



About Our School

What Type of School is Heathside?

Heathside is a local authority primary school for children with severe learning difficulties. The special educational needs of our pupils include a wide range of communication, physical, profound and multiple learning difficulties. An increasing number of children have autism as well as their learning difficulties.

Moving on.

The majority of our pupils move to Belstead School, the senior school, at the age of eleven, though transfer to other schools may take place at any time. Children join the nursery from three years old.

Our Numbers.

The number of children on the roll of the school is 75. This includes our part-time nursery children.

Our Buildings.

The school has a swimming pool, a soft play area, a hall, a sensory studio, a visual stimulation room, bases for physiotherapy, speech therapy and occupational therapy, a nurse's room, grassed and tarmac playing area as well as the usual classrooms.

Class Organisation

There are eight teaching bases, including the Nursery. They are organised according to age and staffed by qualified and experienced teachers supported by Teaching Assistants (TAs) and a Nursery Nurse to meet the individual needs of children in the group. The children are taught in a number of ways, for example; class groups, small groups or individually.



Working with Other Professionals

As a school we work closely with colleagues from many other disciplines. Whilst recognising our different roles and responsibilities, we strongly believe that a well co-ordinated multi-professional approach provides the best level of support to meet the special educational needs of children. A team philosophy is a distinguishing feature of the school. Regular meetings and clinics are held and they provide a valuable focus for parents and professionals to discuss childrens' progress, identify priorities and plan future programmes.

Professionals Working in School

Jo Leek	- school nurse
Nicky Hammond	- physiotherapist
Marion Sleath	- physiotherapist
Pauline Nunn	- physiotherapy assistant
Rebecca Clark	- occupational therapist
Ruth Cadwallader	- occupational therapist
Gaynor Witchells	- speech and language therapist
Rose Bacon	- speech and language therapist
Becky Bowen	- speech and language assistant

Visiting Professionals

Doreen Bartlett	- advisor
Di Haward	- educational psychologist
Jane Calver	- advisory headteacher for SEN
Diane Whitham	- school improvement partner
Wendy Melia	- advisory teacher for children with visual impairments
Meenal Manning	- advisory teacher for children with hearing impairments
Sonia Harvey	- educational welfare officer
Claire Gwatkin	- link social worker
Dr Glass	- consultant community paediatrician
Dr Bamford	- consultant paediatrician
Dr Gould	- consultant paediatrician
Mr Hudson	- orthopaedic consultant
Mr Edelsten	- consultant ophthalmologist
Mrs Clarke	- orthoptist
Mr Dunstan	- optician
Lindsay Mowles	- community dietician
Dr Eliatamby	- consultant psychiatrist for learning difficulties
Suzy Mawson	- community nurse
Steve Gray	- community nurse
Clare Williams	- community nurse
Mr Heaton	- dentist
Mrs Parsons	- dental health educator

Depending upon the children's specific needs we have contact with members of the learning disability team, social services, the Children's Society, respite agencies, voluntary organisations and support groups.



SCHOOL ROUTINES

The School Day

School starts at 9.00 a.m. and finishes at 3.00 p.m. Lunchtime and playtime are from 12.00 to 1.30 p.m. Meals are cooked on the premises and special dietary needs can be catered for in consultation with parents/carers, class teacher, school cook and the dietician. Further information about how to pay for meals and the arrangements for free school meals can be found in the Parent's Information Pack which is sent to all parents/carers of new children starting at the school.

Transport

In most cases, children attending Heathside are eligible for free transport provided by the Local Education Transport. If children are eligible, the Transport Department at County Hall makes arrangements and parents/carers are informed about this. All queries about transport can be dealt with by the Area Office on 01473 265065

Holidays

Term Dates 2008/2009

Autumn Term

Wednesday 3 September to Friday 19 December 2008
(Half term week commencing 27 October 2008)
Professional Development Day Monday 3 November 2008

Spring Term

Monday 5 January to Friday 3 April 2009
(Half Term week commencing 16 February 2009)
Professional Development Day Monday 23 February 2009

Summer Term

Monday 20 April 2009 to Friday 17 July 2009
(Half Term week commencing 25 May 2009)
Bank Holiday Monday 4 May 2009

Staff Training days
1 September 2008
2 September 2008
3 November 2008
23 February 2009
20 July 2009

If parents/carers wish to take their children on holiday during term time (not exceeding two weeks in any one year) a form is available from the school secretary. All other requests for absence should be made in writing. Parents/carers are asked to contact the relevant contractor who provides transport to prevent unnecessary journeys.



Attendance

It is a requirement for schools to record attendance, and all authorised and unauthorised absences. Clinic appointments, doctor's appointments etc are also recorded. We ask that parents/carers send a note into school explaining all absences so we can maintain accurate records. Keeping accurate registers is also a very important part of our fire safety procedures. The percentage figure for authorised absences in the school year 2007/2008 was 9.4%, and for unauthorised absences was 0.06%.

Bad Weather

During particularly inclement weather transport may be delayed or cancelled. In some very bad conditions the school will be closed. BBC Radio Suffolk and SGR will announce details.

School Uniform

School sweatshirts, T-shirts and trousers may be purchased from school. An order form is included in the Parents' Information Pack for new children but orders can be placed at any time by arrangement with the secretary. School uniform is not compulsory but we do ask that children are dressed comfortably and appropriately. We have an active curriculum and whilst the children wear aprons for some activities it is difficult to provide full protection from paint, sand, water and food.

For Physical Education children may require shorts, T-shirt and plimsolls or trainers. All children go swimming and will require a costume and a towel.

The labelling of all clothing is welcomed as things can go astray during a busy school day. The wearing of jewellery is discouraged for reasons of safety, and children with pierced ears may wear studs but not earrings.



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Admissions

All admissions to the school are the responsibility of the Local Education Authority and the arrangements are co-ordinated by the special needs officers. Joint admissions meetings with Thomas Wolsey School are held during each term. The aim of these is to agree the most appropriate placement for each child seeking a place. Admissions arising from children transferring from other schools, or moving into the area, are also co-ordinated by the LEA. Parents/carers are welcome to visit the school and visits prior to children starting at Heathside provide an opportunity to discuss any queries or concerns that may be present and provide information about the school.

Special Educational Needs Policy

The LEA has an overall policy framework for Special Educational Needs which is available from the Area Education Office.

A copy of the school's Special Educational Needs Policy is available on request.

Positive Behaviour

We have a positive approach to behaviour which is outlined in our Behaviour and Discipline Policy and which aims to reward children for good behaviour. Encouragement, praise and a system of "Stars of Achievement" support this approach. We welcome the opportunity to work with parents/carers on joint approaches to managing behaviour, and some children will have individual targets for behaviour which will have been fully discussed with parents/carers. Bullying is not acceptable in any form and parents/carers will be informed if incidents do arise.

Visits

We believe that first hand experience is invaluable and we use the local environment as much as possible to support the curriculum. Visits may involve the use of public transport, the school minibus or walking.

We ask parents/carers to agree in advance to all visits. A form is sent home at the beginning of each new school year seeking your consent. For some less ordinary activities specific permission will be requested and we may also ask for voluntary contributions to cover costs.

Some children will attend horse-riding sessions at Newton Hall Riding For the Disabled Centre in Swilland, and others participate in the Woolverstone Sailing Project during the Summer Term. Children from the Upper Team go swimming at Belstead School as part of our transition arrangements for pupils moving to Belstead and also to provide experience of swimming in deeper water.



Charging and Remission Policy

The Governing Body has formulated a policy for charging for all or part of the cost of certain school activities where appropriate. These include:

- The full cost of visits and optional extras out of school hours;
- The cost, or provision by parents, of consumable materials such as cookery ingredients and refreshments;
- The provision by parents of clothing for PE and swimming

A full statement of this policy is available on request..

Complaints

The Governing Body of the school has formally adopted two separate complaints procedures recommended by the LEA, Curriculum Complaints Procedure and School Complaints Procedure. An information sheet which explains the procedure for parents who wish to make a formal complaint is available from the school or from the Area Office.

Obviously it is the best interest of pupils to deal with any complaint as quickly and effectively as possible. In the first instance, however parents/carers are asked to refer any concerns or complaints directly to the Headteacher or other teaching staff as appropriate.

Child Protection

The Governing Body has approved a policy for child protection which conforms to the requirements of the Area Child Protection Committee. A requirement of the policy is that the Headteacher may make a referral to Social Services if it is considered that there are grounds to warrant this. Parents/carers may, or may not be informed about any referral depending on the circumstances surrounding it.



LEARNING AND THE CURRICULUM

Teaching and Learning

One of our principle aims is to provide a curriculum that is appropriate to the needs of each child. With this in mind each pupil has an individual programme drawn up by the teachers in consultation with parents/carers and the multi-professional team.

The curriculum involves all aspects of the school day. Teaching is not confined to the timetabled lessons and opportunities are sought at any time to capitalise on the right moment to teach, reinforce or develop a new skill. For example, motivation is often high during a drinks session, lunchtime or playtime. Wherever possible learning is based on direct experience and real activities.

Our aim is to take a whole child approach in order to meet individual needs. This requires an integration of:

- Pupil's individual priorities as defined by their Statement of Special Educational Needs;
- The requirements of the National Curriculum, or Foundation Stage Curriculum for children younger than five.
- Other curriculum priorities e.g. personal & social education, religious education;
- The Children's Charter.

Curriculum Organisation

For all full-time pupils classes are designated broadly by age. The inclusion of pupils with profound and complex learning difficulties is a positive feature of the school. Additional resources are allocated to classes according to need, and the planning takes account of a wide ability range in each class. We believe it is not necessary to disapply any pupil from the National Curriculum as all learning can be assessed within P-Levels.

All pupils will have access to the full range of subjects; Communication/English, Maths, Science, Physical Education, Information & Communication Technology, and Humanities. The approach taken to delivering the subjects will depend on the needs of pupils and for some it may involve an emphasis on sensory experiences.

National Curriculum Assessments Results

Where it is appropriate pupils are assessed using National Curriculum Assessment Tests and Task at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Teacher assessment, using National Curriculum criteria, is carried out for all pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. We are not required to report on the results of Key Stage National Curriculum Assessment Tests when less than 10 pupils are involved. Also, the Tests are not good measures of the achievements made by our pupils because they do not reflect the small steps of progress that they make.



Sporting Aims and the Provision of Sport

Physical activity is a very important element in a child's education. We may attach different labels, for example, PE, movement, physiotherapy; and areas of priority will vary according to need but the principle aim remains the same for all pupils. We make good use of the hall, swimming pool, and the outdoor area but there are limitations to developing some aspects of the PE curriculum. It is for this reason we that have identified the development of our school grounds as a major fund-raising project.

Sex Education

Sex education in its broadest sense is concerned with human relationships and is covered within Personal and Social Education. Where specific issues related to an individual pupil need to be addressed this is approached sensitively and parents/carers and other professionals are involved as appropriate.

Arrangements for Religious Education and Collective Worship

Religious Education is an important part of the whole curriculum and it is approached in a multi-faith manner. The school follows the Local Authority's Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

Taking account of the diverse needs of our children we believe it is more appropriate for the class base to be the focus for the assembly, but the whole school joins together twice a week for whole school assembly.

All parents/carers have the right to request exemption for their child from religious education and acts of worship. If this is required then a written request must be made to the Headteacher and alternative arrangements will be made.

Equal Opportunities and Multi-Cultural Education

We endeavour to reflect the multi-cultural nature of society whenever the opportunity arises within the curriculum or other activities. To this extent we have "multi-cultural weeks" each term where we look at and experience other religious or cultures from around the world. The County's multi-cultural service provides valuable support in terms of resources, advice and home/school links.

We believe that equality of opportunity is an important principle and one that we are committed to upholding. We strive to provide equality of opportunity in the education that we offer to our pupils.



THE NURSERY

Admission to the Nursery is possible under the following circumstances:

- Statutory assessment for the Statement of Special Educational Needs has begun;
- A place is available in the term after the child's third birthday;
- Parents/carers, and the child, have visited the Nursery;
- The Local Education Authority approves the place.

All admissions to the school have to be approved by the LEA and this process is carried out at termly admissions meetings. These meetings are attended by a number of different professionals and their purpose is to determine the most appropriate nursery placement for children with special needs. Depending where families live the Special Needs Officer in Ipswich, Lowestoft or Bury St Edmunds sends official confirmation about a placement in the Nursery. Preliminary meetings with parents/carers will usually have taken place before the admissions meeting. For some children there are joint placements with playgroups or mainstream nurseries. At this very young age it is often helpful for parents/carers to focus initially on their child's education within the context of the Nursery. Progression into the main part of the school at age five will be dependent on many factors including: completion of the statutory assessment for the Statement of Special Educational Needs, parents/carers views, the period of attendance, and any other changing circumstances.

Organisation

Once the LEA has approved official confirmation of a place it is possible to determine on what days children will attend. Attendance can be for two full days and it is possible for children to attend for one day and then add a second day later. If children remain at the school they then attend on a full-time basis at the start of the term in which their fifth birthday falls.

To help develop a friendly and welcoming atmosphere in the Nursery first names are used.

More detailed information about the curriculum and organisation is available from the Nursery team.

Transport

In most cases, children attending the Nursery are eligible for free transport provided by the Local Education Authority. This may be a taxi or a specially equipped mini-bus. The Transport Department at County Hall informs the families of all eligible children about travel arrangements. The Area Office can deal with any queries about transport and can be contacted on 01473 265065

Initially parents/carers may wish to bring children into the Nursery by car or public transport, or alternatively they may wish their children to use the school transport right from the start. The Nursery staff are happy to discuss personal transport arrangements and these can be tailored to suit individual needs.



What Children Will Require When They Start in the Nursery.

A bag to carry the following:

1. Pack of nappies and pack of wipes (if applicable)
2. A change of clothes.
3. A packed lunch (if not having a school meal)
4. Dinner money/social skills money in a marked purse or envelope.
5. Home/school diary (provided by school)
6. Special aids e.g. gaiters, helmet etc. (if applicable)
7. Medication with instructions for administration from the G.P. (if applicable)
8. Towel (or two towels if a changing bed is used)
9. Swimming trunks/costume
10. Sun cream and sun hat for the summer.

To prevent confusion all children's bags, clothes etc should have name labels attached.