

Arbour House School Prospectus



Lower School

'Glendinning'

15-17 Glendinning Avenue
Weymouth
Dorset
DT4 7QF
01305 781400

Upper School

'Maen'

Maen Gardens
Off Culliford Road North
Dorchester
Dorset
DT1 1qq
01305 490310



Welcome to Arbour House School

Arbour House School provides a bespoke education for up to 60 pupils aged 6-18 years with a range of complex needs, including SLD, MLD, ADHD and ASD.

We operate as one school across 2 sites in Dorset. Lower School, 'Glendinning' is in Weymouth and Upper School, 'Maen' is in Dorchester.

Our Ethos and Values

We believe that all children should have the right to access education that meets their needs, the opportunity to engage in their local community, and the support to develop positive and trusting relationships with their peers and adults.

We see it our duty of care to give pupils choices, the ability to contribute with confidence, to be heard, and to feel valued.

We want all of our pupils to have a positive educational experience, in a safe and nurturing environment, where they can achieve to the very best of their ability.

We value the diversity of our pupils, take account of their individual strengths and interests, and believe it is our responsibility to support them to work towards their own goals and aspirations.

We believe every child is special, and our experienced staff team support all of our pupils on their unique journey with care, commitment, compassion and empathy.

Our Aims:

- To adopt a pupil-centred approach and empower pupils to contribute to their own learning experience.
- To tailor our provision to meet the education, care, health and well-being needs of our pupils.
- To inspire learning in creative ways to promote pupils' engagement, progress and personal development.
- To work with families, professionals, and other relevant partners to ensure transitions are as seamless as possible.

At Arbour House School we aim to provide a happy, positive, and fulfilling school experience. We aim to nurture in all of our pupils a love of learning and an enhanced sense of well-being. We want our pupils to develop greater independence, be prepared for key stage transitions,

and leave us at the end of their education equipped with the confidence and skills to take their place as contributing and valued members of their community.

We promote equality and diversity and appreciate the value that each pupil brings. We ensure that each pupil's unique requirements are embedded into their individual learning plans and that they are provided with what they need to experience personal growth, success and a sense of well-being.

How the School is Organised:

Most primary aged pupils will be on our Weymouth site and most of our secondary aged pupils will be placed at our Dorchester site. We do, however, recognise that one size does not fit all, so we aim to work in a stage-appropriate way, not based on age. Pupils will transition from Glendinning to Maen only when we feel that they are ready and that it is appropriate and in their best interests for them to do so.

We have a specialist primary and a specialist secondary team.

Each Key Stage of the school has its own team of staff and its own suite of classrooms, furnished and equipped to a high standard. Pupils are generally taught in small groups of 3-4, although can be taught individually if deemed in their best interest for their core curriculum. We also offer pupils the opportunity to work in larger groups and to participate in whole school activities as appropriate.

We group pupils according to chronological age as far as possible, to give them an opportunity to form friendships with their peers, but we recognise too that for some pupils 'stage-appropriate' lessons may be more suitable than 'age-appropriate' and as such some pupils may be in cross-phase groups for some of their lessons.

Lower School – Glendinning

There are 11 classrooms at our Lower School site. The children chose to give them all names that had a seaside theme. Which classroom children are placed in depends on their own needs and the dynamic and needs of other children. On the ground floor there are four main classrooms called Pebble, Coral, Rock and Fleet. We generally place our youngest pupils or our Lower Primary pupils on the ground floor.



Pebble



Coral



Rock

Pupils may then move up to the first floor if deemed they are ready. Lighthouse, Harbour, Pier and Lagoon are all classrooms on the first floor and these are usually rooms for children in Middle to Upper Primary:

Lighthouse



Harbour



Pier



Bay and Reef are small 1:1 rooms that may be used for pupils who are routinely finding being with other children difficult. Their core learning may take place in these 1:1 rooms, but their wider curriculum may still be delivered as part of a group to ensure we continue to support the development of their skills for life.

We have a large Life Skills Room at Lower School called 'Ocean' and this has its own kitchen so is an ideal space for children to develop their Independent Living Skills as well as get used to working in bigger groups. Pupils also access our main school kitchen regularly as all children follow a Life and Living Skills Programme.

Ocean



Main Kitchen

We have a separate Dining Room and we encourage all pupils to eat together at lunch times, although we do understand that for some pupils this can be difficult, so staff are always on hand to support children and smaller group 'sittings' can be arranged.

Pupils can come together in the Dining Room for morning snack time and can utilise the bigger space for group games and Art and Thrive activities too.



Glendinning also has a 1:1 Thrive and ELSA Room. We have 2 Thrive Practitioners and all pupils have their own termly Thrive Action Plan with Thrive activities incorporated into their weekly schedule. ELSA is available too, and we have an ELSA full time on each school site.

We also have a Medical Room and accessible Wet Room on site at Lower School, as well as a fully equipped Sensory Room that offers a quiet space for relaxation and sensory integration.

On the top floor is a Quiet Room and Library Area that pupils can use to read, relax, or just take a breather from the day.

Our Lower School site also benefits from a fully refurbished playground, with a trim trail and a large sandpit and water wall to provide opportunities for messy play. There is a separate area for ball games and a play trail as well as a large decked undercover sensory area.



Upper School – Maen

At Maen in Dorchester we use the ground floor for our more 'social' or community spaces. There is a large community room called 'Casterbridge', and a separate Dining Room where we usually eat our lunch together, but smaller sittings are possible for pupils who find larger groups difficult.



On the ground floor we also have a large community kitchen, and a 1:1 Thrive and ELSA Room as well as our Medical Room and Wet Room.

The pupils at Maen chose to name their classrooms after the names of some of the places in Thomas Hardy's novels.

The main classrooms at Upper School also vary in size to best meet individual pupils' needs. Some children may need to be in a smaller room, at least to begin with, whilst other pupils are working towards being able to learn in a larger group as a skill for life, in preparation for their transition to adulthood, or getting ready to move on to the world of work or college.



Sandbourne, Wessex and Melstock are our larger classrooms.

Wetherbury, Anglebury, Nuttlebury and Cresscombe offer smaller, quieter spaces.



Maen also has a small 1:1 room called Overcombe, a Thrive Room, and a large Quiet Room and Library Area on the top floor, which can be used by pupils when they need a break from interactions with other pupils or just need a quieter place read, to regulate or to reflect.



Maen has its own fully equipped Sensory Room, Medical Room and Accessible Wet Room too, as well as a purpose built Art Room on the top floor that can also be used for Science and more practical activities.



How Your Child Will be Supported

All pupils are supported in wider class teams, consisting of a Lead Teacher and support staff.

It is essential that we work with all children to develop their ability to work with a range of adults. Aside from being a critical life skill, this supports their development of healthy attachments and prevents them becoming over reliant on one key person.

How the Curriculum Works:

We aim to retain most of the statutory elements of the National Curriculum. It is then adapted to meet the unique needs of our pupils. We believe this ensures that our pupils have equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum tailored to their individual needs.

Pupils in Key Stages 1-4 follow a core curriculum to support the acquisition of basic skills for life. The key elements of this are English, Maths and Information and Communication Technology. They also follow a differentiated PSHE programme, have weekly PE sessions to support their physical development, and have the opportunity to study Science as part of their core provision.

Other curriculum offered includes Life and Living Skills, Humanities (delivered through half termly 'Topic Work'), and weekly Creative Curriculum sessions that offer pupils the opportunity to work in a fun, hands on and creative way, either individually, in peer groups or as a whole school.

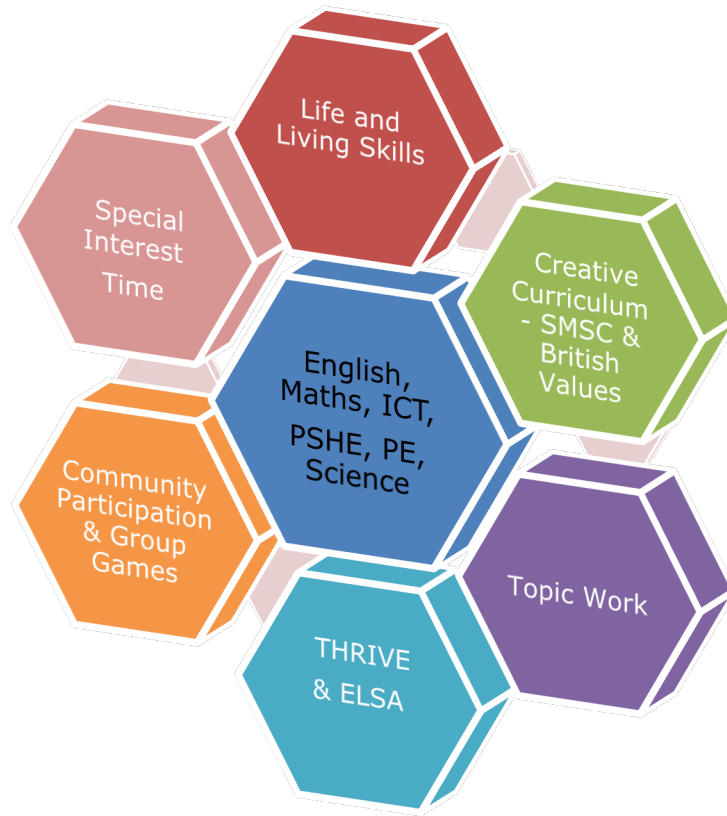
In Creative Curriculum pupils learn more about themselves and the world around them. They explore areas of the curriculum and alternative ways of learning not necessarily covered in other subjects. Our Creative Curriculum planning embeds pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development, as well as enhancing and supporting their understanding of Fundamental British Values.

We offer pupils a weekly 'Group Games' session that is designed specifically to develop their social interaction and communication skills, their ability to share and work with others, and also embeds our work on Fundamental British Values and SMSC. It improves their self-esteem and self-confidence, and they learn of the roles and responsibilities of being a valued member of our school community in addition to developing their understanding of citizenship and the wider community.

Time is set aside weekly for 'Special Interest' too. This is an opportunity for pupils to do something they especially like or are interested in, and to share this interest with others, but also to try some new activities, that their peers may be interested in. This offers pupils an excellent opportunity for skills-development in democracy and negotiation, as every week may not be their own choice, but involve working as a group or taking someone else's wishes into account.

All pupils are supported to access the community at least weekly as part of our real-life learning approach. They are encouraged to visit shops and markets, use the library or leisure facilities like the gym, swimming pool and outdoor education centre, to participate in local services, classes or events, to volunteer, or simply to enjoy what our Jurassic Coast location and the local community has to offer.

Our Curriculum Model:



We aim to make learning relevant to pupils' lives in a way that is purposeful, functional and can be applied to real life situations. For older pupils this may include opportunities to experience vocational and/or work-based learning, as well as having opportunities to attend careers fairs and events and participate in careers interviews as part of their Preparation for Adulthood.

All of our pupils also participate in Travel Training as a skill for life. Participating in Travel Training increases confidence and greater independence. All of our pupils learn to travel safely by car and minibus, to use public buses and trains, have opportunities to cycle, and do plenty of walking.

Our Bespoke Approach:

Within this overarching framework, the curriculum aims to be bespoke to meet pupils' individual special educational needs and is guided by their Education, Health and Care Plans.

We understand that one size does not fit all. Our pupils often have spikéd learning profiles, or have experienced significant gaps in learning, so what pupils are learning and at what level will vary significantly from pupil to pupil and from subject to subject, according to the unique needs, skills and abilities of each child.

Many of our pupils need their core provision supplemented too, by a varied sensory diet for example, with sessions for sensory integration incorporated into their timetable, or additional Occupational Therapy or Speech and Language Interventions and we work closely with other professionals in a multi-agency way to ensure that pupils' wider needs are met in a holistic a way as possible.



Breakout rooms, quiet spaces and sensory tents are available for all pupils and breaks from their schedules and timetables can be taken whenever necessary.

Pupils may also benefit from visual timetables, PEC's, 5-point Scales, Zones of Regulation, social stories, Communication Mats, or an even more specific individualised learning environment, and we aim to ensure that we provide everything our pupils need to enable them to be successful and to feel safe.



All pupils have a Positive Behaviour Support Plan. These are written together with our Positive Behaviour Support Facilitator, pupils, their parents/carers and any associated professionals. This details what works well for individuals, what their triggers may be, and how best to support them in times of anxiety, stress or difficulty. They are reviewed regularly to ensure they best meet pupils' needs.

Arbour House is also a registered THRIVE school. We have our own licensed Thrive Practitioners and all pupils have Thrive Assessments and Action Plans, to support the development of their emotional resilience.

Qualifications and Extended Learning Opportunities:

Some pupils may manage working towards more formal qualifications. Our English and Maths at Upper School can be accredited through Edexcel at a range of learning levels, from Functional Skills Entry Level 1 to GCSE's for suitable candidates. ICT qualifications (Digital Skills) are also available for interested pupils.

We offer qualifications in Art & Design and Food Technology, accredited through Pearson with no minimum entry requirements. Many of the tasks and activities that pupils are engaged in across the curriculum can be accredited as part of daily learning, so there is no pressure for pupils to complete 'additional work' and sitting examinations is optional.

We can offer a range of academic and vocational learning opportunities via links with Weymouth College, Employ My Ability, Dorset Abilities, Rylands Farm, Dorset Wildlife Trust, RSPB and other local community and business partnerships.



Post-16:

Arbour House School can offer provision for KS5 pupils and it is therefore possible for children to remain with us for an all-through education, from age 6 to 18. For many pupils with complex SEN this is significantly reassuring, avoiding the unnecessary stress and anxiety of further transition.

Many of our pupils also stay with us for an additional year just to catch up on previously missed education and to continue to develop their independent living skills and preparation for adulthood.

Other Useful Information:

The School Day:

- The school day starts at 9.00 am and finishes at 3.00 pm at both school sites.
- Staff meet for Daily Briefing 8.40 am – 9.00 am and are therefore not able to staff pupils before 9.00 am.
- Most of our pupils arrive by taxi/school transport. This is organised by the SEN Travel Team when pupils join Arbour House.
- Every day starts with a 30 minute 'Check-In'. This allows pupils time to settle and prepare for their day, complete any OT, sensory integration, or motor skills work, or just have an opportunity to share how they are feeling and get ready for their day.
- There are 5 lessons per day and we aim to complete our 'formal' learning in the mornings, when pupils' concentration and energy levels are at their best.
- In the afternoons more of our creative and off-site curriculum takes place, like Topic Work, Independent Living Skills, Travel Training, P.E. and Special Interest Time.

Breaks and Lunch:

- Morning Break consists of a drink and a healthy snack, usually fresh fruit, provided by parents/carers.
- Lunch is in the Dining Room on both sites, and times can be staggered to allow for a freer flow of pupils and a more manageable environment for pupils that find busy times difficult.
- The school provides a healthy lunch free of charge for all pupils and we encourage pupils to eat with their peers if possible as a skill for life. We do have to negotiate the menu sometimes as we understand that many of our children have food-related difficulties, but we aim to support all pupils to eat regularly.
- At Upper School pupils are supported to prepare their own lunch as a skill for life, and at times they also prepare lunch for each other on a rota basis.
- Pupils can also be taken off-site for breaks and lunch if appropriate and of benefit to them, for a walk or a jog, to access local playgrounds and picnic spots, or to use the local outdoor gym for example.

Lower School lunch is 12.00-12.30 pm and Upper School lunch is 12.30-1.00 pm.

Homework:

- We do not routinely give homework to pupils as for many of them homework was one of the key stressors in their previous educational placements. Many of our pupils also need or prefer to keep home and school 'separate' for it to feel manageable, but homework can be made available at any time to any pupil or parent/carer that would like to receive it. Please just speak to your child's Lead Teacher and they will be happy to help.

Uniform:

- In line with DfE recommendations, Arbour House has a school uniform that all pupils need to wear, unless they are in the Sixth Form, and then it is optional.
- Further information about our uniform, including a full uniform list and advice regarding other essential items pupils will need can be found on our school website.

The School Office:

- The Office is staffed from 8.30 am to 4.00 pm Monday to Friday on both sites, term time only.
- The School Office deals with all enquiries and messages and will aim to deal promptly with any requests or concerns that you may have.
- If you would prefer to speak to your child's Lead Teacher, please be aware that teachers are not usually available until after 3.00 pm due to teaching commitments, but a message can be left and they will return your call as soon as possible.
- You can call the School Office on:

01305 871400 for Lower School, Weymouth

01305 490310 for Upper School, Dorchester

or email us at arbouradmin@potens-education.co.uk if you require further information about the school or would like to arrange a visit.

We look forward to meeting you.