



# Lexden Springs School

Attend, Aspire, Achieve





# Welcome to Lexden Springs School



## A note from our headteacher:-

It is with great pride that I welcome you to our inspiring school which caters for pupils aged 3 – 19 who have complex learning difficulties (profound and multiple learning difficulties and severe learning difficulties) and those on the Autistic spectrum continuum.

### • Learning and wellbeing

We offer a tailored curriculum that stimulates an interest in learning whilst also helping to develop important life skills and independence. Innovative teaching approaches engage and motivate pupils.

### • Dedicated staff

We have highly experienced, well trained and committed teachers and co educators. These teams work together to provide safe and engaging environments and flexibility to ensure the unique needs of all students are met.

### • Multiagency liaison

We have our own dedicated sensory occupational therapist, speech and language therapist and school nurse on site. We also work closely with dieticians, physiotherapists and other outside agencies to provide holistic care.

### • High expectations

We aim to bring out the best from everyone and are continuously striving for our students to meet and exceed their targets; supporting them to rise to every challenge and fulfil their potential to be valued and confident members of society.

### • Parent partnership

We work closely with parents and carers to develop effective trusting partnerships. Every pupil takes home a home/school diary to aid communication. We hold frequent meetings alongside parents/carers and have an active PTA (if you are interested in joining our PTA please enquire at the school office.) Within this prospectus there are many parent and pupil stories and I hope that when you read these you will realise the importance you and your child hold.

Parents, carers, family and friends are always very welcome to visit Lexden Springs and see for themselves what a fantastic facility we have. To make an appointment telephone 01206 563321 or email: [admin@lexdensprings.essex.sch.uk](mailto:admin@lexdensprings.essex.sch.uk)



Sharon and Neil Arnold live in Langham with their daughter, Shannon, aged 16, who is studying child development, and son, Kieran, aged 14, who has been at Lexden Springs School since he was seven. Kieran has been diagnosed with verbal dyspraxia and global learning development delay.

## Kieran has grown in confidence in the caring atmosphere of Lexden Springs School

### Improved communication

Kieran is happy, confident and communicating better with his family now he is at Lexden Springs School. His Mum, Sharon, is thrilled with the progress he has made and is enjoying being able to have a conversation with her son. "When Kieran was still at his mainstream school he couldn't communicate with anyone and was unable to do what the other children were doing," she says.

### Learning difficulties

"In his mainstream school Kieran was alright when he was in the reception class because they were mainly playing, but once he went into Year One and was having to sit and learn it became obvious he had problems. He couldn't ask questions about what he was learning. He could communicate with us using Makaton, which is a language programme that uses signs and symbols, and with his Pecs cards, but he was isolated at school," Sharon explains.

### Fitting in

After Kieran's diagnosis, the family started looking at special schools. "We didn't choose Lexden Springs originally, as I didn't think Kieran would like it - but the headmaster of Kieran's mainstream school asked us to go and look at it. I suppose I was in a bit of denial at that stage. However, he settled in really well and took to the routine like a duck to water," Sharon says.

### Trying new things

The first sign of progress was Kieran seemed happier when he was at home. Sharon says: "He was interacting with us more and seemed more confident. He was attempting to do things he wouldn't have tried before. For example, he started to change the Makaton to fit with what he wanted to say."

### Writing skills

Kieran never wants to miss school when he is unwell, which shows he is happy there, Sharon says. "I am constantly being told by the school that he is doing well with his work and when he comes home from school, without being told, he sits down and practices his writing. If he wants something I am trying to encourage him to write it down, or to at least give me the first letter of the word he wants to say, which he can now do by pronouncing the sound."

### Physical activity

Kieran loves sports, PE, swimming and all the outdoor activities at Lexden Springs. "His teachers say he is engaged in everything he does. He likes all the staff and particularly looks up to the male teachers. He has a taxi to school every day but he enjoys the journey and likes his escort. He loves the school dinners. If I have to take him to a hospital appointment he never wants to miss his school dinner. He has had a problem with his stomach and we have had to try to eliminate various foods to see what is causing it, but the school have been really helpful and are prepared to cater for his needs," Sharon says.

### Mixing well

Kieran has made lots of friends at Lexden Springs and talks about them to his family by pronouncing the first letter of their names using phonics. Sharon says: "Kieran enjoys seeing some of them out of school at the youth club he goes to. He's a typical teenage boy and he likes listening to music when he comes home from school. It's his way of de-stressing."



# ‘Facilities to help your child excel expectation’



## Facilities

**Sensory Room:** Our large purpose built sensory room is equipped to bring the curriculum to life through sounds, colours and textures. We can see through pupils' responses the delight this facility brings. Words from stories are brought to life and experiences enriched.

**Therapy Room:** Our in-house sensory occupational therapist carries out sensory assessments in our dedicated therapy room. Resources are on hand to help pupils to regulate their senses and individual programmes are put in place for classroom use. When pupils are regulated they are better placed to access learning. Engagement levels have significantly increased following the introduction of these techniques.

**Snoozelum:** This unique room comprises of a temperature controlled water bed, specialist lighting and music facility. It is an ideal relaxation and refocus space for students of all needs. Pupils can use the room as a place to reflect and benefit from short timetabled sessions, emerging in a positive frame of mind, motivated to learn.

**Adventure Playground:** Our state of the art adventure playground is timetabled for every class to enjoy. Pupils can burn energy, play with friends and have fun. Happy pupils are pupils who learn best.

**Soft play room:** Pupils' physical skills are developed in this room and it is an ideal space to support pupils with social interactions and turn taking skills.

**Hydrotherapy swimming pool:** Those pupils who benefit from hydro therapy have regular sessions in our pool – where they can stretch and work their muscles under the supervision of our experienced staff. Alternatively our qualified swimming instructor teaches all who are able to swim lengths. A certification system is followed for this. Older pupils access leisure world swimming pool in Colchester.

## Other facilities include:

Food technology room, library, large medical room, 'Holly Lodge' house in community, board walk, sensory garden, and extensive wooded area where our qualified Forest School instructors carry out weekly lessons.

We have the use of 3 school minibuses and classes go out fortnightly to places which enhance their curriculum topic – such as a local beach or Colchester Zoo. Groups of pupils also go out to enjoy horse riding and trampolining. We offer the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme to our older pupils and facilitate this. Exciting residential trips are organised for groups of our SLD (ASC) and PMLD pupils.







## The school day:-

The school day begins at 9:00 and finishes at 3:00. At 9:00 the gates open and staff greet the pupils. Pupils should arrive before 9:15.

At 10:30 classes have a snack time. Snacks are provided through a 'class funds' system set up with parents or carers.

Lunch begins at 12pm and finishes at 12:45pm. We ask that dinner money is paid each Monday in advance or half termly in a named envelope please. From 12:45pm until 1:30pm lunch time clubs are run, leisure activities take place and students' personal care needs are met.

At 3:00pm the gates are opened for home time and students are supported to be received by parents/carers or taxi transport.

**Transport:** The local authority have a transport policy and guidelines which indicate which students will be transported to the school and which will need to be brought in via personal arrangements. The transport team are responsible for ensuring students with the most complex need are safely transported to and from school. Any transport issues need to be directed to the transport team as we do not employ these staff.

**Uniform:** Our school uniform consists of red embroidered sweatshirts, cardigans, polo shirts, school book bags, coats, waterproof all weather suits, red gingham dresses, grey pinafore dresses and PE kits and bags.

A simple uniform helps pupils to feel part of the community. It is available to buy from the school office or [www.tesco.com/ues](http://www.tesco.com/ues). Uniform is not worn by students in our post 16 classes.

All staff members also wear a uniform of a navy blue polo shirt with STAFF across the back so that they are easily identifiable.



Sarah and Philip Lingard live in Colchester with their daughter, Elle-Mae, aged nine. Elle-Mae is autistic and has attended Lexden Springs School since she was four.

## Elle-Mae has blossomed in the warm friendly atmosphere of Lexden Springs School

### Enjoying reading

Sarah and Philip are thrilled with the talkative little girl who comes home from school, smiling and happy and delighted to be bringing home a reading book in her school bag. "Elle-Mae couldn't talk or communicate at all when she first started at Lexden Springs. Now she chatters away and is reading and writing, it's brilliant," Sarah says.

### Communication problems

After Elle-Mae was born Sarah and Philip noticed that all stages of her development were delayed. "She crawled late and she walked late and she didn't show any signs of talking at all. She started to attend a nursery, where she had a one to one key worker looking after her, but she still could not communicate with us and did not make much progress while she was there," Sarah says

### Welcoming atmosphere

The turning point came when the family moved to Colchester and started looking for a suitable school for Elle-Mae. Sarah says: "We went to look at three different schools for her because we wanted to make sure we found one that really suited her and where she would be happy. As soon as I saw Lexden Springs I was impressed. I liked the layout and thought that the atmosphere was friendly, warm and welcoming and I just knew instinctively that it was going to be the right school for Elle-Mae."

### Fun with phonics

From the minute she started at Lexden Springs, Elle-Mae began making progress, Sarah says. "She started to talk and communicate with us and began learning to read using their phonics programme. Within about a year of learning this way she picked up a book and started reading it and yet she couldn't read at all when she first started at the school. The school teach using phonics to pronounce the actual sounds, rather than saying the letters in a word and then they put all the sounds together to make the full word. Elle-Mae loves phonics lessons and saying the sounds."

### Writing and spelling

"Now Elle-Mae can read, she loves bringing books home with her. She is still behind considering her actual age but the progress she has made since she has been at the school is fantastic. She can read and understand what she has read and she can spell words and copy pieces of writing. They are now helping her improve her handwriting and teaching her to write on lines. She really has come on loads since she started at Lexden Springs," Sarah says.

### Varied activities

"Elle-Mae loves absolutely everything about the school. She loves the teachers, she loves the other children, she loves swimming and she loves doing PE," her Mum says. "She enjoys going there in a taxi every day and taking her packed lunch with her because she is a fussy eater. She will just have school dinner once a week when it is pizza and chips on the menu. But she loves doing 'shop, cook and eat' with the school and going to the supermarket with her little list and buying things to take back to the school to cook and eat. As a result she also likes going to the supermarket with me."





## EYFS

OFSTED rate our Early Years provision as outstanding. Pupils follow the statutory Early Years Framework supported extensively in their communication, physical and social skills. Learning is offered through a topic based approach. During the transition process to Lexden Springs, home visits, visits to nursery settings and 'taster' sessions are offered.

## Post 16 Department

Each pupil has an allocated transition key worker. Building independence and social skills is a priority. Numeracy, Literacy and ICT are offered as basic skills in becoming 'work ready'. Pupils in post 16 follow accredited programmes of study; work related learning and enterprise

education are embedded. OFSTED; 'The sixth form is extremely well led and provides excellent tailored programmes that are highly effective in preparing students for life after school – outstanding'. Post 16 students may attend college one day a week if suitable and we endeavour to match work experience opportunities to meet their likes and interests as well as meeting their level of need and the skills developed.

Holly Lodge is our post 16 house in the community. Students based here benefit from all of the features of a modern day house, helping to develop vital life skills. A bus stop is conveniently placed outside and allows for students to practice safe travel. We have established a comprehensive list of links in the community.



John and Julie Mayle live in West Mersea with their son, George, aged 18, who has attended Lexden Springs for seven years. George has autism, severe learning disability, limited speech, a rare chromosomal abnormality and epilepsy.

# George is gaining valuable skills after moving up to the post 16-19 department at Lexden Springs School

## Making progress

George has progressed in leaps and bounds since moving to Holly Lodge, a building about half a mile away from the main school that has been converted for the use of a group of post 16 students. His Mum, Julie, says: "George loves what he is doing at school now. It took him a while to get used to it because he hates change, but he has settled in and become more confident. He used to struggle to make friends but he has started to understand that he needs friends and is developing social skills."

## Experiencing work

George is learning valuable life skills at Holly Lodge. Julie says: "They are teaching him things like shopping and cooking and how to travel somewhere by bus. They are getting him ready for when he leaves Lexden Springs when he is 19. He likes going out from the school to do work experience. He works at a café in Colchester that is geared up for people with special needs and really loves it there. He also enjoys working at a farm near the school. He likes mucking out, collecting the eggs, digging the ground and feeding the animals. The farm is run by lovely people and he enjoys going there."

## Team work

George has made a lot of progress since he started at Lexden Springs at the age of 11.

"He used to attend another special needs school for children with mild learning difficulties but they couldn't cope with him. We moved him to Lexden Springs but when he first started he didn't adjust to it well and things were difficult. However, we worked as a team with the school to try to help him and between us we have sorted him out," Julie says.

## Improved behaviour

"The first sign that his new school was having an effect was when his behaviour at home got better. He started to do things without kicking off too much. The staff took an interest in him and one of his class teachers, Caroline Gore, who is now the deputy head, seemed to really understand him. It was a turning point for him when he went into her class.

"Now George has developed some verbal communication. We can understand what he is trying to say to us at home, although other people probably wouldn't be able to, but it is real progress. But he still uses Makaton signs to talk to us some of the time and gets frustrated because he can't make us understand what he wants to say," Julie says.

## Happy environment

"I like the lovely, relaxed atmosphere at Lexden Springs. The teachers let the children and parents call them by their first names and they are all very friendly and have a good sense of humour. Everyone seems happy in their work and I am confident they will do their best for George," Julie says.

"I would recommend Lexden Springs and the work they do with post 16 students to other parents. I was worried how George would cope when he moved up to Holly Lodge but amazingly, thanks to the staff, he has taken it all in his stride."





Our curriculum at Lexden Springs is skill and context based and encourages active engagement in learning. The curriculum focuses on developing the key skills of communication, cognition, independence, physical development and self care – all transferable skills that equip pupils for life beyond school. Students in school receive an adaptation of the National Curriculum in which the following subjects are used as a vehicle to drive the above key areas – English, maths, science, computing, PSHE, history, geography, design technology, food technology, modern foreign languages, music, expressive arts, PE and RE. Progress is assessed via the EHC plan targets, engagement and personal achievements.

## Supporting 'in house' team:

Transition workers (work across the 14 – 19 age group supporting work experience and future life skills) swimming instructor and transport coordinator; physio and MOVE key worker; pupil premium key worker.

Family support: MAZE is a group held in school once a week to give help and support to parents and family members. Application forms are available on request.

Accreditations: \* Eco schools \* Healthy schools \* School achievement award \* CPD mark \* Autism Accredited since 2012\*



David Stoker and Sharon Slade live in Colchester with Sharon's daughter, Lauren, aged 15, and their son, Joseph, aged five. Lauren, who has physical and mental disabilities as a result of having Rett syndrome, has attended Lexden Springs since she was eight.

Lauren's family are delighted to see her making progress with the help of staff at Lexden Springs School

## Improved mobility

David and Sharon are pleased with the progress Lauren has made in the last few years at Lexden Springs. Sharon says: "Lauren has a lifelong condition that has affected her speech and mobility but thankfully she has now started to improve with the help of staff at the school and there is real hope for her future. She is meeting and exceeding her targets each year and the staff are pushing her and challenging her to continue to improve and stay mobile."

## First symptoms

Lauren was born with Rett syndrome, a rare genetic condition that mainly affects girls, but there were no signs of it until she was two and a half. Sharon says: "She lost what speech she had and started to develop other symptoms, such as constantly wringing her hands and putting them in her mouth. Her mobility suffered and she struggled to walk unaided. It is a condition which starts with slow development but is followed by alarming regression until it reaches a plateau."

## Good recommendation

Lauren was not definitively diagnosed with Rett syndrome until the age of four. "It was just in time for her to get a place in another local special needs school rather than in mainstream education. The school was lovely but they had little experience of Rett syndrome. They looked after her in the reception class for three years but eventually recommended Lexden Springs as they knew it was more equipped to cater for her learning difficulties," Sharon says.

## Sensory curriculum

Lauren enjoys the way they teach her at Lexden Springs because a lot of her learning takes place in a multi-sensory environment. Sharon says: "They have an interactive white board which she likes to touch and they encourage her to make choices using pictures to decide on what activity she is going to do. They also use objects of reference to help with her understanding of the day ahead. For example, Lauren knows that an armband means that she is about to go swimming. They are teaching her to use her hands properly and to reach out and touch things. Everything has to be sensory for Lauren. They have discovered that once she starts using her hands properly, she will concentrate better, engage with the activity and enjoy it."

## Improved concentration

Sharon is pleased that Lauren has been able to have continuity at Lexden Springs. "She has really benefited from having the same teacher for the last few years because by now she has got to know Lauren inside out. We have been lucky that many of the support staff have also remained consistent. They understand when they should be pushing and challenging her and when she genuinely can't do things because they have got to know her. They have encouraged her to respond more and have definitely helped improve her concentration. They are constantly trying to help her be the best she can be, which has been wonderful for us, and her extended family, to see."





## Behaviour management

Our positive behaviour policy is fundamental to our success and is based on our core values of integrity, respect and positive attitudes. We aim to support pupils to self manage their behaviour and develop their emotional intelligence. All staff are trained in observing triggers for unwanted behaviour, de-escalation strategies and keeping pupils safe in difficult situations. Teachers write detailed 'wellbeing' plans to ensure consistency in supporting pupils with their behaviour. OFSTED: 'Behaviour and safety at Lexden Springs is outstanding.'

## Safeguarding

At Lexden Springs we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. If we ever have a concern we will contact you. If you would like a copy of our policy please contact the school office. We take Health and Safety and safe guarding our pupils very seriously and if you ever have a concern, please share this with us immediately.

## Car park safety

Please use our car park safely, particularly at busy times. Pupils need to follow and walk around the yellow painted path. Pedestrians must use the fenced pathway and should not walk through the Ambulance Station. We actively encourage all parents to work with the school and address any concerns as they arise.



Susan and Christopher Harte live in Essex with their son, Oliver, aged ten, daughter, Sophia, aged five, and youngest son, Benjamin, aged two. Oliver is severely autistic and non verbal and has attended special needs schools since the age of three.

# Oliver's family are thrilled with the progress he is making at Lexden Springs School

## Enjoying school

Oliver really looks forward to going to Lexden Springs in the mornings. His Mum, Susan, says: "He laughs when the taxi turns up, does a little dance, gets in, puts on his seatbelt and goes." It is a huge relief for his family to see him finally enjoying school and making progress after years of attending different special schools of varying standards because his father travelled about with the army.

## Improved communications

Since Oliver started at Lexden Springs in September 2013 the staff have worked hard to bring him on and he is now communicating a lot better with his younger sister and brother: "They've started playing games together and it is all smiles and laughter. For the first time I feel there is light at the end of the tunnel, Susan says. "At one of his previous schools they kept him in the lowest class in the primary school the entire time he was there. At another, the staff had never seen a book of picture cards for communication before. When he moved to Lexden Springs, I was understandably nervous to begin with. He was put in with children of his own age and I wondered how he would cope, but he is coming on in leaps and bounds."

## First word

"After about four months at Lexden Springs he was able to write his own name and count to ten verbally. Some words have come, such as Nemo, which is his favourite film, and he has verbalised foods he would like from his packed lunch. He has had speech therapy and sensory integration therapy, which has helped him. They give him things such as a giant sleeping bag made of lycra to roll around in to experience the sensations and weighted blankets to calm him, things he never had access to at

other schools. Lexden Springs have also worked out which of his senses are particularly sensitive," Susan says.

## School dinners

"The staff are friendly and approachable. I can phone them or send a note if he refuses to put on a jumper or socks. Then they will try to persuade him to wear them when he gets to school. Lexden Springs have expanded his eating habits. He loved pasta and rice but wasn't keen on meat and vegetables. He used to take a packed lunch every day but now has school dinners. One day he went into the dining hall and pointed to some food so they gave it him to try and he ate it all but then had his packed lunch afterwards. Then one day he chose gammon, something he never has at home, and appeared to enjoy it," Susan says.

## Winning awards

"Oliver travels to school in a taxi every morning with an escort who works at the school. She has built up a good relationship with him and always has a bag of things to distract him. Lexden Springs get him outside doing things so he is not stuck in a classroom all day. Because he loves swimming they let him have two sessions a week. He swam 56 lengths to raise money for charity when they held a swimathon. He has been given the head teacher's award three times for his achievements," Susan says.

## Speaking to Daddy

"The other day we were skypeing my husband who is in Cyprus for six months. I asked Oliver who was on the screen and he made a lot of strange sounds and then said 'Daddy'. My husband said it was the longest conversation he had ever had with him. I could never thank the staff at Lexden Springs enough because they are so patient and tolerant and never give up trying to help Oliver achieve things."





The role of the school governor is demanding but very rewarding and is a good way to give back to your local community. School governing bodies are responsible for working with the school to ensure that it delivers a good quality education. Together with the Headteacher, who is responsible for day-to-day management, the governing body sets the school's aims and policies. Our chair of governors is Wendy Crockett OBE. For more information please have a look on the school website.



All pupils have a Statement of Educational Needs or an EHC Plan - prepared by the LA. If this is in the process of being prepared or if you have moved from another area, the LA will liaise with local schools and parents as to which school will best fit the child's needs.

The Essex LA school admissions team contact details are:

Tel: 0345 603 2200

Email: [admissions@essex.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@essex.gov.uk)

Web: <http://www.essex.gov.uk/>



## LEXDEN SPRINGS SCHOOL ETHOS

At Lexden Springs School we believe all pupils are entitled to develop to their fullest potential - academically, socially, emotionally, physically, morally, spiritually and aesthetically, enabling each pupil to grow in confidence, and able to participate in the wider community. The school leadership strives to be reflective evaluative and outward looking in all aspects of school life.

We aim to raise achievement through active independent learning in partnership with the vital support of parents.

### **The following aims act in support of our ethos:**

The curriculum should be broad, balanced, coherent and relevant.

Staff have high expectations of pupils.

They are always encouraged to work to the fullest extent of their capabilities in all aspects of the curriculum.

Our school strives to recruit and retain high quality and motivated staff.

The school and its governors are fully committed to ensuring the physical and mental health of all pupils. In support of this commitment, the school encourages pupils to maintain a healthy lifestyle, taking exercise and following a healthy diet. We support these aims by providing a rich variety of curricular and extra-curricular activities, providing both breadth of experience and opportunities for personal/social development.

An important emphasis is placed upon the pupil's personal development, independence, self-discipline and self-esteem. Skills for life, and self-motivation are promoted. Pupils are encouraged to play an active role both in the school and wider community by developing sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others regardless of differences.

The school will have a warm and friendly atmosphere for all who work within it and for visitors and other working partners. We will work to provide an environment in which children will feel safe secure and happy enabling them to develop effectively. We will value each pupil as an individual enabling them to develop a positive self-image. We aim to encourage self-discipline and respect for others self-confidence and the confidence to make informed choices and decisions.

To help pupils develop personal spiritual and moral values, an understanding of religious and beliefs, a tolerance for others and their cultures, and ways of life.

To promote equal opportunities for all pupils.



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