



Our SEN Information Report

What We Provide for Pupils with SEND

Open Air Education is an inclusive setting where children of all needs and backgrounds are supported to thrive. We cater for pupils with a wide range of needs, including:

- Communication and Interaction Needs
- Cognition and Learning Difficulties
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs
- Sensory and/or Physical Needs

Our goal is to support each pupil holistically through an adaptive, outdoor, and experiential curriculum, helping them flourish both academically and emotionally.

Open Air Education's approach to Special Educational Needs (SEN) reflects its mission to provide inclusive, nature-based, and project-led learning. Our provision is responsive, child-centred, and rooted in real-world engagement, enabling children with SEN to thrive in a nurturing and dynamic outdoor setting.

Key Contacts

For information about SEN support and admissions, contact our education team via [our contact form](#).

SENCO: Amy Dobson

SEND Admissions

We welcome children with additional needs and tailor our admissions process to meet the needs of each individual. A holistic understanding of the child guides our transition and planning process.

Our SEN Provision

Provision is embedded within our flexible, experiential learning environment, offering support across cognitive, communication, sensory, emotional, and social domains.

Our "Quality First Teaching" is underpinned by:

- Differentiated planning

- Child-led project work
- Sensory and nature-based learning
- Individual and small group support

All staff work collaboratively to ensure each pupil receives appropriate challenge and support.

There are four broad areas of special educational need, these are:

Communication and Interaction

This area of need includes children with Autism Spectrum Condition and those with Speech, Language and Communication Needs

Cognition and Learning

This includes children with Specific Learning Difficulties, Moderate Learning Difficulties, Severe Learning Difficulties and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties

Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties

This includes any pupils who have an emotional, social or mental health need that is impacting on their ability to learn

Sensory and/or Physical Difficulties

This area includes children with hearing impairment, visual impairment, multi-sensory impairment and physical difficulties.

The Kinds of SEN That Are Provided For

We support a broad spectrum of needs, including but not limited to:

- Autism Spectrum Conditions
- ADHD
- Speech and Language difficulties
- Social, Emotional & Mental Health needs

- Specific Learning Difficulties

Our Approach to Teaching Children & Young People with SEN

Teaching is hands-on, immersive, and designed to adapt to varied learning styles. Our outdoor model enhances engagement, especially for neurodiverse learners, encouraging curiosity, autonomy, and confidence.

We apply the Graduated Approach of *Assess – Plan – Do – Review* to ensure all support is continuously evaluated and improved. This means:

- Needs are identified early.
- Interventions are tailored, reviewed regularly, and refined.
- Students, families, and staff work collaboratively at every step.

All pupils on SEND Support or with an EHCP have their progress reviewed at least termly. Annual Reviews are held for pupils with EHCPs, involving families and all professionals involved.

How We Adapt the Curriculum and Learning Environment

We tailor activities to individual needs through flexible grouping, sensory-friendly outdoor spaces, and real-life projects. Nature itself becomes a multisensory classroom that helps remove learning barriers.

All teaching staff are responsible for delivering “Quality First Teaching” tailored to individual needs. Our outdoor, experiential curriculum naturally supports differentiated instruction, allowing for sensory input, movement, and hands-on problem-solving — key strategies for many learners with SEND. Staff work together to adapt materials and activities so all students can access learning.

Our outdoor classrooms and project-based learning allow us to adapt activities to suit sensory, emotional, or physical needs. Resources are tailored, movement breaks are embedded, and pupils can work in alternative spaces if needed.

How We Identify, Assess, and Review Children with SEN

We use observation-based and formative assessments alongside parent and specialist input to identify needs early. Progress is reviewed regularly, with adjustments made as needed.

Children are identified through a combination of classroom observation, assessments, and dialogue with parents and external professionals. Once a potential need is identified, we follow a *Graduated Approach* (Assess, Plan, Do, Review), using both internal support and external advice as needed. The SENCO manages a live SEND Register, and support plans are monitored termly.

How Children with SEN Engage in All Activities

All children, regardless of need, access our full range of outdoor and project-based activities. We modify where necessary to ensure full participation and equal enjoyment.

Every child participates in all curriculum areas, including off-site trips and physical activities. We adapt resources, tasks, and groupings to ensure accessibility and provide additional support where necessary.

How We Evaluate the Effectiveness of SEN Provision

Provision is evaluated through pupil progress, wellbeing checks, and reflective staff practice. Child specific targets are monitored via our online learning platform Toddle. Ongoing dialogue with families and specialists ensures responsiveness.

Progress is tracked through academic data, wellbeing indicators, and personalised targets. Provision is reviewed each term, and staff use feedback from pupils, parents, and professionals to refine support.

Support for Emotional & Social Development

Student wellbeing is central to our ethos. The outdoor setting reduces anxiety and promotes self-regulation. Community building, empathy, and emotional literacy are woven into everyday learning.

Our calm, outdoor setting supports regulation and emotional wellbeing. Staff build trusted relationships with pupils and use informed approaches, emotional coaching, and social skill development activities as part of everyday learning.

Looked After Children with SEND

We provide tailored support to looked after children with SEND, including close liaison with carers and professionals. Our SENCO ensures that strategies are informed by pupils' individual life experiences and that emotional wellbeing is prioritised. Their voice is central to planning and review.

SEN Transition

Transitions are supported gradually through visits, parent meetings, and personalized planning. Our small-group setting helps students adjust in a calm and supported manner.

We personalise all transitions — whether joining us, moving between stages, or leaving. Transition plans may include additional visits, photo books, and key adult introductions. We work closely with parents, receiving schools and our own nursery sites, Playology.

SEN Specialist Expertise

Our SENCO is experienced and regularly trained in current SEND practice. Staff are trained in child-centred, inclusive education, and continue to develop through CPD focused on SEN, mental health, and inclusive outdoor learning strategies. We also work with speech therapists, psychologists, and advisory teachers when needed.

Consulting with Our SEN Pupils, Parents & Carers

We maintain close, open communication with families. Children are involved in shaping their learning, and parents are viewed as essential partners.

Compliments, Complaints & Feedback

We encourage feedback and aim to resolve any concerns swiftly and supportively. Families can contact the team via the school website.

Key Policies

Open Air Education regularly reviews its SEN policy and other related policies; including safeguarding, inclusion, and accessibility policies.

Equalities

We are committed to equality and celebrate diversity. Our learning environment is designed to promote inclusion, respect, and a sense of belonging. All pupils are respected and supported according to their unique strengths and needs. Adjustments are made to ensure every learner can participate fully.

Local Offer

Our provision aligns with Durham County Council's Local Offer. Details on local services and wider SEN support can be found via their Local Offer site.