Orion Academy

SEND Policy

2026-2027

Last reviewed:	September 2026
Date of next review:	September 2027
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Chair of RIB	Simon Terrington

The GALLERY TRUST

A community of special schools

1. Introduction

Orion Academy is a Special School for students who present with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH). Alongside our specialism for SEMH, many of our students may present with an additional special educational need including 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 facilitates the social and emotional needs and academic development of students through a personalised approach to ensure that all students are supported, valued and challenged. 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.

Orion Academy is proud to be a member of The Gallery Trust.

2. Admission Arrangements

As a publicly funded special academy within The Gallery Trust, our student admissions are agreed in partnership with the Local Authority through the Countywide Admissions Panel. We work with the Local Authority to ensure that Orion Academy is the most appropriate provision for each student when a placement request is made. All students who attend Orion Academy must have a current Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which states SEMH as part of their needs profile.

Once a place has been confirmed, we work closely with the student's current provision to ensure a smooth transition to the school takes place.

If a parent or carer wishes their child to attend Orion Academy, in the first instance they should speak to the SENDCo at their child's current setting. Parents and carers can also look at Oxfordshire County Council's Local Offer to explore options for their child. The Local Offer can be found here

https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/children-education-and-families/education-and-learning/special-educational-needs-and-disability-local-offer

Detailed information on admissions can be found in a separate document on our website, titled 'Admissions Arrangements'.

3. Identification, Assessment and Review

All students at Orion Academy have a current EHCP which states SEMH as part of their needs profile. Individual plans are used to identify strategies to support each student's progress towards their stated outcomes.

In deciding whether a student has an additional need that is not in their current

EHCP, the SENDCo (or equivalent) considers information gathered from within the academy about the student's progress and their possible barriers to learning. Where more specific assessment is deemed to be necessary, this will be carried out by the SENDCo who may then involve other professionals from outside the academy. The information gathering will include an early discussion with the student and their parents. When a student is identified as needing additional support, the school employs a graduated approach of Assess-Plan-Do-Review adopting the recommended model for Special Educational Needs as set out in the Code of Practice (DfE 2014).

The SENDCo and the class teacher, together with specialists, involve the student and their parents or carers to consider a range of teaching approaches, appropriate equipment, strategies and interventions in order to support progress. Outcomes are agreed and progress reviewed regularly.

4. Categories of Special Educational Need

All our students at The Orion Academy have **Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)** needs as stated in their EHCPs.

Students who have difficulties with SEMH may find it hard to:

- Make and maintain appropriate and healthy relationships
- Regulate their emotions

Sometimes these difficulties will present in:

- Withdrawn behaviour
- Challenging, over active or dis-regulated behaviour
- Behaviours which enable them to have a sense of control

These behaviours will be persistent and may indicate mental health issues, such as anxiety or depression. It must also be recognised that behaviour is a child's first way of communicating, whether intentionally or not, and that their needs (safety, belonging, understanding or other) are not currently being met.

Certain individuals and groups are more at risk of developing mental health problems than others. These risks can relate to the student themselves, their family, or to their community or life events. It is important to provide early intervention and support to prevent difficulties escalating.

Young people can develop social, emotional and mental health needs for many reasons. Sometimes these are related to:

- Other learning needs, either as part of a condition or disorder, such as:
    - Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) or Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)
    - Attachment needs
    - Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)

    - A pervasive developmental disorder that impacts upon their mental health and social and emotional wellbeing
    - A communication or language complication, that impacts on expression, skills on oracy or language processing and / or organisation
    - A medically unexplained condition, such as being reluctant to speak.

- A response to an unmet need; for example, a young person who has difficulty with communicating thoughts and ideas may find inappropriate ways to express themselves.

- Sensory difficulties; students will require reasonable adjustments to help them adapt to the learning environment.
- A response to factors outside of the learning environment, such as early life trauma.

As well as SEMH needs, many of our students have an additional special educational need from one of the following categories:

- Communication and Interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Sensory and/or Physical

5. Provision and Monitoring

The Rapid Improvement Board (RIB) and staff of Orion Academy recognise that all students have a right to a broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum. We aim to create an enjoyable, educationally exciting and positive environment in which all students can develop their skills to become confident, independent individuals who are able to take advantage of the opportunities offered to them as they progress toward adulthood.

At the heart of the work in every class is a continuous cycle of assessing, planning and teaching which takes account of the wide range of abilities, aptitudes and interests of our students. All students benefit from short-term plans and targets which are based on the longer-term outcomes in the EHCP. They also have access to small group and class teaching. These plans and targets are reviewed and discussed with parents and carers at least three times a year, and is a key piece of progress data for the Annual Review.

In particular we aim to:

- Empower each student to experience success and feel like they belong
- Promote the development of self-confidence and self-esteem
- Transform their views of school and raise their aspiration
- Ensure that our curriculum is responsive to all students whatever their individual need
- Promote positive attitudes
- Identify, assess, record and regularly review students' special educational needs
- Encourage parents and carers to be involved in planning and supporting at all

stages of their child's development
- Make effective use of available support services
- Ensure that all staff are meeting their responsibilities within their identified roles

Provision for learners is monitored by:

- Levels of student wellbeing and engagement
- Observations of teaching and learning through regular learning walks conducted by the Leadership Team
- Formal lesson observations
- Analysis of students' progress data
- Regular review of the school's Raising Achievement Plan
- Scrutiny of students' work and ongoing achievements
- The delivery and implementation of the curriculum
- How learners build specific skills and understanding in their foundational knowledge
- Quality assurance processes in relation to the Positive Handling Plans (PHPs), Risk Assessments, Annual Reviews and Progress
- Regular communication with parents to discuss progress towards outcomes.

The role of the Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Co-Ordinator (SENDCo) is delivered and facilitated by the Academy's Senior Leadership Team.

These responsibilities include:

- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of the school's SEND policy
- Coordinating provision for students
- Ensuring the involvement of parents and carers in reviewing and planning for agreed outcomes
- Liaising with staff to make appropriate provision by supporting planning, monitoring and the review of curriculum and provision effectiveness
- Liaising with educational psychologists, health and care professionals, and independent or voluntary bodies
- Being a key point of contact with external agencies, especially the Local Authority and its support agencies
- Managing teaching assistants (and other staff) who deliver, support and plan interventions
- Ensuring alignment with all statutory responsibilities
- Monitoring the progress of various groups of students
- The training and professional development of all staff

<u>Teachers' responsibilities:</u>

Teachers deliver learning and curriculum experiences for the students on a daily basis, whilst closely monitor learning, progress and achievement. Teachers also monitor those students involved in interventions away from the main class, and are instrumental in building a wider understanding about the needs of the students in their class.

Teachers work closely with teaching assistants (and any person who may be supporting a student in their class) to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions, and how these can be used to deepen and empower the teaching of the planned curriculum. Teachers contribute to student target setting, and are involved at the Annual Review of the EHCP by writing a report or by attending the meeting in person.

In each classroom (and collectively together) the Teachers help to deliver the culture of inclusive learning for all students. They will be instrumental in helping to remove the barriers to learning, through the delivery of responsive and well thought-through strategies for engagement and motivation. The quality of purposeful and respectful relationships will determine the quality of learning and progress.

Trustees' responsibilities

The Trust Board has delegated responsibility for monitoring activities within Orion Academy to the local governance committee called the Raising Improvement Board (RIB). The RIB members, together with the Executive Headteacher and Executive Director for Orion Academy, have a legal responsibility for overseeing all aspects of the school.

They determine the school's general policy and approach to provide effectively for the particular needs of each student, establish the appropriate staffing levels to meet these needs, and to use funding to provide appropriate teaching and support staff. Regular reporting to the Trust Board ensures that Trustees are well informed in order to make strategic decisions to enable rapid improvements.

An appointed representative from the Rapid Improvement Board is actively involved in SEND and provision self-review.

6. Resources

As a special school, Orion Academy receives funding through the Local Authority formula for special school provision. Orion Academy, as part of normal budget planning, takes a strategic approach to using resources in support of the progress of all students.

Teachers and Leaders have considered and provide a differentiated curriculum for their students, which has been designed to support the learning of the students at Orion Academy, and takes into account any additional needs. This may take the form of additional help from support staff, teacher time, materials or specific pieces of equipment. The school is committed to providing appropriate equipment and equal access to high quality learning experiences which support the needs of each individual student.

7. The Annual Review Process

In addition to the termly reviews of targets, every student will have an Annual Review of their EHCP. Parents will be given notification of the date and time of the Annual

Review at least one month in advance. Follow up phone calls will be made to remind parents about the meeting where appropriate. If a change of date is necessary and possible, this will be made in good time.

The following information is the minimum expected to be gathered ahead of the Annual Review:

- The current EHCP and associated targets
- A report from the teacher specifically relating to progress and outcomes over the last 12 months
- Any reports provided by additional professionals: both from within Orion Academy, and any support agencies
- A parent comment form, which is sent out with the invitation
- A student comment form, with students supported as necessary
- Attendance information
- TOPs

Attendance at the review

Parents / Carers and all professionals currently involved with the student receive invitations to attend the review. These professionals may include the Local Authority SEND Officer, therapeutic staff, a specialist teacher, a representative from the Virtual School for Looked After Children, a social worker or an Early-Help practitioner.

Parents / Carers are welcome to invite a member of the SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service) to support them if they wish.

If any person or professional is unable to attend the annual review, they will be asked to submit a written report in advance. If a parent / carer cannot attend the given date, every attempt is made to agree a mutually convenient time and date.

The Annual Review Meeting

Students are invited to attend their Annual Review meeting to discuss and comment on their progress since the last review. The student is the centre of the review and therefore should be given the opportunity to contribute to the meeting alongside the adults in attendance.

The agenda for the meeting follows guidance from the Local Authority. In particular, the meeting focuses on amendments to the student's plan so that it is up to date and relevant; reviewing and evaluating progress towards the student's individual outcomes and completing a Record of Annual Review (ROAR) form: this document records key information about the student for the last 12 months.

All relevant paperwork will be completed and sent to the LA within 2 weeks of the Annual Review meeting

Orion Academy is proud to be a member of The Gallery Trust:
https://thegallerytrust.co.uk/

The Gallery Trust is a Multi Academy Trust dedicated to providing outstanding education and support for young people with special needs and disabilities

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