



INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

A SCHOOL WITHOUT LIMITS

Transforming Approaches to Education



UTOPIA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL PROSPECTUS 2023

WELCOME TO OUR SCHOOL

Utopia is an independent special school for boys and girls aged 13-16 with social, emotional and mental health needs, neurodiversity and those experiencing emotionally based school avoidance. We are a small setting for up to 30 learners providing intensive and personalised support for those with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) who would benefit from a nurturing environment.

Founded by directors with a wealth of experience in engaging young people with additional needs, the Utopia model recognises that accelerated academic progress can be made by adopting a different approach. For the past 8 years Utopia has supported hundreds of young people with additional needs, resulting in positive outcomes and supporting progression through Alternative Provision. Our mission to provide accessible, approachable and aspirational support in a way that puts learners at the heart of the decision-making process. This approach has created a culture of collaboration within which learners and parents/carers are full participants. It is our responsibility to provide a safe, caring and nurturing environment that learners can access with confidence. Our ability to build strong and meaningful relationships helps us to affect positive change and helps young people to realise their potential. This creates a sense of belonging for all learners who are part of the Utopia community.



Chris Black

Head of Centre



A PLACE THAT REDEFINES THE NORMS OF EDUCATION

UTOPIA ETHOS

Our 'AAA' ethos underpins everything we do:

- **Accessible** – removes barriers to learning by identifying them from the outset and addressing the needs of individuals.
- **Approachable** - places the relationship between staff and learners at the centre of everything we do.
- **Aspirational** – sets high expectations and offers a curriculum that provides a platform that enables learners to develop, and reach their full academic and social potential.



AN ENVIRONMENT THAT ALLOWS LEARNERS TO BE HAPPY, SAFE AND GROW



UTOPIA VALUES

At the heart of what we do are our core values:

- **Relationships** - develop the skills needed to make positive connections with others.
- **Resilience** - learn valuable life-skills so problems and challenges can be overcome.
- **Respect** - know what it means to flourish within a diverse modern Britain.

A NEURO DIVERSE & TRAUMA INFORMED APPROACH TO LEARNING

UTOPIA VISION

Our vision is an education journey that allows children to be happy, valued and safe while surrounded by people who treat them as an individual and help them to achieve.

At Utopia, neurodiversity is celebrated, after all no 2 people are ever the same, therefore why should their curriculum be? We adopt a strength based approach for our social and academic development, reinforced by powerful, pastoral programmes to improve educational outcomes.

The bedrock of our approach centres around specialist staff knowing our pupils, parents/carers and working together to build packages of support to address their needs.

CURRICULUM BUILT AROUND YOUNG PEOPLE'S NEEDS



AT UTOPIA WE ADDRESS BARRIERS TO LEARNING WITH A PERSON CENTRED APPROACH

Our curriculum provides tailored intervention in Maths and English, and addresses skill gaps on a 1-1 basis by boosting confidence to accelerate learning. Our vocational qualifications provide practical opportunities for learners to become critical thinkers and to develop key skills to boost employability, communication and teamwork skills. In addition our outstanding mental health and wellbeing support is delivered via our PSHE curriculum; this includes daily personal development opportunities, group-work and 1-1 counselling. We believe much can be learned through practical and physical activities that take place outside of the classroom, and we facilitate this kind of learning by providing challenging activities that encourage young people to try new things and break out of their comfort zones.

The Utopia approach prides itself on being innovative, providing unique learning experiences that stretch and support young people to reach their full potential. Based on key performance indicators, the Utopia model is designed to enhance all aspects of individual learners' education and wellbeing.

The curriculum at Utopia comprises of core GCSE Maths and English, BTEC Science alongside options of 7 vocational qualifications at level 1 and 2 (BTEC Sport, Business, Media, Home Cooking Skills, Teamwork and Personal Skills and Caring for Children Under 5).

The curriculum is adapted to a learners' priority needs as identified on their referral form or statement of special educational needs. Work is differentiated for each learner. Utopia staff are mindful of individual learning styles and work with learners to maximise their potential across all curriculum areas.

As part of the programme learners will have opportunities for industry visits, college placements and work experience- this is in addition to regular curriculum sessions that focus on personal learning and critical thinking skills. The Utopia model places a specific focus on personal and social development. The curriculum prioritises opportunities for learners to practice social skills and new behaviours, and this is carefully embedded in the timetable.



BUILDING A PLATFORM FOR PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC GROWTH BY BUILDING ON STRENGTHS, QUALITIES AND ATTRIBUTES

HOLISTIC APPROACH

At Utopia we take an holistic approach to learning, our young people achieve accelerated engagement and progression, through bespoke timetables that increase their future life opportunities.

The Utopia programme places particular emphasis on:

- High levels of parent/carers engagement
- High levels of professional engagement (i.e. social workers, therapists, educational psychologists.)
- Effective communication links with external agencies
- A diverse curriculum offer
- Community partnerships/involvement
- Age appropriate/relevant practical 'life-based' activities
- Supported transition to FE, work placements or traineeships
- Supporting the mental and physical wellbeing of its young people

LEARNER PROFILE



Boys and Girls
aged 13-16



Young people with
high anxiety,
neurodiversity or
emotionally based
school avoidance



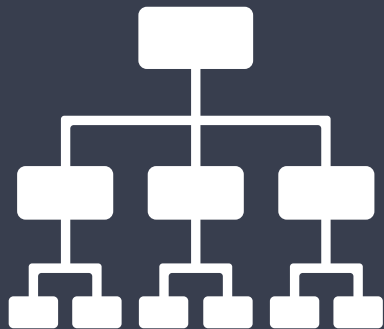
Young people who
may be on the
SEND pathway



AT UTOPIA WE GENUINELY CARE ABOUT OUR YOUNG PEOPLE AND VALUE THEM AS INDIVIDUALS



Young people with
an EHCP



Young people
unable to access
mainstream
education



Young people who
require a small and
nurturing setting to
progress

REFERRALS & ADMISSIONS

At Utopia we focus on the needs of learners with additional needs. These learners may be 'lost to learning', at significant risk of exclusion, or be out of school no established placement. This may include (but is not limited to) children and young people who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and children and young people who are undergoing assessment for an EHCP.

Utopia will always seek to work collaboratively to meet the individual needs of learners with additional needs, as such we will utilise our extensive network of professional and community partners to provide personalised interventions for young people. Interventions to support learners may include but are not limited to:



Community
Interventions



Occupational
Health



Speech &
Language



Dyslexia
Interventions



Bespoke
Support



Educational
Psychologists



Counselling

Our admission's criteria and procedures are designed to ensure that we do not discriminate on grounds of ability, gender, ethnicity, race or religion. A copy of our policy is located in the policies section of our website



**“IF A CHILD CAN’T
LEARN THE WAY
WE TEACH,
MAYBE WE
SHOULD TEACH
THE WAY THEY
LEARN”**

IGNACIO ESTRADA