Dawn House

A Speech and Language UK school



Dawn House School
Prospectus



"Dawn House and its staff have provided a nurturing and supportive environment which has given my child back his enthusiasm to learn, self-belief that he can achieve and the confidence to speak and communicate with others which he previously lacked."

Parent

Welcome to Dawn House School

A message from our Principal, Jenny McConnell

I'm delighted to invite you to become a part of the Dawn House family.

At Dawn House, we provide a collaborative, child-centred and innovative experience. It's one that enables our children to achieve ambitious goals and have endless opportunities.

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of our amazing staff, we are delighted to have been judged by Ofsted as 'Outstanding' since 2015.

Communication is a fundamental life skill and developing these skills is key to ensuring children get the best start in life. That's why supporting speech and language development is at the heart of everything we do at Dawn House. By supporting children with complex speech and language challenges, we give a voice to those that do not always have the words.

We ensure that all our pupils emerge as self-confident, independent individuals, able to manage their own learning and behaviour. We make sure they are equipped with the abilities, skills and strategies to take the next steps into further or higher education and the world of work.

Our pupils are impressive young people, and we are extremely proud of their achievements and of our school.

Above all, we want every child at Dawn House to **engage, develop, communicate, aspire**. That means giving them all the support they need to grow into independent young adults.



I hope this prospectus will give you some idea of everything Dawn House can offer your child. But it can never take the place of seeing the place for yourself and feeling, as a parent, the very special atmosphere we create.

If you would like to arrange a visit – or have any questions about what we do – please don't hesitate to get in touch by calling 01623 795361 or emailing us at enquiries@dawnhouse.org.uk. We will be delighted to hear from you.

With very best wishes,

Jenny McConnell
Principal

Who we are and what we do

Putting children and young people at the heart of everything we do

Who we are

Dawn House is a school that supports children and young people aged five to 19 who have complex speech and language challenges that are barriers to their learning. We have been judged by Ofsted as 'Outstanding' since 2015.

What we do

We provide a combination of specialised education, therapy and care, creating a community of happy, independent, and confident communicators. We enable children with complex speech and language challenges to look to the future with confidence.

We are committed to integrating outstanding education and in-house therapy for all pupils in a highly specialist environment where their speech and language challenges do not prevent them from learning. We work hard to ensure that children receive an appropriate curriculum, are happy and engaged, and take part in a range of experiences.

Our mission

Dawn House achieves all this by supporting children with complex speech and language challenges to **engage, develop, communicate, aspire**.

- **Engage** - Joining in with the things on your timetable and your learning.
- **Develop** - Having a go and improving your skills in any area.
- **Communicate** - Using positive and kind words, working with others, asking for help and listening to others.
- **Aspire** - Believing in yourself so that you can try something new and achieving something you want to.

With love and hard work, we're transforming children's lives.



About Speech and Language UK

Dawn House is part of Speech and Language UK, a children's charity that wants every child to face the future with confidence.

For two million children in the UK, learning to talk and understand words feels like an impossible hurdle. So, we give children and young people the skills they need so they are not left behind, waiting to be understood.

We design innovative tools and training for thousands of nursery assistants and teachers to use in their classrooms. We give families the confidence and skills to help their children. And we put pressure on politicians to prioritise help for speech and language challenges.

Speech and Language UK



Inside our school

Our specially equipped school provides an environment where children can thrive

Set in a beautiful ten-acre site in Nottinghamshire, the school gives our pupils access to a range of specialised modern facilities.

Indoor facilities include:

- Swimming pool
- Food tech room
- Science lab
- Design and technology suite
- IT suite
- Gym/hall
- Music studio
- Dedicated Sixth Form building
- On-site kitchens and dining room
- Library with access to gardens
- Green screen room/drama room
- Sensory integration room
- Therapy rooms
- Quiet room
- Wellbeing suite
- Medical room
- Hair and beauty area
- Chimes – a special learning space where children who are unable to access the main school environment due to high anxiety or other reasons can have a more individualised programme of learning.
- School dog
- Sensory bus

Outdoor facilities include:

- Extensive grounds
- Tennis court
- Trim trails
- Outdoor pavilion
- Forest school woodland area

By providing an environment that is stimulating, caring and fun, we know we can help all our pupils get the most out of their education, and really shine.

> **"The school is outstanding and absolutely amazing. We can now live as a normal family."**
>
> ***Parent***



Learning

Giving children every chance to engage, develop, communicate, aspire

Our classes

With small classes of 8-12 children and a specialist teacher, speech and language therapist and learning support assistant working together in each class, we can support your child to reach their potential. Pupils are grouped into classes not only by age but language comprehension skills, attainment levels, learning and social needs.

Our curriculum

Our broad and exciting 'entry to exit' curriculum ensures that, throughout their school career, children and young people are preparing for life beyond our school gates and are supported to develop strategies that help them overcome the barriers to their learning.

We follow the national curriculum but adapt our lessons for complex speech and language challenges. Our curriculum's foundations lie in our commitment to helping children **engage, develop, communicate, aspire.**

In addition to academic subjects, we provide special programmes to support all aspects of children and young people's personal development, supporting their self-esteem, independence and self-confidence.



▲ **Helping children engage, develop, communicate, aspire is our priority and is embedded in everything we do.**

Life stages

Dawn House provides exceptional teaching for children from primary school age all the way up to Sixth Form, with the Sixth Form located in a separate building on the grounds of Dawn House.

We teach all the Key Stages, with a range of qualifications and an ever-increasing number of vocational options offered at Key Stages four and five, plus personalised guidance to help pupils take the right path. Pupils at Key Stages four and five are also provided with essential careers guidance and work experience opportunities. It's a crucial part of building their independence and setting them on track for a fulfilling adult life.

Therapy

Meeting each child's needs, whatever they are

Speech and language therapy

A key speech and language therapist is based in each Key Stage providing coaching to staff and input to children throughout the school day. Therapists are closely involved in planning and reviewing lessons, helping to tailor them to pupils' needs.

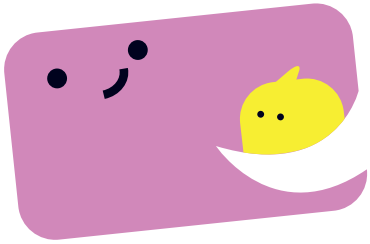
Children and young people are offered individual or group speech and language support in therapy rooms close to their classrooms, or individual support within the classroom if they need it, and according to their Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Our therapists aim to develop children and young people's communication skills, help them to access the curriculum, and build their confidence in communicating.

Occupational therapy

Our occupational therapy team – including sensory integration trained therapists – aims to reduce barriers to pupils' learning, develop their functional abilities and increase their independence. Our on-site occupational therapists, collaborate closely with class teams, speech and language therapists and families, to ensure a coordinated approach to meeting each child and young person's individual needs and helping them achieve their potential.

Occupational therapy usually takes place in functional spaces such as the classroom and playground. When necessary, therapy is provided in specially equipped therapy spaces, such as our purpose designed sensory-integration room.

The focus of all occupational therapy is to help your child access the curriculum and learn to the best of their ability, but occupational therapists also focus on helping children and young people develop skills for play and leisure, social participation and work. In addition, the team helps children and young people achieve independence in self-care and daily activities such as dressing, using cutlery, handwriting and more.





With the right therapy, every young person can flourish.

> **"As they journey through the school, pupils develop strong friendships with their peers. The school fosters a strong ethos of respect for others. As a result, pupils feel happy and safe in school."**
>
> ***Ofsted, 2025***



Better futures

Children who struggle to talk and understand words can often have trouble developing the social and communication skills they need to build the foundations of a successful life. They can lack confidence and find it hard to do so many of the things other children take for granted. This can be a huge struggle – and affect their whole lives.

Here at Dawn House, we provide specialised support for children with complex speech and language challenges. Through this dedicated care, we can give these children better futures.



Success for life

We offer a wide range of after-school activities and clubs where children can learn vital independence skills. They can go to local football matches. They can have fun and learn to swim in our on-site swimming pool. They can learn to cook in cookery classes. All of this can help children become much more confident, boost their self-esteem and – crucially – help them grow into happy and independent adults.

Pupils at Key Stages four and five are also offered vocational options and work experience opportunities that help build their independence and set them on track for a fulfilling adult life. Every day, we're helping children work towards successful futures – not just academic success but success for life.



Kian's moving up

After attending Dawn House, Kian is now studying at Confetti College in Nottingham, which offers college level courses in creative industries. He told us:

"Dawn House has set me up for a good future. Without the encouragement I received there, I wouldn't have picked up a guitar or had any interest in the music industry. The school has really boosted my confidence with talking to new people, and the extra support they gave me helped me get my GCSEs. They've really taught me a lot about being independent."

The team

Holistic care from dedicated professionals

All the care your child needs

At Dawn House, we take a joined-up approach to children's care. A full multi-disciplinary team of dedicated professionals is on hand to provide holistic care that addresses every aspect of your child's needs.

The team includes:

- **Teachers team:** Teachers work with therapists to make sure each child's development plan is included into their planning and evaluation, and support teaching assistants to record and report on pupil progress.
- **Therapies team – speech and language therapy team and occupational therapy team:** The teams guide and support pupils through their personalised therapy and care.
- **TA team – teaching assistants:** Frequent updates with tutors allow pupils to hear updates on their progress.
- **Pupil leadership group:** Meetings every half term give pupils the chance to discuss their ideas and wishes for how the school should move forward.
- **Designated wellbeing team:** Our wellbeing team supports our pupils and families to share needs and frustrations appropriately, while teaching them strategies for maintaining good emotional and mental health.
- **Learning mentors:** Supporting children to access school through a careful induction and providing ongoing support.

Be part of the team

We consider parents and carers like you to be a crucial part of the team too.



Supporting pupils' families at home is integral to our approach.

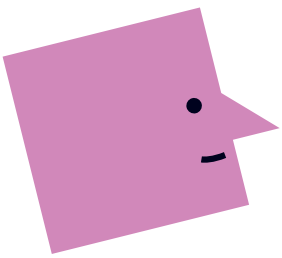
Parents and carers are invited to become part of the Dawn House community, with regular events taking place that give them the opportunity to come into school.

We also host meetings every term where parents and carers of our new pupils can get together to network and have the opportunity to give us feedback about their initial experiences of Dawn House.

The Friends of Dawn House are a group made up of parents and staff who work to enhance the support the school provides for pupils, through a range of activities. They provide opportunities for parents and carers to get in touch with one another and share experiences. And they raise money to benefit pupils by organising shops in school on special days such as the Summer Fayre and Winter Fayre, where children can purchase gifts for their family and friends.

"Pupils receive an exceptional education at this transformative school. Staff maintain consistently high expectations and are dedicated to helping every pupil achieve them."

Ofsted, 2025





▲ Children and young people from five to 19 can enjoy everything Dawn House has to offer.

Entry and eligibility

How your child can attend Dawn House

Our admissions process

You can apply for your child to attend Dawn House if developmental speech and/or language disorder is their main barrier to learning. We can also support children with high functioning autism spectrum disorder who have associated language and social communication challenges.

Once we have looked at your child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), and confirmed that we can meet their needs, you are very welcome to visit the school and see our learning in action to find out whether it is the right environment for your child before applying for assessment, usually through your local authority.

Assessing your child

Once referred to us, your child will undergo a thorough assessment here at Dawn House to determine if their needs can be met at the school. The assessment will provide a detailed understanding of your child's needs and the best school environment for them.

Our experienced assessment team is usually made up of a speech and language therapist and a specialist teacher, who work together to provide a joined-up picture of your child's needs.

> **"Dawn House has given me confidence to do so many things. Things like being able to communicate with people, being able to keep my thoughts clear, and knowing when to keep my thoughts to myself. I've learned some really important things, like independence, confidence and self-esteem."**
>
> ***Pupil***

Dawn House

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