



Crowdys Hill
School

Crowdys
Hill School

'Learning for Life'

Welcome to Crowdys Hill School

Kate Higham, Headteacher, says:

We are an all through maintained special school, for children from 4 to 19 years of age who have severe to moderate learning difficulties, with other complex needs. Our school has an excellent reputation in Swindon due, mainly, to our dedicated and experienced staff and our place in the community.

Supportive and encouraging

We offer an adapted National Curriculum, with a variety of extra activities to develop our pupils' social, physical, sensory and communication abilities. We consider ourselves to be a supportive, encouraging environment where children can build their confidence and self-esteem.

Bright futures

Our pupils are encouraged to be tolerant, caring and positive minded citizens. Some of our young people leave us from year 12 onwards to attend Swindon college courses or to take up employment. We produce employable citizens who have a good understanding of what a good employee is, and how to get a job, while those young people who may not be able to work leave us as independent as they possibly can be.

Disability support

Our pupils may have a wide range of physical needs. These could be difficulty walking without support, using a wheelchair fulltime, or having hearing or visual impairments. We focus on what the pupils can do, what their strengths are, and how we can adapt to ensure they can access all areas of the curriculum. Our site is fully accessible to wheelchair users, and staff are trained in supporting pupils with physical difficulties.

Before your child joins us, we will discuss their needs and strengths with you, their school (if they are attending) and external agencies who work with your child. We will ensure that the right support is in place before they join us. All pupils are expected to participate fully in school life and beyond. We will do our best to give your child as much independence as possible.

Therapy

Our specialist staff offer a range of therapies including Speech and Language, Hydrotherapy and Physiotherapy. Each child is assessed and provided for according to their individual needs, whether physical or cognitive.

We also have a highly trained school counsellor who is able to use her extensive experience to help address issues such as anxiety, depression, relationships and difficult behaviour. Many young people may be struggling with how they feel. They may be having problems with friends, family or school, they may be anxious, depressed, angry or scared and need to talk to someone, but find it difficult to talk to people they know. Our counsellor can help them talk things through, support them without making them feel judged, and in confidence (unless they disclose that their personal safety is at risk).

Pastoral care

We pride ourselves on our pastoral care of our pupils, and are a THRIVE approach school. Created to support this vision, the Thrive Approach is a dynamic, developmental and trauma-sensitive approach to meeting the emotional and social needs of children.

We get to know our pupils as individuals. Each child comes with a history and background and very different needs. Our response to their outward reactions is based on understanding why they are reacting. Our main aim is to develop strong links with families, trust and respect with pupils, and support, the development of our young people into happy, confident members of their communities.

We are very proud of Crowdys Hill School and everything we are able to do to help our pupils achieve.



Our Values and Ethos

We value...

- We value equality.
- We believe that all pupils should have the best education that allows them to access all activities, participate fully in school life, and achieve their goals.
- We value education.
- We believe that learning is essential for a happy life. Learning should not stop due to age, ability or achievements.
- We value collaboration.
- We believe that the school community should work harmoniously with each other.
- We believe that the school community should be part of the local community and beyond.
- Our motto is 'Learning for Life'.
- Learning to enable us all to live our best lives, and learning throughout our lifetime.

School community

Our ethos is to ensure that all members of the school community have the tools they need to carry out their roles successfully, becoming a valued member of the school. Whether these are the teachers having the expertise to perform to high standards, caretaking staff having the knowledge needed to maintain the safety of the school, teaching assistants understanding the needs of individuals, or pupils learning how to regulate their emotions to be able to access learning.



School day: settling in

Our school times

School starts at 9.00am for all year groups. The day ends at 3.00pm for Primary, 3.15pm for Secondary and Sixth Form.

We provide a free breakfast from 8.45am for any pupil wanting one.

Uniform

Our policy is that all pupils should wear uniform. It also ensures that all children feel equal with their peers and part of a community. Many items can be easily found on the high street, but items with the school logo are available only through the school. These are sold at cost price and the school does not make a profit.

Additionally, our sponsors Greggs Bakery, who fund our free breakfasts, offer a subsidy fund for uniform for families in need of financial support. Pupils eligible for pupil premium can also access free uniforms.

Food in school

All food provided in school is cooked on site, with an emphasis on healthy and nutritious ingredients. We cater wherever possible for individual needs such as allergies; please ensure that our Head of Care knows if your child has any allergies.



From Early Years to Primary phase to Sixth Form

We provide a broad range of national curriculum subjects, from Early Years to Primary phase to Sixth Form. We also offer a wide range of opportunities, outside of the national curriculum, to develop self-esteem, engagement and independent learning.

To develop strong minded, independent citizens

Our ethos throughout is to develop strong minded, independent citizens. With this in mind, we offer a variety of subjects where social skills, life skills and independence skills are embedded. We give pupils opportunities to achieve the 'Learning for life' aims, which we feel will set our pupils up for a good life.

Learning for Life

Our curriculum is rich in experiences, positive learning, building the feeling of self-worth in our pupils, and developing the love of learning.

Communication skills

At the heart of this learning is communication skills. We understand that the best way to ensure that our pupils feel part of their community, whether in school, home or in the world, is to promote their ability to communicate effectively to the best of their abilities. This begins in the primary phase, through access to SEN trained staff, with experience in using Signalong, PECS (picture exchange communication systems), AAC (Augmented Assistive Communication) and use of visual aids to consolidate understanding, and the expertise of our own speech therapists. Our emphasis is on cooperative learning, with many opportunities to develop conversation and discussion.

This continues through to the secondary phase, where pupils are encouraged to use their social skills to wider audiences, such as in assemblies, or on the school trips and other events that we offer.

In the Sixth Form, this is further developed through the wide variety of work experiences and social and educational trips which take place. The curriculum is based on the needs of the child and their EHCP outcomes.



Outdoor learning

Wide range of opportunities

We organise trips and visits to local events and facilities, helping to build our pupils' confidence and independence. We offer residential, theatre and activity trips and even visits to the seaside.

Music and drama

Our pupils take part in local music and drama events and have travelled as far as Bristol and to Wembley Arena to show off their performing abilities. We place great emphasis on art and creativity, which can be expressed in the form of painting, drama, music, and writing.

Farm

Our pupils spend time on our farm, learning how to care for animals, about health and safety outdoors and links to other curriculum subjects.

Duke of Edinburgh Bronze and Silver Awards

Trips and outdoor learning are structured so that pupils learn progressively through the years. In Sixth form, the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze and Silver Awards are run, culminating in a local expedition and overnight camping. Residential trips run from Year 6 onwards.



Hydrotherapy

We are very lucky to have access to the hydrotherapy pool next to the school. We have sessions there frequently throughout the week. Students with physical needs are referred to use the hydrotherapy pool. This is with the agreement from our Head of Care, physiotherapist and parents/ carers.

Some students may attend the pool sessions to build their self-esteem, through mentoring other students in the pool, under the supervision of the adults, or through building social skills outside the classroom.

Physiotherapy

We have a designated Physiotherapy room which is equipped with an overhead ceiling hoist, we also have a plinth in the room, used for pupils to carry out exercises which are essential to them. The room is situated in a quiet area of the school.

Staff are trained to transfer pupils from their wheelchairs onto the plinth, standing frame or walking frame. Pupils have their own slings that we use during transfers. Trained staff work with pupils throughout the week under the guidance of the physiotherapist or occupational therapist.



Speech and Language

Speech and Language Therapists (SALTs) help support children and young people with their speech, language and communication skills.

We are really lucky that we have an established speech and language therapy department at Crowdys Hill School. Every child and young person that starts at Crowdys Hill School will be viewed to understand their speech, language and communication skills. Some children and young people will then require more detailed speech, language and communication assessment.

The Speech and Language Therapist will write an initial report to describe the child or young person's communication strengths and needs and will create speech and language targets. These reports and targets will be shared with parents/ carers, teachers, and other professional people.

The SALTs work closely with teaching staff, training them to develop strategies to use in class to target pupils' communication skills.

Sensory

Crowdys Hill school has two sensory rooms, one based in the Primary building and the other in the Secondary building. All staff are trained on how to use the equipment in these rooms and plan specific activities based on individual EHCP targets. Sensory rooms are also used to help the children and young people self-regulate with support from an adult.

We have a large amount of equipment in school from dark dens to gym balls, light boxes to weighted items, and ear defenders to wobble cushions.

All teaching staff are trained in strategies to reduce sensory imbalances.



Occupational therapy

Our Occupational Therapists advise staff on equipment to use for individual children and then train staff on how to use it. Items such as ear defenders and wobble cushions are readily available in classrooms for pupils to access if they feel they need them. OTs may carry out individual assessments as needed.

Outdoors

Our fantastic on-site farm gives our pupils the opportunity to learn how to look after a range of animals, from rabbits to alpacas in a spacious and purpose-built environment. It is designed so that it is fully accessible to those of our children who have a disability.

The Primary area has a lovely playground, and a high staffing ratio to support the communication and sensory needs of the children. In secondary the pupils' communication skills are further developed and there is a stronger emphasis on independence.

Early Years have a separate outdoor area. Secondary school is on the same site and has separated playgrounds and a playing field. Pupils are encouraged to try new games, team games and sports daily. There is an outside gym and quiet areas.

Sixth form is also on the same site. It has its own outside areas, which the pupils have developed over the years. There are spaces for sport, and quiet areas.

Learning for life

Our aim is for pupils to love learning and to learn the skills they need to have a happy life and live as independently as possible. We hope to instil a love for learning new things throughout their lives.



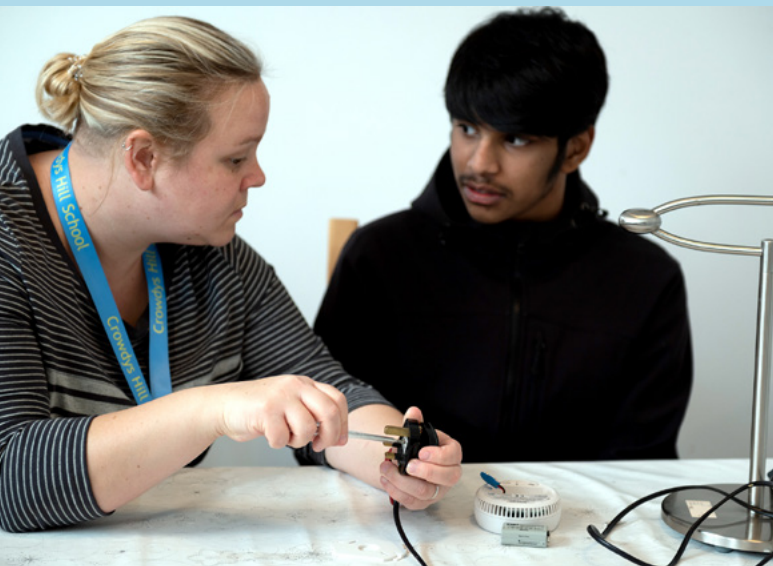
Communication with parents

Clear, transparent and regular home/school communication

We hugely value the support our parents/ carers provide, and we pride ourselves on clear, transparent and regular home/school communication. Our website is updated regularly. We have a school app and a texting service as well as good old-fashioned letters and phone calls. You will receive academic data three times a year, which will also include details of attendance and attitude.

Parent evenings

You will be invited to parents' evenings twice a year in Early Years and Primary, and once a year for other year groups. You will be invited in annual reviews to discuss your child's progress towards their EHCP outcomes once a year.



Behaviour and self-development

Thrive

At Crowdys, we follow the THRIVE approach. This ethos is nurturing and understanding of pupils' needs and motivations. The emphasis is on support not punishment.

Negative behaviour can have a negative impact on a class/group or individual. Here, instead of sanctions in the first instance, we try to find the cause of the displayed behaviour. Often with time and support a pupil is able to communicate an underlying issue. We can then discuss and develop strategies that may help in and around the classroom in the future.

Behaviour support team

We do have a behaviour support team for any pupil unable to continue to work in the classroom for whatever reason. They allow for de-escalation and give an opportunity to talk through any concerns or anxieties. The main aim is to get the pupil back into class so they can continue learning.

Zero-tolerance

We have a zero-tolerance policy to bullying, homophobic and racist incidents. In the event that a sanction is required, we try to ensure consistency and successfully use restorative justice to help resolve many situations.



Admissions and getting involved

How to apply for a place at Crowdys Hill School

Children who have a statement of SEN or an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are placed in schools through the arrangements set out in the [SEN Code of Practice](#) and not through any admission criteria. All admissions to schools for students who have a statement or an EHCP are handled by SEND Services at Swindon Borough Council. Their contact email is SENDSERVICE@swindon.gov.uk or telephone 01793 464641.

The Friends of Crowdys Hill School

The Friends of Crowdys Hill School is a group of parents and staff who support the school by organising fund-raising activities throughout the school year i.e. summer fete, bingo evenings, activity day. All parents are welcome to attend meetings (reminders are sent nearer the meeting dates), these are held approximately 4 times a year.

We also welcome volunteers to help at fund-raising events to help set up, pack away and man the stalls – even if you can only offer an hour – all help is greatly appreciated. Please contact Rachel Russell of the FOCHS at the school.

During the last few years we have installed a brand new sensory room at the Primary School with help from Wooden Spoon, held a Christmas Bazaar, bingo nights, and musical evenings. We also support other charity events such as Children in Need, World Book Day, Sport and Comic Relief.

Governorship

Governing bodies are responsible and accountable for all major decisions about the school and its future. Governors have a legal responsibility to make sure the school promotes high standards. The Governors set the school's vision, strategic aims and monitoring processes. They evaluate performance – acting as a critical friend to the Headteacher and making sure the school is accountable to everyone it serves.

Within this our responsibilities include:

- Setting strategic direction, objectives, targets and policies.
- Reviewing progress against budget, plans and targets.
- Approving the school budget.
- Acting as a critical friend to the Headteacher through support and challenge.
- Appointing the Headteacher.

If you would like to become a parent governor, please email chair@crowdyhill.swindon.sch.uk.





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