

School and Early Years Template – Blackburn with Darwen Council’s Local Offer for Children & Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Who we are

Darwen Aldridge Community Academy is an original sponsored academy which is jointly funded by its sponsor (the Aldridge Foundation) and the Department for Education. Darwen Aldridge Community Academy is a Centre of Excellence for entrepreneurial education. It is an inclusive 11-18 school that provides for the students and citizens of Darwen continuous opportunities and a high quality environment for lifelong learning. The Academy opened in September 2008, housed in the buildings of the predecessor school, and started a new sixth form at the same time. It moved into new buildings close to the centre of Darwen in September 2010 and opened the adjacent Personalised Learning Centre in January 2011. Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities make the same progress as their peers.

What specialist services and expertise are available at, or accessed by, the school/setting?

The Academy follows the National Curriculum however there are a number of specialist provisions available for students who need additional support to access mainstream education. The Academy uses information from Primary Schools alongside our own baseline assessments carried out on entry to identify students with additional needs. Students may access support from a number of internal and external services. These include:

- RAISE Curriculum at Key Stage 3. Students who enter below Level 3 of the National Curriculum are placed in a small teaching group for English, Maths, Science and Humanities with full time, specialist support and specialist teaching. The curriculum is differentiated and tracked back to ensure progress in the acquisition of basic skills. There are RAISE groups in Year 7 and Year 8, both with a focus on improving literacy, numeracy and focus on the social and emotional aspects of learning.
- RAISE Curriculum at Key Stage 4. Students who struggle to close the gap on their peers and require further intervention can join the RAISE groups at Key Stage 4 which provides GCSE standard work, differentiated appropriately for their needs with full time support.
- Key Stage 3 intervention group. Students at risk of not meeting the benchmark are placed in a Key Stage 3 intervention group which targets basic and key skills needed to ensure they make progress before starting Key Stage 4.

- STEPS. This is a provision which provides targeted intervention for vulnerable students.
- Counsellors. The Academy has two full time counsellors who offer support for students and their families.
- Student Services Team. This includes pastoral managers, attendance welfare officers and general support for students and their families on a daily basis.
- Learning Support Faculty. This includes specialist teachers, higher level teaching assistants and learning support assistants who work across the academy ensuring that identified students achieve appropriate outcomes in Key Stage 3, 4 and 5.
- Visual Impairment Team. This consists of two dedicated staff who work closely with the local authority and are trained to provide support and suitable differentiation for students with visual impairments.
- Literacy Intervention. The Learning Support Faculty works closely with the English Faculty to provide a number of interventions to ensure high levels of progress including Read, Write, Inc., Indirect Dyslexia Learning, Accelerated Reader, Toe by Toe, Catch Up reading and Dockside reading programme.
- Numeracy Intervention. The Learning Support Faculty works closely with the Maths Faculty to provide a number of interventions to ensure high levels of progress including Every Child Counts, Catch Up numeracy, Power of 2 and functional numeracy by specialist teachers.
- Speech and Language Intervention. The Academy works closely with the local authority to provide bespoke training and packages for individuals and small groups. This year this will include whole school training for all staff to improve outcomes for students with language difficulties.
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder Support. The Academy has a number of teaching and support staff specially trained to work with students on the autistic spectrum. Provision includes small group work to develop social language, work on the acquisition of life skills and delivery of training for mainstream staff.
- Behaviour Support. The Academy has a quiet room provision which is an alternative to exclusion. It also works on a partnership basis with other schools in the authority. There are a number of specialist staff who provide support and training, including students mentoring, anger management and mediation.
- Intervention Leader. The Academy has its own intervention leader who provides tailored withdrawal sessions including motor skills, Mastering Memory, handwriting and Talkabout.

As well as a wide range of internal provision, the Academy has links with a number of outside agencies including:

- Advisory Teachers for Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment, Behavioural, Social and Emotional Needs, Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Speech and Language.
- Educational Psychology Service

- Specialist Providers such as: St Thomas' Centre PRU, Crosshill and Newfield Specialist Schools and The Heights
- Engage
- Youth Offending Team
- Lifeline
- Brook
- The Wish Centre
- Family Wise
- East Lancashire Child and Adolescent Services (ELCAS)
- Health Care Professionals
- Social Care Professionals

This is not an exhaustive list as students will be referred as a need arises.

What training and experience have the staff supporting children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities had, or are having?

The Vice Principal who oversees Pastoral Care has previously been a SENCO and line manages the Learning Support Faculty. This ensures that Special Educational Needs provision is a priority for the Academy in all aspects of the curriculum and teaching and learning.

The Academy has a Director of Learning Support (SENCO) who is an English Specialist with a Master's Degree in Teaching and Learning with a focus on Special Educational Needs and has also completed the National SENCO award. They have worked in the academy since its opening and have recently attended a number of courses relating to the current Special Educational Needs reforms. They keep up to date with legislation, policy and outstanding practice via the local authority, Academy SENCO network, Nasen and other training providers.

The Academy has an intervention leader who has worked in both the primary and secondary sector. They oversee assessment, intervention and progress of targeted students. Her training is wide ranging across a broad spectrum of needs.

There are seven Level 3 Learning Support Assistants who each take a lead on a specific area and access both internal and external training to enable them to carry out this role. Specialist areas include Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment, Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Behaviour Management, sixth form, EAL and the RAISE Curriculum.

There are six Level 2 Learning Support Assistants who provide support and differentiation for identified students. They work both within the Learning Support Faculty and mainstream classrooms. Training needs are identified for both individuals and the team as a whole.

There are six Pastoral Managers who provide daily support for students and their families. These are non-teaching staff who are available throughout the day.

All staff over the last three years have accessed training on differentiation, target setting for students with additional needs, behaviour intervention, Autistic Spectrum, improving memory skills, Read, Write Inc, provision for EAL learners, Speech and Language needs, dyslexia friendly classroom as well as improving literacy and numeracy across the whole curriculum. In addition to this all new staff receive a training programme including Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and specialist support workers offer training, support and guidance for faculty and individual improvement. All staff are regularly observed with a focus on outcomes for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Accessibility

The Academy is committed to providing accessibility for all stakeholders which evolves with the communities changing needs.

There is lift access to all areas and ramps are available to aid movement around the Academy. In the event of an evacuation staff are trained to support the buildings users to leave safely. To ensure the Academy users have full access, we have used translators, sign language and braille for meetings to meet the needs of the community. Signs are printed in braille and there are high visibility strips on individual steps. The Blackburn with Darwen Visual Impairment mobility team were involved in ensuring that the Academy is accessible for students and other users with a visual impairment.

There is a designated physiotherapy room and sensory room and an adapted bathroom with changing bed, hoist and height adjustable sink.

Who to contact

Name: Lisa Dolan – Principal / Jade Tumelty – Director of Learning Support

Phone: 01254 819500

Email: lisa.dolan@daca.uk.com / jade.tumelty@daca.uk.com

Website: www.daca.uk.com

How do you know if my child/young person needs extra help?

There are a number of stages in identifying students with additional needs. Primary visits are carried out throughout Year 5 and 6 to support transition and pass on information. Potential parents are invited to the Academy's open evening in September each year where they have a chance to discuss their child's needs with key staff in the Learning Support Faculty. Once at the Academy, a series of baseline assessments are carried out (reading test, CAT test, and individual faculty assessments) to identify any students that may need additional help in a particular area.

Referrals from staff and parents are welcomed at any time and the faculty uses a number of assessment tools to identify any areas of weakness which is addressed by intervention after being discussed with the students and parents/carers.

Underachievement is identified by whole school tracking and the SENCO is involved in discussions with pastoral leaders to identify individual students and support.

What should I do if I think my child/young person may have special educational needs?

If you think your child has Special Educational Needs please contact the Director of Learning Support (Jade Tumelty) on the contact details listed above. Assessments can then be carried out to identify needs.

How will staff support my child/young person?

The National Curriculum sets out three key principles for inclusion, to be considered at all levels of curriculum planning:

- Setting suitable learning challenges.
- Responding to students' diverse learning needs.

- Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of students.

At the Academy we aim to provide a graduated response that includes a range of strategies along the continuum of SEND.

In the classroom teachers provide programmes of work that are matched to each student's ability. If, despite these inclusive strategies, the student is experiencing significantly greater difficulty in accessing the National Curriculum than their peers, increased levels of support will be provided.

The stages of the graduated response are as follows:

Level 1

1. The student's name is added to the SEN Register.
2. Parents or carers are informed.
3. Students have a pupil passport and action plan written.
4. Previous strategies are reviewed.
5. A programme of support is agreed, this could include any of the following:
 - Literacy/Numeracy support
 - Revised classroom strategies
 - Alternative curriculum
 - Additional resources
 - Mentoring or counselling
6. The student's progress is reviewed continually.

If, at the review, the student appears to continue to have significantly greater difficulty in accessing the curriculum than their peers, then increased levels of support will be provided at Level 2

Level 2

1. More specialist assessment is provided, sometimes by the Educational Psychologist.
2. External support services may advise staff.
3. A further programme of action is agreed for the student. This could include any of the following:
 - Increased literacy/numeracy support

Support from a specialist support teacher or assistant
Alternative curricular arrangements (e.g. RAISE groups)
Access to additional resources
Further classroom management strategies

4. The student's progress continues to be reviewed.

For a very few students help at Level 2 may not be sufficient to enable progress to be made. It will then be necessary for the Academy, in consultation with parents and/or outside agencies, to ask the LEA to initiate statutory assessment procedures towards an Education, Health and Care Plan.

Students with IPRA's or EHCP's

The Academy receives funding from the LEA for students with EHCP's or IPRA's. This funding has traditionally been used to provide in-class support from a Support Assistant for the student, however changes to the funding arrangements mean that this can be more flexible e.g. buying specialist equipment or offering a personalised curriculum.

Students who have an EHCP or have an IPRA will have a Pupil Passport which outlines key information and the intervention that is in place. This is a planning document, highlighting the students' learning and/or behavioural needs and suggesting the possible provision to overcome these needs. Copies of the Passport are sent to parents/carers and are reviewed termly. All Passports are written and updated by Support Staff and are available on the shared area.

Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP's)

From September 2014, students with a Statement of SEND will start to transfer to EHCP's. These will outline a student's needs in terms of Education, Health and Social Care.

How will the curriculum be matched to my child's/young person's needs ?

Students in the Academy follow the National Curriculum. Our 'core business' is teaching and learning and we ensure that this is of the highest standard. Some of the main differences noticed by the students are in how the curriculum is structured, the regular assessment and emphasis on themes of entrepreneurship. The Academy curriculum provides entrepreneurship both as a discrete subject and as a theme underpinning every area of the curriculum. In addition to the main specialism of entrepreneurship and the second specialism of sport, the following are strong themes in the structure and delivery of the curriculum:

- Numeracy and financial awareness (in particular through ICT and Mathematics)
- Literacy, communication and international themes (in particular through English and modern languages)
- Creativity (in particular through Creative Arts and the Humanities)
- Discovery, Research and Development (in particular through Technology and Science)

Students who struggle to access mainstream curriculum pathways are supported in a number of different ways. The first stage of differentiation is quality first teaching. All staff are provided with information and guidance on teaching and supporting each individual child and their differing needs via the inclusion booklet. If a child is still struggling to make progress the Learning Support department will provide training or additional resources for members of staff.

Stage two involves specific targeted intervention and support for individual students and/or groups of students. This may involve the use of specialist equipment, in class support or withdrawal intervention.

Stage 3 may involve an alternative curriculum such as RAISE Groups in Key Stage 3 or alternative provision in Key Stage 4. Any changes to a student's curriculum will be discussed in full with the students and their parents/carers.

Further advice is sought where appropriate from outside agencies to ensure that the curriculum is appropriately adapted to meet the students' needs.

How will teaching approaches be modified to support my child/young person?

All teaching staff receive advice and guidance both on general strategies to support a child's learning (e.g. dyslexia friendly classroom) and specific strategies for individual students. Quality first teaching ensures that classroom practice reflects the needs of the children. This is monitored regularly via observation, work scrutiny, learning walks and pupil tracking.

Learning Support Assistants work closely with teaching staff to plan and adapt learning activities for the needs of the different students.

How will both you and I know how my child/young person is doing?

The Academy's whole school approach involves termly progress updates and an annual written report. Parents are also invited in for formal parent's evenings and informal discussions throughout the Academy year.

Additionally the Learning Support faculty reviews progress termly through the use of provision mapping, pupil passports and intervention action plans. Parents are invited in as part of the review process to discuss progress and set future targets. For some students, more regular, informal updates have been the key to successful communication. This can be done by telephone or email.

Students with IPRA's or Education, Health and Care Plans will have a statutory annual review led by the school where all stakeholders are invited to discuss progress and identify future provision needs. From September 2014 the Academy adopted person centred planning within the annual review meetings.

How will you help me to support my child/young person's learning?

The Academy has a Virtual Learning Environment named 'ilearn' which provides details of the curriculum, homework tasks and advice for students and parents/carers in preparation for assessments. Information to parents from individual subject areas will be provided through annual reports and parent's evenings. Each child has the opportunity to read daily in school and parents are encouraged to support reading activities at home.

The Learning Support faculty provides suitable activities that students can take home and work on with the support of parents/carers. For further advice and support parents/carers can contact Jade Tumelty for individual strategies which will also be discussed in review meetings.

What support will there be for my child's/young person's overall wellbeing?

The Vice Principal oversees all aspects of pastoral care, child protection and support for students with additional needs. There are three assistant principals with specific responsibility for each key stage. Additionally there are teachers responsible for progress at each key stage who monitor progress and ensure positive outcomes.

Each year group has a pastoral manager who stays with that year group from Year 7 to Year 11. The pastoral managers are responsible for the students overall well-being and are available throughout the day for both students and their families. They take on responsibility to ensure students are safe, happy and can meet their full potential.

There are two full time counsellors based on site who are available for students and their families throughout the day. They are there to support students' emotional needs as well as providing resolution for conflict.

STEPS is based within the learning support faculty and provides intervention for student's emotional needs. Programmes include: social skills, anger management, life skills and self-esteem/self-worth workshops. Parents are fully involved in the planning process and encouraged to come in to celebrate their child's success. Progress is reviewed at the start and at the end of each programme with the child, teacher and their parents.

A number of the teaching assistants have expertise and specific roles to support students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. This support includes: mentoring, withdrawal sessions to focus on social and emotional aspects of learning, in class support and support and advice for teaching staff.

The Year 7 and 8 RAISE groups are specifically aimed at providing an appropriate curriculum for students who have both learning needs and social and emotional difficulties. Specialist teaching and support staff are allocated to the group. The support staff will also provide support in mainstream lessons to give consistency.

Curriculum is personalised to meet the learning needs of each individual student through specialist teaching and support. Students can also access provision at 'The Heights' which provides vocational courses at Key Stage 4. Pastoral support is given by form tutors and a lead HLTA.

The Learning Support faculty has a base within the Academy where students can come if they need any support. There is always someone available throughout the day for the students or their parents/carers. The SENCO works with individual teachers to ensure they provide an appropriate curriculum to meet the students' emotional and learning needs. Parents can contact the SENCO at any time for advice or support. The SENCO will also liaise with appropriate outside agencies to ensure the child receives the most appropriate provision.

What activities will be available for my child/young person?

Students with special needs and disabilities are fully included and encouraged to participate in all aspects of academy life. There is a full session 5 programme which can be found via this link: <http://darwenacademy.publishpath.com/session3>. As part of the session 5 timetable the learning support faculty runs a homework club three days a week where students can access support for homework activities.

There are frequent educational visits throughout the school year both within the UK and abroad. Many students with additional needs access these trips as part of their mainstream curriculum. Learning Support Assistants accompany students where appropriate to ensure that their needs are met. The Academy supports students that receive pupil premium and those with additional needs by funding the cost of trips. As part of the RAISE Curriculum the learning support faculty carry out a number of educational visits.

Students with additional needs are fully involved in the student council working closely with the Academy leadership team to express views and implement changes within the Academy. The entrepreneurial specialism allows students to excel in their areas of strength which is celebrated alongside academic achievement. Students with special educational needs have been involved in national and regional activities including boccia, STEM challenge, career academy and AfriDACA.

Students with additional needs have been fully involved with the interviewing of new staff and their views have been fully taken on board.

How will you prepare and support my child/young person during transitions?

There is a dedicated Vice Principal for transition at all stages. The Learning Support faculty work closely with the pastoral team to ensure that all information about new students is passed on and vulnerable students are identified. The SENCO attends Year 5 and 6 reviews of potential students so can therefore meet parents and the students. Parents and students are invited to the Academy open evening early in September where the Learning Support faculty are available to discuss individual concerns.

A number of teaching staff deliver sessions in feeder primary schools, these include: Maths, PE, English and Modern Foreign Languages. All students who are attending the Academy attend for three transition days in July. Additional visits are arranged for students who may find the transition difficult. These visits are bespoke for the individual student's needs. A number of Learning Support Assistants work with identified students within the primary setting in the Summer term.

There are 6 Pastoral Managers, all of whom stay with their year group. They ensure that transition stages run smoothly and the consistency enables positive relationships with students and their families. Where possible, Learning Support Assistants will move up the school with identified students as they know the students' needs and are able to communicate these to new teaching staff. There are close links between Pastoral Managers and the Learning Support faculty to ensure a holistic approach to support.

Parents are invited to attend the Academy's options evenings for both the transition to Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5. New Directions are fully involved in planning for each individual student's future and they attend statutory reviews from Year 8 onwards. For students that do not access the Academy's sixth form transition information is passed on to the relevant provider and taster sessions/visits are arranged.

In Key Stage 5 there is a dedicated support worker who offers both educational and emotional support for students post 16. They, the pastoral team and the SENCO liaise closely with secondary SENCOs during the transition to the sixth form to ensure that the needs of the student are met.

Students are given advice and support throughout Key Stage 5 to enable them to make suitable choices for further education. The pastoral team and the learning support team work closely together to ensure that students' needs are communicated to the relevant educational providers.

How are resources and equipment allocated and matched to my child's/young person's needs?

At the Academy we adopt a graduated response to students' needs. Any additional resources (including support staff) are allocated on a needs basis with full discussion with parents/carers and the student. The Academy receives funding from the Department of Education to provide support for students with additional needs.

For high needs students, individual top up funding is provided from the Local Authority. This is to ensure that their specific needs are met. Annual reviews give opportunities for parents/carers and students to discuss how resources are utilised and identify any further funding needs.

The Academy accesses global services from a number of providers including education, health and social care. The referral to these services are discussed with parents/carers and students. In addition, the Academy buys in services from a number of providers linked to the needs of the students.

How are decisions made about what type and how much support my child/young person will receive?

Decisions are made with full discussion with students and their parents/carers. The Local Authorities panel allocates resources for high needs students. This is done on a needs basis. For students at School Action and School Action Plus, allocation will be decided on student progress, assessments, outside agency views and discussions with parents/carers.