

# **Blossom Lower School and Upper House**



## **POLICY FOR ADMISSIONS EYFS, Primary, Secondary School and Post 16**

**Frances O'Garro September 2025**

**Review Date September 2026**

## **POLICY FOR ADMISSIONS**

### **Aims**

- To provide children and parents with detailed information about Blossom House School, the assessment process and the education and therapies provided
- To ensure that Blossom House is an appropriate provision to meet a child's special educational needs
- To make each child's start a happy and successful one
- To begin a partnership with parents that will be lasting

### **Mission Statement**

At Blossom House, we conduct a comprehensive and thorough assessment process in order to establish if the school is a suitable educational placement to meet the needs of the individual child or young person being assessed. This includes meeting both educational, therapeutic and social needs to ensure the placement is appropriate for achieving best outcomes for the child/young person.

### **Admissions Criteria**

Please note, Blossom House School includes several different provisions, and each has its own remit and admissions criteria as follows:

#### **Blossom House Motspur Park & Euston Admission Criteria**

Children are accepted at Blossom House only after careful assessment, to ensure that we are the right provision.

- We assess children if there is a space available in the appropriate year group and if the child/young person is in early years, primary, Key stage 3 (years 7, 8 and 9) and post 16. We are currently unable to assess children who require places in years 10 or 11.

- All pupils at Blossom House School have a primary speech, language or communication impairment, with aspects of their cognitive profile within the average range, necessitating highly specialist teaching and integrated therapeutic provision to enable them to achieve the best possible outcomes
- Many also have additional co-occurring diagnoses such as SpLD (dyslexia).
- Approximately half of our children and young adults have an Autism diagnosis.
- Pupils' diagnoses are taken into consideration during the initial assessment process and when a pupil is placed at the school, through planning, teaching, therapeutic input and behaviour management.
- The school can be an appropriate and successful placement for pupils with a primary speech and language difficulty and additional diagnoses including autism if the pupil is able to cope with the following fundamental features of our learning environment:
  - Being able to follow an adapted version of the National Curriculum
  - Being able to learn within a small group setting and being able to process both academic instruction and social information at the same time
  - Coping with frequent transitions between classrooms
  - Coping with changes of staff for different lessons
  - Coping with changes to the school day e.g., trips and events
  - Coping with additional pupils joining a class
  - Coping with environmental stressors e.g., noise, heat, movement
  - Coping with the demands of following an adult's agenda
  - Responsive to teaching, therapy and behaviour interventions
  - Sufficient attention and listening skills and behaviour regulation to manage without the need of a 1:1.
- The child or young person does not require staff to be specifically trained in physical intervention, to support their behaviour needs

### **Blossom House Wimbledon Admissions Criteria**

- Difficulties with any/all areas of receptive & expressive language and social communication skills and for this to be the primary need of the pupil.
- Pupils who require a functional, community-based approach to learning that aligns with their individual learning profiles and supports their needs, rather than traditional classroom-based models.

- Pupils who thrive when undertaking vocational courses and supported work placements and are unable to access formal academic qualifications.
- Pupils who require intensive therapeutic support due to their co-occurring language, sensory and physical needs.
- Pupils who do not demonstrate physical behaviour which poses a risk to themselves and others. This is due to the high degree of community-based learning.
- Pupils who are able to manage unstructured time and able to transition between different settings in their local community e.g., travelling on public transport and visiting community leisure facilities.

### **Blossom House Post 16 Admissions Criteria**

Blossom House 16-19 caters for students with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) and has three distinct pathways catering for different student profiles. All pathways are three-year provisions.

#### **College Link**

College Link students attend a local Further Education college and complete a full-time course there. They then attend Blossom House for therapeutic sessions as per their EHCP requirements, as well as English and Maths if required.

The three local colleges we link with are NESCOL College, Merton College and Kingston College (Creative Industries Centre campus only). Each college has onsite College Link Mentors employed by Blossom House to support students in accessing their college courses. Our Speech and Language Therapy team also visit the colleges on a regular basis to support and observe the students there.

Students must have a level of independence to access the provision, as the below may be required:

- Travelling independently by public transport to/from college
- Travelling independently by public transport between college campus and Blossom House Motspur Park site if required

- Working at times without direct support from College Link Mentors (CLMs) within a mainstream environment
- Able to demonstrate academic potential to progress beyond level 1 & 2 courses at college, to enable progression across the three-year provision
- Working at Level 1 or above (equivalent of GCSEs grade 1-3) in English and/or Maths
- Have knowledge and understanding of their diagnoses
- Willingness to engage with strategies and support that will allow them to work towards self-advocacy

## **Employability**

The Employability pathway is a provision for students who have achieved at Entry Level but who would not be able to engage independently with college courses. This is a five-day-a-week provision and the aim of the curriculum is to support students develop their skills, experience and understanding so that when they graduate, they are prepared for the world of work.

In the first year of the programme, students engage with carefully managed work placements within the school, at our local café Blossom & Brew, and at two local charities - Voices of Hope and The Dons Trust. In the second and third years of the provision, students engage with work placements further afield and that align with their interests or potential next steps. Students timetables incorporate English and Maths, and a Work Skills BTEC qualification, as well as other qualifications relevant to the world of work. They receive group sessions of Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Arts Therapy, in addition to one-to-one therapy sessions if required.

Students on the Employability provision must:

- Have the capacity to work towards independent travel by the third year of the provision
- Have achieved already at Entry Level and demonstrate the capacity to work towards Level 1 qualifications or beyond
- Have interest and capacity of working towards future employment

- Be able to interact safely with the general public

### **GOALS (Growth in Occupation, Ambition in Life Skills)**

Students enrolled on this pathway have access to a five day a week educational program at Blossom House School. Pupils are given opportunities to develop a range of independent living skills through practical experiences and therapeutic input. This pathway builds skills needed for keeping healthy, domestic independence, socialising independently, pursuing interests and hobbies, engaging with the local community and travelling more independently. Pupils are supported to become more aware of the world around them, and to engage with it with increased confidence and independence. The programme's key focus on independence includes thinking about useful occupation. Students achieve an OCR Entry Level Certificate in Life & Living Skills. All classroom-based learning links to supporting functional skills development and will be completed at a pace suitable for each child. Our pupils will develop their skills over three years to support them to move on to further educational opportunities, or Post 19 provisions.

Candidates for the GOALS pathway may still need support in:

- Communicating with independence
- Understanding their diagnoses and their effects
- Managing unstructured times
- Engaging with literacy and numeracy tasks
- Regulating emotional responses and sensory needs
- Accessing the community safely
- Managing unstructured times independently

### **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Admissions Criteria**

#### **EYFS Overview**

The EYFS at Blossom House Lower School is currently inclusive of Reception and Year One children. \*

Admission to the EYFS provision is dependent on several factors, and each child's needs will be considered individually. However, in general a child entering the EYFS would be expected to:

- Demonstrate some ability to jointly attend with an adult to a structured activity
- Be able to learn as part of a group.
- Be able to follow simple instructions.
- Demonstrate communicative intent.
- Demonstrate some examples of functional, expressive communication e.g. verbal or non-verbal communication, used consistently and with purpose
- Show some problem-solving abilities e.g. puzzles, construction, tasks of daily living
- Show some signs of non-verbal cognitive strengths
- Be able to transition between activities with universal supports e.g. visual supports, verbal countdowns
- Be able to access and participate in the learning environment without the additional support of a dedicated 1:1 adult

Transition into the Blossom House Lower School Primary section from the EYFS is not automatic. Each child's needs and progress will be considered in line with the main school admissions criteria and consultation with the Primary Admissions team will take place when the child is in Year One (during the Autumn Term) to ensure that they will be able to access the step-up in demands of the Blossom House Lower School Primary section. Additional assessments, for example from an Educational Psychologist, may also be requested. Progression will be subject to the annual review process and parents will be kept informed of any multi-disciplinary discussions and decisions that take place that would impact a child's progression from the EYFS to the Primary section of Blossom House Lower School.

*\*Previous academic years have included a Nursery cohort; a decision of whether to offer a Nursery provision is taken each academic year by the EYFS Phase Leads and is dependent on staffing, environmental factors and presence of suitable cohort.*

## **Adapted Curriculum Overview**

The Adapted Curriculum is a specialist setting for children with complex social communication needs.

The Adapted Curriculum at Blossom House Lower School consists of range of classes from Early Years, up to and including year 6. The Adapted Curriculum Early Years Class is a mixed class of Nursery and Reception Children (some Year One pupils may remain in the Early Years Adapted Curriculum class at the discretion of the transdisciplinary team, if it is felt that they would benefit from additional time in this setting). Pupils of Year One age and upwards are taught within one of the other six classes within the Adapted Curriculum. Classes are typically grouped by the sensory profiles, communication and interaction strengths and needs, behaviour and learning styles of the pupils and are therefore not always the same age as their peers. However, pupils within each class are usually within a couple of school years of one another. The environment of the Adapted Curriculum is specifically designed to be low-arousal and highly therapeutic. The approach supports the development of spontaneous functional communication as a primary aim.

Admission to the Adapted Curriculum is dependent on a number of factors, and each child's needs will be considered individually. However, in general a child entering the AC would:

- Require a slower paced timetable of lessons and activities, with fewer transitions, and a very flexible approach to access sensory regulation activities across the curriculum.
- Need a high level of support to develop a consistent, functional, communication method e.g., verbal or non-verbal
- Require ongoing support to demonstrate their skills consistently to others e.g., not always able to respond to direct requests and/or questions to express their wants and needs.
- Present with sensory processing needs and/or seek significant amounts of sensory stimulation
- Be self-directed in their attention, and find it extremely challenging to jointly attend to an activity with an adult



- Present with emotional regulation needs, often showing high dependency on communication partners to calm, organise and/or alert them within different situations

Progression through the Adapted Curriculum's classes is not automatic and will be subject to the statutory annual review process. Parents will be kept informed of any multi-disciplinary discussions and decisions that take place that would impact on their child's continued progression through the Adapted Curriculum.

### **The Admissions Process**

Children are admitted to the EYFS, AC, Primary, Secondary or P16 at any time during the school year should the school be an appropriate educational placement, a place is available and funding has been agreed.

When a parent telephones the school to find out about Blossom House School, they will usually speak to the Admissions officer who will enquire about specific information such as:

- Date of Birth
- Diagnosis
- Local Authority and EHCP status
- Current School Placement

Based on this information, and if there is a place available in the school, parents would then be invited to complete a questionnaire for their child and send the relevant paperwork for their child. This usually includes the EHCP and any supporting reports (including Speech and Language Therapy (SLT), Occupational Therapy (OT), Paediatrician/Neurodevelopmental assessments, Educational Psychologist (EP) assessments and current school reports) to provide a full picture of their child and his/her special educational needs.

These reports would then be reviewed by the Admissions Lead Speech and Language Therapist and/or a senior Speech and Language Therapist member of the Admissions Team. Based on this information, parents would either be:

- Given an appointment to visit the school with their child (an initial assessment).
- Informed that more information is required to help best understand their child's profile so the right next steps can be identified (e.g. additional reports, a discussion on the phone with parents or with the current school -with parental permission) or contacted via email to explain why the school would not be able to meet needs

### **The Initial Assessment**

At the initial interview, the parents will usually be seen by the Admissions Team and the child will be seen by a senior Speech and Language Therapist. For EYs, the parents and child may be seen in the same room if required. The parents will discuss their child's Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) profile in more depth (including a case history) with a member of the Admissions Team and the child will engage in informal, play-based assessment with a senior Speech and Language Therapist.

At the interview, there is an opportunity to ask questions and engage in discussion about the school's possible suitability for the child should the parents wish to pursue Blossom House as an option for their child.

If the school is not deemed appropriate, the Admissions Lead will, where appropriate signpost alternative next steps or provisions to consider if possible. If it is not entirely clear either way, additional information at this point may be sought from the current school or key professionals (with parental permission). A follow up phone call will then be made to parents to explain the outcome.

### **A School Trial**

If the child is a possible candidate for the school, they will be offered a more detailed assessment at the school (school trial). The timeframes offered will depend upon the age of the child and will be planned in conjunction with parents prior to the assessment.

Multiple visits to the school may be necessary if the child requires additional time to settle and demonstrate their strengths and needs to the admissions team.

The assessment visits are booked in with the Admissions Officer/Administrator.

During their in-depth assessment, the child will spend time in the classroom with his/her appropriate peer group and is supported to do this by a member of the Admissions Team. Informal assessment and observation will be carried out, as well as monitoring of the child's ability to follow a typical morning/day within the school. Formalised assessments which will include Speech and Language and may also include maths and literacy will be carried out if required. Feedback from all members of staff working with the child is crucial and is considered prior to deciding as to whether Blossom House School can meet the child's needs.

Further assessment of a child's cognitive profile may be recommended to parents/carers to determine the exact nature of the child's difficulties.

### **Assessment Outcomes**

Following the assessment period, parents will receive an outcome regarding our decision, usually by telephone.

A written outcome letter will be sent explaining the outcome of the assessment. If a place is offered, parents are requested to complete a written form to either accept or decline the offer within two weeks of receiving their placement offer. The offer period will be stated in the outcome letter and is usually 6 months.

If requested by parents/carers prior to the child's assessment, an assessment report will be compiled, detailing the assessment visit and the outcomes of the assessment providing evidence for this. There will be a fee of £750 for this service if it includes formalised assessments (e.g. Speech and Language Therapy Assessment(s) or £450 without the assessment.

Offers made are subject to the Statutory Review Process. This means that a child's place will be reviewed after their first term at the school, at their annual review and at interim reviews when required. This is in accordance with the statutory annual review

process (SEND Code of Practice pg. 194) and is to ensure that the placement remains appropriate in relation to the following criteria:

- To ensure that the school continues to be suitable for their age, ability, aptitude and special educational needs outlined in the EHCP
- Their attendance is not incompatible with the efficient education of other children in the school or the efficient use of resources.

Parents will then need to inform the LA that an offer has been made and that they would like to pursue this. Parents are asked to inform the school of any decisions made by their LA.

Once the child's place has been confirmed, parents are asked to keep in close contact with the school to ensure that their child's transition to Blossom House School is successful.

### **Transitioning into the school**

After Funding is Finalised, Blossom House tailor a comprehensive transition package which is individualised for each pupil to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible. The key steps include:

<b>Step 1</b>	<b>Initial Phone Call</b>  Families will be contacted usually by phone by a member of the admissions team to verbally outline the next steps for the transition process
<b>Step 2</b>	The Admissions Officer/ Administrator will send them a ' <b>New Child Pack</b> ' which contains key information including: Letter confirming the pupil's placement, stating that this is subject to regular review. Forms for parents/guardians to complete Key Policies Key Information e.g. uniform, lunch requirements, PE kit. Letter stating who the pupil's Specialist Advisor is, as well as outlining what the role is and what the main points of contact are for the parents.

<b>Step 3</b>	<b>Administration including putting the new joiner on roll</b> The Admissions Officer, IT & Admin team will set up the relevant documentation for the pupil, such as a personal Bromcom profile.
<b>Step 4</b>	<b>In House-Team Planning</b> Key Staff are notified when a new pupil's placement is confirmed. The following is then put into action: relevant information regarding a new pupil is disseminated to key staff as well as any significant points to note regarding the pupil's well-being and integration into the school.
<b>Step 5</b> Please refer to enhanced transition section	<b>Transition Meeting with Parent/Carer or Home Visit</b> <i>For pupils entering the Foundation Stage:</i> A short home visit will be organised prior to their start date. The Foundation Stage Manager and Early Years Teacher or Speech and Language Therapist will attend this.  <i>For pupils in Key Stage 1 and above:</i> Parents/carers will be invited to attend a transition meeting with the admissions team and the Specialist Advisor (SENcO), This is an opportunity to ensure that the school have all of the most up to date information from parents regarding their child as well as relevant background information to support the transition process. During this meeting, a transition plan will be finalised including- identifying the frequency and duration of transition sessions required, specific transition support/considerations required and whether specific services may need to be involved such as the Family Support Team or Pastoral Team.
<b>Step 6</b>	<b>School Team Meeting</b> Once a pupil's place has been confirmed, the Assessment Team will pass on this information to the Specialist Advisor, and any key points to note such as individual needs, family circumstances, previous school experiences. The Specialist Advisor then disseminates this information, as well as key EHCP requirements, to the relevant members of staff
<b>Step 7</b>	<b>Pupil Information-Transition Packs</b> Pupils are sent a Transition Pack that is relevant to their age and phase. Transition packs contain key information such as:

	<p>Class name, photos of key staff and pupils in the group</p> <p>Structure of the day including visual timetable</p> <p>How we can help you</p> <p>Photos of the school building</p> <p>School rules and behaviour chart</p> <p>The <i>Early Years pack</i> also contains photos of the staff, a social story for the children, a letter for the parents and an 'All about me' EYFS pack.</p>
<b>Step 8</b>	<p><b>Transition Sessions</b></p> <p>The exact nature, frequency and duration of transition sessions will depend upon individual circumstances and can include but is not exclusive to:</p> <p>Familiarisation or taster sessions where the new joiner will spend time in their new class group</p> <p>If there has been a significant gap between the pupil's three-day assessment in school and the placement being confirmed, additional transition days will be arranged. This may also be put in place for those pupils where it is apparent that s/he will require more gradual integration to reduce anxiety levels.</p> <p>In the summer term new pupils are invited to a whole school Transition Day where they will meet their new group leader and other relevant staff, as well as their peers and get to know the layout of the building</p> <p>For children joining year 7- pupils are invited to a series of after school social skills sessions</p>

### Enhanced Transition Provision

In addition to the above package, we provide enhanced transition opportunities for pupils who have been impacted by trauma or loss to assist in making the transition as smooth as possible. This may be particularly relevant for pupils who are adopted, looked after, previously looked after, under an SGO or for students who have experienced trauma.

The support is based on the following key principles:

- Good preparation to help alleviate transfer difficulties
- To reduce anxiety levels for the pupil as well as the family

The provision offered includes, but is not exclusive to, the following:

*The approach below is based on the Attachment-Aware and Trauma-Responsive Transition guidelines published by 'Touch Base.'*

<b>Transition Meeting with Parent/Carer (Step 5 above)</b>	At the transition Meeting, a specific meeting will be offered for looked after/previously looked after children or for children who have been impacted by trauma or loss as follows:
<b>Parent Meeting with Adoption Support Counsellor</b>	<p>An Adoption Support Counsellor and Specialist Advisor offer a space for the parent/carers to reflect on the child's past experience. The aim of the meeting is to gather more detail on the child's relevant history. This is to ensure all relevant information is gathered in relation to a child's background and early life experiences and the implications that this has for their educational journey and transition.</p> <p>help to identify what support has been received and what might be helpful in the future for both pupil and family. This could include Life Story Work, family or individual therapy, external support, and sibling support groups.</p> <p>inform the transition plan as appropriate and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Referrals to in house Arts Therapy Team</li> <li>Linking up with external services already in place e.g.</li> <li>Referral to in house family support team</li> </ul>
<b>Direct Pupil support</b>	<p>To include but not exclusive to:</p> <p>Offering additional transition sessions and visits to create familiarity, increase identity with new school provision and reduce the 'unknown' &amp; increasing familiarity with the building and the staff/pupils</p> <p>Creating a memory bank e.g., photos, pictures, objects from previous school</p> <p>Creating a physical secure base- this can include maps, photos of key learning spaces and may involve identifying a 'consistent base'</p> <p>Creating an emotional secure base- identifying a key adult or a</p>

	<p><b>‘TEAM’</b></p> <p>Transitional Objects- pupils may require a transitional object to help to provide a sense of security and familiarity within the new school setting</p> <p>A carefully planned ‘after care’ approach to ensure contact with key adults from a pupil’s previous school through visits, letters etc</p>
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### **Visiting Children- Wellbeing & Safeguarding**

Parents and carers should be aware that whilst visiting children are onsite at Blossom House school, the school’s policies and procedures will be followed in the event of any notable incident. This could be a behaviour event, a safeguarding event or medical event, as an example.

Parents and carers should read the policies on the school website to ensure they are familiar with the school’s processes around these events. We have a Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, a Working together with Parents Policy and a behaviour policy amongst others.

In the event of a Safeguarding incident that meets the harms threshold, the local authority will be contacted in line with our policy. If the safeguarding event does not meet the harms threshold, but staff feel that the event is significant enough that it should be documented on the child’s Safeguarding log, this will be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the school where the child is on roll.

### **Oversubscription**

If Blossom House School is oversubscribed, details will be kept and parents will be encouraged to keep in touch with the school if they continue to require a place.

**(cf Equality Act 2010 Part 6: Education)**



**For information relating to pupils who require an adapted curriculum to support their transition, please refer to the Holistic Curriculum Policy ('Adapted Curriculum and Transitional Pupils' section).**