



“ Woodlands has helped me to become an adult, one who knows what they want to do and where they are going in life. ”

An independent specialist day school supporting young people aged 10-19 who face various challenges associated with social, emotional and mental health needs and behavioural challenges associated with Autism Spectrum Conditions

## At The **Aurora** Group

We believe in giving people the opportunities they need to create and lead fulfilling, independent lives.

Established in 2015, we are now the UK's sixth largest provider of education, care and support services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Each of our schools, colleges and residential homes retains its own unique identity while embracing and embodying our group's core values:

- We are caring. We understand that your experience in mainstream care and education may have been a difficult one. We take seriously our responsibility for the children and young people in our care, and are committed to making your time with us as positive and fulfilling as possible.
- We are ambitious. We have high expectations of all our children and young people, regardless of what barriers they may have faced in the past. We encourage them to expect more for themselves, while challenging employers and communities to understand and value their diverse needs and attributes.
- We are collaborative. Everything we do, we do in partnership with you. We actively seek and listen to feedback from students, parents and staff, to find out what's working well, what we can do better, and how we can further develop all our services to benefit the people we work with.
- We are trusted. Our business is funded by ethical investors. They understand that sustainable growth is possible only when we hold ourselves to the highest standards, by delivering consistently top-quality services to every single person we work with.
- We are innovative. We begin planning for each young person's future the minute they walk through our doors. We tailor our approach to their unique needs, and are constantly looking for new opportunities to help them explore, enhance and employ their own skills, talents and abilities.

**Caring**

**Ambitious**

**Collaborative**

**Trusted**

**Innovative**

# Welcome

Here at Aurora Woodlands School, our staff work compassionately and with dedication every day to provide the best possible experience for every young person in our care.

We understand that the path you have travelled before arriving with us may have been difficult; mainstream education may not have been a good fit for your child and your relationship with school to date may not always have felt positive. At Aurora Woodlands School, we have the skills, facilities and expertise to provide you with a different, better experience.

We work closely with families and carers to ensure that every student is happy, safe and fulfilling their unique potential – at school and beyond. By the time they leave Woodlands, your child can confidently look forward to a bright, exciting and independent future.

I am very proud of our school and look forward to welcoming you into the Woodlands family.

*Sarah Gregory*

Principal, Aurora Woodlands School



# About Our School

Situated in a beautiful location in the small town of Darwen, Lancashire, Aurora Woodlands School is a small specialist school providing personalised, tailored academic and therapeutic support in a calm, nurturing environment.

Many of the young people who come to us have had a poor experience of formal educational settings in the past, and may face significant barriers to learning. With the support of our trained, skilled and experienced teaching and therapeutic staff, students are able to overcome their barriers and to develop the skills they need to thrive in their lives beyond school.

We focus on providing a creative and stimulating learning environment while building genuine trust between our students and the adults that work with them. This approach inspires high levels of engagement, facilitating achievement and progress for every individual.



## Our facilities

Our students enjoy access to a range of specialist on-site facilities, including:

- Five-a-side 3G football pitch
- Wellbeing "Woodlands" Therapeutic Suite
- Nurture area
- Fully equipped art room
- Food Technology Room
- Science Lab
- "Highgrove" horticulture and forest school provision



“ I have been impressed by the Headteacher and the staff at Woodlands School who have listened to the information available and used this in a sophisticated way to embrace this young person into their learning environment. ”

## Our curriculum

We offer a unique curriculum. All students study English, Maths, Science PE, Art and PHSE as part of their individualised programme, alongside more vocational options including catering, horticulture and sports coaching. The timetable also includes opportunities to participate in performing arts. Our curriculum also includes regular outdoor sessions in our onsite forest school "Highgrove" area as well as offsite outdoor education opportunities.

Regardless of the level of a young person's starting point when they arrive at Aurora Woodlands, we support them to gain appropriate and meaningful qualifications and skills in line with their abilities and interests; we use progressive qualification pathways that mean every individual will leave us with recognised accreditations ranging from entry level through NVQ to GCSE.

As a small provision, we aim to tailor our core offer to suit the aptitudes and interests of our individual students.

# Our Outcomes

## Parental feedback

### Quality of Teaching



Parents rate the quality of teaching at Woodlands School

**5 out of 5**



### Overall School Rating



Parents are happy that their child attends Woodlands School

**5 out of 5**



### Ofsted rating



“ My little boy has been given the opportunity to succeed in a school that loves him just as much as I do and I'll be forever grateful to all the staff at Aurora Woodlands for going that extra mile to ensure he has what he needs. ”



# Your experience with us

When a young person arrives at Aurora Woodlands School, we aim to provide continuity from their previous setting where it is possible and in their best interests to do so.

Some of our students may follow a bespoke learning pathway taking into account their prior attainment, their ability to engage, and any other specific barriers to learning.

Our classes are organised according to each student's needs and abilities, identified through regular assessment and monitoring. We also consider social and emotional factors when establishing classes, to ensure an optimum fit between different members of the group.

For those who require additional support, we offer small-group and one to one interventions focusing on achievable targets that can be applied back in the classroom. We also provide further support in reading, writing and numeracy through specialist intervention. We have a Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapy Team and access to an Educational Psychologist and other specific clinical provision on hand daily. Fundamentally, we view challenging behaviour as communication of an unmet need; to deliver our holistic approach to supporting students, all our staff are trained in Emotion Coaching and Trauma and Attachment, with additional training and expertise in sensory practice, lego therapy, draw and talk and ELSA. Aurora Woodlands is a THRIVE school with a trained THRIVE practitioner on staff.

## Our school day

The school day runs from 9am to 2.45pm Monday to Thursday, with a 2.30pm finish each Friday. When students arrive at school, they are offered a light breakfast in their form rooms to prepare and plan for their day's learning. Lessons are 45 minutes long. At 11am, there is a morning break and snack, then lunch is served between 12.45pm and 1.15pm, where we encourage the students to eat "family style" with their peers and staff. The lunch menu is a three week rotation and includes a choice of main hot meal or jacket potato as well as a range of desserts. A packed lunch is provided by the school if students are learning offsite. Any specific dietary needs can be easily accommodated. During all social times, indoor and outdoor games and other activities offered throughout the term.



# What you need to know

## Rewards

Aurora Woodlands School operates a rewards system based on our 5 values;

**CARING** – we look after each other and all that we share

**AMBITIOUS** – we have high hopes for the future

**COLLABORATIVE** – we value ourselves and each other

**TRUSTED** – we are honest in what we say and do

**INNOVATIVE** – we are brave and enjoy a challenge

All students are rewarded points in the above throughout their time in school. These points can then be used to exchange for short, medium and long term rewards such as gift cards, books and end of term trips.

## Uniform

We provide all students with:

- Grey fleece with school logo
- Grey logo sweatshirt
- A combination of the below:
  - White logo t-shirt
  - Grey logo polo-shirt

We require parents and carers to provide:

- Black school trousers, skirt, plain black joggers or shorts (we ask that these do not bear any branding. A stockist list can be provided if required)
- Appropriate footwear (sliders or metal toe capped shoes are not allowed)

## Term dates

Our term dates are published annually and are available on our school website at:

<https://www.the-aurora-group.com/woodlands>

## Absence

If your child is too ill to attend school, you should contact the School Office by 8am in order for transport staff to be informed. Please contact us each day that your child is absent.

All routine medical and other appointments should be arranged out of school time wherever possible. In exceptional circumstances, where an urgent appointment is required or for hospital clinic appointments that operate during the day only, please provide an appointment card or letter to obtain authorisation for the absence.

Where the school office has received no reason for an absence, pastoral calls will be made to parents/carers – even where your child has been absent due to illness on previous days. We take our safeguarding responsibility seriously and cannot assume that your child is still ill unless you have notified us.

Excellent attendance is awarded weekly and is a target linked to rewards trips for all students.

# Our commitment to you

## Quality statement

At Aurora Woodlands School we strive to provide the highest quality service to young people, parents/carers and local authorities. We believe that all these groups have the right to comment on the service we provide and to understand the complaints procedure.

If you do 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 – our staff are always happy to hear them!

## Safeguarding statement

At Aurora Woodlands School we are wholly committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of our students, and we expect all staff and visitors to share this commitment. Safer recruitment practices are followed and all staff have an Enhanced DBS check.

## Contact Us

For more information please contact us at:

### Aurora Woodlands School

The Woodlands  
Holly Tree Close  
Darwen  
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**01254 706600**

[wds-reception@the-aurora-group.com](mailto:wds-reception@the-aurora-group.com)

[referrals@the-aurora-group.com](mailto:referrals@the-aurora-group.com)

[www.theauroragroup.co.uk/woodlands](http://www.theauroragroup.co.uk/woodlands)



ADHD, ASC, MLD,  
SEMH



10-19



Mixed



38 Week Day

Caring

Ambitious

Collaborative

Trusted

Innovative



[www.theauroragroup.co.uk](http://www.theauroragroup.co.uk)



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The\_AuroraGroup



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