

The
Portsmouth Academy

11 November, 2021

The Portsmouth Academy develop into Special School Provision

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you're keeping safe and well and had an enjoyable half-term.

As you will be aware, the Thinking Schools Academy Trust is a family of 7 schools in Portsmouth and TPA provides the secondary phase, for those children who wish to continue their education with a 'thinking school' approach. We are very closely tied to Penhale Infant School and Newbridge Junior School, as we form the Fratton hub of schools under a single Regional Governing Body.

In February this year, we received the wonderful news that Penhale would receive a much needed upgrade to the buildings funded by Portsmouth City Council. As part of the investment, new accommodation for children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) was created, due to the need to expand the number of specialist places available across the city. On 1st September, the 'Rainbow Fish' centre opened providing education for 8 children with cognition and learning barriers in the first stage of their education. All children attending have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and are placed in this specialist setting via Inclusion Support Panel in collaboration with Portsmouth City Council's SEN Team. In September 2022, the number of places is set to increase to 16 places.

<https://www.portsmouth.co.uk/education/boost-for-portsmouth-children-as-rainbow-fish-inspired-inclusion-centre-after-it-opens-at-penhale-infant-school-3423928>

ALL THROUGH EDUCATION

One of the key reasons that the Thinking Schools Academy Trust was chosen to deliver special school provision, was due to our ability to offer an 'all through' education from Year R to Year 11 with minimal transitions between different buildings and staff. We are therefore intending to build a 48 place provision, with 16 children to be based at Penhale from Years R to Year 4, and 32 children to be based at The Portsmouth Academy, from Years 5 to Year 11.

We know that the children will benefit from a 'one school, one staff' approach, where their needs are very well known and understood, and the curriculum is precisely tailored to them each and every day. At the same time, the children will be integrated with the main school, for example for assemblies and special events, and to join in with some mainstream learning opportunities, where this is felt to be of benefit for them.

It is intended that the 'secondary' phase of the specialist provision will begin in September 2022, with places for 8 students at The Portsmouth Academy, growing each year until it is full in September 2025. This will not affect the Published Admission Number for the school which will remain at 250 spaces per year group. The admissions process for this specialist setting will be done in collaboration with the SEN Team at Portsmouth City Council. All children attending this specialist setting must have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and parents can express their preference for a place at the specialist setting through the initial EHCP assessment or annual review process. The specialist provision will serve pupils across Portsmouth.

www.theportsmouthacademy.org.uk

TRANSFORMING LIFE CHANCES

Principal: Rachel Grey, BA (Hons)

Director of Education: Natalie Sheppard BSc (Hons) NPQH

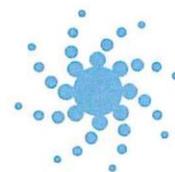
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USE OF THE CURRENT 'BRIDGE' AREA

Previously, the back, right wing of the school was developed to provide a 'school within a school' - accommodation for Year 6 Newbridge children. However, these children have now moved back to the Newbridge main site. Therefore, there is already empty space to house the special provision and very little work is needed to prepare it to meet the needs of the students. Some changes will be made such as the creation of a sensory room (which students with special needs in the main part of the school will also be able to access) and a therapy room. The works can be carried out with minimal disruption to current students due to the space being empty.

Diagram showing proposed accommodation for the Special Provision at The Portsmouth Academy



CONTINUING TO WORK TOGETHER

We are very proud of the impact the provision at Penhale is having on children so far. Jack Jones (formerly the SENDCo of Penhale and Newbridge Schools), was appointed as Head of the Special Provision Partnership and is regularly sharing updates about the children's progress. Please click here for a link to the newsletter: [Rainbow Fish Newsletter 22.10.2021](#)

Jack will now be starting to look at building the curriculum for the students who will be based at TPA and building a new team to work with, to deliver the next phase of children's education.

FEEDBACK/COMMENTS

We would really appreciate comments and questions that you may have about the opportunity I have presented to you in this letter. If you wish to do so, please complete this form by clicking the link below, by 11 December, 2021.

[The development of an Inclusion Centre at The Portsmouth Academy \(office.com\)](https://www.office.com)

I would like to thank all the governors, staff, parents and pupils who have, over the years, worked in close partnership to support all our schools in creating a thriving and close-knit community.

I am really looking forward to the next phase of our successful journey.

Yours faithfully,



Rachel Grey
Principal



Natalie Sheppard
Director of Education



Jack Jones
Head of Special Provision Partnership