

The Birches Specialist Support School Admissions Policy



Date Reviewed: **January 2022**

Reviewed by: **Farzana Shah, Deputy Headteacher.**

Signed:
On behalf of the Governors

Signed:
Head teacher

Date of next review: **January 2023**

THE BIRCHES SCHOOL SPECIALIST SUPPORT SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The Birches Specialist Support School caters for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Children who come to The Birches have a variety of cognition and learning difficulties including:

- Profound and multiple learning difficulties
- Complex medical needs alongside cognition and learning difficulties
- Speech language and communication needs alongside cognition and learning difficulties
- Autism or social communication needs alongside cognition and learning difficulties
- Pupils who have challenging behaviour as part of their cognition and learning difficulties

We are one of six Specialist Support Schools in Manchester and as such take children mostly from central areas of the district.

REFERRAL PROCESS

Pupils are referred to The Birches by Manchester Local Authority (LA). They consult with us on the suitability of our provision to meet the needs of individual pupils. They do this by sending us the child's EHCP and supporting paperwork. These papers are currently reviewed by Angela Lucy, HLTA, who summarises their needs and liaises with the Head Teacher to formulate a response to the LA. This response will say whether or not we feel placement at our school would be appropriate and whether or not we have an available place.

The Local Authority keeps our waiting list. We keep an electronic record of all consultations, summaries and responses.

Children may come to The Birches from:

- Private nurseries or home if their SEND has been identified early and an EHCP is in place. The Rodney House

Outreach Service for the Early Years (RHOSEY) team support these children and families through the EHCP process.

- Mainstream Schools where it has been agreed that they can no longer meet their needs. These children will have an EHCP in place and families will have been supported through the process by the school's SENCO.
- Special Schools in other Local Authorities where the child has moved to Manchester. These children may have an EHCP or a Statement of Special Educational Need depending on their Local Authority.
- From abroad. These children will have been seen by an Educational Caseworker who has recommended a Special School setting due to their presenting cognition and learning difficulties.
- Occasionally a pupil is admitted for assessment purposes or is out of education.

Parent/Carers are usually given the opportunity to visit Manchester's Special schools prior to agreement about their child's placement. Parents are then encouraged by the Local Authority to state a preference of provision.

We usually hold weekly tours of the school in which we show Parents our provision and explain how children learn in our school. We aim to keep these tours small so that we can tailor them to the parents and prospective pupils' needs. We aim to answer any questions and to support parents to make an appropriate choice.

During the Coronavirus Pandemic school tours have not been permitted. In lieu of a school tour an "All About The Birches" information booklet has been produced. This is sent to Parents of prospective pupils, alongside a curriculum information leaflet and a link to the video school tour on the school's website. Angela Lucy, HLTA, will then be available for any further questions or to speak with Parents individually.

The majority of pupils have an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) on admission to The Birches. Those children who do not have an EHCP may have a Statement from another Authority or may be children who have arrived from abroad but who show evidence of having cognition and learning difficulties. In these cases we will begin the EHCP assessment process on admission to school.

ADMISSIONS

Admission to The Birches School is determined by the Local Authority in consultation with Parents/Carers and the Head Teacher.

For further information regarding the Local Authorities advice and guidance on school admissions please use the following link.

http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/705/school_admissions/6589/applying_for_a_primary_school_place/4

There is a yearly allocation meeting with the LA and other Special Schools where the names of new pupils are finalised.

Following allocation of pupils Angela Lucy as Admissions Co-ordinator will endeavour to visit all pupils in their current setting. This is to gain an update on the Pupil's needs and also to inform our planning of classes for the coming year. We endeavour to ensure that children are placed into the most appropriate learning group on admission to school, taking into account cognitive level and learning style.

For some families, in particular those who may need extra support at Early Help, or those children who are transitioning from home, a Home Visit may be appropriate. Home visits will be conducted by the admissions co-ordinator or the Cohort lead and Parent Support Adviser.

During the Coronavirus Pandemic individual observation visits and home visits have not been possible. In lieu of these, information about new pupils has been gathered both via SENCOs of feeder settings and information directly from parents. Angela Lucy, HLTA, has been responsible for collating information from SENCOs with

Cohort leads and receiving teachers taking responsibility for liaising with Parents.

We aim to make transition to the Birches as smooth as possible by identifying needs and providing support as early as possible.

Policy Information and Review

Review frequency: annually

Date	Version	Changes made	By whom (name and role)	Due date for next review	Reviewed & Ratified by Govs. (sign and date)
Spring 2016	3	V3 to v4	SLT	Spring 2018	
25/04/18	4	Change HT to HLTA for parent/carer visits to school	Angela Lucy HLTA	April 2019	
July 2018		<i>06/07/18 The Policy Ratification Committee has met and requested that all current statutory policies are ratified for one year only whilst an appropriate cycle of ratification is implemented. Policies will then be approved for their full length of term either through the Full Governing Body or one of the committees following an agreed plan of ratification.</i>			
October 2018	4	Dates changed for ratification purposes – policy is the same just the dates altered	F Shah DHT	October 2019	

January 2020	5	Policy rewritten by Angela Lucy, Admissions Co-ordinator to reflect current practice.	Angela Lucy HLTA	January 2021	
January 2021	6	Policy altered by Angela Lucy, Admissions Co-ordinator in the light of the Coronavirus Pandemic to ensure that Policy reflects current practice.	Angela Lucy HLTA	January 2022	
January 2022	6	Policy proof read and checked – remains the same.	Farzana Shah Deputy Head	January 2023	