



Cherry Tree  
EDUCATION

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*Where children have the time and therapeutic space to fulfil their potential*

# School Prospectus

## for Professionals 2017-2018

*'A school can become a surrogate 'secure base' which can contain the inevitable anxiety engendered by the challenges of learning. School can provide compensatory relationships and experiences to pupils whose capacities to learn have been impaired by adverse emotional and social experiences.'* Heather Geddes, *Attachment in the Classroom*, 2012.

## Introduction

Cherry Tree has been designed to meet the needs of pupils who present with mental health issues and learning difficulties, which has stopped them from accessing long term education or who have struggled to fit into the education models available to them. Cherry Tree specialises in pupils who need time to settle, need space to thrive and need patience and support to achieve. A highly experienced staff team will work together and with all relevant agencies to ensure that an individualised education package is shaped around each pupil. This will ensure that in time, they can reach their potential academically, while building their emotional stability and resilience.

Mental health and ongoing difficulties can present in many ways, both verbally, non-verbally and through various behaviours and so each individual situation will be discussed thoroughly to ensure that Cherry Tree can give the best possible fit for your young person. Understanding their holistic needs means that the most effective Learning Plan can be created to promote their growth and progress. Learning Plans are flexible working documents and will flow and adapt to the ongoing needs of the pupil.

Reflective practice and staff development is an integral part of Cherry Tree life and underpins much of what we do. Regular meetings with external experienced and qualified professionals also ensures that we remain up to date in our knowledge and add to our expertise to provide the best possible teaching and learning environment for our pupils.

***‘There is evidence that suggests that a whole school approach is important as it ensures that mental health and well-being is embedded within the culture and processes of the school, and also ensures that they work with partners in health, the voluntary sector etc. to provide mental health support for those most in need’.*** House of Commons Education Committee, *Mental Health and well-being of looked-after children*, 2016.



## How we educate

Square pegs do not fit into round holes so why keep trying the same? For some children, the traditional classroom setting does not work and can create even further barriers to their learning. This can often become a revolving door which adds to the loss of crucial real education time for the pupil. Cherry Tree is a detached building in a quiet residential area and has a warm homely feel and can cater for up to 10 pupils. The rooms are spacious and comfortable, and pupils will be encouraged to take ownership of their school. The property also has a large safe garden area where various ‘hands on’ projects can be carried out. For some pupils who need an integrated plan to allow them time to settle into school life, a variety of environments can be accessed including classrooms without walls within the spacious outdoors of the beautiful Kent countryside. In our experience, pupils who have a history of sporadic education respond well when a variety of these learning environments are tried. Through this flexible and adaptable approach, pupils have the time and space to discover their strengths and the way they learn best, which in turn creates the best possible environment ‘fit’ for the pupil to achieve their potential.



## School Counsellor

To complement our therapeutic education provision, we commission our own school counsellor for our pupils to access should they wish to do so.

Our counsellor has a range of experience working with children with mental health issues, attachment difficulties and who have experienced trauma and is a member of the BACP. The pupils have a choice as to whether they would like to see the counsellor or not, so the option is entirely theirs and will be offered on the days the counsellor attends. The sessions are confidential between the pupil and the counsellor, unless any safeguarding / child protection concerns are raised. We would not want our service to interfere with any other therapeutic input the pupils may be having so we liaise with all agencies concerned to ensure the best possible outcomes for our pupils.



### **Education Psychology Assessment**

To assist us in knowing what our pupils need to help them learn, we also commission an Education Psychologist to do an up to date Education Psychology Assessment for each new pupil. The results of the Assessment help us to put the right strategies in place and to refer to other professionals if needed. The results are also shared with other appropriate professionals to ensure cohesive working.



### **EHC Plans, Statements of SEN & PEPs**

Cherry Tree caters mainly for those pupils whose needs are not currently being met by either a mainstream, special or independent school within the area that they live. Most pupils who have complex and additional needs to help them learn, will already have a Statement of Special Educational Needs, or an Education and Health Care Plan. However, to ensure that those who need an EHC Plan have one, we offer to take the lead on pulling all information together and completing all relevant documents so that each pupil has a complete education history snap shot. Cherry Tree staff have a vast amount of experience of working closely with colleagues in Local Authorities and relevant departments to ensure this work is completed smoothly and efficiently. All pupils also have an Individual Learning Plan that works alongside all other relevant educational documents and is reviewed either termly or bi-termly depending on the needs of the individual pupil.



### **The Curriculum**

A blended, interesting and relevant curriculum is created for each individual pupil to ensure that their academic, spiritual, moral, social and cultural needs are addressed in a way that captures and motivates them to learn. The Cherry Tree timetable captures all the elements of the National Curriculum as well as ensuring pupils have the time to learn how to play, how to socialise and how to share and care. Developing these valuable life skills can be very difficult for children and young people who have attachment and or learning difficulties. Specific time through Social Enrichment Activities is dedicated for pupils to develop these skills in a safe and nurturing environment.

Pupils are given the opportunity to achieve Functional Skills qualifications which is often more suitable as they enable pupils to achieve in 'bite size chunks', especially if they have previously

struggled with a more formal route. Functional Skills qualifications enable the pupils to achieve up to a level 2, which is the equivalent of a higher level GCSE. The Cherry Tree curriculum also encompasses 'how to stay safe on the streets' through its 'Prevent' scheme of work. Our 'Prevent' work promotes and ensures that all pupils are aware of the fundamental British values of democracy, and mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, and for those without faith. Cherry Tree will also assess the skills and needs of children who are learning English as an Additional Language so that they can access appropriate provision within the school.

Pupils are supported with progress into further education in the next stage of their lives and are supported with careers advice and transition. Pupils also have the option to complete various NCFE qualifications for vocational subjects such as Cookery, Art and Craft subjects, and Employability Skills. We also have a part time professional musician who has several years of experience of working with children and young people with complex needs. Various music skills can be explored such as learning to play drums, guitar, keyboard etc. Singing lessons and Music Tech are also available.

A valuable part of our curriculum is having a 'shared lunch time'. We use this time as a valuable opportunity to help pupils develop their social and communication skills. All staff and pupils eat together and engage in 'Question of the day' where they learn to take turns and explore their own views and the world around them in a fun and safe way. They also takes turns in helping to clean up after lunch, which enables them to take some responsibility for the general order of the day and to develop every day life skills.



### **Moving On**

Some pupils need more time than others to catch up, work through their learning barriers and to be ready to engage in bigger groups and / or mainstream schools. However, some pupils may be ready to move on faster than others. To ensure that Cherry Tree continues to be the right provision for your child, discussions will take place at every PEP and EHC Plan Review to identify and start planning any future potential moves. This will not only ensure that there is a smooth transition plan in place but that everyone including the child, is involved in the decision making about their future.



### **Part Time Provision for Children Missing Education**

If a child is either excluded, a school refuser or is simply out of education because a provision is being sought, steps should be taken to ensure that they are receiving some form of education. Cherry Tree can offer a part time provision in response to a strategy meeting or when a permanent place is being sought for those children who are 'in between' schools. We can offer not only the essential core subjects, but a mini curriculum that will use strategies and methods to support a child to become a curious and happy learner. Regular reviews, base line assessments and progress and achievements will all be reported regularly to all stakeholders involved.



## **Our Ethos and Intentions**

### **Ethos**

Our school ethos is to value all pupil's skills and abilities beyond the cognitive. Pupils voices are valued and are at the heart of, and a part of every decision we make. Cherry Tree will strive to be innovative to meet the diverse, emotional and aesthetic needs of all pupils. We will endeavour to build mutually respectful relationships so that pupils feel appreciated and noticed. We believe in encouraging pupils to take learning risks and explore the world around them which in turn enables them to feel more positive about their learning and their future. The character, personality, individuality, awareness and resilience of each pupil is encouraged and developed, thereby promoting a healthy and enjoyable approach to learning and to life.

### **Through our considered intentions we will ensure that:**

- Our pupils are the focus of everything we do
- Our pupils are inspired and stretched to achieve the success they are capable of
- Our pupils are encouraged to adopt the responsibilities that go with their rights
- Our pupils are encouraged to adopt healthier and safer lifestyle options
- Our staff establish rich, diverse and stimulating learning environments for all
- Our staff provide ongoing choices, challenges and encourage initiative
- Our staff provide opportunities in a safe and happy environment
- Our staff will ensure that opportunities are local, national and international
- Our staff demonstrate a commitment to equality of opportunity
- We let you know what the pupils are doing each step of the way
- We let you know the pupils base line in core subjects
- We let you know regularly what they achieve and how they are progressing
- We let you know how they are progressing in relation to their peers
- We expect and maintain high standards in every aspect of school life and for it to be evident in behaviour and attitudes of all pupils
- We will promote the professional development of all staff and volunteers

### **Consultation and Training**

Are you looking to start your own independent school, or do you want to take your school to the next level? Do you need an objective observer to clearly define what you need to do? Do you need to revisit your ethos and intentions and create a more adhesive culture? Do you have a time scale? Whatever your need, our creative team and 'can do' approach can help you. We have many years of experience in setting up schools and provisions, designing and implementing whole school systems, writing policies and procedures and implementing training and support. Our team will work with you to ensure your school can meet its targets and ultimately your pupils can reach their potential.

Some of the areas we can offer consultation and training around are:

- Assessments Without Levels
- Reflective Practice and Self-evaluation
- Whole School Improvements
- Whole School Assertiveness
- Behaviour Management Systems and Procedures



## **What people say about us.....**

***Every member of staff are aware of the young peoples needs and issues and are able to manage them in a patient and tolerant way. The young people are treated as individuals and given huge respect. (Home Manager, March 2018)***

*Great pastoral care. A strong love for the child and will for them to succeed. (Foster Carer, March 2018)*

***Can I thank you and your staff for the support you are providing to..... it's great to see them engaging again. I was also proud of their achievements and the level of work they showed me when I attended their last CLA review. It is obvious they are enjoying being in education. (Team Manager, Jan 2018)***

*If more people in the world had your approach, drive and determination to do the right thing for children, it would be a much better place. Your team clearly share your ethos. (Education Co-ordinator, Feb 2018)*

***The management and staff are exceptional at this school, dedicated and hard working. (Foster Carer, Mar 2018)***

*I think it's the best school I've ever been to. (Pupil, Term 2)*

***I've been in many educational provisions and this is the only one that has worked for me'. (Pupil, Term 4)***

*The School's strengths:*

*Staff's passion to encourage learning and positive experiences*

*Staff go above and beyond support*

*The drive from the senior leaders is inspiring*

*Communication and allowing staff autonomy for teaching whilst promoting team work*

*A strong sense of collaboration*

*Focused on pupil academic and holistic progression*

*High expectations for learning and behaviour*

*(Various staff, March 2018)*

***I have worked with Soo Finn professionally for over 14 years, both as a colleague and education advisor, mostly recently in an independent school for 'looked-after' children with attachment issues and complex needs and consequent serious psychological and behavioural difficulties. Soo is very creative in her thinking and developing of both staff and pupils and works tirelessly to create an exciting and differentiated curriculum and activities to motivate and engage hard to reach pupils and young people. The school was deemed to be 'outstanding' as a result of the hard work and dedication of Soo, as recognised by myself and a consultant Ofsted inspector. Soo is an outstanding leader of a school, with an expertise in vulnerable, hard to reach learners of any age and has shown over the years to be able to engage these children in education and give them a positive outlook for their future.***

(Retired Ofsted Additional Inspector, Retired Deputy Principal of a specialist school and college, and Education Consultant and Advisor 2017)

**Contact us**

For a referral form or for general further information on our service please contact us on:

**01843 229633**

**Soo Finn Headteacher:**

[soo.finn@cherrytreeeducation.co.uk](mailto:soo.finn@cherrytreeeducation.co.uk)

Phone: 07913759432

**Emma Brown School Operations Manager:**

[Emma.brown@cherrytreeeducation.co.uk](mailto:Emma.brown@cherrytreeeducation.co.uk)

Phone: 07745354498

