

ADMISSIONS POLICY 2016 - 2018

Centre Academy must of necessity remain a small school and we therefore accept only a limited number of students for each academic year. Because of the nature of our mission and, indeed, our students, we are exceptionally careful with regard to offering places. In broad terms, we must be convinced that we will be able to meet the needs – academic, interpersonal and social – of the applicant and that the applicant will benefit and thrive in our environment for learning and will not in any way compromise the ability of other students to learn. The school cannot accommodate students for whom behavioural difficulties are a primary diagnosis.

The initial step involves a telephone conversation between the applicant's parent(s) and the Principal, who will ascertain if the parent should be encouraged in pursuing a place. The Principal will understand the parents' objective in enquiring, the academic and other difficulties that the applicant is experiencing and the diagnosis that may be operative. He will also present an overview of the School and its programmes, and attempt to answer any questions that may arise. If the Principal believes that an application should be encouraged, he will forward to the family the school Prospectus.

The family subsequently forwards the formal application as contained in the Prospectus, along with a current report by an educational psychologist, a copy of the child's Statement (if applicable), reports from other schools and any other information that parent deems significant. Specialist staff may also be asked to review the information.

Centre Academy London is a school for children with learning difficulties, including dyslexia, ADHD, ASD and dyspraxia. It does not accept children for whom social, emotional and behavioural difficulties are the primary diagnosis; this said however, as professionals, we understand that some learning difficulties may behaviourally manifest as secondary characteristics of a primary diagnosis. For example, this might include difficulties relating to transition particularly associated with children on the autistic spectrum

Through differentiated approaches to teaching, the programme can provide for students with learning difficulties for whom English is a second/foreign or additional language. However, EFL/EAL students do not fall under the umbrella of Special Education Needs without a specific diagnosed learning difficulty and would not therefore be best served by being placed in a school which caters for students with SEN. DfE guidance clearly states that "Difficulties related solely to limitations in English as an additional language are not SEN." (6.24 SEND Code of Practice, January 2015)

For students presenting with SEN in addition to English as a foreign or additional language, typical provisions might include: one to one literacy support through withdrawal, expressive and receptive language tuition with the Speech Therapist, a highly differentiated personalised learning plan, a highly specified IEP, opportunities for attending social skills groups, and homework which targets and enhances language skills development. The school's ability to accommodate this range of difficulties will be assessed fully through the admissions process, including during any potential trial period.

If the information supplied upon application is considered to be a potential match at Centre Academy, the family is then contacted and invited to visit the School and discuss the child's needs with the Principal, who will also discuss all the aspects of the School's academic and related programmes. During this discussion, the child may meet with the SENCO and/or other specialist teachers for an informal assessment; he/she will also spend a few minutes with the Principal after he has completed his discussion with the family.

If staff are in agreement that the school may be an appropriate placement, the family is contacted thereafter and the child is invited to spend a trial period at the School; this is usually arranged for a period of three days, during which Centre Academy attempts to achieve four objectives: (1) to ensure that our programmes and approaches are germane to the child's needs; (2) to ensure that the child will be able to interact successfully with the children already enrolled at the School; (3) to ensure that the child can work at a sufficiently independent level in order to fully access the programme; and (4) to ensure that the child is sufficiently comfortable at Centre Academy to the extent that he/she really wishes to attend.

At the end of the trial period, each teacher who worked with the applicant submits a short review of the child's performance to the Principal; discussions then take place and if an offer of a place is deemed practical, the Principal so indicates in writing; in the case of a child who is Statemented, the appropriate LEA is provided with a copy of the offer letter. It is important to note that Centre Academy uses a rolling admissions policy, that is, we accept children at any time during the academic year.