



SEN INFORMATION REPORT – ST DOMINIC’S SCHOOL

Arrangements for admissions

St Dominic’s School is approved by the Department of Education as a non-maintained weekly residential and day special school for boys and girls from 8 -19, providing specialist support. Most pupils and students are functioning from Level 1 or above, which may include pupils who can attain A* GCSEs and Level 3 qualifications. All applicants will have a Statement of Educational Need or Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and many may have more than one area of difficulty.

St Dominic's is registered with the Department for Education (936/7010) for Autism, Specific Learning Difficulties, and Speech & Language Disorders. The school achieved Autism Accreditation in 2012. In addition to ensuring that the environment is suitable for individuals on the autistic spectrum, the rigours of this accreditation benefits all pupils, despite their primary learning needs, by enhancing their teaching and learning environment.

All applicants to St Dominic’s will have a Statement of Educational Need or an Education Health and Care Plan and many may have more than one area of difficulty. Pupils and students on roll have a range of ability levels and complex special needs which include the following:

- speech and language difficulties
- social communication difficulties
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- Asperger’s Syndrome
- specific learning difficulties
- dyslexia
- dyspraxia
- fine and gross motor difficulties
- motor planning and co-ordination problems
- sensory processing difficulties
- perceptual difficulties
- ADD / ADHD
- emotional vulnerability
- some health problems

Initial contact may be made to the school by families or the relevant authority. Families should send in a copy of the child’s statement of educational needs/EHCP and up to date reports and they will then be invited to make an informal visit to the school. Initial enquiries from the Local Authorities (LAs) should be made by telephone or by submitting papers to the admissions office.

A mutually convenient assessment date is agreed between the school and the family. The initial assessment takes place over four days, usually Tuesday to Friday. Staff also visit the current or previous school and home. A longer assessment period may follow and a time frame agreed in each case. The assessment includes formal testing as well as informal observation of the child's general conduct. Their impact on the wellbeing of the existing pupils and students and the dynamics of the groups is also taken into account in reaching a decision.

A decision is made as to whether the school can meet the educational, therapy, social and (where appropriate) medical needs of the child on assessment, and consequently whether a place will be offered. The LA is informed of the outcome and sent the reports covering the assessment areas. If the outcome of the assessments is positive and a place is offered to the LA, this can begin on a date mutually agreed between the school, Local Authority and family.

St Dominic's has a banded fee structure depending on the phase of education being accessed and the level of need of the individual child. There are three banding structures, which are determined by the level of provision required and the decision as to which banding structure the pupil needs is established over the course of the assessment.

Steps we take to ensure that disabled children are not disadvantaged

At St Dominic's we accept and celebrate our unique identities and respect and value each other for who we are and what we can achieve as individuals and as a community. We believe passionately in a multi-disciplinary, 'blended' approach to meeting each child's and young person's needs, resulting in carefully managed groupings, including specialist intervention work from our in-house therapeutic team.

Each child or young person benefits from the skills of specialist teachers, therapists and support staff as well as an in-house nurse. Our therapists work alongside teachers in the classroom as well as providing one-to-one sessions in speech & language and occupational therapies.

All our staff members, regardless of role, are part of a team committed to securing positive outcomes and meeting the education, health and care needs for each child and young person.

The school works closely in partnership with families, referring authorities and external agencies to coordinate the best possible education, care, guidance and support for its pupils and students.

Provision to show that disabled children are not disadvantaged

Our approach and ethos is about delivering exceptional outcomes for our children and young people. The results are evident: last academic year 100% of Year 11 pupils achieved a GCSE pass and 75% achieved five A*-G grades. Our forecast this year suggests our Year 11 cohort will outperform national averages across all schools types in term of educational attainment in Maths and English.

We ensure that all of our Year 11 and Sixth Form leavers emerge as self-confident, independent individuals, able to manage their own learning and behaviour and equipped with the competencies, skills and strategies to take the next steps into further or higher education and the world of work. Our track record in this regard is exceptional, with every leaver in the last four years either having secured employment, training or proceeded into further or higher education.

Pupils and students follow a needs-based and skills-led curriculum based on National Curriculum requirements. Significant emphasis is placed on communication, functional independence and accessing the community. The curriculum is individualised for each pupil and student and adapted to ensure it is both functional and meaningful. The skills learnt are transferable, with appropriate planning and support, into the home, the local community and future placements.

Our Waking Day Curriculum is consistent across both education and residential departments and provides each pupil and student with the opportunity to access the whole school curriculum, including the National Curriculum together with individually planned learning programmes linked to continuous monitoring and evaluation of progress.

St Dominic's School delivers the National Curriculum in a modified and differentiated format to meet the individual learning needs of the pupils and students. St Dominic's School is a national lead in the 'blended' approach to teaching and learning across the waking day curriculum. This has been endorsed by the National Autistic Society through the award of Autism Accreditation.

The school addresses the social learning needs of the pupils and students through the use of a Social Communication Programme ©, which is embedded into the waking day curriculum. The range of strategies, including award POINTs and Classroom Rules, used across the curriculum ensures consistency of approach across all settings.

Accessibility for disabled children

St Dominic's School is full of tradition and character. The main house dates back over 100 years and was formerly the home of a wealthy family. It is set in 56 acres of beautiful, wooded grounds which offer plenty of space for horticulture, sports and recreational activities as well as a safe and therapeutic environment.

All our learning, living and play spaces are on one site, creating a campus feel. Our pupils and students also enjoy many escorted visits and adventures outside the school, either on educational trips or to pursue their hobbies and interests or just for fun.

The school is located in the heart of the Surrey Hills, in the southwest corner of the county, a few miles from the borders of Hampshire and West Sussex. It is easily accessible by road and by rail, being less than a mile from the main line station at Witley with its frequent links to London Waterloo and Portsmouth.

The school takes account of the needs of pupils and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises, such as improved access, lighting, acoustic treatment and colour schemes and more accessible facilities and fittings. While the sloping

nature of the site and existing buildings create some issues around access (the main building was originally a country house and is believed to have been constructed in the early years of the 20th Century, with other buildings believed to date from around 1960), the school has made many improvements to better support accessibility, including:

- Visitors car park: disabled parking bay designated and marked;
- Ramp constructed to chapel entrance; railing on ramp to chapel entrance;
- DDA Access Audit completed by independent company;
- External step edgings painted;
- Portable ramp purchased for use around the site;
- Disabled toilet in new building.

The school strives to make communication available in a variety of formats, including signposting to local services for providing information in alternative formats when required or requested.

The school carries out an annual access audit to improve the physical environment of the school.