

OUR SCHOOL OFFER

As part of the Local Authority 'Local Offer', the government has asked all schools to answer the following questions to enable parents to compare the answers from different schools they may wish to know more about. For full details, please visit our website:

www.thomasashton.tameside.sch.uk

1. Which pupils can access provision at Thomas Ashton School?

We provide places for children who are in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. They must have an Education, Health and Care Plan (or a statement) which describes social, emotional and mental health needs as their **main need**. These may include Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), ADHD, Attachment Disorder as well as other needs such as moderate and specific learning difficulties, dyslexia and dyspraxia.

2. How do I get a place for my child?

Places at Thomas Ashton School are allocated by the Local Authority. Your child will have undergone an assessment for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and once this is finalised the school for your child is written into Section 1.

If you still have a statement, the school is named in Section 4.

3. What is provided at Thomas Ashton School?

Thomas Ashton School teaches children in small groups, with up to 7 children in each group. The groups are taught by a dedicated class leader who is supported by up to two experienced Teaching Assistants. Each room offers a calm, safe, positive and nurturing environment where your child will receive a highly structured broad and balanced



curriculum offering 'core' subjects of Literacy, Numeracy and PSHE every morning, with more creative and practical activities in the afternoon that allow for greater experiential learning such as Art, Science, Humanities, Music and Sport. (KS3 groups are timetabled to use the specialist facilities in school with specialist providers).

The day starts with 'toast and chat' for all groups so that everyone has had the chance to have eaten before class begins, and if anyone has something that might be affecting them in some way at the start of the day, we can spend some time helping to resolve it with them.

Learning is personalised to suit the needs of your child. 'Provision Maps' help us to identify the needs of your child so that teachers can plan effectively to meet those needs in class. The teacher will use a range of interventions delivered by the Teaching Assistants to help your child make progress with their learning and to fill in any 'gaps' they may have if they have been out of the classroom for any time.

All learning is 'age appropriate' and there is a strong emphasis placed on getting children ready for the next phase of their education, be it moving from one Key Stage to the next or even moving back into mainstream. This involves developing skills such as independence, team work, responsibility, confidence and self-motivation.

We run two mini buses to enable our pupils to access provision outside of school, to go on trips and visits, to experience reward events and to attend sporting fixtures such as swimming, cycling and trampolining. We run a holiday club and we also offer the opportunity for an annual residential trip.

4. What are the benefits for my child going to Thomas Ashton School?

We recognise that for some children size does matter! We offer small groups with a higher ratio of staff. The day is well structured and constant supervision promotes the feeling of being safe and secure in school.

We understand how our children think and feel, and we recognise it is the job of the adults to help the children find ways to control their feelings and emotions to enable them to learn and to let others learn as well. Understanding the needs of our children is key, and we want to build strong relationships with parents and carers to help us gain this understanding, working together in partnership for the benefit of the child.

The knowledge we gain about your child is put into a Provision Map and from there the teachers can decide how best to meet their needs and deliver learning for your child.

The teachers will write an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for your child that will include achievable targets. These are then reviewed and revised where appropriate with you and

your child on a regular basis. Children will also have an Individual Behaviour Plan and a Risk Assessment which help decide how best to manage the social and emotional needs of your child, especially if they are struggling or have gone into 'crisis'.

In many instances there may be a CAF in place (Common Assessment Framework) and the school works closely with a range of other agencies in support of our children and their families. Some families may have much more support from Children's Social Care, and some children may be working with YOT (the Youth Offending Team) or CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services). Whoever may be working with you or your child, Thomas Ashton School will want to work with them too, and we will ensure we have someone attend meetings whenever required in order to represent your child's education.

By offering a safe, caring and nurturing environment with experienced, professional and dedicated staff, we are able to focus on your child's learning and by making it relevant, accessible and fun, and by using a range of learning and emotional health and wellbeing interventions, we can help your child to learn and to grow socially and emotionally, to become more confident and knowledgeable, to develop their self-esteem and sense of worth, and to help them make progress so that they can move forwards with their lives and be ready for the next step in their journey.

5. Will my child be safe in school?

All new arrivals at Thomas Ashton will have an initial two week transition phase to help them settle into school.

Prior to this, the Headteacher will have met with parents/carers to get a good understanding of the family, the domestic circumstances and the unique knowledge and insights that only parents/carers can have of their children. This visit also includes a tour of the school and the opportunity for as many questions to be asked as needed, so that the parent/carer feels they are making an informed choice if agreeing a place for their child. It also gives the Headteacher the opportunity to ensure the child is best placed at Thomas Ashton School, and to help support the family if it is felt there is more suitable provision available in Tameside.

We will have contacted their previous school to get as much detail about their learning needs as possible and their ability to cope in social and learning settings.

This meeting is then followed by an opportunity for the young person to visit, look round and ask questions. If everyone is happy, the admissions paperwork can also be completed, the young person kitted out with their school uniform and a date set for the transition phase to begin.

Once we have had time to assess the young person ourselves, using the information we have received from parents/carers, previous school and any other agencies involved, we will write a 'Risk Assessment' for that young person which is then reviewed on a regular basis and amended whenever necessary.

Some children and their families may be eligible for transport from the local authority, and we can help and support the application process if required. There is one entrance to school and all children are greeted in the morning as they move to class. The first activity of the day is 'toast and chat' and this enables us to check that pupils are ready physically and emotionally to learn whilst ensuring that all pupils have had the chance to eat and drink before beginning their work. 'Toast and Chat' also provides pupils with gentle 'warm up' activities to get them ready to learn.

We believe very strongly in using opportunities out of school to support children's learning and social and personal development. There are risk assessment procedures in place for every out of school activity or trip, and we always ensure that out of school, pupils are well supervised and supported by adults.

We have deliberately ensured there is very little 'unstructured time' in the school day, with supervision in place at all times. We both recognise and understand that young people in KS3 want the opportunity to grow and become more independent, but we also recognise we have to balance this against our duty of care for these pupils, and for those working with them.

All our policies, guidance and procedures regarding Safeguarding, Child Protection, Security, Safety and Support ('e-safety' when pupils are using the internet; PREVENT - safety regarding extremism and radicalisation; personal safety such as road safety, relationships with others; Behaviour policies, Positive Handling, Anti-Bullying) are all available from school. The governors regularly monitor and review policies and procedures, and receive reports on how they impact on the running of the school.

Whenever the School Council meets, it is an opportunity to discuss their views and feelings around safety in school.

We have clear systems in place if we need to help with the storage and administration of medicines. We have a School Nurse who liaises with Health and who can advise us on any health related matter. We have identified staff who are trained in First Aid, and a defibrillator that is kept in the school office. Any medical emergency will be dealt with in a calm, sensitive manner through the school office, and you will be contacted immediately in the event of an emergency, or at some point if we need help or information, or to let you

know what has happened and how we have dealt with the situation. Children with medical needs will have these identified in their plan and shared with all appropriate staff.

All staff are experienced and trained in 'Team-Teach' (the way we manage children through de-escalation, avoidance and distraction techniques to stop them from getting into crisis, and how to safely manage children using physical intervention techniques if they do go into crisis). Children have 'Individual Behaviour Plans' (IBPs) that identify risky or challenging behaviours, and how the school will manage those risks to help the young person stay, or get back on track, if they start to 'wobble'.

All risk assessments are carried out in line with statutory requirements and school policies, and include 'dynamic' risk assessments to meet changing needs that may arise. All staff receive regular Child Protection / Safeguarding training.

All adults working with the pupils in school or out of school on a school-related activity are subject to enhanced DBS checks.

School works with a range of other agencies that help support the personal, social, emotional and health needs of our children and their families. It is important we work together to provide the best opportunities for our children.

How do I know how well my child is doing?

We speak to our parents and carers on a regular basis about a range of things, but central to all our conversations is how your child is doing, in terms of their learning and their emotional wellbeing. We welcome the opportunity to share information about how a child is doing at school and at home. Working together is one of the keys to success.

Every term we report on progress regarding Individual Education Plans (IEPs) when we send the updated plan home. These plans include the targets the pupils are working towards at that time, and when targets are achieved they are replaced with new ones. For some of our children we will be reporting on 'behaviour' in a similar way.

Teachers regularly review the progress of all the children against curriculum targets, using P levels (further broken down into PIVATS) and National Curriculum Levels (currently under review). In the Autumn Term these levels are shared with parents / carers at a 'Parents and Carers Consultation Evening', where work can be looked at and parents and carers can discuss how their child is settling and the progress they are making. We can also suggest what can be done at home to support the learning.

Parents and carers receive a full school report in the summer term. They will also have the opportunity to come to school to discuss their child's progress as part of the annual review of their statement / Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

The annual reviews are 'person-centred', meaning they involve your child in the process. They attend the start of the meeting where those at the meeting have a chance to celebrate the achievements of the young person over the past 12 months. They get to listen to the views of those at the meeting, which includes parents/carers, staff from school and any other professional working in support of the child in a positive, supportive environment.

The objectives/outcomes on the plan are discussed and reviewed, and joint decisions are made about future objectives for the following year. It is also an opportunity to review the young person's needs and the provision school is making to meet those needs.

Class teachers are happy to make and receive phone calls at the end of the day. The office staff are often asked to pass on information to parents/carers, and members of the senior Leadership Team will often make calls or visit home if a situation requires a greater level of communication and support. Good communication is vital, and just as you will want to know how things are going in school, it is always helpful that you share with us things you are aware of that may affect your child's learning, even if it is just for that day.

We may suggest we run a home/school book to help communication when we have a very specific issue we are all trying to improve.

Finally, we love to see you! Someone will always be made available to talk to you if you want to come in and see us. Alternatively, if you bring your child to school, there is the chance to meet and to talk in the morning or at the end of the day. Or why not support one of our many fund raising events, such as coffee mornings, celebration events or Fayres? These informal opportunities all help to make sure you know exactly what is going on in school and how well your child is doing.

Who can I contact if I want further information?

If you want to come and look around the school please call **0161 368 6208** to arrange a visit.

If you have questions that you would like answers to and can put them in an email, email admin@thomasashton.tameside.sch.uk marked for the attention of the Headteacher.

If you want to look at the local authority's 'local offer' visit:

<http://www.tameside.gov.uk/localoffer>

Details of Tameside MBC's Parent Partnership Service can be found at:

<http://www.tameside.gov.uk/sen/parentpartnership>

An excellent support network for children and families with Special Needs in Tameside is called OKE (Our Kids Eyes). They can be found at:

<http://www.ourkidseyes.org>