



MEREFIELD SCHOOL

Prospectus 2025-2026



GENERAL INFORMATION

Address

Merefield School
Westminster Drive
Ainsdale, Southport, Merseyside
PR8 2QZ
Tel. 01704 577163

Website

www.merefieldschool.co.uk

Email

admin@merefieldschool.co.uk

Type of school

Special School, Academy converter.

Age Range

3 - 19 years

Chair of Governors

Mr Steve McNorton

Headteacher

Ms Joanne Sharpe

Designated Safeguarding Officer

Ms Joanne Sharpe

Deputy Headteacher

Mrs Katy Calder

Assistant Headteachers

Mrs Rachael Hyslop & Ms Lauren Barlow

School Business Manager

Mrs Gemma Parker

School Secretaries

Mrs Vicky Snape / Mrs Clare Howard



**EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITIES TO
POSITIVELY IMPACT THE WORLD**

ABOUT MEREFIELD SCHOOL

A word from our Headteacher....

Dear Reader,

It is a privilege to welcome you to Merefield School. Following our recent Ofsted inspection in February 2025, I am incredibly proud to share that we have maintained our 'Outstanding' status, with inspectors hailing Merefield as an "exceptional school" where pupils truly "love their time."

At Merefield, we provide a specialized learning environment for over 110 pupils, aged 3 to 19, with severe, complex, or profound learning difficulties and those on the autistic spectrum. Our mission is to ensure there is "no restriction placed on what we expect our pupils to accomplish."

We are a research-focused, family-centred community. Our talented, multi-disciplinary team is passionate about providing an ambitious, personalized curriculum that prepares our young people—from the early years to the sixth form—exceptionally well for their next steps. Whether it's horse riding, swimming, or local community projects, we believe in enriching lives through memorable, real-world experiences.

What makes Merefield special?

- An Exceptional Environment: Inspectors noted that our pupils arrive "cheerfully" and are met by staff who provide "genuinely caring and positive" interactions.
- High Expectations: We strive for excellence in everything we do, ensuring every child is challenged to reach their full potential.
- A True Partnership: We invest deeply in our staff and our families, working together to make Merefield a safe, happy, and forward-thinking place to grow.

Merefield School is an academy and part of Southport Learning Trust. This has strengthened our community involvement and support networks for pupils, families and staff.

The best way to understand our work is to see it for yourself. Whatever the reason for your interest in Merefield School, you are very welcome. If your child is joining us soon, I look forward to working in partnership with you to ensure they thrive.

Joanne Sharpe BA(Hons), QTS, NPQH
Headteacher



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IMPACT THE WORLD





“This is an **OUTSTANDING** school.”

Ofsted, June 2019

“Merefield School has taken effective steps to maintain the standards at the previous inspection.”

Ofsted, February 2025.



“Staff have a thorough understanding of pupils’ individual and complex needs.

Interactions between pupils and staff are genuinely caring and positive.”

Ofsted, February 2025.



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OUR VISION FOR MEREFIELD SCHOOL

Together, we are building a progressive, beacon learning community. We provide an outstanding holistic curriculum centred on the individual needs of every pupil, ensuring they are challenged, encouraged, and safe. At Merefield, every voice is valued, every difference is celebrated, and every child is empowered to reach their full potential.

Our Motto

"Working together to provide an exciting place where every child can achieve success."



Our Core Values

1. Respect

- **For the Individual:** We treat every child and young adult with dignity, ensuring equality of opportunity for all.
- **For the Voice:** We listen to our pupils, whether their communication is subtle or loud.
- **For the Community:** We value, consult, and support our parents, carers, and staff as equal partners.

2. Grow

- **Holistic Development:** We nurture the "whole child," focusing on their well-being and life skills as much as their academic journey.
- **Independence:** We encourage pupils to exercise control over their lives and make meaningful choices.
- **Through Partnership:** We grow stronger by working closely with families, offering home visits, workshops, and open communication.

3. Inspire

- **High Expectations:** We are passionate about progress and maintain an unwaveringly positive ethos.
- **Innovation:** We embrace new ideas and creative thinking to meet the complex needs of our learners.
- **Success for All:** We celebrate every contribution, ensuring our school is an exciting place where achievements are recognized and shared.

Family Involvement: A Positive Choice

We invite parents, carers, and family members to be active participants in the Merefield journey. Our school is a community built on open, honest, and transparent communication.

- **Connect with Us:** Join us for Coffee Mornings, Family Forums, and Annual Reviews.
- **Open Lines:** You are welcome to phone class teachers to discuss your child's education (preferably after 3:45 PM).
- **Community Events:** From Summer Fairs and drama productions to workshops and Carol Services, we provide frequent opportunities to celebrate together.



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THE MEREFIELD CURRICULUM

Merefield School Curriculum Intent

Our pupils are aged 3-19 years. All pupils have an EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan) and each has a primary need identified within their EHCP as Severe or Profound Learning Needs. At Merefield School, we recognise that every child is unique and is on a personalised learning journey.

Their EHCPs outline a range of learning needs, including medical and sensory needs. The curriculum is tailored to match individual pupil needs and their aspirations and goals for the future. We have high expectations of all pupils and we believe it is every child's entitlement to achieve their full potential.

Curriculum Framework

Merefield School provides a sequenced and ambitious curriculum that includes all statutory frameworks, including the EYFS early learning goals, and the National Curriculum which are suitably adapted to give all learners the knowledge, skills, understanding and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. We provide a curriculum that promotes reading, communication, independence, resilience and self-help skills.

Our curriculum takes into account that our learners require deeper differentiation and adaptations and is therefore designed to provide many exciting opportunities for skills to be learned, revisited and generalised over time, at a pace that is appropriate and challenging for each learner.

The Merefield curriculum model is organised into six strands and is based on developing functional skills that allows young people to prepare for everyday life. Each area of the curriculum has a range of programmes of study that include a sequential ladder of learning outcomes.

My Communication			
Core Communication	Interaction	Functional Reading	Physical Communication
My Thinking and Problem Solving			
Work it out		Patterns in Everyday life	Functional Maths
How My World Works			
Developing Independence		Investigating and Exploring	Technology
My Community			
Preparing for my next stage		Citizenship	Community Participation
My Physical Development			
Self-Awareness		Looking after my body	Moving and using my body
My Emotional Wellbeing			
All about me		The World I Live In	Relationships

“Pupils enjoy a wide variety of opportunities that promote their wider development”
Ofsted, February 2025.



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THE MEREFIELD CURRICULUM

Curriculum Implementation:

The curriculum is delivered through a thematic approach to make learning exciting, engaging and meaningful. The topic cycle spans over four years and is also split by Key Stage. This provides up to sixteen years of different topics. This provides pupils with a huge breadth of opportunities for any necessary repetition or overlearning and to revisit previously learned skills to gain mastery and generalisation. This model allows for pupils to get to “know more and remember more”. Each topic has a range of suggested texts to support learning and to promote reading.

Teachers adapt lessons, texts or write their own stories to provide sensory experiences for our pupils with more complex needs so they are able to access the curriculum in a more practical way.

Teachers at Merefield School are highly skilled in teaching pupils with severe and complex learning disabilities. They attend regular training to support their subject knowledge and attend regular collaborative planning sessions and teacher meetings where curriculum information is discussed and shared. Teachers are creative in their approach to teaching, learning and assessment to ensure all pupils are suitably challenged and to ensure that knowledge, skills and understanding builds on prior learning. Evidence of learning is recorded and reviewed regularly.

Teaching Assistants also play a vital role in supporting the holistic progress of pupils and are also highly skilled in recording observations, supporting individuals or small groups and promoting high expectations for all.

Measuring Success

We use a range of assessment tools to measure progress and learning. The EHCP forms the basis of measuring success against aspirational targets. Challenging, smaller step targets stem from the EHCP and curriculum outcomes are measured within the PLIMs. All PLIMs are reviewed termly and monitored and moderated by senior leaders. Evidence of learning is captured to show progress over time and to identify next steps.

All pupils leave school with a range of external awards and qualifications that are tailored to their interests, ability and intended destinations. We work closely with the child, families and other professionals to identify the most appropriate post 19 destination and support successful transitions.

“A brilliant school with an incredible staff team that cares about each and every child that attends.”



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WHAT'S SO SPECIAL?

A Bespoke Curriculum: Learning Without Limits

At Merefield, we don't expect the child to fit the curriculum; we tailor the curriculum to the child. Using a transdisciplinary approach, we collaborate closely with families to translate Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) outcomes into Personalised Learning Intention Maps (PLIMs).

Our curriculum is broad, balanced, and ambitious, placing the pupil at the heart of every lesson. With an exceptional staff-to-pupil ratio (approximately 1:3), we provide the high-quality, small-group, and one-to-one support necessary for every student to Grow and Inspire others with their progress.

Beyond the Classroom: Enrichment & Adventure

We believe that learning should be an adventure. To Inspire our pupils, we provide a vibrant range of extracurricular opportunities:

- On the Move: With three minibuses and two people carriers, our pupils enjoy extensive offsite enrichment, educational visits, and residential experiences.
- Bringing the World to Merefield: We host regular visits from theatre groups, petting zoos, and specialists to bring our topics to life.
- Clubs & Culture: From our signing choir and music sessions to sports and gardening, there is a lunchtime activity for everyone.
- Extended Care: We offer an after-school club (currently Tuesdays) and a dedicated Summer Holiday Club for pupils who require specialist provision during the break.



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WHAT'S SO SPECIAL?

Specialist Resources: A Purpose-Built Environment

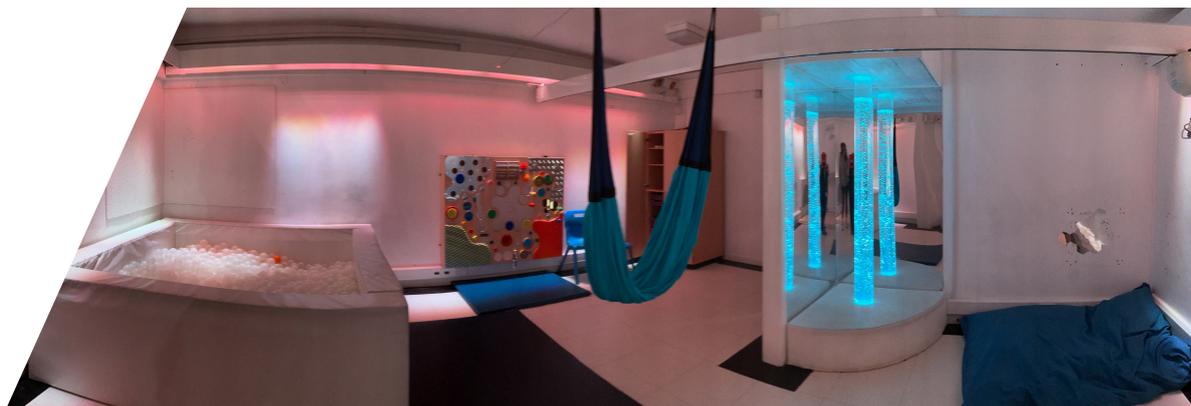
Our school is a modern, single-level facility designed to foster independence and Respect the physical needs of our community. Our world-class facilities include:

- **Therapeutic Spaces:** A hydrotherapy pool, two multi-sensory rooms, a sensory garden, and a dedicated therapy suite.
- **Learning Hubs:** A Forest School area, ICT suite, food technology room, and a well-stocked library.
- **Health & Wellbeing:** A dedicated medical room, family room for training, and an on-site kitchen where fresh meals are prepared daily.
- **Technology:** Every classroom is a "smart" environment, equipped with interactive whiteboards and modern adaptive technology.

Specialist Support: Expert Care, Integrated Daily

To ensure our pupils can Grow safely and healthily, we host a comprehensive team of onsite professionals. Through our partnerships with Alder Hey and other specialist services, we provide:

- **Therapy Teams:** Integrated support from NHS Physiotherapists, Speech and Language Therapists, and Occupational Therapists.
- **Medical Clinics:** Regular onsite clinics with Paediatricians and Educational Psychologists.
- **Specialist Partners:** Ongoing collaboration with the Sensory Support Team, CAMHS, and Shine Therapists to ensure every barrier to learning is removed.



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ADMISSION AND TRANSITION

The Consultation Process

In line with the SEND Code of Practice, all admissions to Merefield School are managed by the Local Authority (LA). Every pupil must have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that identifies Merefield as the appropriate provision to meet their needs.

- **Naming the School:** If Merefield is identified as a potential placement during an EHCP meeting or review, the LA will send a formal Consultation Request to our Headteacher.
- **Suitability Review:** We carefully review all provided documentation to ensure we can meet the specific requirements outlined in Section F of the pupil's EHCP and that the placement is compatible with the efficient education of others.
- **School Visits:** We encourage parents and carers to arrange a tour during the consultation phase to see how we Respect, Grow, and Inspire our learners.

Supporting a Smooth Transition

Once the LA formally names Merefield School in Section I of the EHCP, we begin a bespoke transition program. We recognize that change can be daunting, so we work in partnership with families and current settings to reduce anxiety and build confidence.

Our Transition Package includes:

- **Observation & Collaboration:** Staff visits to your child's current school or nursery.
- **Relationship Building:** Dedicated time for parents to meet the new class team.
- **Phased Integration:** Planned visits and shared activities to help pupils feel at home in their new environment.

Timing of the School Day

Arrival	9.00 - 09.15am
Circle Time/Registration	9.15 - 09.30am
Lesson 1	9.30 - 10.30am
Snack/Break	10.30 - 11.00am
Lesson 2	11.00 - 12.00pm
Lunch/Playtime	12.00 - 13.30pm
Lesson 3 & 4	13.30 - 14.45pm
Dismissal	15.00 - 15.20pm



Lower School Uniform Non-Compulsory

Yellow polo t-shirt
Grey or black trousers, pinafore or skirt
Royal blue jumper or cardigan with school logo
Or blue gingham summer dress

Upper School Uniform Non-Compulsory

White polo t-shirt
Grey or black trousers, pinafore or skirt
Navy blue jumper with school logo
Or blue gingham summer dress



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