



SEND Annual Statement

Date Published	June 2025
Version	2
Approved Date	July 2025
Review Cycle	Annual
Review Date	July 2026

An academy within:



Learning together, to be the best we can be



1. Context

- 1.1. The Willows School is a special school which offers provision for children and young people (aged 5-19) with Moderate Learning Difficulties, ASC and other attached difficulties. Some pupils have additional sensory and / or communication needs. Some pupils have specific medical needs and others may require support for their Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH).
- 1.2. Our strap line: I can
- 1.3. We believe:
 - Every young person is a unique individual with their own strengths and skills
 - Everyone has the right to be listened to and respected
 - Everyone has the right to be included
 - Everyone should be encouraged and given the opportunity to reach their full potential

2. Admissions

- 2.1. As per the school's Admissions Policy, all pupils who attend The Willows School will have had a Statutory Assessment of their SEND by the Local Authority. Following this assessment the school will be consulted as part of the Education, Health and Care (EHC) planning process, if it is agreed at panel that it can meet the needs of the child.
- 2.2. Prospective parents/carers are encouraged to visit the school as part of the preparation of their contribution towards their child's special needs assessment.
- 2.3. Subsequent to The Willows School being named in the child's (EHCP) and the school receiving a copy of this, the school will arrange a home visit to collate the schools Admissions Information.
- 2.4. The child will start their transition into school as soon as is practically possible following the Admissions information being completed and transport arrangements being made.

3. Areas Served

- 3.1. Children are admitted from the whole of the Rotherham area. Currently some children and young people living in Sheffield, Nottinghamshire, Doncaster and Barnsley attend The Willows School where the journey would be shorter than that to similar schools in i.e. Sheffield.



4. Pupil Numbers

- 4.1. The school has planned places of 150 pupils. Currently it has 191 pupils on roll (May 2025).

5. School Organisation

- 5.1. For teaching and organisational purposes, the school has four areas:

- Lower School – Year 3,4,5,6,7 (Key stage 2)
- Middle School – Years 7, 8, 9 (key stage 3)
- Upper School – Years 10, 11 (Key Stage 4)
- Post-16 – Years 12,13,14 (Key Stage 5)

- 5.2. Staff work in departmental teams. Pupils are in class groups of 10-14 key stage 2 and 10-12 key stage 3 and 4 children generally. On a day-to-day basis parents/carers and other professionals link with the teacher and educational support staff responsible for a child's base group.

- 5.3. The Heads of department are accountable for day-to-day matters within their departments. The first point of contact for financial and administrative matters is the School Business Manager.

- 5.4. The Willows School is on one site however we rent space from the Miners welfare centre in Thurcroft.

6. Staffing Structure

- 6.1. Please note that these numbers were correct at the date of publication.

- 6.2. Senior Leadership

Level	Number	Full Time Equivalent
Headteacher	1	1
Deputy Head	1	1
Senior leaders, Head of departments	3	3

- 6.3. Teaching

Level	Number	Full Time Equivalent
Teachers	15	14



Unqualified teacher	1	1
---------------------	---	---

6.4. Teaching Support

Level	Number	Full Time Equivalent
HLTA	13	11.6
Band D and E	43	29.54

6.5. Administration

Level	Number	Full Time Equivalent
Band H	1	0.88
Band E	5	3.38

7. Pedagogy, Curriculum and Assessment

- 7.1. We understand that the priority outcomes for individual children and young people will be different dependent upon their needs, learning styles and aspirations.
- 7.2. In order to identify this starting point an individual is assessed academically and holistically within the first 6 weeks. A baseline record sheet is then produced and fed into the school assessment system.

8. Curriculum Content

- 8.1. At The Willows School we provide a formal setting for learning modelled on a mainstream model. The curriculum encompasses life skills and prepares pupils for their next steps by valuing childhood and raising aspirations for the world of work and beyond.
- 8.2. We jointly work with families and other professionals to increase the opportunities that our pupils/young people are given.
- 8.3. We promote the moral, cultural, spiritual, mental and physical development of pupils and prepare them for the opportunities and responsibilities of later life. We also acknowledge the importance of developing life skills and that fun and enjoyment is essential to well-being, emotional development and a passion for learning.
- 8.4. In addition, pupils will require a range of opportunities to develop key learning skills. They will need to acquire, develop, practise, apply and extend these skills in a range of contexts across the curriculum. Without the opportunity to practise and apply such skills our pupils would be unable to access their curriculum and participate in meaningful learning experiences.



8.5. These skills include:

- A range of communication skills.
- Physical development (at the level of the child developmentally)
- Personal learning and thinking skills
- Personal, social, emotional development (including self-help, independence, hygiene, self-esteem, working with others, readiness to learn and feeding skills)
- Sensory awareness (making sense of auditory, taste, tactile, visual and olfactory experiences).
- A rich and varied curriculum is offered to all pupils. The whole curriculum can be linked to the National Curriculum programmes of study which have been modified to meet individual needs. Communication and personal, social and emotional development are core areas of the school's curriculum.

8.6. Specialist resources found within the sites:

- Staff with a range of relevant experience and training in SEND.
- Horticulture gardens, pond and sensory outdoor spaces.
- Green screen technology and film making equipment
- Computers in every classroom including C-Touch boards.
- School dinners prepared on-site catering for individual dietary requirements where required.
- Grounds for forest school curriculum.
- Access to 4 School Minibuses/people carrier.
- Specialist Design and Technology room.
- Specialist Food Technology room.
- Specialist Science Lab.
- Specialist Outdoor classroom.
- Vocational building.
- Life skills bungalow.
- Post 16 area.
- Fully resourced gym.

8.7. Access to a broad and balanced curriculum, which includes the National Curriculum, adapted to an appropriate level. The National Curriculum does not constitute the whole of their curriculum – individual pupils will have additional priorities including communication, independence, personal / social identified within their Education, Health and Care Plan and Pupil Premium targets.

8.8. Pupils will be expected to develop understanding of concepts, acquire knowledge and learn skills. They will be provided with opportunities to consolidate, reinforce and transfer knowledge, skills and understanding in preparation for the next stage of learning.

8.9. Unaided communication does not require additional equipment; People use many unaided methods to communicate, for example body language, pointing, eye pointing, facial expressions, vocalisations, gestures, and basic signing (Makaton).



- 8.10. Pupils have access to an NHS speech and language therapist whilst in The Willows School; access to which is done through the NHS referral system in co-operation with the family and the professionals educating the child.

9. Staff Training and Development

- 9.1. All staff have access to a programme of Continuing Professional Development which includes mandatory training in safeguarding, teaching and learning strategies and Team Teach positive behaviour management. Where applicable, staff are supported to access the National Professional qualifications. In addition, all staff have annual appraisals which identify bespoke training needs. Training needs are a key area of the School Improvement Plan, and the school is committed to staff development. The school has a number of staff who have specialist knowledge in specific areas of learning or needs and these staff share best practice and lead elements of the school's work.

- 9.2. Examples of Specialist knowledge and training include:

- Multi-sensory
- Intensive interaction
- Key worker training
- Sleep training
- Attachment and Trauma Informed Schools
- Theraplay
- Picture Exchange Communication (PECS)
- Sex and Relationships Education (SRE)
- Child Protection
- Mental Health Lead
- Medication administration
- Behaviour Management
- National Professional Qualification in (Middle/Senior/Headteacher) Leadership
- OTAP Teaching and TA qualifications.

10. Meeting Individual Need

- 10.1. Teachers and support staff receive training and support to ensure that they are able to meet individual needs within their classroom through Quality First Teaching and personalised learning approaches. However, occasionally these approaches will not be sufficient to address barriers to learning any progress may be affected.

11. Pupil Voice

- 11.1. The term pupil voice refers to a way of listening to the views of children and



young people and/or involving them in decision making; at The Willows School we promote the use of modified and adapted devices to ensure ALL pupils are provided with the opportunity to express opinions and to communicate, in all aspects of their own lives.

11.2. The aim of The Willows School is to ensure that all pupils are given equal opportunities to communicate, in all areas of their school day, that all pupils have access to the school curriculum at the level appropriate to their development and taking into account their individual communication needs and preferences, where appropriate they will have access to AAC resources and teaching approaches.

11.3. We aim to provide a communication rich environment where all modes of communication are equally valued and pupils are given opportunities to make choices, initiate conversations, and express their own ideas and opinions. Staff are trained to be confident using a wide range of communication strategies that are often unique and personalised to the child.

12. Partnerships With Other Schools

12.1. As a member of a Multi Academy Trust the school has positive partnerships with the other schools within the Trust which enables sharing of practice, knowledge and resources.

12.2. We have strong links with other local and regional schools through our Sporting partnerships. We also play a key role within the Rotherham Learning Community alongside our local mainstream partner schools. We partner with our local teaching school Learners First and also support Rotherham MBC work through ROSIS.

13. Partnerships With Families

13.1. We believe that pupil's families are key partners in the education of their child. The views of families are actively sought and respected in order that a trusting partnership can be developed in the best interest of the child. Families, with their child, make a significant contribution to the Individual flight path. The Heads of Department support and facilitate this through the Annual Review held annually but reviewed each term at the family meetings. The school believes that these meetings form the foundation of the personalised programme for each child and therefore family meetings are arranged to suit the parents /carers and may take place during a home visit if this is requested.

13.2. In addition, contact is maintained with families through apps and telephone calls / emails.



- 13.3. Wider school information is sent to families via a text message service or the school website. The Willows Facebook pages also contain family friendly information. It is the policy of this school to actively engage with families and involve them as much as is practical in the life and work of the school and the teaching and learning of their child.

14. Collaboration With Other Agencies

- 14.1. Collaboration with the families is viewed as essential. Families who are involved in the decision-making process are more able to extend use of the school strategies into the child's home and social networks.
- 14.2. Collaboration with other agencies (including SALT) may be required where the scope and experience of the school staff is limited; this collaboration may take the form of a referral for a particular service or an outside agency visiting school to provide support and training.
- 14.3. Ensure that all children that are looked after (CLA) are supported through LAC reviews and ePEP's as well as maintaining open channels of communication through the designated LAC teacher and Virtual schools and social care.

15. Assessment, Recording and Reporting

- 15.1. Assessment, recording, and reporting will:

- Provide all pupils with opportunities to show what they know, understand and can do and involve them in self-assessment.
- Help pupils to understand what they can do and what they need to develop.
- Recognise that the National Curriculum does not encompass all learning and ensure that the curriculum offer meets needs.
- Advance the learning process.
- Enable Teachers to plan more effectively.
- Support parents to be involved in their children's learning.
- Provide schools with information to evaluate work and set appropriate targets.
- Undertake tasks using specific skills and transfer these in new situations.

- 15.2. For pupils and young people at The Willows School, our key aims are that they:

- Can achieve recognised accreditation based upon their interests and aspirations
- Can be self-regulating learners who challenge themselves in an immersive



contextualised environment.

- Can make informed choices and influence their own life beyond 16
- To enter further education and / or employment with self-belief and aspirations.

16. Transport Arrangements

- 16.1. Every pupil has offered transport to and from school. The relevant Local Education Authority in which the child lives makes transport arrangements. In practice pupils come to school by variety of means, by taxis and minibuses and independently. Generally, an escort is provided on home-school transport. Some parents/carers choose to bring and collect their child from school.

17. Complaints

- 17.1. The Willows School offers a high standard of education and support to its pupils. We welcome comments and suggestions about the education and support provided to our children and young people.
- 17.2. All complaints are seen as an opportunity for the school to evaluate its performance. Complaints can about any aspect of the services provided at the school. In the first instance contact is with the child's teacher, unless a parent/carer feels that it should be with the Headteacher or Senior Leadership Team.
- 17.3. Pupils are encouraged to speak to any member of staff regarding any concern or complaint. A specific team of staff are designated to deal with pupils complaints and every pupil has a nominated 'safe person' in which they can speak to. The pupils can also make their complaint known to the school council whereby it will be dealt with by the Headteacher.
- 17.4. Complaints are acknowledged promptly, usually in writing and the appropriate person in school will undertake a full investigation. Generally, parents should expect a response within 5 working days. If school staff are unable to resolve the issue, then parents are urged to contact the Chief Executive Officer using the Trust Complaints Policy found on the school website.

18. Transition

- 18.1. As the majority of our pupils are grouped by age this means most admissions are during the September of a new school year. In order to ease the anxiety



of transition, the school has a transition programme each year which allows any pupils moving into a new classroom or new teacher to spend time in this new class before the long summer break. Transition meetings are held between staff and families where they can meet the new teacher and share any information before the Summer Break.

- 18.2. The school has planned activities for transition year groups which take place over the year to promote familiarity with new staff, routines or areas of school. In Year 11 students and families are supported to prepare for the transition at 16 onto their next placement whether that be The Willows Post 16, College or another setting. Person Centred Planning processes are utilised to gather the aspirations and views of students and parents. Bespoke learning programmes are then developed to support the student as they move towards these goals. The school has a dedicated Transitions lead.

19. Further Information

- 19.1. Rotherham have produced a Local Offer which details services, resources, support, provision and activities for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. This can be found at www.rotherhamsendlocaloffer.org/
- 19.2. Rotherham SENDIASS can also give you:
- Information and advice about SEN and disability support and provision
 - More information about local services, organisations, and resources which might help
 - Advice and support to get more involved. This can be found at <http://www.rotherhamsendiass.org.uk>
- 19.3. Rotherham parents and carers forum are a group run by parents for parents and their website can be accessed at <http://www.rpcf.co.uk/>