

## **INTRODUCTION**

Hexham Priory School is designated for pupils with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. School currently has 102 pupils aged from 2 to 19 years on roll. In addition to a learning difficulty, many pupils have a secondary disability, which may be an Autistic Spectrum Condition, a sensory impairment or a physical disability. With effect from 1 September 2018 Hexham Priory School, became part of The Eden Academy Trust family of schools and along with James Rennie School in Carlisle has formed the 'Northern Hub'. The Eden Academy Trust is a group of seven special schools who all have a similar ethos in putting the pupils at the heart of everything we do.

School is supported by the contribution of a multidisciplinary team, with a range of professionals including: Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, School Nurse, Social Workers, Paediatricians, Dietician and Community Nurses all working collaboratively with Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Parents and Carers to meet the needs of individual pupils.

School's motto is "*Never underestimate a child's ability*" and this pervades all aspects of our work. We are aspirational in our aims for our pupils and they regularly reward us by their achievements. All Sixth Formers leave School with externally accredited awards and qualifications.

Several of the pupils at school enjoy shared placements at mainstream schools accessing relevant learning opportunities alongside children from their local community. Our staff are involved in supporting these placements through outreach support into the mainstream school and through receiving staff from mainstream schools into their classroom. Our pupils act as excellent ambassadors for our School during the time that they spend in their local mainstream school.

## **LOCATION AND CATCHMENT AREA**

The catchment area of the school covers the whole of West Northumberland and at over 1,000 square miles is one of the largest in the country. Transport is provided for most pupils, although a small number that live within Hexham are able to walk to school.

Hexham enjoys good transport links with Tyneside, regular train and bus services operate to Newcastle upon Tyne 20 miles to the east, which can be reached by car in half an hour. Tynedale offers a wide range of semi-urban and rural communities. The school is relatively close to the Lake District and to the Scottish Borders.



## **SCHOOL BUILDING**

Following a steady rise in pupil numbers over many years, Northumberland County Council commissioned a new school building which opened in September 2009.

The new 80 place school building includes 10 classrooms, a common room for Sixth Form pupils together with two workrooms and three quiet rooms which are used for one to one work. School also has a fully equipped Cookery Room, Library, a Sensory Room, a Movement Room for pupils to work on their Occupational Therapy programmes, a Soft Play room and an IMEX (Interactive Multi-Sensory Experience) Studio. We are also fortunate to have a large gym and a separate multi-purpose hall. Externally the school has a Sensory Garden, two large playgrounds, enclosed play area with extensive outdoor play equipment and a Forest School area.

Due to the continued demand for places at School, Northumberland County Council committed to a £1.17 million building project to be completed by November 2018. This will see the capacity of the School rise to 112 places.



## SCHOOL ORGANISATION

School operates a departmental system with Primary aged children currently based on the ground floor and Secondary aged pupils educated on the first floor. This allows for a sense of transition between departments with each having their own age-appropriate facilities, colour schemes and pupil uniforms. Each Department benefits from the strong leadership of an Assistant Head. In addition to the Class Teacher each class has a minimum of two Teaching Assistants.

School starts to pupils at 9.00am and their day ends at 3.15pm. Lunch is served to Primary Department pupils from 12 noon to 12.30pm and to Secondary Department pupils from 12:30pm to 1:00pm. Lunch time is considered as teaching time, where social skills are taught and practised.

Staff are very committed and hard-working and this has allowed us to offer seven residential visits to pupils throughout the last school year.

## CURRICULUM

By 'curriculum' we refer to all the learning opportunities provided by the school. We offer a 'personalised curriculum' which offers a wide range of activities. Flexibility in terms of balance within the curriculum is essential in ensuring relevance for individual pupils at different stages of their education. Balance in the whole curriculum reflects the needs of pupils at various age related stages of their school careers. As pupils move through the school we give them the opportunity to develop academically, socially and to increase their level of independence; preparing them for the next stage of their education and to be active members of their community.



Our choice of curriculum organisation has been developed around the starting point of pupil need and is contextualised to meet the specific needs of the pupils in our school and to support their personal development and welfare.

Our five Areas of Learning are;

1. **My Communication:** English, Speech and Language
2. **My Thinking:** Mathematics, Science, Design and Technology
3. **Myself and My Body:** Personal, Social and Health Education (Sex and Relationships Education, Social Skills, self-care, behaviour), PE, Swimming, Rebound, Horse Riding, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Programmes

4. **My World and My Community:** History, Geography, Religious Education, Modern Foreign Language, Life Skills (Work Experience, Food Preparation, Enterprise) Citizenship, Careers Education, Information and Guidance
5. **My Creativity:** Art, Music, Drama

### **Current Vacancy**

The post has arisen due to the maternity leave of a current staff member with an expected start date for the post as December 2019. For the remainder of the school year, the vacancy is in our Secondary Department teaching a class of seven pupils between Key Stage Three and Four.

Please browse our website and read (and comment if you like!) on our blog. This will inform you more about school and the activities that our pupils take part in.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to view the school prior to interview.

Thank you for your interest.

**Liz Davison,  
Head Teacher**