



The Forum School

Specialist Day and Residential School for Autism and Complex Needs

- Mixed Gender • 7 - 19 years
- Up to 52 Weeks Residential Provision

School Ethos

At The Forum School, we provide a truly life changing experience of care and education for young people with autism and complex needs. Our aim is to support each individual to find their voice, whatever form that takes, so they can communicate, make choices, and participate meaningfully in their everyday lives.

Communication and emotional regulation sit at the heart of everything we do. Through highly personalised support and the expertise of our skilled multidisciplinary team, we work with each young person to overcome barriers, build independence, and achieve their individual EHCP outcomes.

Set within 28 acres of beautiful Dorset countryside, The Forum School offers a calm, nurturing and therapeutic environment. Combined with our dedicated and compassionate staff team, this creates an exceptional place where young people can live, learn, and grow with confidence.

Shillingstone,
Blandford Forum, Dorset,
DT11 0QS

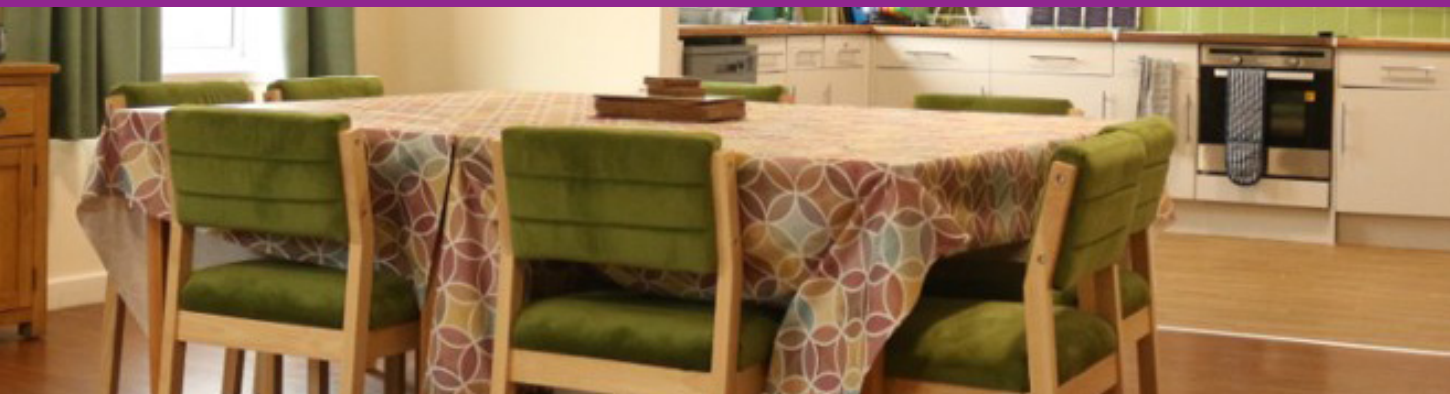
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Student Profile

May have one or more of the following:

- Mixed gender, ages 7-19
- Primary diagnosis of Autism
- Co-existing conditions
- Complex needs
- Challenging behaviour
- Learning difficulties
- History of placement breakdowns
- Has an Education, Health & Care Plan

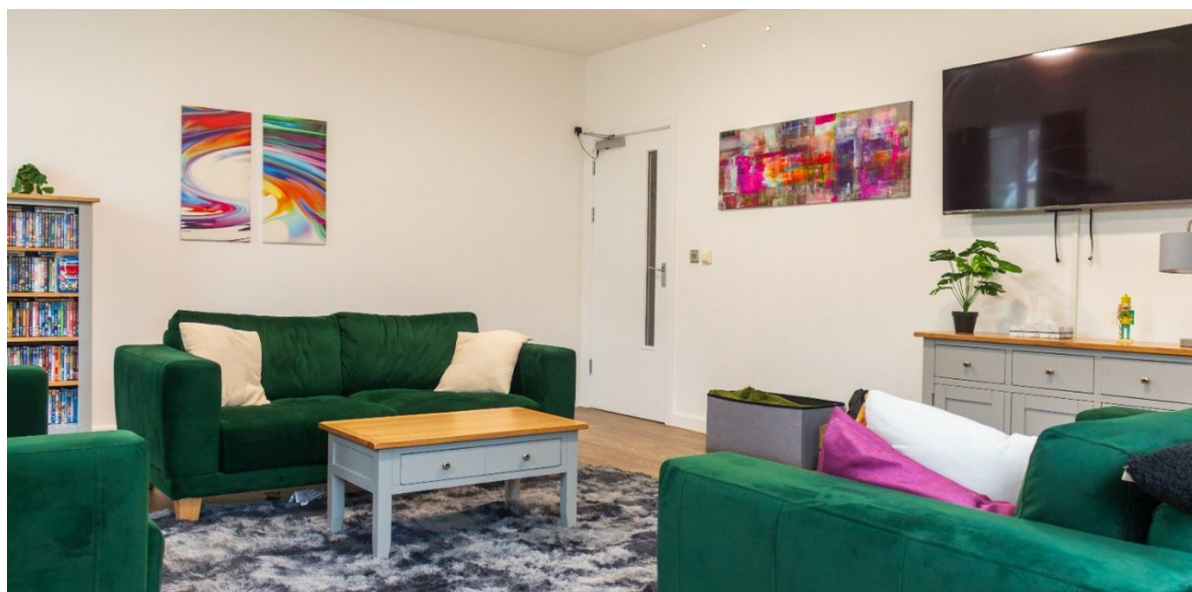
A Home Away From Home



The Forum School offers high-quality residential provision designed to feel truly like a home away from home. Our on-site houses are supported by dedicated care teams who create a warm, safe and family-style environment where students feel secure, valued and understood.

Each young person has their own bedroom, which they are encouraged to personalise with familiar items from home, helping to build comfort and a sense of belonging. Students also benefit from welcoming shared spaces, access to outdoor areas, and a strong emphasis on privacy, dignity and independence.

Every student is supported by a named Key Worker, who plays a central role in their care and development. The Key Worker builds a trusted relationship with the young person, supports their growing independence, and acts as a consistent point of contact for families, ensuring clear communication and continuity of care



Family contact

The Forum School works in close partnership with families to provide a supportive and welcoming environment, recognising that starting a new school can be an anxious time. Parents and carers have open access to staff and facilities, receive regular updates, and can stay in contact as often as needed by phone or video call.



Views, Wishes and Feelings

At The Forum School, we are committed to ensuring every student has a meaningful voice. We support young people to communicate their needs, wishes and concerns using communication systems tailored to their individual strengths and preferences.

Students are actively encouraged to share their views through regular opportunities, including fortnightly house meetings, half-termly whole-school meetings, and dedicated sessions with their Key Worker. Key Workers also play an important role in advocating on behalf of students where needed.

An Independent Person visits monthly to gather feedback from both students and staff, ensuring an additional layer of oversight and support. Students can also raise concerns through a student-friendly complaints procedure. Further feedback is captured through questionnaires, Talking Mats, and reflective debriefs following incidents.

Community links

We place strong emphasis on preparing students for life beyond school by supporting them to engage with the wider community. Through carefully planned, real-life learning opportunities, students develop confidence, independence and social understanding.

Our strong links with the local community provide regular opportunities to visit local towns, shops, cafés and leisure facilities, as well as to access public transport. Where appropriate, support from independent visitors further enriches these experiences.



Our Multidisciplinary Team

At The Forum School, every young person is supported by a highly skilled and dedicated multidisciplinary team. By working closely together, we ensure that each individual receives the right balance of education, care, and therapeutic support to help them thrive.

Our team brings together a wide range of specialist expertise, including:

- Specialist Teachers and Leadership Team
- Highly Trained Teaching Assistants
- Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) Team
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Clinical Psychologist and Assistant Psychologist
- Consultant Psychiatrist
- Physiotherapist
- Music Therapist
- Equine Therapy Specialists
- Key Workers
- Qualified Healthcare & Nursing Support

The Forum School Curriculum

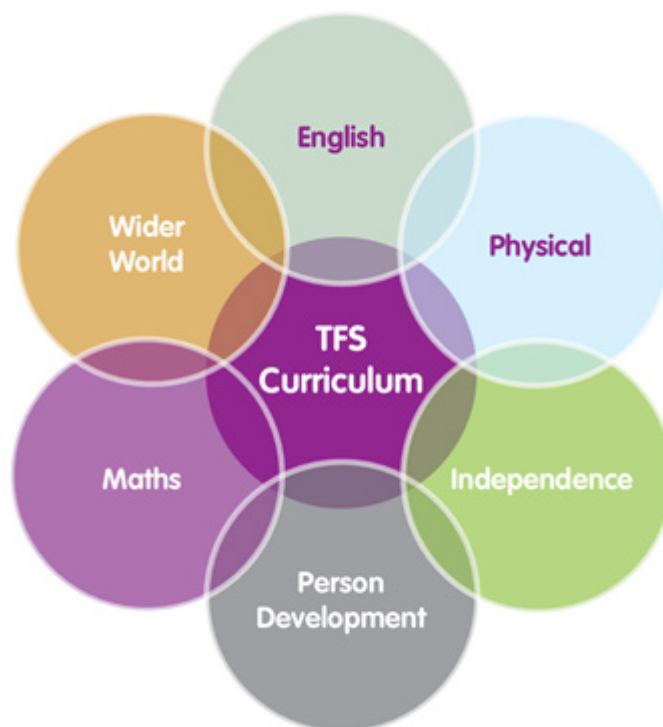


Curriculum Impact

The curriculum is regularly reviewed to ensure it remains effective and responsive to the evolving needs of our students. We recognise that progress may not always be immediate; therefore, teaching approaches are continually adapted to support sustained, long-term outcomes.

Student progress is carefully monitored through a combination of structured tasks, ongoing assessment, lesson observations, and reviews of work over time. Progress is discussed in regular pupil progress meetings, drawing on a wide range of evidence including assessment data, professional observations, and student voice.

Each student's development is recorded through an individual Learning Journey, providing a comprehensive and holistic picture of their progress over time.



AQA Unit Award Scheme

At The Forum School, our AQA Unit Award Scheme offers a highly personalised and flexible curriculum, designed to celebrate every step of progress. Students engage in a wide range of practical, meaningful activities that build independence, confidence and life skills.



Outdoor Learning and Community Access

Students are supported to explore the world around them through structured outdoor and community experiences.

This includes:

- Preparing for and visiting local shops and supermarkets
- Travel training, including use of the school minibus
- Litter picking and environmental engagement
- Outdoor pursuits and local visits with appropriate support

These experiences help students develop confidence, independence and real-life skills.

Cooking and Life Skills

Students develop essential life skills through practical, hands-on learning in the kitchen, including:

- Basic cooking and baking skills
- Preparing simple meals such as pizzas, omelettes and sausage rolls
- Baking treats such as cupcakes, flapjacks and rocky road
- Learning about healthy eating and food preparation

These activities support independence and promote healthy lifestyles.

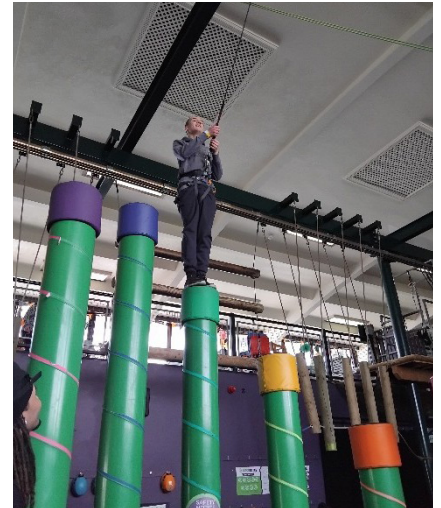


Sport and Physical Development

A wide range of physical activities help students build coordination, well-being and enjoyment of movement:

- Swimming and water-based activities
- Team games and ball skills
- Dance, yoga and movement sessions
- Cycling, trampolining and indoor sports
- Horse riding and equine activities
- Use of fitness equipment such as exercise bikes

All activities are adapted to meet individual needs, with appropriate support.



Creative Arts

Students are encouraged to express themselves through creative and sensory experiences, including:

- Exploring art through sensory activities
- Seasonal crafts and decorative projects
- Printing, candle making and nature-based art

Communication and Independence Skills

The curriculum places strong emphasis on communication, cognition and independence, including:

- Developing reading, writing and early numeracy skills
- Understanding money, time and travel safety
- Building social skills and maintaining relationships
- Participating in enterprise activities and vocational tasks
- Learning domestic skills such as cleaning and organisation

Students also benefit from sensory learning, rebound therapy and structured regulation support.





Music and Sensory Learning

Music and sensory activities form an important part of the school experience:

- Exploring sound, rhythm and movement
- Music therapy and listening sessions
- Sensory-based learning to support engagement and well-being

Personal Development and Enrichment

Students take part in a range of activities that support personal growth and wider understanding, including:

- Celebrating key events such as World Book Day and Remembrance Day
- Learning about festivals, kindness and community values

Nature and Environment

Our extensive grounds provide opportunities for hands-on environmental learning:

- Gardening, planting and growing
- Woodland walks and nature exploration
- Mini-beast hunts and insect studies
- Learning about weather, seasons and wildlife
- Animal care and equine environment activities

Our broad and engaging curriculum ensures that every student has the opportunity to develop essential life skills, explore their interests, and achieve success at their own pace.





Equine Programme

Our equine programme gives students the opportunity to take part in a weekly riding rota with our three resident horses, Dusty, Erin and Tazi. Alongside riding, students develop practical skills through grooming, cleaning the horses, plaiting their manes and helping with day-to-day stable duties.

Every activity is tailored to each student's individual pace and ability, ensuring they feel supported as they build confidence and develop new skills. Through the programme, students can work towards recognised achievements, including AQA Unit Award Schemes, Yard Duties Certificates, and Riding and Small Animal Care Awards, celebrating their progress every step of the way.

The Impact of Equine & Animal Therapy

Our equine programme provides students with a supportive environment where they can develop confidence, emotional regulation, sensory awareness and practical life skills.

Time spent with animals offers a calm, predictable space where students can build trust, develop communication skills and experience the benefits of positive interactions without pressure. Caring for the horses through grooming, stable tasks and riding activities also provides opportunities for physical activity, responsibility and independence.

The combination of movement, sensory experiences and connection with animals can support students in managing anxiety, improving focus and developing greater awareness of their own emotions and surroundings.



JC's Journey



Where JC began

JC started his equine journey through stable yard sessions, where he spent time getting to know the horses and building his confidence around them. By taking part in grooming and stable activities, JC gradually became more comfortable and developed a positive connection with the horses.

As part of this journey, JC successfully completed his AQA Preparing to Ride a Horse unit, developing the knowledge and understanding needed before taking the next step into riding.

Taking the next step

After spending time building his confidence, JC reached an exciting milestone when he asked if he could begin riding. This was a huge step forward, and it has been wonderful to see him feeling happy, relaxed and confident as he continues to ride regularly.

Riding Erin, our gentle English Native breed who is a favourite with many of our younger students, JC has embraced this new challenge and grown in confidence with each session.

What JC has achieved

Having completed his AQA Preparing to Ride a Horse unit, JC is now channelling his enthusiasm into his learning and working towards his AQA Horse Riding unit, alongside his Stage 2 Horse Riding Stable Yard Award.

JC's journey highlights the importance of giving students the time and space to build trust at their own pace, celebrating every achievement along the way. We are incredibly proud of his progress and look forward to seeing what he achieves next.

We are incredibly proud of JC and look forward to seeing him continue to grow and achieve new milestones.



Forest School

Our Forest School programme provides students with the opportunity to learn, explore and develop skills through meaningful outdoor experiences. Led by Renea, who has completed specialist Forest School training, sessions take place entirely outdoors, encouraging independence, confidence, creativity and well-being.

Through hands-on activities in nature, students develop practical skills while building a greater connection with the environment around them. Activities include growing and planting, bug hunting, creating nature-inspired artwork, and building bug hotels, with each experience offering opportunities for exploration and learning.

Students can also work towards recognised AQA unit awards, celebrating their achievements and progress as they develop new skills at their own pace.

Our Forest School offers a safe, supportive space where students can discover, create and grow through the natural world.

Every student's journey is individual, with activities adapted to their needs, abilities and goals, helping them to achieve meaningful milestones at their own pace.





Transition Pathway

At The Forum School, we prepare students for adulthood by developing the education, life and vocational skills they need to achieve greater independence and confidence in their future.

To ensure the best possible match, the Principal and Senior Leadership Team carefully review each young person's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) alongside their background information. We warmly welcome families to visit the school, meet our staff, and experience first-hand how our environment and daily routines support each individual.

Placement requests are made through the Local Authority, and we encourage families to engage with them early to enable a smooth process for visits and assessments. Further information can be found at www.cambiagroup.com.

Curriculum Pathway

At The Forum School, learners are thoughtfully grouped according to their abilities and individual needs, ensuring a highly personalised approach to education.

Our flexible curriculum pathways evolve alongside each student, allowing them to move between levels as they progress and their needs change. By working closely with families and sharing learning goals, we extend progress beyond the classroom and into everyday life.

Our creative, theme-based curriculum focuses on four key areas:

- Communication and social interaction
- Independence and cognitive development
- Physical and sensory development
- Health and well-being

Through tailored interventions, structured support, and small-group teaching, we provide an inclusive and meaningful educational experience that equips every learner with the skills they need for the next stage of their journey.



Curriculum Implementation

At The Forum School, we deliver a flexible and inclusive curriculum that is carefully tailored to each student's individual strengths, therapeutic needs and EHCP outcomes. Our multidisciplinary approach ensures that learning pathways are highly personalised, enabling every young person to make meaningful progress and develop greater independence.

Learning is embedded throughout the entire day, extending beyond the classroom into daily routines, personal care and residential life. This integrated approach ensures that skills are taught, practised and reinforced in real-life contexts. Our curriculum pathways remain dynamic, adapting over time to reflect each learner's changing needs, abilities and aspirations.

In planning for a broad and balanced curriculum, we take into account:

- Statutory requirements
- The evolving needs of our learners
- The views and aspirations of parents and carers
- Input from a wide range of professionals
- The level and type of support required for each individual

We provide a diverse range of activities, carefully differentiated according to age, ability and need, ensuring all students can access and benefit from learning.

The Forum School Curriculum

At The Forum School, we believe in a curriculum that seamlessly integrates education, care and personal development, while offering engaging and motivating learning experiences.

Our approach is broad, balanced and meaningful, underpinned by highly personalised and holistic teaching. We recognise that every learner is unique, and personalisation sits at the heart of how we support each young person to achieve their full potential.

Our curriculum is designed to be:

- **Meaningful** – rooted in real-life experiences
- **Functional** – developing practical, transferable skills
- **Purposeful** – preparing students for the next stage of their lives

This empowers our students to build confidence, develop independence, and achieve outcomes that truly matter to them.



The Person-Centred Curriculum

The Forum School offers a curriculum and a programme of enrichment to ensure each learner has a personalised, rich, varied and interesting school experience. Our curriculum incorporates a meaningful approach with highly personalised holistic teaching and learning, enabling learners at The Forum School to receive a curriculum enabling the following key objectives

Independence & Community

- Becoming effective communicators
- Empowerment to realise individual potential
- Greatest possible independence of body & mind
- Happy, engaged & included members of their community
- Confidence & commitment to lifelong learning

Academic learning & Achievement

- Realisation of each individual's learning potential
- Acquisition of meaningful key learning skills
- Experience of a wide range of learning opportunities in and out of school
- Access to personalised learning which promotes enjoyment based on individual interests
- Celebration of learning & achieve accreditation

Communication & Interaction

- Development of own voice
- Development of communication skills to meet own needs
 - Expression of self
- Ability to make informed choices & decisions
 - Ability to understand others in different situations
- Social skill development
- Ability to work independently & with others
- Ability to problem solve in a range of situations

Health & Well-being

- Physical skill development & confidence in movement
- Development of senses
- Knowledge of how to be healthy & safe
- Capacity to play & enjoy leisure & relaxation
- Ability to cope with change
- Achievement of happiness & well-being
- Self-awareness and regulation
- Capacity to develop & sustain friendships

AQA PASSES

EDUCATION

5 x English - Greeting a Person

1 x English - A Study of the Very Hungry Caterpillar

4 x English - Listening and Responding to a Story

1 x English - Writing Simple Sentences

6 x English - Recounting a Story

6 x English - Verbs Nouns and Adjectives

2 x English - English Reading and Comprehension - (Unit 1)

1 x English - Basic Reading and Comprehension Skills

1 x English - Introduction to Phonics, Spelling and Reading (Unit 1)

1 x English - Functional English Speaking, Listening & Communicating

1 x Mathematics - Introduction to Repeating Patterns with Support

1 x Mathematics - Using Maths in Everyday Context

4 x Mathematics - Properties of 2D Shapes

4 x Mathematics - Measuring: Identifying Lengths

7 x Mathematics - Addition and Subtraction Within 10

4 x Science - Biology Animal Classification (Unit 3)

6 x Science - Investigating Magnets

3 x Science - Biology Plants

5 x Science - Formation and Erosion of Rocks

19 x Science and Nature - Experiencing Lifecycles

2 x Science and Nature - Taking Part in a Woodland Walk

4 x Geography - Rivers

6 x History - Greek Mythology (Unit 1)

PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH AND ECONOMIC

6 x PSHE - Completing an Outdoor Activity

6 x PSHE - Outdoor Activities with Support

6 x PSHE - Accessing Services of The Post Office

2 x PSHE - Crossing Roads Safely with Support

4 x PSHE - Sorting Materials For Recycling

3 x PSHE - Passport to Success: Empathy and Kindness

1 x PSHE - Introduction to Healthy Relationships

1 x PSHE - Respectful Relationships Including Friendships

AQA PASSES (CONT.)

TECHNOLOGY

1 x ICT - Using iPads

1 x ICT - Basic Computer Skills

LIFE SKILLS

4 x Independent Living - Money (Unit 1)

2 x Independent Living - Going Shopping

2 x Independent Living - Independent Living Skills Programme (Unit 1)

2 x Key Skills - Following Instructions

1 x Key Skills - Following Simple Verbal/Visual Instructions

1 x Shopping - Buying a Drink in a Café

4 x Shopping - Purchasing Food in a Shop

4 x Shopping - Shopping & Purchasing Skills

1 x Shopping - Shopping in a Food Supermarket

1 x Shopping - Shopping in the Local Community

1 x Shopping - Visiting Different Shopping Environments

1 x Shopping - Visiting a Café

1 x Shopping - Visiting a Café With Support

1 x Shopping - Walking to the Local Shops

7 x Shopping - Entering and Leaving a Minibus Independently

1 x Shopping - Shopping Using an Automated Self Service Check Out

3 x Mental Health - The Zones of Regulation

COMMUNICATION

2 x Communication - Early Awareness: Reacting to Materials & Experiences

2 x Makaton - Signing on the Farm (Unit 2)

2 x Makaton - Signing on the Farm (Unit 3)

AQA PASSES (CONT.)

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

9 x PE - Basic Trampolining

5 x PE - Introduction to Swimming

5 x PE - Swimming Activities (Unit 1)

2 x PE - Balancing in Rebound Therapy

4 x PE - Using a Trampoline for Rebound Therapy

5 x PE - Introduction to Using an Obstacle Course

1 x PE - Basic Trampolining

1 x PE - Basic Football Skills

1 x PE - Football Skills (Unit 2)

1 x PE - Gross Motor Skills Running

2 x PE - Participating in a School Sports Day

MUSIC & DANCE

5 x Music and Dance

1 x Introduction to Dance

5 x Listening to Music

COMMUNITY

4 x Community - Engaging With Less Familiar People in the Community

4 x Community - Visiting an Aquarium

4 x Community - Visiting an Aquarium: Penguins

ART & DESIGN

22 x Art & Design - Chinese New Year

6 x Art & Design - Leaf Prints

6 x Art & Design - Tree Bark Rubbings

4 x Art & Design - Fruit and Vegetable Printing with Support

5 x Art & Design - Recognising Primary and Secondary Colours

2 x Crafts - Creating a Decorated Christmas Tree

15 x Art & Design - Painting & Planting up a Flower Pot with Assistance

22 x Art & Design - Making & Decorating a Papier Mache Item with Assistance

4 x Art & Design - Designing, Making & Decorating a Clay Model

3 x Crafts - Making a Clay Pot with Support

6 x Religious Festivals - Making a Christmas Decoration

4 x Crafts - Using Scissors (Unit 1)

3 x Crafts - Using Scissors (Unit 2)

2 x Crafts - Using Scissors (Unit 3)

AQA PASSES (CONT.)

COOKERY

6 x Participate in a Picnic with Support

3 x Preparing a Toasted Snack Meal

1 x Making a Snack

4 x Preparing a Simple Cold Lunch with Support

1 x Cookery - Sensory Preparation of Food

6 x Baking a Cake

2 x Making a Pizza by Hand

2 x Making a Pizza with Support

2 x Making a Fruit Salad with Support

4 x Healthy Eating - Making a Healthy Soup

5 x Seasonal Cookery - Christmas (Unit 1)

3 x Practical Cookery Skills Cheese Straws

1 x Safety & Hygiene in the Kitchen with Support

4 x Food Hygiene and Safety While Cooking with Support

OUTDOOR LEARNING

6 x Gardening - Growing and Monitoring Sunflowers from Seeds

6 x Gardening - Need for Seeds Sunflower Growing

1 x Gardening - Basic Gardening Skills

1 x Conservation - Making a Bird Feeder

ANIMAL CARE

4 x Animal Management - Engaging with Animals with Support

2 x Animal Management - Small Animal Care with Support (Unit 1)

12 x Horse Riding - Identifying and Cleaning Tack

4 x Horse Riding

2 x Horse Riding - Basic Horse Care Unit 1

2 x Horse Riding - Horse Stable Preparation with Support

Before Cambian The Forum School

When this young person joined The Forum School in February 2024 as a 38-week residential student, they continued to return home to their family during the school holidays. Prior to this, they had been living at home and attending a specialist day school.

At the time of joining, communication presented significant challenges. This young person used a small number of signs, although these were unique to them and not always easily understood by others. Verbal communication was limited to a few sounds, such as “ddd” for drink, and they often relied on gently leading adults to what they needed.

Progress Throughout Their Time at Forum School

From the very beginning, this young person settled well into school life. Staff quickly noticed their growing curiosity and willingness to engage with those around them. With support, they began using PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System), taking important first steps towards more independent communication. Alongside this, they were encouraged to develop vocalisations, which they responded to positively.

A significant milestone came in February 2025, when this young person was introduced to their own communication device (AAC). Initially used within the classroom, it has gradually become part of daily life in the residential setting. While they still show a preference not to use the device at home, they are becoming increasingly confident using it with the support of familiar adults.

This young person has also made encouraging progress in their ability to engage with learning activities. When they first joined, sustaining attention was difficult. Through consistent encouragement, strong relationships with staff, and activities linked to their interests, they can now sit and engage for short periods—representing meaningful progress.

Supporting well-being has been key to this success. This young person has an individual sensory support plan to help them stay calm, regulated, and ready to learn. They particularly enjoy hand massage and messy play, which are thoughtfully incorporated into their daily routine.

They have also made positive strides in developing independence. With support, this young person now contributes to everyday routines such as placing their plate in the dishwasher, taking laundry to the washing machine, and helping to keep their space tidy. These small but important achievements have also been recognised by their family at home.

Today

Today, this young person is a settled and happy member of the school community. It is a pleasure to see their confidence growing and their personality shining through. Staff are proud of the progress they have made and look forward to supporting them as they continue their journey.

Curriculum Impact

The curriculum at The Forum School is rigorously monitored and evaluated through a robust quality assurance process to ensure it remains effective and responsive to the needs of our learners.

We recognise that learning represents a change to long-term memory and, as such, impact is not always immediately visible. Therefore, alongside tracking outcomes, we carefully review the quality of teaching practices to ensure they are appropriate, aligned with our curriculum goals, and likely to lead to sustained long-term progress.

A range of strategies are used to assess and evaluate impact, including:

- **Comparative judgement**, both in the design of tasks and through reviewing students' work over time
- **Lesson observations**, to ensure teaching approaches align with our expected pedagogical standards
- **Ongoing assessment**, tracking progress against core concepts and key milestones

Each student's progress is regularly reviewed in pupil progress meetings, where a triangulation of evidence is used. This includes assessment data, work scrutiny, observations, and pupil voice, ensuring a comprehensive and accurate understanding of progress.

To capture the full picture of each learner's development, the school uses a '**Learning Journey**', which provides a holistic record of progress over time.



The Proprietor

The Proprietor

The proprietor of the school is Farouq Sheikh, Chair of the CareTech Board.

The representative of the proprietor is:

Andrew Sutherland
Operations Director – Education
Parkview, 82 Oxford Road
Uxbridge, UB8 1UX

The proprietor's representative may be contacted during both term time and holidays via:

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