



# **St Christopher's School**

## Prospectus – July 2017

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## About Our School and Children's Home

Welcome to Aurora St Christopher's School and children's home. We have one aim, to empower the children and young people we support to develop and grow in their own unique and inspiring way. In so doing, we work to progress all of the children we support in five distinct areas including self-care, communication, community engagement, decision making and emotional resilience.



St Christopher's provides specialist education and care for young people aged 5 to 19 years with severe language and communication difficulties and with profound and multiple learning difficulties including physical and sensory needs. These may be as a result of autism, cerebral palsy or other conditions that may also include complex health needs.

The skilled team at St Christopher's is supported by a strong clinical team of nurses, doctors, psychologist, psychiatrist and therapists cover physiotherapy, speech and language and occupational therapy.

This impressive five-acre site close to Bristol City centre provides flexible learning and living accommodation with six residential houses and two flats to support differing levels of need. Placements can also be flexible with day places at school for a 40-week term, and up to 52-week residential care.

We have completed phase one of our site redesign plans, with phase two starting now, creating a bespoke environment able to support young people with complex learning needs in their ambitions and to achieve their full potential. Young people will leave St Christopher's with greater independence and opportunities as they leave school and reach adulthood.

## Student Profile

Aurora St Christopher's is registered with Ofsted both as an Independent Special School and as a Children's Home. We believe that determining whether the school can meet the needs of the individual is central and our assessment will define how this can be achieved. Having a relevant peer group will also be a consideration. Students have a Statement of Special Educational Need or a new Education, Health and Care Plan.

They have severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties and associated complexities that require education in a specialist setting providing small class sizes, high levels of specialist support, specialist learning environments and a teaching team experienced and skilled in supporting higher level complex needs.

**Age:** 5-19 years

**Gender:** Mixed

**Special Education Needs:** Severe and complex learning difficulties (PMLD, SLD), sensory impairments and physical disabilities associated with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy and other health needs.

**High levels of support:** all students are provided with enhanced support throughout the school day and provision can be made for those requiring higher levels of support, either full time or periodically, to enable access to the curriculum and participation in school activities.

**Flexible placements:** education is delivered for 40 weeks of the year. Our residential placements are offered for up to 52 weeks of the year and we also offer residential care only placements.

**Clinical and therapeutic support:** clinical and therapeutic input is integral to the educational approach with therapy and nursing support integrated throughout the school day to enable pupils to fully access the curriculum.

***"We are delighted and proud that our son is taking part in the bold new future which lies ahead for the school as he completes his education"***

— Parent of student at St Christopher's School, 2017

## Our Vision

Our vision is simple:

# 'To empower individuals to grow.'

The word 'growth' is personal to each and every one of the pupils at the school. We believe that no matter how big a challenge they face, each and every individual has a unique set of skills and abilities and diversity is encouraged, developed and celebrated.

## Our Aims

At Aurora St Christopher's School we focus on:

- Providing personalised specialist education – where students can learn and express themselves in a nurturing and safe environment that understands their needs and supports them to maximise their full potential
- Supporting students to be part of an enriched school and community life
- Preparing students for life beyond school – developing their abilities and achieving their own unique level of independence as they approach adulthood

## Facilities

St Christopher's is very much part of the local community, overlooking Westbury Park, on a beautiful five-acre site which has been designed to give students plenty of space and independent movement within a structured and safe environment.



The school provides multiple classrooms for small class learning of up to five students and individual learning areas can be available if needed. Facilities include a hydrotherapy pool, gym and multi-sensory areas. Outdoor spaces are used for additional learning and development opportunities and include a horticultural garden, a tranquil sensory garden with water features, a sunken trampoline and a climbing wall.



## Education at St Christopher's School

The school provides a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum, designed to meet individual learning needs. Students benefit from small class sizes of up to five and a high staff ratio. They are allocated a class and given a weekly timetable detailing both group and individual learning sessions. Specialist teaching takes into account group dynamics and each child is supported based on their abilities and strengths.

Where required, students may study in individualised learning spaces if their surroundings and other people impact their ability to learn. But the aim is to be inclusive and encourage group work and interaction as much as possible and to develop social and independence skills.

Students can work towards academic qualifications and accreditation through ASDAN (Personal Progress Units) and EQUALS.



Throughout the school week, students experience consistent and familiar rhythms that help them to make sense of the structure of their day.

The school morning runs from 09:00 to 12:30. The school afternoon runs from 13:30 to 15:15. Classes have weekly timetables covering all subject areas and each student has an individual timetable detailing both group and individual learning sessions.

This approach is enhanced by the imaginative use of a variety of interesting and appropriate resources and the environments they learn in - from the rich experiences of sound, colour and touch in the sensory garden, through to visits to the local parks or physical work in the hydrotherapy pool. Education extends to the local community and students access off-site learning experiences in the nearby park, shops and many of Bristol's other local attractions, such as the Sea Life Centre, Zoo and the docks. These regular trips provide opportunities for students to experience the local and wider communities and put their life skills into practice.

Communication between school and home life is important and daily handover meetings enable the team in the children's home to continue the work from school and provide a waking day curriculum. Day students will have daily reports for home too as well as regular reviews and reports.

## Learning styles

Teaching and learning activities are adapted to suit the student's individual learning styles. The balance of the curriculum reflects our student's needs. Due to the complex nature of their learning difficulties, most of them are at the early stages of development as learners. They require a high proportion of time allocated to development 'readiness for learning'. Our students present a variety of learning styles (i.e. tactile, visual, auditory, kinaesthetic) and these are taken into account as part of planning for groups and individuals.

**Students with a tactile learning style** benefit from using the sense of touch whilst learning. This involves working with and manipulating sensory materials; and using three-dimensional learning resources (e.g. objects of reference).

**Students with a visual learning style** benefit from using the sense of sight whilst learning. This involves visual resources (e.g. photos; symbols; visual schedules; and a range of visual media including the use of Interactive White Boards, iPads and other devices).

**Students with an auditory learning style** benefit from the sense of hearing whilst learning. They find easier to learn through spoken language and the use of sounds (e.g. engaging in dialogue, receiving verbal information; using specific sounds to create anticipation).



## Outcomes and Qualifications

Long term and short term learning outcomes/targets are agreed with parents and relevant external agencies at Annual Review Meetings. Progress is monitored throughout the school year using formative and summative approaches. P-Levels and National Curriculum levels are assessed three times a year through the B Squared software. Learning Outcomes/targets are also assessed three times a year as part of Pupil Progress Meetings involving Education, Health/Therapy and Care professionals.

16+young people at Aurora St Christopher's receive nationally recognised accreditation through EQUALS-moving on for the topic units they complete. They also work towards building up credits for QCF (Qualifications Credit Framework) approved qualifications at Personal Progress level. Aurora St Christopher's uses ASDAN as the awarding body.

Achievements are celebrated as part of school routine and at the end of the school year, there is an Award Ceremony when children and young people receive certificates of achievement and externally accredited certificates.

## Residential Living

Our six residential homes and two flats are spacious, light, modern and have been interior designed to be homely, providing comfortable and enjoyable living areas, whilst able to fully meet individual needs.

Houses have up to 9 individual bedrooms with en-suites and shared bathrooms/wet-rooms. Several large communal spaces for lounge/TV and dining give young people space to meet and get involved in daily activities or to simply relax.

Each house has a large kitchen and choosing, preparing and cooking meals is part of the daily routine to develop independent living skills. This includes shopping at nearby supermarkets and shops, visiting cafes and getting involved in the many leisure activities on offer in the local community and the city.



## **Multidisciplinary Team approach**

Education at St Christopher's is enhanced by clinical support from qualified therapy and nursing staff who are experienced in supporting children with complex communication and health needs and work in close collaboration with the teaching team. This multidisciplinary team approach provides holistic support for pupils with complex needs to be able to access education and build on their abilities to maximise their full potential.

## **Safeguarding Statement**

Aurora St Christopher's School is wholly committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of pupils and expects all staff, volunteers, parents/carers and visitors to share this commitment. Safer recruitment practices are followed and all staff have an Enhanced DBS check.

## **Quality Statement**

Aurora St Christopher's School is wholly committed to providing the highest quality service to children, young people, parents/carers and Local Authorities. We believe that children, young people and young adults, as well as others, have the right to comment on the service we provide and they are supported to understand the complaints procedure.

If you have a concern or complaint, we do want to hear about it as soon as possible. Please ask the School office for a copy of our complaints procedure if you would like to know more.

We like to know when we are getting things right too, so please feel free to also send us any compliments which our staff are always happy to hear.

**For further information on the Safeguarding policy and copies of other school and children's home policies please refer to the website or contact school reception.**

## **Our term dates**

Our term dates are sent to parents and carers annually. These are also available to view and download on our website.

## **Contact Us:**

For more information or to get in touch with the school please contact us at:

**Aurora St Christopher's School, Westbury Park, Bristol, BS6 7JE**

**Telephone:** 0117 973 6875

**Email for school:** [info.stchris@the-aurora-group.com](mailto:info.stchris@the-aurora-group.com)

**Website:** [www.the-aurora-group.com/st-chris](http://www.the-aurora-group.com/st-chris)

**Director of Operations:** Dan Alipaz

**Head of Education:** Thereza De Lucca

**Head of Care:** AJ Wilson

**Proprietor:** Stephen Bradshaw

## **How to find us:**

St Christopher's School is within easy access of the M32, just off the M5 and M4. Bristol Temple Mead train station, with mainline links to London and Exeter, is approximately 20 minutes by taxi.