Orion Academy: SEND Information Report

Academy Name: Orion Academy
Address: Knights Road, Blackbird Leys, Oxford, OX4 6DQ
Telephone: 01865 771703
Email: office@orionacademy.co.uk
Website: https://www.orionacademy.co.uk
Executive Headteacher: Julia Hyde
Governor responsible for SEND: Simon Terrington
Date updated: September 2026

What kinds of SEND do we make provision for?

Orion Academy is a Countywide Special School, designated for students who present with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH), aged between 10 and 18 (Years 6 - 13). Although our specialism is SEMH, our students may also have a multiple presentation of need, which could include Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Conduct Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), Speech and Language Difficulties, and Moderate Cognition and Learning Needs.

The school is situated in Oxford and accepts students from across the county.

Orion Academy supports the social, emotional and academic needs of students through a personalised approach that ensures all students are cared for, valued and challenged in their learning.

We offer a tailored curriculum which is delivered by a specialised, dedicated and experienced staff team. This approach enables students at Orion Academy to develop academically, socially, emotionally and behaviourally, as they progress towards adulthood and employment.

Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs can manifest in many different ways, with examples such as anxiety or depression, dis-regulation, counter-connecting, low self-worth, tendencies of self-harming, substance abuse, risk-taking behaviours, or eating disorders.

What is the academy's policy of identification and assessment of students with SEND?

100% of students enter the academy with an EHCP - this documents their specific needs and provides strategies, with planned outcomes, for how personal barriers to learning can be overcome.

Alongside the information with a student's EHCP, we may identify any additional special educational needs through the use of our internal academy data, alongside research and guidance, combined with a high-level of staff SEND knowledge.

We track the progress, presentation and wellbeing of our students and act when information shows that students may not be making progress or functioning in line with our expectations and their stated capabilities.

We will communicate with parents and refer to any other professional service with regards to any unidentified need to ensure the EHCP reflects the child/young person we are supporting. This will be discussed and agreed within the Annual Review process, alongside the placing Local Authority (typically Oxfordshire County Council (OCC))

How do we know that our provision is effective and how do we review the progress of students?

The progress and presentation of all students is tracked and reviewed throughout the academic year, both formally and informally. In addition, we hold an Annual Review of each student's EHCP in line with OCC's guidance.

We also report progress to parents / carers regularly, and work to ensure that student and parent / carer voice is key to understanding the effectiveness of progress and the presentation of every student.

How will the curriculum be matched to student needs and how might we adapt the curriculum and learning environment to meet the needs of your child?

We aim to offer all students a wide-ranging curriculum which will stretch, challenge and inspire them. We prefer our students to remain in the classroom as much as possible - we believe that nothing is as important as having access to the best quality teaching each and every day. We follow Government guidelines about the curriculum we offer for every student, whilst taking a flexible approach to our provision to ensure each student has an academic experience which is relevant to them. This includes the opportunity to make learning choices and take options that best align with aspiration and high-expectations.

Our learning pathways ensure that all students have a Key Stage 4 curriculum that meets their needs, which includes accessing GCSE and other qualifications. Some students may also access a Bespoke Pathway and / or Alternative Provision for some of their time each week, if this is agreed to be the most appropriate way for them to access their learning, and make progress. Examples of alternative provision (AP) include;

- TRAX – http://traxorg.com/
- SOFEA – https://www.sofea.uk.com/
- City of Oxford College – https://www.activatelearning.ac.uk/
- Abingdon and Witney College – http://www.abingdon-witney.ac.uk/
- Horsewyse- https://www.horsewyse.org.uk/
- Path Hill - https://pathhill.com/index.php/home
- Hill End - https://hill-end.org/

At Orion Academy we make reasonable adaption to the curriculum to enable access and engagement for all students.

What additional support might we offer to students?

When an additional need is identified, we take an approach which focuses on the individual requirements of the student. All our strategies focus on ensuring a student retains or gains independence, builds skills, knowledge and understanding, is able to access learning and the curriculum, feels understood in the world, and belongs to the community.

At Orion Academy our Community Learning Team (CLT) comprises of Pastoral Support Workers (PSW) and Youth Engagement Workers: this team offer interventions, mentoring and specific activities, to support students' needs and provide additional curriculum access support, with a focus on building skills and resilience in the area of personal development.

How will your child be included in activities outside the classroom?

All students are encouraged to take part in enrichment and character development activities that is part of our broad and balanced curriculum offer. We are guided by the Equalities Act (2010) in making reasonable adjustments to allow students with a SEND to take advantage of enrichment activities, which includes trips outside of

school. We will complete a risk assessment when necessary and will use this to guide our provision of support.

What support will we offer for your child's overall wellbeing?

Students have access to services and professionals employed by Orion Academy, The Gallery Trust, and through partnerships with multi-agency professionals (typically employed by Oxfordshire County Council).

Our responsive and flexible approach ensures that we have, for example, access to a School Health Nurse and SALT (the Speech and Language Team), alongside strong links with other health and specialist services external to the academy. These include the Locality and Community Support Service (LCSS), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) the Police Liaison Officer, and Social Care.

Anti-bullying

At Orion Academy we help to prevent any bullying between students by educating them about the effects of bullying, and by building an understanding about the positive power of relationships and people.

We deliver specific and robust anti-bullying units of work within our curriculum. To support the curriculum intent and implementation, where necessary we will incorporate the involvement of external agencies such as SAFE project workers and the Academy Police Liaison Officer. We also offer restorative sessions/meetings between students and in some cases parents and families which are facilitated by a trained member of staff (please see Behaviour and Relationship Policy).

Our curriculum is responsive to the needs and trends of individuals and groups of students within the school as they arrive, with an opportunity for the content of the curriculum (and any specific interventions as required) to be adapted and matched to identified need.

What specialist services and expertise are available for your child?

Staff at Orion Academy have ongoing training to ensure that their practice is high-quality, well-informed, up to date and relevant. All training is aimed at helping our staff to meet the particular needs of our students.

Alongside the specialist services and expertise available as **additional support**, we work in partnership across The Gallery Trust to support and deliver staff training and to provide additional expertise for your child, when required. Recent training includes autism awareness, cognitive load, trauma informed practice and attachment.

Observations of and support for your child can arise from within a variety of access points and from a variety of services and experts. We pride ourselves on working in partnership to ensure the best possible outcomes for all.

How will equipment and facilities to support students with SEND be secured?

Orion Academy was constructed to be a state of the art and purpose built facility for students with SEND needs - the environment has been considered by design. We take a reasonable adaption approach to the use of specialist equipment and the use of our facilities to support our students. This includes the use of quiet spaces, our reflection rooms, our fitness suite and our outdoor spaces.

Equipment can be used to facilitate and augment curriculum access and regulation, such as through IT, equipment to meet sensory needs, and other approaches to support SEND need.

Equipment and facilities are accessed and secured in a responsive way to student need, and sometimes following professional advice and recommendation. Should additional funding be required for particular high-cost pieces of equipment, we will work in partnership to ensure that this is secured in good time.

How do we work with parents / carers and students?

We continually strive to work in partnership with parents / carers and students. We work collaboratively to support the needs of our students through communication and clarity. We hold parent consultation meetings three times a year, to celebrate and reflect the joint aspirations for parents / carers, students and the school, and understand the value of regular, proactive communication at all times.

We will always contact parents / carers if we begin to believe that a student may have special educational needs in addition to those stated on their EHCP, and the reasons for this belief. We understand that student participation is crucial to ensure success and for them to feel empowered: as far as possible, we want all students to have a voice when decisions are made that affect them and their education.

In a wider sense, we have an active student council that works within the school to ensure that their voice is important and heard. Each year we gather date from students and parents / carers. For instance, the student questionnaire gathers information on key areas related to well-being, mental health, what it feels like to be ‘a student at Orion’ and what we can do (as a school) to be even better.

How do we support students at key transition points?

In addition to well thought-through transition planning for all students (which includes information gathering from the people who know them, and visiting students in their ‘placing environment’ (wherever possible)), we hold additional transition activities for any vulnerable students who are joining the school. This may include additional visits to the academy to get to know key members of staff and the environment, or a pictorial handbook. These additional visits may be individual and outside of the school-day, if this is agreed to be required and of benefit.

When a student is leaving us, we work closely with the new setting to ensure a smooth transition and to identify any additional support for any student who needs it. This involves visiting the new setting with a student over a period of time running up

to their leaving school (typically in Yr11), as well as helping them to apply for and secure a place on an appropriate course or next step in their education.

Transitions between year groups (particularly between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4) are also recognised as key moments for our students. We work closely with all students who find change challenging, to ensure they understand what is happening and what to expect from their new year-group or class.

How accessible is the academy's learning environment?

The academy's learning environment is accessible for all our current learners.

We continuously review our learning environment and make reasonable adjustments when necessary to ensure that we can meet need, to the best of our abilities.

How does the governing body involve other agencies in meeting the needs of our students and in supporting their families?

Orion Academy and its governance, work closely with different agencies to support the needs of all students. Those responsible for governance (and those with specific roles within The Gallery Trust) support the Academy to deliver on their responsibility to work with other agencies, which helps to ensure the effectiveness of provision and overall accountability.

This includes supporting and reporting agency work such as with Social Care, the Oxfordshire MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub), and the Virtual Academy for Looked After Children.

Where should you go to find more information about the SEND provision in Oxfordshire?

Please visit the following website for more information about Oxfordshire's SEND provision- Oxfordshire's SEND Local Offer.

Who should you contact to discuss provision for your child at Orion Academy?

We are committed to joint working with our young people and their families. We would encourage you to speak with your child's Class Teacher to discuss their provision and learning in the first instance. We believe that regular communication is at the heart of building strong partnerships, trust and understanding.

If you have any concerns that you feel are not being listened to, please contact the School Business Manager in the first instance, who will discuss this with members of the senior leadership team.

If you feel as though the school response has not been good enough and you wish to make a complaint about your child's provision at Orion Academy, please follow the academy's complaints procedure. This can be found on the academy's website.