



Interventions at The Orchard Centre



What do we offer?



In addition to our small group sizes, high staff to student ratios and specialised curriculum/enrichment offer, we also run a range of individual or small-group interventions for young people who require additional support. These interventions are timetabled and monitored carefully to ensure that they are meeting the needs of each student. Most of them take place within lesson time, which may result in a student being withdrawn from a lesson in order to participate in an intervention. However, timetables are reviewed and revised on a regular basis and interventions are kept as short term as appropriate in order to ensure that young people miss as little class time as possible. New interventions are added to our menu of options as required based on student need.

When people are talking...



I will not interrupt them.



Social Stories

Social Stories is a story-based intervention that aims to explain social situations to a young person and help them to understand and explore different ways of behaving in these situations. It is largely aimed at students with an Autistic Spectrum Condition but also benefits those who struggle in social situations as a result of trauma, anxiety or a range of other needs. This intervention is often delivered as a one to one session but may involve more students based on individual needs.



Time to Talk

A one to one session designed to encourage a young person to build a trusting relationship with a key adult in school. This is not a counselling session but gives students a chance to build their social skills, practice conversation, develop a stronger relationship with a staff member and discuss any issues that are on their minds or areas of interest. It reflects our nurturing approach to education by ensuring that young people who may otherwise struggle to engage socially are given a caring and empathetic contact with whom they can learn to relax and express themselves.



You and Me

Some young people struggle with personal issues linked to body image, self care, understanding of gender/sexuality and the way in which they present themselves to others. You and Me is a talking therapy which aims to help students to deal with these issues which they may be encountering for the first time as they hit puberty and beyond. It gives students a safe, judgement-free space to ask questions, discuss concerns and explore their interactions with the world.





Cool Kids

Cool Kids is a physical therapy programme which targets fine and gross motor skills. It is often recommended for use with young people with dyspraxia or other sensory or coordination issues, but offers all participants the opportunity to regulate arousal levels, bond with other students through shared physical activities and increase dopamine levels through exercise. With this in mind, all students at the Orchard Centre take part in a weekly Cool Kids session.





Speech and Language Therapy

Language and communication is vital in ensuring progress towards independence and wellbeing. However, many young people who struggle with social, emotional or mental health issues find language and communication to be an area of particular challenge. Targeted interventions are designed to focus on these areas of difficulty, often informed by a referral to the NHS Speech and Language Therapy team. These interventions may be delivered via individual or small-group session, based on the particular needs of students. Young people who exhibit selective mutism may also be supported by bespoke programmes and resources provided by an educational psychologist.



Circle of Friends

Our Circle of Friends intervention is based upon that used within a mainstream environment with a few alterations made to reflect the range of needs and issues experienced by our young people. The programme is aimed at teaching students how to positively support each other, engage in problem solving as a group and build individual and group resilience. It encourages social communication, inclusivity and positive behaviour support.





Lego Therapy

Lego Therapy is a play-based tool designed to support neurodivergent students to communicate, socialise and work cooperatively with peers. It builds a range of social communication skills, such as naming, turn-taking, problem-solving and following rules, and can also be effective in helping to reduce anxiety in young people with Autistic Spectrum Conditions. This intervention is delivered via small-group sessions in which each young person is expected to take on a variety of different roles and communicate with others, fully supported by a staff member at all times.

Academic interventions

As far as possible, academic difficulties are tackled within lessons, using a range of strategies such as targeted in-class support, small group sizes and additional support resources. We utilise a spiral curriculum, which means that skills are explored, built upon and revisited frequently throughout each course of learning. This ensures that young people have numerous opportunities to master and enhance their use of a range of skills in each subject. Lessons are also taught in a dyslexia- and ASD-friendly way, allowing us to meet the needs of neurodivergent students through Quality First Teaching.

On occasion, however, it is necessary to deliver some academic interventions as withdrawal sessions. This might take the form of additional tutoring to fill in gaps in knowledge and understanding or short-term subject focused sessions which hone in on a particular area of difficulty. Literacy support is provided as standard to all young people, but those in need of further phonics development will be supported on a one to one basis using the Toe By Toe programme.

Outdoor interventions

In addition to our timetabled outdoor curriculum offer, we utilise a number of outdoor-based interventions according to student need.

Our resilience course aims to build confidence, self esteem and personal resilience by exposing young people to a range of outdoor challenges at gradually increasing levels of difficulty.

We also make use of animal therapy, either via centre therapy dogs or, where needed, on trips to farms where young people have the opportunity to work with alpacas, poultry or other domestic animals.

Horticulture therapy is an effective intervention for young people struggling with sensory difficulties and is provided in our own outdoor space or at our allotment several miles away.





Social interventions

Many of our young people struggle to build and maintain reciprocal friendships. Speech and Language, Time to Talk and one to one counselling sessions can help to tackle the causes of some of these difficulties, but we can also provide additional social interventions in which young people are supported to develop their social communication and begin to interact in a positive way with their peers. These interventions are based on the interests and needs of the young people in question and currently include craft groups, walking groups. Within these interventions, learners are encouraged to converse, play and develop friendships in their own time.