



A Speech and
Language UK school



Meath School

Prospectus



“Meath school has been amazing – we’ve got our little boy back! He’s made lots of friends, and he’s understanding so much more. The school teaches life skills so they can be more independent. The strategies they’ve given him means he doesn’t need any additional support which is really empowering.”

Parent

Welcome to Meath School

A message from our Principal, Majella Delaney

It is with great pleasure that I invite you to share the Meath experience.

We are a school that is dedicated to ensuring every child learns to communicate, gets a positive learning experience and feels a sense of belonging and security to be themselves. Whatever speech and language challenges a child may have, we find a way for them to flourish by overcoming their barriers to learning.

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of our amazing staff, we are delighted to have been rated Ofsted 'Outstanding' since 2007.

At Meath, we take great pride in the work we do and the progress we see individual children making. We believe in opening doors and supporting children to be strong, independent communicators and learners. For each child, we offer a way to ensure they are heard and are able to express their valued voice and opinions, by whatever means.

Above all, we want every child to **talk, learn and grow**. That means giving them all the support they need to **talk** and communicate, through any means possible, to **learn**, and to **grow** as independent people.

I hope this prospectus will give you some idea of everything Meath has to offer your child. But it can never take the place of seeing the place for yourself and soaking up the very special atmosphere we create.

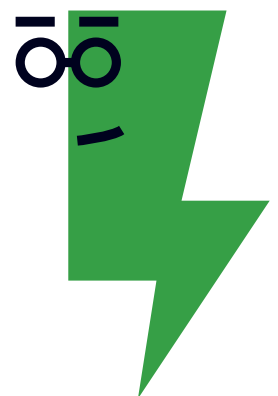


If you would like to arrange a visit – or have any questions about what we do – please don't hesitate to get in touch by calling **01932 872302** or emailing us at **meath@meathschool.org.uk**. We will be delighted to hear from you.

With very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'M Delaney'.

Majella Delaney
Principal



Who we are and what we do

A nurturing community with communication at its heart

Who we are

Meath is a school that helps children aged four to 11 with complex speech and language challenges to build the foundations they need to thrive. We have been rated Ofsted 'Outstanding' since 2007.

What we do

We work hard to prepare children for the next stage of their education and give them the tools they need to independently access the learning and education that will allow them greater life choices and experiences.

Our collaborative and immersive environment encourages children to be effective communicators and to learn various ways to have their voice heard. To do this, we work as a multi-disciplinary team to ensure the very best expertise is shared and taught, through evidence-based approaches.

Our mission

Through a combination of specialised education, therapy and care, we aim to create a community of happy, independent, and confident communicators.

Meath achieves this by supporting children with complex speech and language challenges to **talk, learn and grow**:

- Enabling each child to **talk**, understand and connect with the world through a combination of methods.
- Integrating specialist teaching, therapy and care to help children **learn**.
- Creating a nurturing environment where children can develop social skills, friendships and learning approaches – and **grow** up safe and happy.

▼ Giving children the communication skills they need.



About Speech and Language UK

Meath is part of Speech and Language UK, a children's charity that wants every child to face the future with confidence.

For two million children in the UK, learning to talk and understand words feels like an impossible hurdle. So, we give children and young people the skills they need so they

are not left behind, waiting to be understood.

We design innovative tools and training for thousands of nursery assistants and teachers to use in their classrooms. We give families the confidence and skills to help their children. And we put pressure on politicians to prioritise help for speech and language challenges.

Speech and Language UK 



Inside our school

Our specially equipped school provides an environment where children can thrive

Set in a beautiful eight-acre site in the village of Ottershaw, Surrey, the school gives our pupils access to a range of specialised modern facilities.

Indoor facilities include:

- Therapy rooms
- Heated swimming pool
- Library
- Art, design and technology room
- Class set of iPads
- Class set of laptops
- Gym/hall
- Music room
- Occupational therapy spaces
- Quiet room
- Zones of regulation room
- Wellbeing spaces throughout
- Medical room

Outdoor facilities include:

- Extensive grounds
- Woodland area
- Trim trails
- Outdoor gym, playground and woodland learning area
- Beautiful spacious play areas
- Football field
- Daily mile running track

For our residential pupils, we also provide:

- Shared bedrooms
- Shared playrooms
- Shared kitchen
- In-house laundry

By providing an environment that is stimulating, caring and fun, we know we can help all our pupils get the most out of their education, and really shine.

“Parents praise the school, with one comment summing up the views of many, saying, ‘Meath is a truly special place’.”

Ofsted, 2023



Learning

Giving children every chance to talk, learn and grow

Our classes

With small classes of up to 12 children and a specialist teacher, speech and language therapist and learning support assistant on hand, we can support your child to reach their potential. Pupils are grouped into classes not by age but functional comprehension level, learning and social needs.

Our curriculum

Our broad and engaging curriculum reflects our belief that wellbeing, independence and life skills are just as important as academic learning. We follow the National Curriculum but adapt our lessons for complex speech and language challenges. Our curriculum's foundations lie in our commitment to helping children **talk, learn and grow**.

We also take a bespoke approach that focuses on linking the curriculum taught in the school with that learned by our residential pupils.

In addition to academic subjects, we provide special programmes to support all aspects of children's personal development, supporting their self-esteem, independence and self-confidence.



Integrated therapy and learning

Therapy and teaching staff plan lessons together to help each child access the curriculum. Our speech and language therapists ensure that lessons are delivered at the right level for pupils' understanding, and occupational therapists advise on how to adapt equipment to meet different needs.

We use a total communication approach, meaning that we teach in a highly practical and visual way, using a combination of speech, signing, pictures and symbols to help pupils' understanding. By using techniques such as sign-supported English, a form of sign-language used alongside spoken English, children who find talking difficult can learn to express themselves in different ways.

▲ Helping children talk, learn and grow is our priority.

Therapy

Meeting each child's needs to help them talk, learn and grow

Speech and language therapy

Our speech and language therapists work with the class team in many ways including team teaching, modelling of therapeutic approaches and leading some lessons. Therapists are closely involved in planning and reviewing lessons, helping to tailor them to pupils' needs.

Children can access therapy through a range of different ways depending on their assessed needs. This includes individual or small group therapy, whole class groups and ad hoc input throughout the day within lessons. Our therapists aim to develop children's communication skills, help them to access the curriculum, and build their confidence in communicating.

Some children benefit from the use of alternative and augmented communication aids, and we have a dedicated therapist in place to support the use of these aids.

Occupational therapy

Our occupational therapy team aims to reduce barriers to pupils' learning, develop their functional abilities and increase their independence. Our on-site occupational therapists collaborate closely with class teams, speech and language therapists and families, to ensure a coordinated approach to meeting each child's individual needs and helping them achieve their potential.

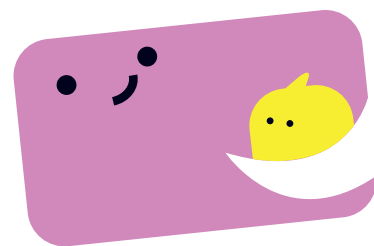
“The harmonious collaboration between the therapy and education teams forms the core provision. This powerful blending of expertise means pupils receive a genuinely integrated curriculum.”

Ofsted, 2023

Occupational therapists use activities that require active participation and are directed towards a goal to help children develop their skills for learning and life. This includes helping children achieve independence in activities such as dressing, using cutlery, handwriting and more.

Occupational therapy takes place across the school in functional spaces such as the classroom and playground. This therapy is provided in specially equipped therapy spaces, such as our purpose designed sensory-integration space in line with the pupil's EHCP recommendations.

The focus of all occupational therapy is to help your child access the curriculum and learn to the best of their ability.



▼ **With the right therapy, every child can flourish.**





Residential care

Staying at Meath can change young lives

Overnight stays

Pupils at Meath are welcome to access sleepovers every school day or set days each week from Monday to Thursday during term time, depending on the needs of your family or child.

As well as giving your family respite, residential care gives your child the opportunity to socialise and practice key skills such as personal hygiene in a fun and safe environment. Supporting communication skills remain at the core of our residential service, with children continuing to use the signs and symbols they learn in class.



Fun and learning

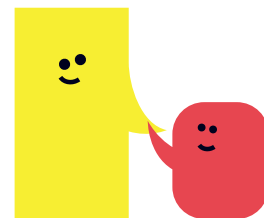
Staying overnight at our residential centre enables children to develop independence and life skills beyond the classroom.

We also offer a range of after-school activities and trips such as sports, swimming, arts and crafts and games, as well as time to play and relax, supervised by our dedicated care team.

Making it home

Children are encouraged to personalise their rooms how they wish and can bring photos in from home, as well as having their artwork and pictures displayed. The furnishings we use are homely and we have a small kitchen. The dining facilities are in the same building and are easily accessed.

It's not just about making a cosy home for them. Giving children input into their environment helps them belong and learn skills that support their independence. It can have a positive impact on their whole lives.



“My child stays over at school once a week and absolutely loves it! She has become far more independent with wanting to and being able to dress herself and clean her teeth by herself.”

Parent

“Pupils are happy and safe, and they enjoy being in school. They comment that ‘everyone can have friends here’.”

Ofsted, 2023

Independence

Putting young people on track for a better future

Better futures

Children who struggle to talk and understand words can often have trouble developing the social and communication skills they need to build the foundations of a successful life. They can lack confidence and find it hard to do so many of the things other children take for granted. This can be a huge struggle – and affect their whole lives.

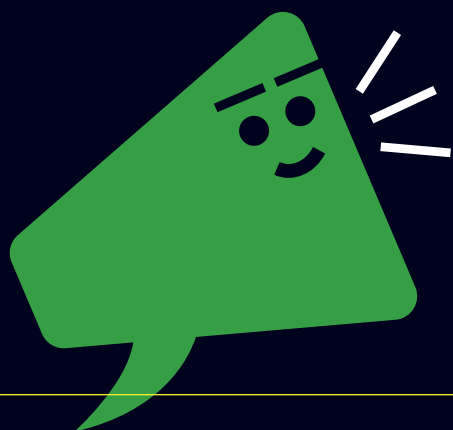
Here at Meath, we provide residential care and specialised support for children with complex speech and language challenges. Through this dedicated care and support, we can give these children better futures.

Success for life

We offer a wide range of after-school activities and clubs where children can learn vital independent skills. For example, they can have fun and learn to swim in our on-site swimming pool and learn to cook in cookery classes.

We also focus on generalising targets in a real life setting through peer groups and social interactions.

All of this can help children become much more confident, boost their self-esteem and – crucially – help them grow into happy and independent adults. Every day, we're changing young lives and helping children face the future with confidence – not just academic success but success for life.



Seeing Louis shine

Louis has a diagnosis of Developmental Language Disorder (DLD). He came to us after spending five years in mainstream school. His language needs were not being met there and Louis fell so far behind that he was working significantly below the level expected of a child his age. It was having a big impact on his life. He had no friends, no confidence and struggled to engage and look after himself.

But all that changed after he started coming to Meath. He is now happy to come to school and has already made lots of progress. His parents have seen him walk taller, show confidence and, for the first time ever, speak about his friends. This is a huge milestone for Louis – and he's now on track for a happier, more independent future.

The team

Holistic care from dedicated professionals

All the care your child needs

At Meath, we take a joined-up approach to children's care. A full multi-disciplinary team of dedicated professionals is on hand to provide holistic care that addresses every aspect of your child's needs.

The team includes:

- Therapy teams – speech and language therapy team and occupational therapy team
- LSA team – learning support assistants, advanced learning support assistants, emotional literacy support assistants
- Residential team
- Senior leadership group
- School council
- Rights respecting schools' team
- Children's forum
- Parent forum
- School advisory board

Be part of the team

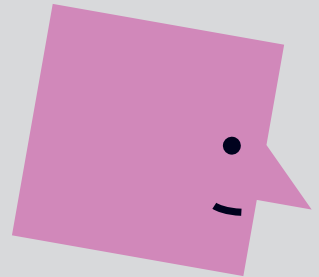
We consider parents and carers like you to be a crucial part of the team too. Supporting pupils' families at home is integral to our approach. Our family partnership leader acts as a link between the school and your home and provides advice, guidance and support to ensure your child is happy and secure.

Parents and carers are invited to become part of the Meath community, with regular events taking place that give them the opportunity to come into school, such as individual pupil meetings, learning workshops and parent forums.



All parents are welcome to join Friends of Meath, our parent-teacher association which supports the school's mission through fundraising and social events.

All families and members of our local community are invited to the highly anticipated Summer Fair, featuring, pony rides, bouncy castles, face painting and many games for the children to play as well as having delicious food and drink on offer. Similarly, Meath's annual fireworks display is a wonderful event where families, staff and local residents come to enjoy a spectacular display.



“There is a purposeful buzz of learning around the school. Routines and expectations are well established. Lessons are active and engaging, and this helps pupils to focus on their learning. Because staff know pupils so well, they easily perceive when to intervene and prompt or when to allow a pupil to persist and achieve tasks independently. Pupils know that all staff have high expectations of them, and so they consistently behave exceptionally well. All staff recognise that behaviour is a form of communication. They skilfully enable pupils to learn strategies to self-regulate and take responsibility for their choices.”

Ofsted, 2023



Entry and eligibility

How your child can attend Meath

▲ Children from four to 11 can enjoy everything Meath has to offer.

Our admissions process

You can apply for your child to attend Meath if developmental speech and/or language disorder is their main barrier to learning. We can also support children with high functioning autism spectrum disorder who have associated language and communication challenges.

You are very welcome to visit the school and see our learning in action to find out whether it is the right environment for your child before applying.

Assessing your child

Once referred to the school, your child will undergo a two-day assessment at Speech and Language UK's Bill Harrison Assessment Centre to determine if their needs can be met at the school. The centre is based on-site here at Meath in Surrey but is open to families and local authorities from across the UK.

The centre provides multi-disciplinary assessments for children and young people aged three and a half to 19 years with a range of speech and language challenges. An assessment will provide a detailed understanding of your child's needs and the best school environment for them.

Our experienced assessment team is made up of a speech and language therapist, specialist teacher and educational psychologist, who work together to provide a joined-up picture of your child's needs. Occupational therapy assessment is also available if requested.

“Before Lara started at Meath, she was practically non-verbal and she didn't really have any life skills. But, thanks to Meath, she's now a completely different child. She's come on in leaps and bounds. The residential team have taught her crucial social skills and how to stay safe. Meath's residential services have done more for her than I could ever have wished for.”

Parent



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