is available on the school website.

Woodlands Complaints Procedure

At Woodlands, we like to be told about how we are doing, whether well or badly. If you have a concern or complaint we always try to deal with it helpfully and reasonably. If we need to, we try to put things right as quickly as possible. If you have a concern or complaint you need to take it up with the school itself. The Council would not usually get involved in a complaint about a school unless the school had completed its own procedures first.

A copy of the Woodlands Complaints Procedure is available on the school website.

This complaints procedure is for general complaints. The school must follow other procedures for complaints or appeals about the curriculum; special educational needs provision, exclusions and admissions. Staff disciplinary action, child protection issues or criminal investigation will also need to be handled differently. We shall tell you which is the right process when you discuss your concern with us.

Charging and Remissions

It is the policy at Woodlands school to provide free education for all pupils. However, the Governors also recognise that it would be impossible for the school to continue to organise such a varied and exciting curriculum for all the pupils without extra financial support.

The Governors can only charge for activities known as ‘optional extras’. Schools may charge for the following activities:

- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit;
- extended day services offered to pupils (for example -school clubs).
Voluntary Contributions

Nothing in legislation prevents a school governing body or local authority from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the governing body or head teacher should make this clear to parents at the outset. The governing body or head teacher must also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution.

It is important to note that no child should be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, or the school cannot fund it from some other source, then it must be cancelled. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit.

The Governors at Woodlands School have agreed that voluntary contributions may be requested for the following:

- Education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours.
- Transport provided in connection with an educational trip.
- Life Skills lessons involving pupils cooking and eating lunch. This will be the same cost as a school meal.

A copy of the Woodlands Charging and Remissions policy is available on the school website.

Pupil Premium

The pupil premium is a government initiative that targets extra funding at pupils from deprived backgrounds, which research shows underachieve compared to their non-deprived peers. The premium is provided in order to support these pupils in reaching their potential. It is in addition to any funding that the pupil may receive for their special educational needs.

The government have used pupils entitled to free school meals as an indicator for deprivation, and have deployed a fixed amount of funding to schools per pupil, based on the number of pupils registered for free school meals. Additional funding is also allocated to schools for any child that is ‘looked after’ or whose parent / carers are employed by HM Services.

The governing body of Woodlands School will ensure that the provision is made which secures the teaching and learning opportunities that meet the needs of all pupils. Our priority is to focus on ‘narrowing the gap’ for those pupils not on track to achieve the individual targets set of them. As part of the additional provision made for pupils who belong to vulnerable groups, the governors of the school will ensure that the needs of socially disadvantaged pupils are adequately assessed and addressed through pupil progress meetings, and planned and recorded intervention strategies.

Governors also recognise that not all pupils who receive free school meals will be socially disadvantaged. Similarly, not all pupils who are socially disadvantaged are registered or qualify for free school meals. The governors reserve the right to allocate the Pupil Premium funding to support any pupil, or groups of pupils the school has legitimately identified as being socially disadvantaged or vulnerable.

The range of provision will cover the following:

- Facilitating pupils access to education
- Facilitating pupils access to broader curriculum opportunities
- Additional teaching and learning opportunities
- Alternative support and intervention
- Facilitate individual pupil development.

Information about how the school’s pupil premium monies are spent can be found on the school website.
The Governing Body operate at a strategic level, leaving the head teacher and senior school leaders responsible and accountable to it for the operational day-to-day running of the school.

The Governors focus strongly on three core functions: setting the vision and strategic direction of school; holding the head teacher to account for its educational performance and ensuring financial resources are spent well.

Name: Ian Luckett  
Position:  
Chair of Governors  
Specific responsibility:  
Health and Safety  
Skills/Area of interest:  
Finance and Performance  
Employment: UK Power Network Services  
Role/position: Finance and Governance Manager  
I approach the role as if the school was my own business while spending my own money. My values are integrity, responsibility and trust. The school’s greatest assets are the staff.  
Hobbies: Golf and running.

Name: Emma French  
Position:  
Vice Chair of Governors  
Specific responsibility:  
Finance Monitoring and Safeguarding  
Employment: Healthcare Company  
Role/position: Computer Business Analyst  
I am married to Mike and we have 3 wonderful children. My eldest son, Matthew is a pupil at this school. As a governor I am in a great position to ask the questions parents would like to ask. I care about all the pupils in this school and want to understand the different challenges they face, whilst supporting the school in all the excellent work that it does.

Name: Debbie Foolkes  
Position:  
Head Teacher  
Previous Employment:  
1986—1993 Furzehill Middle School, Borehamwood.  
1994—2004 Royal National Institute for the Blind, Northwood  
2004—2013 Deputy Head Teacher, Richmond Hill School, Luton  
2013—present Head Teacher Woodlands Secondary School  
Hobbies: I love spending time with my family including our two grandchildren. I like walking, being outdoors, gardening and travelling. I try to go back to Yorkshire to see my parents as often as possible and I love the open space of the moors and dales. I also love cooking, baking and I have recently discovered jam making.

Name: Sandra Connolly  
Position:  
Deputy Head Teacher  
Chair of Curriculum Committee  
Skill/Areas of Interest:  
Supporting our young people to be as independent as possible and to secure the best possible post school placements  
Previous Employment:  
1992—1997 William Austin Junior School  
1997—1999 Putteridge Junior School  
2000—2008 Lady Zia Wernher School  
2008—2012 Deputy Head teacher St John’s School, Bedford  
2012—present Deputy Head teacher, Woodlands School  
Hobbies: I love spending time with family and friends. I enjoy swimming, walking, reading and socialising.
**Governing Body**

**Name:** Kerry Rees

**Position:** Co-opted Governor, member of Finance Committee

**Skills/Area of interest:** Post 16 and post 18 provision, pupils with multiple and complex needs, ensuring the ‘voice’ of the young people is heard.

**Employment:** Previously employed at Luton Council as the Transition Team Manager until November 2016. Now self employed and also working part-time as a Home Carer.

**Other initiatives:** Makaton Tutor, Crafter, Advocator.

**Name:** Kate Burchall

**Position:** Community Governor and member of Curriculum Committee

**Skills/Area of interest:** I have a strong commitment to ensuring that disabled children and young people are fully able to reach their individual potential and see the role of the Governor offering support and challenge to Woodlands to help them enable their students and parents/carers to make the most of their time at the school.

**Employment:** Service Manager for the Disabled Children’s Service at Luton Borough Council

**Other initiatives:** Luton Parent Carers’ Forum.

I’m married and have 2 children, one who is in her second year at Sheffield Hallam University and the other has just started his GCSE courses.

**Name:** Helen Rolfe

**Position:** Community Governor and member of Curriculum Committee

**Skills/Area of interest:** I am presently undertaking a degree in Applied Education. I have been fully supported by my colleagues and senior management during this time with opportunities made available to me in order to succeed in my quest to become a qualified teacher.

**Employment:** I have worked as TA at Woodlands since 2011

**Other initiatives:** I have been an active member of the scout movement for the past 9 years. I am a member of the district’s appointments committee and part of the interview panel for prospective adult members. I am very aware of the need to safer recruitment issues and how important it is to keep young people safe.

**Hobbies:** Family, walking, scouting, studying
Name: Leeroy Jenkins

Position: Community Governor

Skills/Area of interest: Networking, printing, marketing

Employment: Director of nextuplocal.com

Other initiatives: Sponsor of Luton Town and Indians Cricket Club, The Academy, Luton, Friends of Hightown, Panthers Netball Team, Luton Foodbank, Tropical FM.