



**National  
Autistic  
Society**



**Vanguard  
School**

## **Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)**

### **Information Report**

**January 2020**

## **What are the kinds of SEN for which provision is made at Vanguard School?**

Vanguard School ("The School") is a maintained day specialist autism school for students aged between 11-19 years.

We offer specialist education to autistic children who have been referred by their local authority through a curriculum tailored to suit their needs. In some cases, this means teaching a child from year 7 to year 14. The school will take students from Lambeth and other surrounding local authorities.

All students must have an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) that refers to a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Though no longer recognised in the DSMV, our students' diagnosis may include Asperger's or High Functioning Autism.

Students may also have additional needs, for example obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Students may also have associated needs in the areas of emotional, social and communication and interaction development and/or psychological or mental health difficulties. In addition, students may have sensory, or physical/motor difficulties.

Our students benefit from provision that opens up the breadth of the full mainstream curriculum while recognising that some children need the additional support of our school to manage anxiety arising from their autism, sensory, social and communication difficulties are unable to manage a mainstream school environment.

Students at Vanguard school access a structured environment and high levels of targeted intervention and differentiation throughout the school day. Our students work at broadly age related levels of attainment and we anticipate that they will gain a range of qualifications, including GCSEs and A-levels.

Vanguard School aims to identify the learning needs for each individual student taking into account their barriers to learning and will put in place an appropriately paced and differentiated curriculum to help the student achieve the best possible results.

## **What are Vanguard School's policies for the identification and assessment of students attending the school?**

All students have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Students are assessed on entry for the level of support required. Students can be brought in on a standard or enhanced staffing level dependent on need. This can be reviewed at the annual review.

Further information on the admissions process to Vanguard School can be found on the Vanguard School website.

Target setting is used to raise standards of achievement and rates of progress at Vanguard School. The targets show what we expect all our pupils to attain. We use prior attainment and assessment to inform our target setting and continuous monitoring of progress. Comparing current attainment against targets allows us to intervene where necessary and measure the impact of the teaching and learning, curriculum and tutoring.

All pupils should make **at least** 'Expected Progress' although we aspire to achieve more than this. Prior attainment and assessment information is used to inform target setting and continuous monitoring of progress takes place to ensure that pupils meet these targets, sometimes with intervention and support, or have targets adjusted when appropriate.

When pupils arrive at NAS Vanguard School, a thorough baseline testing and holistic assessment procedure takes place, to enable staff to gather a full picture of pupils' ability and to enable ambitious, well informed targets to be set. This baseline assessment has 2 parts:

- Initial baseline assessment : cognitive and engagement assessments completed within first three weeks
- Extended baseline assessment including transdisciplinary team assessments and teacher observations.

The baseline testing process follows the following timeline:

(Week 1 - w/c 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020)

**Weeks 1 -2:** Baseline testing using online GL Complete Digital Solution: (Cognitive Abilities Test 4; Progress Tests in English, Mathematics; Science; New Group Reading Test; New Group Spelling Test; Pupil Attitudes to School and Self survey).

**Week 3:** School-set baseline tests in English, Mathematics and Science are undertaken. Tests are formed of Key Stage 2 assessment material (where national data on a pupil is not available) and from National Curriculum Key Stage 3 material.

By close of Week 3, academic targets are set.

**Weeks 1 – 3:** Initial assessment of pupils' developmental needs takes place through:

- evaluation of the effectiveness of pupil transition plans with adaptations made
- observation of pupils' wellbeing in the 'settling in' period by teachers and learning mentors
- further information on the above garnered from initial meetings around the child to take place in Weeks 1-3. Attendees to include the child, parent(s)/carer(s), social care team (where relevant) and the School
- initial assessment of pupils by transdisciplinary team: S&LT, OT and Clinical Psychologist (ongoing in Weeks 1-4)
- personalised learning plans (PLPs) and positive behaviour support plans (PBS plans) written prior to pupils joining school are revised in light of the above and shared with pupils, parents/carers and relevant staff.

**Week 4:** by close of Week 4, full assessment of pupils' developmental needs has taken place and informed goal setting in relation to ECHP targets, PLPs and PBS plans.

**Week 1-12:** Transdisciplinary team carry out observation and standardised assessments and by week 12 provide an up to date assessment of need and recommendations of provision required.

Depending on the year and Key Stage of entry, any circumstances that have affected a pupil's progress since Key Stage 2 may require additional baseline tests to provide achievable targets. E.g., for pupils who have missed long periods of schooling or whose medical treatment or conditions have affected learning progress.

We understand the contextual factors that can affect pupils and should ensure additional interventions are actioned in order to help pupils keep on their flight path and aim to achieve above it by providing them with **challenge** and **pace** in learning whenever appropriate.

Targets will be reviewed in line with national averages and similar school's performance indicators.

Targets are:

- Moderated on a termly basis, three times a year. Progress towards targets is measured 6 times per year, each half term).
- Adjusted upwards where a pupil is outperforming their initial target.
- Used to formulate early intervention strategies when a target is seen to be at risk.

## **What is the provision for students at Vanguard School, and how is it evaluated?**

### **Vanguard school organisation of provision**

Vanguard School is a secondary school and operates a secondary model (as similar as much as able to a typical secondary school) but with highly specialist autism specific teaching.

### **Vanguard school Quality of Life Curriculum**

Vanguard school offers a specialist package of developmental support. The package incorporates academic, vocational, life skills, occupational health, psychological, speech and language, and pastoral inputs that when combined well develops pupils' knowledge and skills now and for the future. The major objective of this curriculum strategy is to ensure that every one of our schools provides the education promised by planning per child each input carefully and cohesively into a child and family centred provision. The quality of life curriculum is a whole school approach which includes assessing our pupils quality of life using a range of indicators. Central to this approach is carrying out this assessment process including the child and families view. It is built on the National Autistic Society's position that parents and young people need to be full participants in decision making and that we should be working together to support autistic young people to live the lives they want as they move towards adulthood.

Staff at every stage in their careers will play a crucial role in this strategy. Every member of staff has the potential to change a child's life by being the key advocate for a pupil. No

matter their level of professional training or education, every member of teaching and learning staff will be the go to people for our pupils' provisions' impact. Your child will have one identified keyworker who will liaise with you on all aspects of your child's life at school.

### **Systems for monitoring and Evaluation**

Vanguard School has a cycle of continuous evaluation and improvement which includes:

- Termly and annual reports to the board of trustees
- Reports to the governing body
- Quality assurance visits (NAS Education Directorate)
- Lesson observations and learning walks
- Staff supervision and appraisal
- Combined Self-evaluation document and School Improvement Plan (SEIP)
- Analysis of pupil progress data
- Analysis of attendance data
- Analysis of behaviour data
- Pupil progress meetings

### **How the school reviews progress of pupils with SEN**

All teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all the students in their class, even where students access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff. The teacher is to ensure that all information and data on each student in class is up to date and freely available to review and will take a proactive rather than reactive stance when it comes to the students' progress or lack of it. Where a student is not making adequate progress, teachers (class teachers or form tutors), the therapy team and parents will collaborate on problem solving, planning support and teaching strategies for individual students.

There are 3 forms of assessment used by the school:

#### **1. Day-to-day in-school formative assessment, for example:**

- Question and answer during class
- Assessment / review of pupils' work
- Observational assessment i.e. teachers seeing what pupils do with new knowledge
- Regular short re-cap question and answer sessions
- Scanning work for pupil attainment and development

The results of formative assessments have a direct impact on the teaching materials and strategies employed immediately following the assessment. Results and observations are kept on the school's Data Tracking document, in pupils' Progress Files in teacher's own assessment files, recorded on the school's data system and in the pupil's own books.

#### **2 In-school summative assessment, for example:**

- End of year exams
- Short end of topic or unit tests
- Annual review reports (including evaluation of progress against EHCP outcomes)

### **3 Nationally standardised summative assessment, for example:**

- National Curriculum tests
- National Curriculum teacher assessments
- External exam board examination

### **How does the school support equality and inclusion?**

The School is committed to providing an appropriate and high-quality education to all the students living in the local area and beyond. The School believes that all students, including those identified as having special educational needs or a disability have a common entitlement to a broad and balanced academic and social curriculum. By being a specialist school we are able to provide an accessible academic life as well as an inclusive school life.

We believe that all students should be equally valued in school. One way in which this is done is by holding achievement assemblies every week in school and we encourage parents to communicate to us about any achievement their child has had outside school, so that the whole school community can celebrate and learn from the experience. It is important for all students to feel a sense of community within their school and to feel valued and supported. We will strive to eliminate prejudice and discrimination, and to develop an environment where all pupils can flourish and feel safe. In order to achieve this, we aim to encourage an environment of tolerance and kindness to one another.

The School is committed to inclusion and we will aim to embrace diversity as this is another way for the student to learn about the world and expand their horizons

The School has an Accessibility Policy which is available on the school website.

### **The School's approach to teaching pupils with SEN**

Vanguard School uses a blend of autism-specific approaches:

- TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication related handicapped Children). This is an evidence based service, training and research program for individuals of all ages and skills levels with an autism spectrum disorder . The School uses aspects of TEACCH in the way the environment is structured and how the School plans and organises students learning.
- The curriculum is delivered in line with the NAS **SPELL** philosophy. **SPELL** is a framework for support and intervention when working with children and adults on the Autistic Spectrum. It is an acronym which stands for:

**Structure**

**Positivity**

**Empathy**

**Low arousal**

**Links**

### **How the School enables students with SEN to engage in the activities in the school together with children who do not have special educational needs.**

All students at Vanguard School have Special Educational Needs. All students benefit from inclusion in a wider sense, participating in class, group and whole school events and all students' access the local community for a range of purposes on a regular basis.

Some students may benefit from participation in a mainstream educational setting and individual schools may make inclusion arrangements for a particular student to visit and participate in a particular class within the mainstream setting where it is able to be demonstrated that the student would benefit from such participation.

### **Supporting emotional, mental and social development**

The School has its own Transdisciplinary team and liaises with external professionals such as CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) teams. The Transdisciplinary team works closely with the teaching and care staff on a daily basis.

The Transdisciplinary team aims to familiarise themselves with each student and their individual needs so that they are well equipped to help them build their own communication, social and behavioral skills. As such, the MAST team are not an isolated entity within the school, they are proactive and work directly with students and the teaching staff in the classroom and throughout the school. This approach means that all staff are constantly using therapeutic techniques in their work, so the student is supported at every moment of the day.

The transdisciplinary team also see students individually if this is required and will aim to give a student particular attention if they are having a difficult time. The team also contribute to the student's assessments and reviews, looking at areas like social understanding, anger management and communication. The School runs groups which focus on specific skills such as communication, and role play to teach social skills. The School also has approaches to help the student get used to being near others, to develop sensory awareness, to help them relax and reduce anxiety.

### **Vision, Mission, Values and Aims**

**Vision:**

The National Autistic Society has a vision of:

### **A SOCIETY THAT WORKS FOR AUTISTIC PEOPLE**

Vanguard School will be a centre of expertise and excellence, educating 78 students aged 11-19 with a diagnosis of an Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) and an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

The Vanguard School's vision is:

### **TO PREPARE OUR LEARNERS FOR LIFE BEYOND SCHOOL THROUGH SPECIALIST EDUCATION THAT WORKS FOR AUTISTIC CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.**

The purpose of our school is to help prepare young people to make a successful transition into adulthood with the confidence and the necessary skills to live as independently as possible and participate in their local community. We seek to increase achievement and independence to give our students the best possible opportunity to gain employment or access further education and enable them to go on to live the life they choose.

We aim to provide autistic students currently not receiving an effective or suitable education access to high quality specialist provision.

The school's name 'Vanguard' denotes a group of people leading the way to advance thinking. A key aspect of our school will be to advance thinking in what autistic students can achieve and contribute. As such we will need to build social capital and work with core stakeholders to secure opportunities for our students, extending their experiences and future possibilities.

#### **Mission:**

To transform the lives of autistic young people in our community by offering high quality specialist provision.

To create a community with a clear ethos of respecting and valuing each young person, with high ambitions which will enable them to lead happy, independent lives.

#### **Values:**

- **We learn from real experience.** The School forms part of the National Autistic Society's Academies Trust ("NASAT"). The National Autistic Society ("NAS") has over 50 years working together with people on the autism spectrum. It is the largest Autism charity in the UK and as such no one has more practical knowledge of autism and all this experience and knowledge is filtered down for the benefit of the School. As the leading charity, for Autism, the NAS, NASAT and the School aim to "have their finger on the pulse" and are constantly seeking out new methods and theories and practices that would benefit the students.



- **We tell it like it is.** The School aims to share what it has learned about autism to as wide an audience as possible especially with parents and the immediate wider community. This is to promote understanding, knowledge and tolerance. We also aim to educate our students about their autism so that they can make better-informed decisions and lead full happy lives.
- **We inspire.** The School celebrates progress, aims to open up new possibilities and spur people into action and motivate change.
- **We are courageous.** The School will not accept ignorance or inequality. In addition, the School will also never stop pushing for more understanding, greater support and a better world for people on the autism spectrum.

#### **Aims:**

We will know we are achieving our vision when we can demonstrate the following impact:

#### **Our students will:**

- Access a curriculum specifically tailored to meet individual needs.
- Be taught using a range of strategies to meet individual learning styles.
- Develop skills for life including promotion of safety, well-being and independence beyond school.
- Develop a belief in the importance of what they can achieve, not what they can't.
- Recognise and develop personal strengths, interests and skills.
- Become empowered to make informed life choices through a structured approach to Person Centred Planning.
- Become self-aware and be able to self-regulate personal barriers to learning.
- To develop and maintain positive relationships.

#### **Our parents will:**

- Feel involved, informed and supported in relation to their child's progress and development.
- Regard the school as a source of expertise and support.
- Highly rate the NAS Vanguard School in satisfaction surveys
- Support the work of the school and participate in school community activities.
- Take opportunities to develop partnerships with other parents and families.
- Use the school as a community resource.

#### **Our local schools and community will:**

- Regard us as specialists in the field of autism to develop their autism knowledge and practice.
- Understand our students and work with us to extend their opportunities incl. work experience.
- Seek our advice and contributions on matters relating to autism, for individual students, whole school development and/or community projects.

- Use our facilities and resources, including the sport hall.
- Welcome us in accessing some of their specialist facilities.

Vanguard School is unique both in the way these aims are achieved, and how the balance is accomplished between students' Individual My Progress plans and the other aspects of the learning environment. Every effort is made to discover the wishes of parents/carers regarding their children's education. These aims are met by creating a well organised learning environment that is challenging, stimulating and based on fun and enjoyment.

At Vanguard School, we look at the whole person, planning realistic programmes to meet the intellectual, social, spiritual, moral, cultural, physical, emotional and therapeutic needs of every student. These needs are most effectively met by pursuing a student-centred approach that is undertaken by a team of talented professionals. Each professional makes a special contribution, brought about by specialised training and expertise, but all are united in the common pursuit of Vanguard School's mission statement,

All staff have a responsibility to meet the needs of all the students at Vanguard School.

School staff details are on the Vanguard School website. The School contact details are also on the website.

Staffing levels are high so that students are usually taught in classes of up to 6 students, with a teacher and an appropriate number of additional Learning Mentors to meet the needs of the class group.

The School receives advice from a range of health professionals, in order to meet the needs of the students, as assessed by the appropriate professionals. We are working closely with our health and social care colleagues to implement the SEND Code of Practice, 2015. We will work closely to keep parents/carers informed of the changes and next steps for their families.

### **What training do staff have in relation to the needs of students at Vanguard School?**

The professional development of all staff is ongoing and continuous. A wide range of training opportunities related to care, education and developing expertise in the area of Autism are provided both in induction and beyond. These include:

- Skill sharing and the demonstration of teaching techniques and strategies organised within the School
- Extensive access to on line training.
- Professional development sessions and one-off sessions on relevant subjects provided by SEN specialists
- Attendance at courses offered by external providers, accredited and non-accredited, as part of the School's Performance Management process
- Other courses which are relevant to the work being undertaken. This can be generated by staff interest or can be undertaken at the request of the School.
- Progression through Autism Education Trust competency framework.

All staff have clear job descriptions, which detail the required qualifications for each post in the school. All staff have a core training programme related to their work within the School. This includes:

- NAS Ask autism models
- Universal safeguarding
- Studio 3 managing challenging behaviour
- Health and Safety
- Manual handling
- Fire procedures
- Online safety
- Female Genital mutilation
- PREVENT
- GDPR / data protection

This is not an exhaustive list and specialist courses are additionally organised for specific roles.

### **How will equipment and facilities be provided to support students at Vanguard School?**

Vanguard School is a new and purpose-built school, and is fully accessible for wheelchair users with a lift to access the first floor.

Our school is purpose-built for children with autism. It is the ideal place for your child to learn, be supported and feel safe. Our school is on one site.

In some classes, we have individual work stations, so that if a child finds it hard to work among others, they can have their own space within their classroom.

At the center of the School is our main hall, where we gather for assembly, do indoor PE and gym, and hold our shows.

We have a number of specialist rooms including:

- Life skills
- IT and Multimedia
- Science
- Design and Technology
- Numeracy
- Literacy
- Art

We also use the local community to access a range of activities that promote academic, social and physical development.

Our outside spaces are well utilised with opportunities for playing outdoor sports as well as play equipment, outdoor gym equipment and a sunken trampoline.

All parents, families and associated professionals are welcome to visit Vanguard School either on an open day or at an agreed appointment date prior to students attending the School.

### **What are the arrangements for consulting parents of students at Vanguard School, and involving them in the education of their child?**

Parents/carers are fully included in the process of working with their child.

This includes:

- Initial visits to the School.
- Introductory meetings
- Daily home-school book for information exchanges and key messages.
- Termly parent/teacher target setting meetings, including update from professionals.
- Annual Review of EHCP meeting
- Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings or Children In Need (CIN) meetings.
- Parent workshops and training.
- Coffee mornings.
- Open afternoons/evenings.
- Parental representation on the Governing Body.
- Parent involvement in changes in school, through informal and formal consultations.

### **What are the arrangements for consulting students at Vanguard School about, and involving them in, their education?**

All students at the School are treated with dignity and respect. There is full personalisation of the curriculum for every student, so that every student can access and experience success throughout their school-life. The School Council involves students, to contribute to and decide on aspects of school-life, relating to their needs. Every Annual Review of EHCP includes the individual student's views.

The school promotes a person-centred approach and understands that our students learn best when they are motivated and feel the learning is purposeful. Staff work closely with students to understand their ambitions and interests and tailor learning to suit this.

### **What are the arrangements made by the governing body for dealing with complaints from parents/carers of students in relation to the provision made at Vanguard School?**

The process for all complaints is made available in the complaints policy, which is available on the Vanguard School website.

### **How does the governing body involve others - including health, social services, local authority services and voluntary organisations, in meeting the needs of students at Vanguard School, and in supporting their families?**

We have a wide range of staff working together within the School to support the students and their families. Most staff are full time. Some professionals work for the School and are in school on particular days or as necessary.

Some staff are employed directly by the School whilst other staff have different lines of management from external sources (this may include members of the Transdisciplinary team if brought in on a consultant basis)

Members of the Senior Leadership Team, teachers, Positive Behaviour Support Co-ordinator, Learning Mentors, Administration team and Site manager employed directly by the School.

The school / SENCO works with other external professionals including local authority employees, e.g. SEN Case Officers, Social Workers, Family Support Workers (FSWs), Education Welfare Officers (EWOs), as well as Autism advisory teachers, reintegration services/Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), organisations supporting families (e.g. Help for Families), respite carers, careers advisors (e.g. Adviza), Youth Offending Team workers, and drugs workers. All these professionals visit Vanguard School to attend meetings (e.g. Annual Reviews of EHCP, or to deliver 1:1 or group sessions), or to work with Vanguard School staff and students.

The Sensory Service staff including Visual/Hearing Impairment (VI/HI) advisory teachers are employed by the LEAs. They may provide staff training and advice on individual student's needs.

Where pupil transport is provided this is organised by the LAs, not the school. Transport staff are employed by the transport companies. Some parents are responsible for transport.

There are also social workers for some students, who are LA employees and are based within the Children Specialist Services.

### **What are Vanguard School's arrangements for supporting students in transferring between phases of education or in preparing for adulthood?**

All transitions are well planned for throughout Vanguard School, as students move from class-to-class and phase-to-phase (e.g. primary to secondary). Parents/carers always have the opportunity to meet the new teacher and class staff. Students are increasingly supported in planning for their transition from school- to adult-life.

Vanguard will employ the services of an independent careers advisor . This advisor will work with students in school, to get to know them and to advise both students, school staff and parents/carers on what is available after leaving Vanguard School.

### **Where is the information on Lambeth's Local Authority local offer published?**

Detail on Lambeth's local offer is published at: <https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/send-local-offer>

There is further detail on our website : <https://www.autism.org.uk/services/nas-schools/vanguard.aspx>

**Contact details of support services**

National Autistic Society Helpline: 08008004104 <http://www.autism.org.uk/>

National Autistic Society Education rights help line: 08008004102

National Autistic Society Parent to Parent helpline: 08008004106

National Autistic Society Information centre: 02079033599

IPSEA (Independent Parental Special Educational Advice): 08000184016

<http://www.ipsea.org.uk/>

Parent partnership services <http://www.parentpartnership.org.uk/>

Contact a Family's SEN National Advice Service 0808 808 3555 <http://www.cafamily.org.uk/>

Mencap 0808 808 1111 <http://www.mencap.org.uk/>