Include

Issue 3, Autumn 2019 Orchard Hill College & Academy Trust 'Family' Magazine

Orchard Hill College

Support our students!

Orchard Hill College is an Ofsted Outstanding specialist college and independent charity for young people with SEND.

Each year we need to raise additional funds to provide our students with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) with the specialist equipment and opportunities to realise their aspirations.

You can support us through:

- Making a donation
- Running your own fundraising event
- Corporate sponsorship

We would love to hear from you, please contact us on marketing@ohcat.org or 0345 402 0453.

Thank you for your support.

Charity number 1144922

Welcome

Welcome to the third issue of INCLUDE, the annual publication from Orchard Hill College and Academy Trust (OHC&AT), and my first as CEO.

Over the last year the organisation has undergone significant change, and in this issue we inform you of the changes we have implemented, and how they underpin the next phase of our growth. On page 6 read how our new ethos and vision will set the direction for our future, and the five key strands of our new strategy.

One thing that has not, and will not change, is that we are here to support and benefit our pupils and students. On pages 8 and 9 we celebrate achievements across OHC&AT, and you can read regular stories from all the schools and college via our website www.ohcat.org.

In each issue of INCLUDE we focus on different areas of our unique and broad offer, this time taking a look at The Link Secondary School's outstanding outcomes; Tom's Farm at Nightingale Community Academy, the unexpected rare-breed city farm; and how WorkStart at Orchard Hill College is enabling its students to gain life-changing qualifications and experience.

The continued developments of our Training School and Digital School are detailed on pages 14 and 15, and we feature an in-depth look at Contextual Safeguarding on page 16.

I am privileged to be CEO of OHC&AT and I invite you to join us on the next exciting phase of our our journey.

John Prior
CEO
OHC&AT

Contents

04-05 The OHC&AT Family
A snapshot of the academies and college centres within OHC&AT

06-07 What OHC&AT did next...
What the future holds for the 'family'

08-09 Achievements and Successes
Celebrating success across OHC&AT

10 Aiming High: The Link Secondary School
A look through the doors of The Link Secondary School

11 Tom's Farm
A hidden gem in Wandsworth

12-13 WorkStart
A unique package of courses centred on getting students in to work

14 Training School
Developments from our in-house training provision

15 Digital School
An update on our latest digital projects and partnerships

16-17 Contextual Safeguarding for pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties
As featured in SEN Magazine

18 Building futures, changing lives
A look at plans for the future of Orchard Hill College

Follow us on Twitter and Instagram @OHCandAT

Orchard Hill College
Carew Academy
Dysart School
St Philip's School
Young People's Academy
The Skills Hub
Bedelsford School
Nightingale Community Academy
Chart Wood School
The Link Primary School
The Link Secondary School
Brantridge School
Grafham Grange School
St Dominic's School
Arbour Vale School

The Orchard Hill College and Academy Trust 'Family'

Orchard Hill College and Academy Trust (OHC&AT) together form a family of inclusive special education providers for pupils and students from nursery through to further education.

OHC&AT is a 'family' of education providers and services located in four local community hubs in London, Surrey, Sussex and Berkshire with six college centres and 14 academies.

Orchard Hill College is an outstanding independent provider offering specialist education programmes for students who have a wide range of needs, aged 16 and over, in six main college centres:

Lomond House is situated just off Camberwell Green.

Beaconsfield is located within a quiet residential setting in New Malden.

Vocational Progression Centre is a stand-alone centre sharing a campus with Carshalton College.

Vocational Centre is co-located with Nightingale Community Academy in Wandsworth.

Wyvern House is based near Uxbridge town centre.

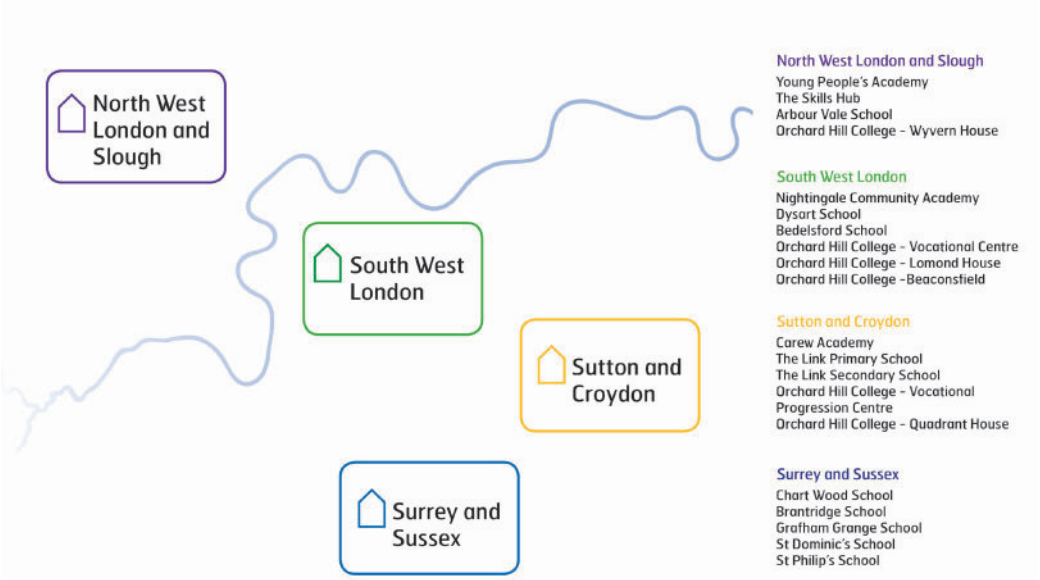
Quadrant House in Sutton is for students accessing the Digital School, work experience, apprenticeships and enterprise activities.

Academies

Carew Academy in Wallington is for pupils aged 7-19 with a wide range of ability levels and additional learning needs, including complex autism.

Dysart School in Surbiton is a provision for pupils aged 4-19 who have a range of severe and complex learning needs including autism.

St Philip's School in Chessington is for pupils aged 9-19 with a wide range of ability levels and additional learning needs, including complex autism.



Young People's Academy in Hillingdon is for students aged 11-16 with social, emotional and mental health needs.

The Skills Hub in Hillingdon offers an alternative provision to mainstream education for pupils aged 11-16 to prepare them for adult life and employment.

Bedelsford School in Kingston provides for pupils aged 2-19 who have a wide range of physical disabilities, including profound and multiple learning difficulties, multi-sensory impairment and complex health needs.

Nightingale Community Academy in Wandsworth is a school for boys aged 5-19 who have social, emotional and mental health needs.

The Link Primary School in Beddington provides for pupils aged 4-11 years whose primary need is speech, language and communication. Some children may also have additional learning, sensory or physical needs.

The Link Secondary School in Beddington provides for students aged 11-19 whose primary need is speech, language and communication.

Grafham Grange School in Guildford is for boys aged 10-19 with autistic spectrum conditions, speech, language and communication difficulties, ADHD, opposition defiance, medical conditions and attachment disorders.

St Dominic's School in Godalming is for pupils with complex educational, health and care needs aged 7- 19 typically with a primary diagnosis of speech, language and communication needs and/or autistic spectrum conditions.

Brantridge School in Haywards Heath is for boys aged 6-12 with social, emotional and mental health needs, autistic spectrum conditions, including those with Asperger's syndrome, and those with a diagnosis of ADHD and associated learning difficulties.

Arbour Vale School in Slough is for pupils aged 2-19 with a range of educational needs including severe learning difficulties with profound and multiple needs.

Chart Wood School in Merstham is for boys aged 9-16 who have social, emotional and mental health needs.

Orchard Hill College

Carew Academy

Dysart School

St Philip's School

Young People's Academy

The Skills Hub

Bedelsford School

Nightingale Community Academy

Chart Wood School

The Link Primary School

The Link Secondary School

Brantridge School

Grafham Grange School

St Dominic's School

Arbour Vale School

What OHC&AT did next...

John Prior, CEO of Orchard Hill College and Academy Trust, explains how a new mission and ethos statement will set the direction for the organisation's future.

Orchard Hill College and Academy Trust (OHC&AT) is now entering 'Phase 2' following a period of rapid growth.

To signpost this next phase, we have a new mission statement – in other words, what is OHC&AT's core purpose?

OHC&AT exists to support, enable and champion the talents, skills and rights of the most complex and vulnerable people in our society in order that we can release their potential, promote their wellbeing and transform their lives.

Alongside this, we have developed a new statement that summarises our ethos – in other words, what we believe:

As a community of learners, families and colleagues OHC&AT believes that by working collaboratively, with energy and ambition we can always effect positive change. At the core of our ethos is the conviction that there should be no limit placed on what is possible and that everyone has the ability to be the very best they can be.

There are five key strands to our revised strategy in Phase 2, and these are summarised below:

Quality, Standards & Reputation

At OHC&AT we aspire to, and expect to ensure, that every pupil and student receives exceptional provision, whatever academy or college centre they attend. Our broad portfolio includes already good and outstanding schools that chose to convert to become OHCAT academies as well as schools that have had difficult experiences and present challenging legacy issues. Too many people with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) have poor life outcomes, whether in relation to employment, physical wellbeing or mental health. Every learner is an OHC&AT child, young person or adult and as such we work relentlessly to develop careful pathways, promote meaningful destinations and effect life changing outcomes for all individuals, regardless of their starting points or the complexity of their needs.

John Prior with a student at the 2019 Outstanding Achievement Awards

Life changing outcomes
Meaningful destinations
Quality of life

Innovation and Specialism

OHC&AT is a specialist Multi-Academy Trust that offers deep and wide-ranging expertise across the full range of SEND and across all age-ranges, from pre-school into adulthood. We use this extensive resource to ensure that creative approaches to meeting complex needs are distributed across the Trust and the College in order to maximise opportunities for our pupils and

students. Our ethos of informed practice, focused networking and targeted professional development and training promotes a genuinely collaborative culture where innovation is valued and risk-taking is encouraged.

Professional networking
Measuring impact
Research active

Development and Growth

OHC&AT adopts an ambitious but judicious approach to growth and development. Our broader mission is to advance the voice and needs of all children, young people and adults with SEND, including those within the mainstream sector, and not just those within our family of providers. This means that we are responsive to local and regional need and have a clear moral purpose that impels us to generate a positive impact where we believe we can do so. We are also conscious that growth need not always simply equate to 'more' and that as such, our focus is as much on building on existing strengths, eliminating under-performance, taking a partnership approach and maturing the specialism.

Partnership and outreach
Training and professional development
High-quality estates

System Leadership

OHC&AT believes that the collective thoughts and experiences of leaders and governance at all levels of the organisation must be harnessed to enable positive and sustainable transformation.

Great practice and informative learning will exist everywhere, regardless of quality snapshots at moments in time and as such, every aspect of OHC&AT should expect to give and receive support and challenge. Such a connected approach, supported by strong, reliable and compliant processes that enable people to be held to account for their part of the plan, give us the best chance of fulfilling the potential of our learners and to extend our reach and influence beyond the parameters of OHC&AT.

Influence and advocacy
Compliance and accountability
Responsive governance

Nurturing Talent

In order to generate great outcomes for our OHC&AT learners we need great people, throughout all strands of the organisation. This means that we place real emphasis on investing in our staff, governance and volunteers so that we promote and liberate their talent, harness expertise, attend to their wellbeing and enable them to make the difference. In doing so we not only make OHC&AT an attractive place for recruitment but we invest to retain high quality people, which in turn means that succession planning is strong and our 'no limits' culture is perpetuated.

Future-proofing
Releasing potential
Growing opportunity

At the heart of all of this is our most valuable resource – our staff team, governors and volunteers. Together we create the environment that enables our amazing pupils and students to be all they can be.

Achievements and Successes

Award winners, community spokespeople and outstanding results, pupils and students across OHC&AT never stop striving, learning and smashing expectations.

Skills for Work and Living

Over the last year Orchard Hill College launched 'Skills for Work and Living', giving students the chance to study a vocational course specifically linked to their interests. Skills for Work and Living takes place across all six college centres and courses range from animal care, motor vehicle maintenance to hair and beauty and more.

Skills for Work and Living enables students to progress on to a new range of employment opportunities. One of our students recently completed the catering and hospitality course and now works at Pretty Little Cupcakes bakery. Some of our students are also working with Southwark Playhouse and Fairfield Halls to develop creative arts skills and have performed a variety of shows.

The benefit of Skills for Work and Living is that students can work towards nationally recognised qualifications, helping them to go on to further studies and employment.

Kelly Phillips, Principal of Orchard Hill College, says:

> "Skills for Work and Living is life-changing; it will enable our students to thrive after their time at college."

Key partners for Skills for Work and Living

The course gives students the opportunity to work with organisations including:

- Sainsbury's
- Waitrose
- Deen City Farm
- Sutton Community Farm
- The Old Vic
- John Lewis
- Croydon Clocktower
- Boots
- Salvation Army
- Metropolitan Police
- DASH
- Disability Lambeth
- Fairfield Halls

Leading Parent Partnership Award

Dysart School was thrilled to be awarded the Leading Parent Partnership Award. This award highlights the positive relationship between the school and parents.

Vice Principal, Emmet Murphy, said: "The dedication, hard work, and care that everyone at Dysart shows to our pupils and to their families really shone through and bowled the verifier over."

Residential trip to Paris

Carew Academy was delighted to launch its first residential trip to France.

Students have been learning French and this was the perfect experience to develop their language and independence skills while adapting to a new environment. The trip enabled students to see first-hand the landmarks and traditions they have been learning about at school.

Lesson time at Dysart School

Pupils working together at Arbour Vale School

Kingston schools' Ofsted success

Bedelsford School, Dysart School and St Philip's School celebrated the results of their fantastic Ofsted inspections. Bedelsford School's report found *"The personalised and very well-thought out curriculum is underpinned by the key areas of social and emotional, thinking, independence, communication and mobility skills."*

St Philip's School's report highlighted that *"behaviour and attitudes of pupils is exemplary. Pupils are very proud of their school. They are polite, respectful and friendly to each other and to school staff."*

While Dysart School's report noted their 'Rainbow' curriculum *"is highly responsive to pupils' individual needs. It has been carefully constructed, taking into account the views of pupils and families."*

Bedelsford School continues to be Outstanding

Carew Academy 6th Form in Paris

Students join Slough Youth Parliament

Arbour Vale School was delighted to have two pupils from Key Stage 4 representing the school at the Slough Youth Parliament.
The pupils worked alongside peers from other schools, discussing matters of concern in Slough and fed back to the School Council.

Paragames winners

Pupils from Nightingale Community Academy won the Paragames football tournament from London Youth Games. The school were thrilled to have been the first Wandsworth based team to have won this competition.

Aiming High: The Link Secondary School

How The Link Secondary School is transforming the lives of students with speech, language and communication difficulties.

The school joined Orchard Hill College Academy Trust in July 2017. Principal, John Reilly tells how the school's aspirational learning environment enables students to flourish.

Our students are encouraged to aim high, a phrase that echoes through every part of the school. All students should be fulfilled and achieve – that could mean growing in confidence, finding their voice, passing their GCSEs or taking part in Commando Joe's programme.

Our school places a strong emphasis on a value system which is reflected in the name of each class representing an aspirational or inspirational person from the immediate community.

This has certainly been illustrated by the achievements and successes of students:

- 100% of year 11 and post 16 students engaged in a week-long work experience programme.
- 2018-19 saw the best results the school has ever achieved with 41 students gaining 157 external accreditations and seven students leaving with 45 external accreditations in total.

John Reilly with students at school

- 100% of our leavers achieved 4-9 external accreditations.
- 86% of our leavers left with 6-9 external accreditations including English and maths.
- 100% of our leavers have gone on to further education over the last two years.
- 100% of students at KS4 have already gained 3-9 external accreditations and will work on improving their levels over their remaining years here.

This year students will take part in the Commando Joe's programme which is endorsed by the Department for Education. It prepares young people to have the knowledge and skills to be independent in life after they leave school, developing their core attributes – communication, leadership, working with others and developing self.

The school has built strong links with its local community that enable students to take part in volunteering opportunities and local visits. They make full use of their unique setting, with the river Wandle just a few metres from the school.

The school values its strong partnership with parents and carers, with one parent commenting:

> *Communication is great and the teaching excellent. All the staff are fantastic. My son is very happy at the school, I really can't tell you how pleased we are.*

Another parent simply said:

> *We wouldn't change anything, unless you could open seven days a week. Thank you for your dedication, care, support and love.*

Tom's Farm

A hidden gem in Wandsworth, Tom's Farm is a working rare-breed farm that supports pupils to develop skills such as empathy, teamwork and respect.

An integral part of Nightingale Community Academy, Tom's Farm opened with the generous support of parents John and Estella in memory of their son Tom ap Rhys Pryce.

The farm has been an important part of school life since its opening in 2006, but it has truly come into its own since the appointment of Josh Farrell, the Farm Manager. Josh brings with him years of farming experience, and has high hopes for the future of the farm:

"Since starting at Nightingale Community Academy I have expanded and developed the farm; creating a safe, educational and calming environment in which pupils with a range of special needs spend time. Rare breeds have always been my passion and my aim is to make Tom's Farm a Rare Breeds Survival Trust (RBST) approved city/school farm. We want to work closely with RBST and the breed societies to support conservation, educate our students and to inform the local community. I have placed the growth and conservation of rare breeds at the heart of everything we do; encouraging young people to appreciate and join the cause."

The farm has an array of rare-breed and exotic animals including Oxford Sandy and Black pigs, emus, Southdown sheep, Shetland sheep, Shetland ponies, silver laced sebright chickens, Golden Guernsey goats, cows, pheasants, snakes, ferrets, rabbits, aviary birds, and more.

The farm has become a valued and crucial part of everyday life for students at Nightingale Community Academy, and for those at Orchard Hill College, too. Students from the college are enjoying several academic courses including AQA unit awards in Farming. These courses provide opportunities for students to harness and develop their enthusiasm, learn practical skills, achieve accreditation and in some cases transition into higher-level learning establishments or into the farming industry.

> *Animals and children have a natural affinity and the benefits and positive outcomes from regular contact with livestock cannot be overstated.*
>
> *- Gail Sprake, Chairman of RBST*

Learning to breed, care for and nurture the animals equips students with practical and emotional tools for their future. Alongside the hands-on farming skills they are learning, students also gain life-changing values and skills.

For further information please visit www.nightingaleca.org

WorkStart

WorkStart from Orchard Hill College was formed to bridge the gap between education and employment that can pose a challenge for many young people.

The dedicated team of Job Coaches works closely with students to find them work experience and to gain the qualifications they need to thrive in the workplace.

WorkStart is a package of courses with the ultimate goal of securing employment for students. Applicants come from a range of backgrounds; some may have had a difficult time at school and not received the support they needed to gain qualifications to take them forward. Others may have moderate learning difficulties and need a tailored pathway before applying for apprenticeships or for job vacancies. Every student has a different story but all have hopes for their future. WorkStart works with students to identify their strengths, their goals, and to experience work placements in different areas to see what fits them best.

WorkStart is broken down into:

- Traineeship
- Into Work - Work Experience
- Into Work - Outreach

Traineeship

Traineeship is a unique programme that combines education and training. It equips students with qualifications and work experience to enable them to be work-ready.

The course is open to anyone who is looking to gain qualifications, interview skills and work experience. Students work towards Entry Level 1 to Level 2 qualifications.

Traineeship is open to applicants with or without an Education Health and Care Plan.

Into Work- Work Experience

The aim of this course is to develop students' skills and experience in their chosen area, giving them a positive foundation after leaving college. In small group sessions, students develop their employment skills, which are then put into practice at work placements.

Into Work – Outreach

The aim of this course is to enable students to be active members of their community while building on their employability skills. There are opportunities for volunteering, enterprise schemes and community projects; the course acts as a stepping stone to Into Work – Work Experience.

Both Into Work courses are for students aged 19+ who are keen to develop a range of skills.

Applicants will not be in full time employment and if over 25 years of age they will also be receiving benefits.

Some of our WorkStart students have gone on to apprenticeships, employment, further education, and even to setting up their own enterprises. Here, one former student talks about her journey on WorkStart:

I was reluctant to apply and start a new course with new people but my mum convinced me to apply, then I was interviewed and enrolled. I met the team delivering the programme and they were really friendly and supportive but I still didn't want to mix with anyone and mostly kept to myself.

I met my Job Coach Denise; she was really supportive and we went to job fairs together, updated my CV, searched for jobs and practised for interviews. Denise found me a work placement at Guy's Hospital which I really enjoyed. I was happier and more confident, but I still doubted myself, my skills and my abilities.

With the support of the WorkStart team I applied for a Facilities Apprenticeship at Orchard Hill College Academy Trust, and following an interview I was offered a work trial.

When I started my trial, I was a bit nervous but I was shown what to do and soon I got the hang of it all. I completed purchase orders, made ID cards, ordered equipment online, assigned helpdesk requests, and even took phone calls, which I wouldn't have done at the start of the programme. I was happy in the job and received really good feedback, which not only surprised me but made me more determined to succeed within the role.

I was invited for a second interview and to my delight and astonishment I was offered the apprenticeship. Denise and my family are so happy for me, and now I'm seeing a positive future for myself and my career.

WorkStart students come to the college from different backgrounds with different experiences, expectations and approaches to education and work. The specialist team is here to provide tailored, individualised support to enable them to achieve.

WorkStart has been particularly significant for another student, whose life has been transformed by the support he received.

When the student joined the Into Work course he was unemployed and had no aspiration to work. With their specialist experience and training, the WorkStart team worked with him to establish his strengths, to boost his confidence and to enable him to see his potential.

Thanks to the support he received on the course, he now has qualifications and a paid job. He's thriving in the workplace, and is on the pathway to a Supported Apprenticeship.

Work Placements Manager, Oliver Connolly, said:

> *"We're so proud of him, he's overcome so much and come so far in developing his independence.*
>
> *He's made some fantastic achievements and he's continuing to succeed and push himself further."*

For further information please visit www.workstart.me.uk

Training School

An innovative, shared approach to teaching and learning is proving to be an effective way of enhancing staff members' knowledge, skills and specialisms.

OHC&AT's Training School has developed a specialist network model and in-house training courses that provide opportunities for staff to share best practice and enhance their teaching.

Specialist networks, which meet at least once per term, aim to develop and draw out the many specialisms within OHC&AT. This ensures that all pupils and students benefit from improvements to the delivery of teaching and learning, as well as to promote staff understanding of OHC&AT as a cohesive family of providers working towards the best outcomes for all pupils and students.

A pilot in 2018-19 created networks in: safeguarding, careers, mental health and wellbeing, as well as networks for English leads and maths leads across the organisation. Feedback from these initial networks was overwhelmingly positive, and there are plans to further expand the initiative with networks around PSHE as well as specific SEND strands.

The Training School has also launched a package of in-house Specialist Training courses which are high quality, specialist programmes, written and delivered by sector professionals.

Specialist Training courses being delivered this year are:

- An overview of SEND legislation
- Understanding communication and behaviour
- Understanding neurodiversity
- Understanding profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD)
- Understanding Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA)
- Understanding multi-sensory impairments
- The social, emotional and mental health needs of higher functioning learners
- Understanding Specific Learning Difficulties – Dyslexia
- E-safety and safeguarding learners
- Understanding and supporting complex and challenging behaviours
- Managing transition

Together the specialist network model and courses are improving teaching and learning by giving OHC&AT staff effective and informed tools and strategies.

For more information and to enquire about courses and opportunities from the Training School, please contact Anita Aldridge, Training Administrator, on aaldridge@orchardhill.ac.uk or call 0345 402 0453.

Digital School

Supporting our local communities is at the heart of OHC&AT, and is illustrated by the Digital School's collaboration with the Harlequins Foundation.

Twickenham Stoop, the home of Harlequins rugby team, is supporting young people to develop technical and vocational skills at its digital hub.

Students attending the digital hub learn to use the latest technology, including virtual reality, augmented reality and green screens.

This year, students will be creating a digital tour of the Twickenham Stoop stadium to be used on the club's website. Students will also be supporting the Harlequins Foundation's men's health campaign in partnership with Movember.

Simon Gale, Creative Director of the Digital School said:

> *"We are really excited to be working with Harlequins Foundation again this year and for our students to be taking part in some really interesting and innovative projects.*
>
> *Bringing our students to the digital hub at the Stoop offers them a variety of new experiences and opportunities outside of their regular curriculum and allows them to showcase their digital and creative skills to the wider community."*

Orchard Hill College student Joseph said:

> *"I got to do some filming today and I really enjoyed it. I also went to see the Members Lounge with all of the special rugby shirts and trophies, it was brilliant."*

Andy Carpenter, Harlequins Foundation Manager, said:

> *"The skills that students learn whilst at the digital hub can easily transfer into a range of different subjects and careers and hopefully the sessions will inspire young people to develop their digital skills."*

Key partners for the Digital School

Students undertaking courses or projects with the Digital School enjoy working in partnership with various organisations including:

- Lego Education
- Cisco Networking Academy
- Virgin Money
- Re:Code London
- Greater London Authority
- Riverside Community Centre
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport

If you or your school is interested in taking part or want to learn more about the Digital Hub at the Stoop, please contact andy.carpenter@quins.co.uk or visit www.harlequins.foundation

Harlequins FOUNDATION

Contextual Safeguarding for Pupils with Severe and Complex Learning Difficulties

Emmet Murphy, Vice Principal at Dysart School, was invited by SEN Magazine to provide an in-depth view of the importance of contextual safeguarding for pupils and students with severe and complex learning difficulties.

The September 2018 update of Keeping Children Safe in Education introduced the term 'Contextual Safeguarding' which simply means that assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors that are present in a child's life could be a threat to their safety and/or welfare.

There are many examples of how contextual safeguarding is used in a mainstream school setting to provide meaningful, impactful, interventions for young people who are at risk of being drawn into criminal activities such as gangs and drug use. However, it is less known for those who work with young people who experience severe and complex learning difficulties. So how do we use contextual safeguarding for young people with severe and complex learning difficulties in a way that is meaningful?

For those of us working in this sector that question potentially poses a challenge. To begin the process of ensuring effective contextual safeguarding, we need to identify those physical 'contexts' where, over a typical 24-hour period, the young people we work with are most likely to be. Following this, a careful risk-based analysis of each context – identifying generic risks and looking at how those risks can be reduced to an acceptable level – needs to be put in place.

Obviously, there will be some variation in terms of daily routines between different provisions and contextual arrangements for holidays may require additional consideration but, broadly speaking, the four main term-time contexts are:

- School
- Home
- Transport to and from School
- End-of-day clubs/respite

Strengthening safeguarding at home involves the school having strong relationships with families. Many young people with severe and complex learning difficulties are non-verbal and/or have significant communication challenges, which means it is difficult for them to tell staff when things are not working.

In these circumstances, the relationship between school and the pupil's family becomes their voice – the stronger the relationship, the stronger that pupil's voice.

A note of caution here: many reading this article will probably think – as we did – that relationships with families are already strong and do not really need that much more work done.

At Dysart School, we recently completed a certified award focussing on relationships with families earlier this year – a project that took nearly two years and is still very much an ongoing piece of work. However, a key part of the journey was simply the realisation that, whilst the links we previously enjoyed with families were indeed strong, there was still so much more that we could do to make those relationships even stronger.

It is also worth pointing out that the 'risks' at home are not necessarily of the parents/carers themselves per se. Instead, the risks at home are often broader and look at 'what if' scenarios – what if Mum or Dad becomes unwell – how will they cope managing their child's needs? What would happen if an older sibling were to become involved in criminal activity, or become a victim of online exploitation? Being in a position to answer these questions accurately means that strong and robust relationships with families is absolutely vital and non-negotiable.

Transport was the next context on the list. The geographically-dispersed nature of where families live (for a lot of SEND provisions, pupils will be spread widely across a number of local authorities), as well as the profile of their needs, means that most young people with severe and complex learning difficulties will use transport provided by the local authority to get to and from school. In terms of contextual safeguarding, it is important that safeguarding information is shared appropriately between the school and transport and the support strategies used are consistent to those that are used in school. Whether it is providing drivers and escorts with bespoke coaching that encourages a more consistent approach to supporting individual pupils, or agreeing how, when and by whom safeguarding concerns will be shared, ensuring that there is a strong relationship between the school and with transport providers.

The final 'context' is end-of-day clubs / respite. Because the majority of these places are funded by social care, regular contact with key members of the social care team, including social

workers, is crucial to ensuring that this context is given effective consideration in terms of safeguarding. Setting aside time to meet with these key members of the social care team on a regular basis, and meeting regularly with the managers of the main after-school clubs pupils attend is important.

However, as with providers of transport, these meetings must be very much a two-way discussion founded on openness and transparency. Individual pupils sometimes may get discussed (for example where there are specific concerns that may be leading to an imminent referral), but in general the conversation should focus on systemic issues, identifying and discussing current strengths alongside potential areas for further development.

To summarise, contextual safeguarding has its challenges but the key to ensuring all pupils, including those with severe and complex learning difficulties, are kept safe – across all of the contexts they experience – is relationships. Effective relationships between school and those external contexts is the glue that holds the whole process together. Building and maintaining these relationships can be tricky but by being open and prepared to listen to feedback and new ideas these challenges can be overcome enabling us all to keep the young people we work with safer both in school, and when they are outside of school.

Emmet Murphy

Emmet's full article was originally featured in SEN Magazine.

Visit www.senmagazine.co.uk

Building Futures, Changing Lives

Orchard Hill College's change of leadership has paved the next step in the outstanding provider's journey.

Orchard Hill College was established in 1983 and has grown from a small hospital provision into an Ofsted Outstanding College for students with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) that operates from six centres across London and Surrey.

Kelly Phillips, new Principal of Orchard Hill College, explains her plans for the future.

What is your vision for the future of the college?

My vision is that we will continue to improve our curriculum offer. This will enable students to develop skills that will prepare them for the future and move on to meaningful destinations within their local communities.
I also want to develop our extra-curricular activities and ensure they are embedded into the curriculum. This will allow students to develop in all areas of their lives such as building friendships that are maintained outside college.

What is the main strength of Orchard Hill College?

Our ethos is our strength and drives everything that we do. Students that would otherwise not be in education are able to achieve and reach their full potential with support from outstanding staff.

Kelly Phillips with a student at the 2019 Outstanding Achievement Awards

What are the key areas you would like to develop?

I would like to further develop the curriculum to align with the Preparing for Adulthood pathways; Good Health, Employment, Friends, Relationships and Community and Independent Living. This will ensure more students are able to move on to sustainable outcomes after leaving college.
I am also working to enhance our digital Individual Learning Plan to make it transferable to be used in the home environment as well as at college.

What was the idea behind the new strap line 'Building futures, changing lives'?

We wanted to be able to encompass what the college stands for and to celebrate the fact that students who study here move on to life-changing destinations. I feel the new strap line does that!

#LoveOurColleges

Orchard Hill College took part in Love Our Colleges Week, an initiative from the Association of Colleges (AoC) aimed at raising awareness of the importance of further education, and to lobby parliament to increase funding for colleges.

Every day of the campaign, which ran from 14th to 18th October, stories were shared on the college website, alongside videos, photos and quotes on Twitter and Instagram.

You can follow the college and OHCAT on Twitter and Instagram @OHCandAT

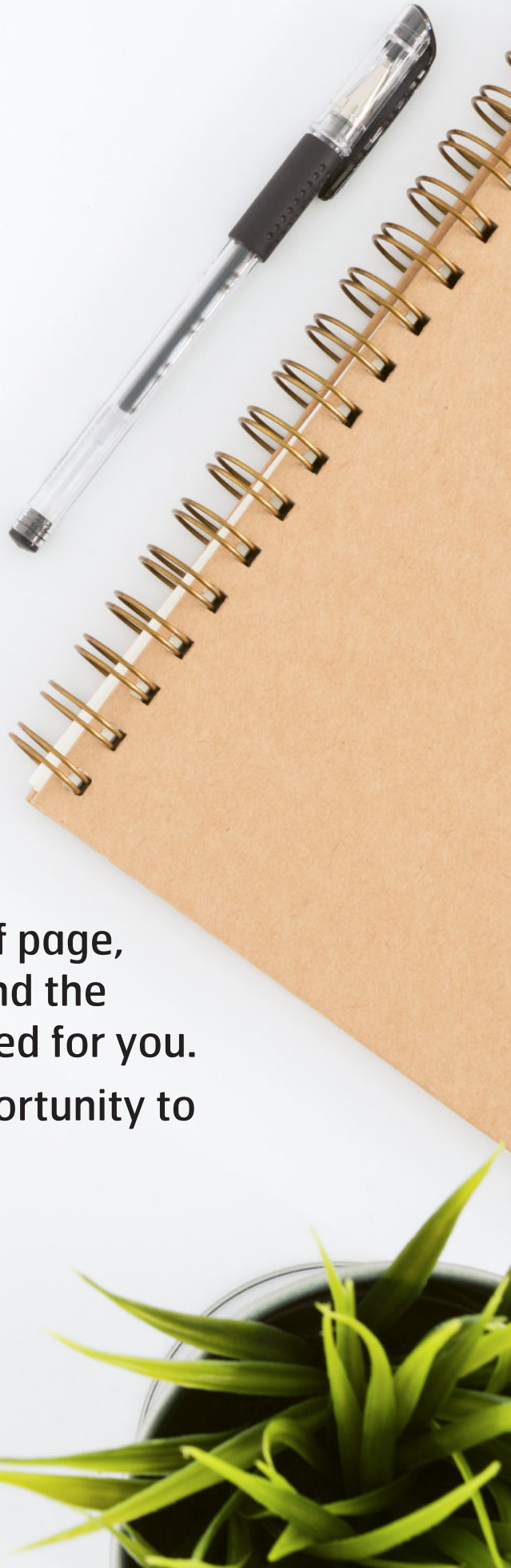
Find out more about Orchard Hill College and keep up to date with news from across our centres at www.orchardhill.ac.uk

Advertise here!

If you would like to reach a targeted audience of professionals across London, Surrey, Sussex and Berkshire, including:

- Local Authorities
- Healthcare professionals
- Local businesses
- Community groups
- Industry partners
- Local Councillors
- Education providers
- Students, staff, parents and carers from OHC&AT

...then advertising in next year's issue of INCLUDE is for you!



Prices start from just £100, with half page, full page and advertorial options, and the opportunity to have artwork designed for you.

Don't miss out on this fantastic opportunity to promote your organisation!

For futher details and pricing
email marketing@ohcat.org
or call 0345 402 0453

Orchard Hill College & Academy Trust

What can you gain from a career at Orchard Hill College & Academy Trust?

- Comprehensive training and development from our in-house Training School
- Partnership with Canterbury Christ Church University delivering teacher training qualifications
- Scope for career progression across six college centres and 14 academy schools
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Generous annual leave and flexible working schemes
- Defined benefits pension scheme
- Childcare vouchers and enhanced parental leave schemes
- Cycle to Work Scheme

...and many more benefits!

Don't miss your opportunity to enhance your career and make a difference to the lives of young people.

Visit www.ohcat.org/vacancies to see our current vacancies!