

Barnet Special Education Trust

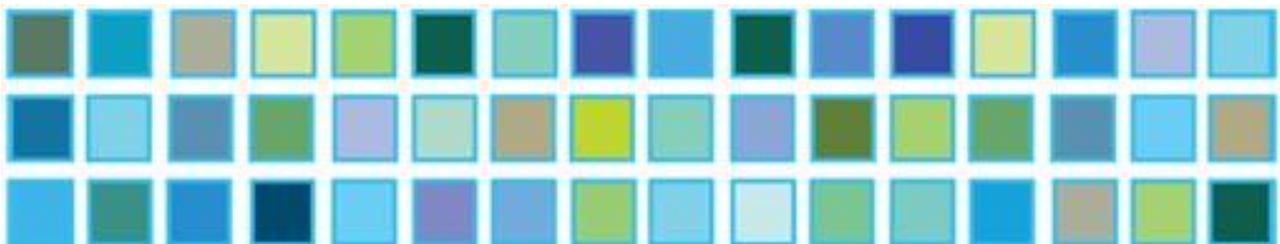


Academy Trust Development Plan

2020-21

Version 1.2 – 12th October 2020

- Oak Lodge School
- Oakbridge Special Education
- The Windmill School



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Context

Multi-Academy Trust

Established in 2016 to support an application to open a special free school that would specialise in Autism education. The founder members were all experienced special education professionals who have fulfilled successful roles in special school leadership and education consultancy. They have been supported by the pre-existing governing body of Oak Lodge School. The board of trustees has been complemented by a strong range of skills and experiences in accountancy, strategic development, education and academic research.

Oak Lodge School

Originally established in 1916, the school operated from a site in Oak Lane, East Finchley until the 1970s, when it moved to its current site in Heath View. It was maintained as a community special school until its conversion in January 2017, when it became the first operational academy of the MAT. The school had received two Outstanding judgements as a maintained school, and was further confirmed as Outstanding by Ofsted in its first academy inspection of September 2019. Subsequently, the new special academy, which had received consecutively successful accreditations from the National Autistic Society's Autism Accreditation programme as a community special school, was awarded expert practitioner status as a special academy following a review in December 2019.

The school is well regarded and in demand from its local authority commissioners. As a result, it is accepting additional admissions over its funded place numbers in September 2020, taking the roll from the current 192, to 206. The local authority has offered the opportunity of additional accommodation on a separate site to enable Oak Lodge to accept additional pupils. This offer is currently deferred.

The school has endured a significant period of closure due to the COVID-19 emergency and is just beginning its process of recovery and of phased re-opening, whilst emergency social distancing measures remain in place. A small percentage of students, identified through risk assessment have returned to part time attendance at the school. The school is fully aware of the impact this extended closure period has had on student and family wellbeing

Oakbridge Special Education

Following the Children and Families Act of 2014, SEN provision was expanded to the 25th birthday of young adults with an Education Health and Care Plan. In response to parental demand, it was decided to create an alternative SEN provision to that offered by local FE providers, for learners aged 19 onwards. This provision was initially established as a franchise with Barnet & Southgate College. Subsequent legislation restricted the continued use of sub-contracted education provision by FE providers. As a result, Oakbridge Special Education has been created as a subsidiary company of the MAT, who remain the corporate member, appointing the subsidiary's independent directors. The provision is recognised as a Special Post-16 Institution by ESFA for funding purposes.

Oakbridge has sustained a popular and successful curriculum offer, well supported by parents and commissioners alike. From its inception in 2014, it has operated from Scout's premises in Mill Hill. Students have benefited from the spacious grounds, but provision has been to some extent hindered by the shared occupation of scouting premises.

Oakbridge operations have also been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. It had also been closed the week before other schools as a result of site health and safety issues. It has now been partially re-opened and is gradually admitting more students to part time attendance.

The Windmill School

In 2015, senior leaders at Oak Lodge formed a development group with other SEN specialists and the director of the Centre for Research in Autism Education at UCL. The group subsequently made a successful application to DfE through its free school programme to open a 5-19, 90 place special academy. The provision will offer places for children and young people on the autism spectrum whose academic ability lies just behind their mainstream peers, but who find the environment of a mainstream setting too challenging to thrive. This project is fully supported by Barnet local authority as a response to high local demand for special school places.

The project entered 'pre-opening' status in November 2016. The search for a site has been very protracted; due to a lack of local authority sites and the high level of commercial land values in the Barnet area.

A suitable site was identified in 2017, but the costs attached led to a broader project of enabling development to make the project affordable to DfE. This was to include a care home and retirement living residential complex. Barnet planning policy has not meshed comfortably with such a plan, given that the land is designated green belt. Both development partners have now effectively withdrawn from the project due to the planning issues and negotiations are underway between the land vendors and LocatED to purchase a smaller parcel of the land subject to planning approval. The success of this approach is by no means guaranteed, and an alternative site is now being considered.

Strengths – Areas for Development – Opportunities – Risks

The Multi-Academy Trust

Strengths	Areas for Development
Experienced members and trustees with an appropriate range of knowledge and skills Committed local governors or directors, including parents of students attending open provisions	Management of documentation and trustee, governor accessibility to information Manage succession of leadership
Opportunities	Risks
Appointment of new Clerk brings opportunity to refresh ideas on governance	Unexpected school closures and associated operational challenges due to ongoing pandemic Loss of trustees due to protracted wait for free school site Inability to recruit future leaders with sufficient skills and experience Additional payroll risk linked to historic holiday payment claim for term-time only employees

Oak Lodge School

Strengths	Areas for Development
Outstanding Ofsted grade NAS leading practitioner Well regarded by local authority Recent work to establish online curriculum materials in response to COVID-19	Adaptation of curriculum to 'new normal'
Opportunities	Risks
Offer of additional accommodation to expand provision Retirement of CFO – provides opportunity for re-structure	Security of succession planning Ability to recruit high-quality staff

Oakbridge Special Education

Strengths	Areas for Development
Well regarded in-demand provision growing from 16 to 18 funded places; providing excellent value for money for local authorities; Highly inclusive and personalised curriculum; Skilled and experienced specialist workforce	Increase robustness and rigour of transition programme to next stage of education or support; Increase levels of home and parental support; Development of student voice
Opportunities	Risks
The development of greater links with social service provision	Long term security and viability of current site; Inability to expand due to limitations of current accommodation

The Windmill School

Strengths	Areas for Development
DfE approval Experienced and knowledgeable development group	A site is urgently required
Opportunities	Risks
Strong demand for specialist SEND places in Barnet and neighbouring authorities	That stakeholder interest wanes in the light of the protracted site search

Strategic Aims

Multi-Academy Trust

- To continue as a going concern in accordance with the Academies Financial Handbook, maintaining sound financial control of its resources and assets
- To be an outward looking organisation committed to the quality of its governance
- To be a forward-looking organisation that ensures it is well-placed to support the continued and future success of its academies and subsidiary provisions
- To remain an independent specialist, SEND MAT, small enough to maintain a personalised service to the community of open provisions
- To establish The Windmill School.

Oak Lodge School

- To ensure a safe and flexible education offer is delivered during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic as best as possible.
- To develop specialist hybrid formal and non-formal curriculums that will meet the broad range of needs and aptitudes presented by students admitted to the school
- To maintain a high level of regard and reputation with commissioners, learners and their families, who will be confident in the quality of its provision.
- To further improve the quality of accommodation and resources on its East Finchley site
- To consider the development of satellite sites where place demand exceeds currently available level of supply

Oakbridge Special Education

- To ensure a safe and flexible education offer is delivered during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic as best as possible.
- To develop a vocational curriculum model as a specialist independent FE provision for young people and adults aged 16 to 25, that prepares them for independent or supported adult lives
- To secure a long-term home on its own discrete site

The Windmill School

- To secure a site with planning permission on which to establish a new Special Academy offering up to 90 places for children and young people aged 5 – 18 with a confirmed autism spectrum condition.
- To develop a therapeutic and eclectic curriculum model informed by evidence-based practice and academic research.
- To open for first admissions by September 2023

Detailed Objectives

Multi-Academy Trust					
Ref:	Impact	Actions	Date	Lead	Prog:
1.1	Both open provisions of the Trust have robust recovery plans in place for re-opening to all students and that take full account of DfE guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed operational plan and risk assessment for each provision Implementation of a 'recovery' curriculum with integrated behaviour and pastoral support Support for parents Contingency plan for educational continuity in the event of a further outbreak 	SEP20	LW	
1.2	There is a robust and efficient system for trustees and local governors to access information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of clerking arrangements Establishment of cloud-based specialist governance service (Governor Hub) Migration of existing documentation 	SEP20	IK Clerk	
1.3	Trustees and local governors provide excellent support and challenge to the operational leaders of their schools and provisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual survey of skills and competences Provision of training opportunities Additional recruitment to fill any identified gaps in the Board or its committees 	OCT20	IK Clerk	
1.4	Minimal exposure of financial reserves from term-time only holiday pay claim of UNISON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with Capita HR joint negotiation 	DEC20	AD	
1.5	The Trust has a clear and successful succession plan for key leadership and administrative roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and consolidation of clerking, compliance and company secretarial roles Plan for succession and combination of current CFO and Finance manager roles, recruiting single replacement Ensure appointment of HT designate for The Windmill School, pending successful planning application 	APR21	JC LW IK	

Oak Lodge School

Ref:	Impact	Actions	Date	Lead	Prog:
2.1	The school will have successfully recovered from the impact of its extended closure during the COVID-19 pandemic.	See 1.1: Plans in place for a full re-opening responsive to updated and dynamic risk assessment Support for staff, student and family wellbeing Contingency plan for further emergency closure	SEP20	LW +SLT	
2.1A	Students will have been supported to mitigate for the disruption to their learning as a result of the pandemic.	Identify and cost options for additional intervention to take advantage of the £46,800 Covid-19 Catch-up premium. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address individual needs Promote wellbeing curriculum Secure the home learning website to support students who may be self-isolating. Provide support to parents required to support home learning 	Oct20-Apr21	GDO EPY ESY CCH	
2.2	There is clear observable and written evidence of a rigorous and personalised approach to assessment of learning in both academic and non-academic spheres. All groups of students make equally good progress from their starting points	EHCP, including SCERTS targets to be clearly available in all classrooms Termly progress tracking to be closer linked to individual EHC Plans Principal that digital portfolios be updated termly Train TAs to support revised assessment and tracking procedures Undertake regular analysis to spot any emerging gaps Relevant interventions put in place	OCT20	CCH EP ESY	
2.3	Ensure highly effective and meaningful engagement takes place with staff at all levels and that issues are identified. When issues are identified, in particular about workload, they are dealt with appropriately and quickly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refine assessment, recording and reporting systems to reduce teacher workload Promote staff well-being programme drawing on resources of the Education Psychology Traded Service 	NOV20	CCH ESY	
2.4	SMSC development is evident and underpins the full range of students' experience of the curriculum and progress in learning, reflecting a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further develop the PSHE curriculum and ensure that this includes a relevant SRE curriculum. Carry out parental engagement and consultation 	DEC20	GD EP ESY	

Oak Lodge School

Ref:	Impact	Actions	Date	Lead	Prog:
	shared knowledge and understanding of fundamental British values.				
2.5	Clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality education to all pupils, through strong, shared values, policies and practice.	Build on the successes of the new learning platform developed as part of COVID response: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Refreshment of IT resources: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Laptop banks for class use Ensure individual laptop for all teachers Upgrade Interactive Whiteboards to display screens in all main building and DT/Art block classrooms Review of strategic curriculum planning to link with emerging decisions around school structure and "Vision25". 	DEC20 MAY21	CCH IK GF SF LW +SLT	
2.6	School has a culture of safeguarding that supports effective arrangements to: identify pupils who may need early help or who are at risk; school fulfils its statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010, and other duties, including 'Prevent'	Increase number of DSL recognising need for strong succession planning Ongoing PREVENT training Awareness training on LGBT for staff and parents reflecting recently published regulation Update safeguarding policy, reflecting any amendments to latest published guidance	JUN21	LW BB	
2.7	Ensure teachers receive focused and highly effective professional development. Teachers' subject, pedagogical knowledge consistently builds and develops over time; consistently translates into improvements in teaching of the curriculum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focused training for the teaching of early reading and mathematics skills Explicit training in SEN pedagogy to ensure learning and emotional needs are met CPD opportunities to support workforce career aspirations	JUL21	LW	
2.8	Students at key transition points are well prepared for next stage of their education or wider learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers help students to compile portfolios of achievement; teachers enable students to have a clear understanding of their next move 	JUL21	EP ESY	

Oak Lodge School

Ref:	Impact	Actions	Date	Lead	Prog:
2.9	All classrooms of the school provide a predictable, safe, hygienic and standardised learning environment that meets the needs of students, whilst realising economies of scale and operational benefits of standardisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial reduction of furniture and equipment in response to COVID. Evidence- based research to balance health, wellbeing and pedagogic needs. Selection of recommended plans Compilation of standardised furniture inventory that continues to offer a small amount of choice to teachers Bulk purchase of furniture refreshment according to audit of need 	JUL21	GDO	

Oakbridge Special Education

Ref:	Impact	Actions	Date	Lead	Prog:
3.1	The provision will have successfully recovered from the impact of its extended closure during the COVID-19 pandemic.	See 1.1: Plans in place for a full re-opening responsive to updated and dynamic risk assessment Support for staff, student and family wellbeing Contingency plan for further emergency closure	SEP20	LW SC	
3.2	Students will feel more confident to express their views knowing they will be listened to an appropriate support will be provided.	To develop students voice to take account of their views and aspirations when planning learning experiences Time tabled sessions to focus on what works well and if better if. To have more input in the weekly newsletter from the students.	OCT20	SC	
3.3	There will be additional members with a broader range of appropriate skills plus parental representation on the board of directors	Ensure recruitment of directors adds to the skills et of the existing body. Ideally replace LW as director so that there is not a conflict of interest	MAR21	LW IK Clerk	
3.4	Students leaving OB will successfully move on to an appropriate setting with the correct level of support.	establish a more rigorous and transition programme out of OB. To develop more collaborative partnerships with other educational/social care providers	JUL21	SC	
3.5	A permanent base that is used daily with teaching	To secure a more permanent base for the provision.	SEP21	LW SC	

Oakbridge Special Education

Ref:	Impact	Actions	Date	Lead	Prog:
	resources/equipment not being required to be put away every evening. Not being restricted by the dual use of the current site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore options to build on site • Continue alternative property search for lease • Continue negotiation with Scouts 			

The Windmill School

Ref:	Impact	Actions	Date	Lead	Prog:
4.1	A permanent home for the new school has been identified and planning permission secured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with national and local government agencies • Increased frequency of Development Group meetings according to programme success 	APR21	IK	
4.2	An Education Plan has been agreed that will meet the needs of the anticipated cohort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Education Plan as originally submitted, taking account of latest research and potential adjustment of cohort expectations • Development Group ensure design opportunities to support new curriculum are addressed within building plans 	MAY21	IK/GD + Dev.Grp	
4.3	All stakeholders are kept aware of progress made and have the opportunity to shape the future direction of the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain effective communication with commissioners and potential parents • Development of website • Prepare for consultation meetings with prospective families 	JUL21	IK	

Long-Term Objectives to 2025

Succession plans in place for:

- Trustees
- Local Governors
- Chief Executive Officer
- Headteacher of Oak Lodge School

Robust SEND educational vision for the 2020's (Vision25+)

- Generic secondary and FE phase special provisions
- Autism specific 5-18 all-through provision

Permanent sites for:

- Oakbridge Special Education
- The Windmill School

Refurbishment/re-build of existing Oak Lodge accommodation (excluding Centenary Building)