

Welcome

A very warm welcome to High Close School. I am proud to be the Principal of this very special school where staff and pupils strive together to make school life a happy and fulfilling experience.

Every pupil who arrives at High Close has experienced difficulties at their previous schools. These may be to do with learning, behaviour, conforming to expectations, attendance, or a range of other problems. But, whatever the reasons may be, at High Close there is the chance of a fresh start in a supportive and stimulating environment.

Here, our team of dedicated education and care staff will work with your child to raise self esteem and improve their learning and social skills. This will be done by providing opportunities to access a range of qualifications and activities designed to make sure that they get the most out of their school life and leave with the skills they need to lead enjoyable and productive lives.

Pupils may attend on a daily basis or board in one of our outstanding residential units.

If you would like to find out more about High Close School, please visit our website www.barnardos.org.uk/schools/highcloseschool or telephone 0118 978 5767.



Rose Mahony
Principal
BA (Hons), PGCE, Adv Dip Sp Ed



Teaching and learning

Learning at High Close is stimulating, interesting and above all, fun! Within the purpose-built school we have a bright and welcoming environment in which good behaviour and respect are fostered. We teach the full range of National Curriculum subjects at a level tailored to the individual child. Teachers use a range of methods and resources, including the latest technology, to engage the reluctant learner.

Pupils are also provided with the opportunity to develop social and emotional skills within the educational setting. Classes are kept small, with a teacher and learning support assistant in every lesson. Where required, extra support is provided by the residential and day unit staff. There is access to a range of specialist support including a speech and language therapist, a dyslexia specialist, a literacy support team and a consultant educational psychologist.



“ Young people benefit from particularly competent and confident staff. ”
Ofsted 2008

...and learning outcomes

High Close prides itself on the achievement of its pupils. Challenging objectives are set on Individual Education Plans and daily targets encourage pupils to regularly give of their best. At Key Stage Four, pupils gain nationally accredited academic and vocational qualifications including NVQ in Horticulture, Entry levels, Duke of Edinburgh Bronze and Silver Awards and up to seven GCSE's in subjects including English, Maths and Science. These achievements allow our young people to move onto a variety of college and work placements after the age of 16.

Parents are given regular updates about the progress that their son or daughter is making in school through twice yearly reports, annual reviews, six monthly planning meetings and parent consultation evenings.



“ All pupils, many of whom have had troubled and inconsistent schooling in the past, improve their behaviour and develop a desire to learn. ”
Ofsted 2008

Outstanding care

At High Close, we see care as a cornerstone of helping pupils fulfil their potential. The well qualified residential staff team is committed to providing the highest possible standard of care. This also means working with families, because in many cases the pupils come from families which are having difficulties of their own.

Staff value the young people as individuals, catering for a variety of cultural and religious requirements. There are particularly secure and positive relationships between staff and pupils who have high expectations of each other.

In 2009, Ofsted graded our residential provision as 'outstanding'. The school provides for 36 residential pupils in 4 well equipped and homely units which are maintained to a very high standard. All pupils can have their own bedrooms.

Day pupils have their own unit which provides breakfast and homework clubs and recreational facilities for break times. Day unit staff support the pupils in school throughout the day and liaise with parents on a regular basis.



“ I feel I have found a place where I belong. ”
Pupil

...and personal development

Pupils' social and personal development is a strong feature at High Close and is key to their future success. The primary focus of the work within the residential and day units is to help pupils to manage their own behaviour, initially within our safe and secure environment and later in the wider community. All pupils have a key worker who will meet regularly with them and address issues such as bullying, anti-social behaviour and keeping safe.

Pupils are encouraged to explore new challenges and unfamiliar situations through a programme of off site activities and residential trips. The school has the International School Award and is proud of the opportunities it provides for pupils to make trips abroad to work with the street children in Goa and to go skiing in Italy. Such trips result in an increase in self confidence which is reflected in all areas of their life.

Many of our pupils have problems with relationships when they arrive and it is a real pleasure to see them learning how to make and keep friendships, some of which survive long after they leave.



“ Pupils' personal development is outstanding as is the care, guidance and support they receive. ”

Ofsted 2008


Sports, health and wellbeing

High Close promotes good health through the everyday 24 hour curriculum and has achieved the Healthy School's Award. There is an emphasis on healthy eating and individuals are encouraged to be aware of their own needs in relation to keeping healthy with regular workshops and group discussions.

The school has good resources, with a new well-equipped sports hall, a multi-gym, an outdoor hard court area and a football pitch. Physical exercise is highly valued, with all pupils being encouraged to take part in regular sporting activities on site as well as having access to local facilities where they can attend classes such as street dance, trampolining, horse riding and gymnastics. Outdoor educational experiences and trips, including visits to outdoor centres in Wales and the Lake District and Skiing in Europe, are annual events.

The emotional health of the young person is of paramount importance, with all staff being aware of and developing the individual pupil's emotional literacy. We have an onsite counsellor who is available for those pupils who wish to see her and access to a variety of outside services who will offer support if required.



They have a clear understanding about how to lead a healthy lifestyle and stay safe.  Ofsted 2008



Creative success

The whole school environment is bursting with evidence of the pupils' creativity. Photographic displays and wonderful examples of art work form a visual backdrop to school life. Performing is an integral part of the school, with all pupils being encouraged to take part in a variety of settings, from reading at an assembly to participating in events such as; the annual talent contest, the Christmas concert and school productions such as 'Lion King' and 'Wizard of Oz'. Music is a real strength of the school with all pupils being given the opportunity to join the school choir and learn a musical instrument such as guitar, drums, recorder or piano. We believe that unlocking the creative talent of our pupils encourages them to express their emotions appropriately and helps to raise self esteem.



“ Spellbound parents and guardians struggled to hold back tears of pride as they watched their children take to the stage. ”

Wokingham Times
16th July 2008



Preparing for life skills

Throughout their time at High Close pupils are preparing for the day they leave. Our aim is to provide them with the qualifications and skills they will need to make a successful transition from school into the adult world.

Within the school there is an extensive careers programme, from lessons in the classroom at year nine through to weeks of work experience in year 10 and 11. We liaise closely with our Connexions advisor who meets regularly with staff and older pupils to ensure that 'moving on' plans are produced.

In the residential units pupils follow a structured independence programme which covers all areas required to cope with living and working within their community.

All pupils have the opportunity to represent their units by joining the School Council which is an important part of the school's decision making process and encourages the development of skills in speaking, listening and negotiation. There are also opportunities to take on increased responsibility by becoming school and unit prefects.

To assist with the transition at post-16 the school employs an aftercare field social worker who is available to support pupils and their families through year 11 and for up to six months after they leave.



“ College links and work placements are carefully organized and effectively help pupils to gain work place skills... pupils are well prepared for life after school. ”
Ofsted 2008