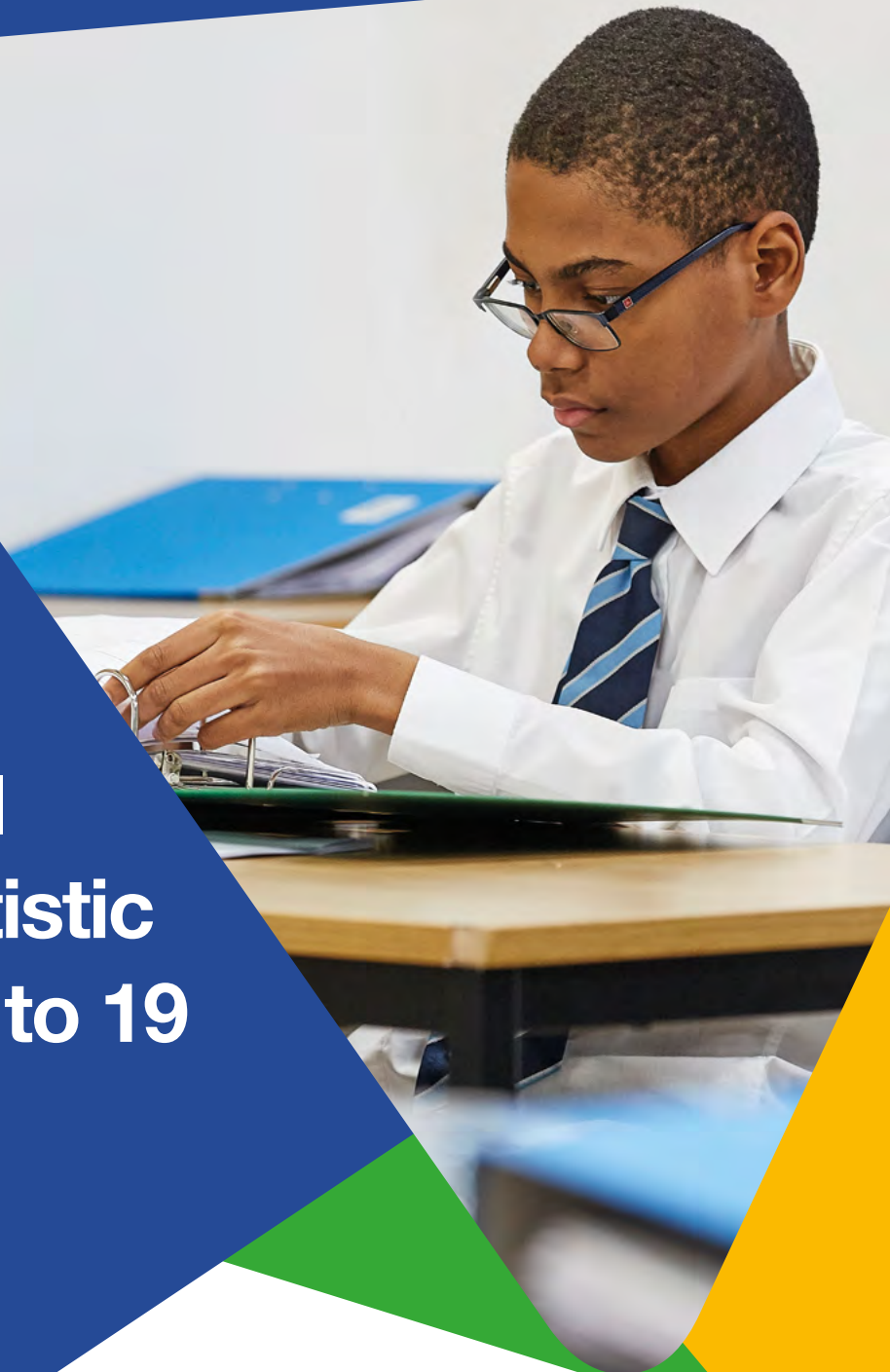




**Spring
School**

**A new special
school for autistic
pupils aged 4 to 19**

Prospectus



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Welcome from the Head of School

It is an immense privilege to have been appointed the head of Spring School and to lead the development of this fantastic new provision for autistic pupils.

I've dedicated my career to supporting autistic children and young people to reach their potential in education, previously leading on the delivery of a purpose-built autism school in west London. I also live in the Kingston area and have strong connections within the community, so I can't wait to get started.

Spring School has been set up to address a growing need for more specialist education provision for autistic children and young people. It is run by Ambitious about Autism, which already has two successful special schools and a further education college, providing excellent education to hundreds of autistic children and young people across London and the home counties.

Spring School will build on our innovative approach to autism education, which is called the Ambitious Approach. At its heart, the approach is centred around improving the quality of life of autistic young people while they are in education and ensuring that this quality of life continues into adulthood.

We will equip young people with the personal skills and academic qualifications needed to thrive in school and beyond. We will offer pupils the best of both worlds: special needs provision combined with a curriculum that follows the national curriculum.

Working in partnership with young people, parents and carers and the whole community, we will develop a wonderful new learning environment where autistic young people can reach their academic potential, strive for independence and lead rich and fulfilling lives.

Thank you for considering us as the next step in your child's educational journey.

I look forward to meeting you.



Andy Nowak

Andy Nowak
Head of Spring School



Our vision

Spring School is a special school dedicated to educating autistic pupils aged 4 to 19. Our vision is to create a school where autistic children can learn, thrive, achieve and belong. We will offer a model of best practice for autistic children with social communication needs who can learn under a broadly age-related curriculum.

In practice, this means that:

- pupils will get the best possible outcomes in terms of academic and personal development, based on their needs, aspirations and priorities, and will feel proud of what they learn and achieve
- pupils will have a sense of competence and self-worth with good mental health, wellbeing and long-term life chances beyond school
- pupils will be directly involved in decisions about their learning and futures
- families will have the confidence that their children are in a safe environment and are being guided towards greater independence
- families will be given the tools they need to support their children beyond school and feel that they are key members of the school community and that their voices are heard.

Spring School will give pupils the support and challenge they need to reach their full learning potential. The school will have academic, personal, social and independence targets to give autistic pupils ambitious aspirations. Pupils will work towards gaining academic and vocational qualifications, to help them succeed in the world beyond school.

Partnership working is at the core of the school's vision. Our school model is designed to offer the best of special and mainstream education through close collaboration with local mainstream providers, including Chessington School. We will work in partnership with parents and carers, recognising the importance of co-production in supporting children's learning and development.

Pupils at Spring School

Spring School will support autistic pupils aged 4 to 19.

Pupils at Spring School will have, or be on the pathway to having, autism named as their primary need on their Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.

Pupils will have some language, which can be any form of intentional communication, be interested in others, and develop early interaction with known adults and peers.

It is expected that most pupils will access the national curriculum at age-appropriate levels, with specialist support.

Key stage 1 placement at Spring School is suitable for pupils who can demonstrate the ability to:

- use spoken language for communication
- share intention and emotions with others
- learn through observation and imitation for some functional skills
- use non-verbal means and gestures to communicate, when not using spoken language
- understand some non-verbal cues in familiar and unfamiliar environments
- understand a range of words, sentences and phrases from familiar and unfamiliar people
- express a range of emotions
- can respond to calming strategies and approaches from familiar and unfamiliar people, when distressed
- regulate emotion and sensory input in familiar settings.

Key stage 2 and higher placement at Spring School is suitable for pupils who:

- have the cognitive potential to access and thrive with an age-related learning curriculum
- find large learning and social environments difficult to manage
- may find it difficult to understand language, intentions and the behaviour of others
- use responses that are unexpected and confusing for others to understand and respond to, when they are distressed.



Ambitious about Autism Schools Trust

The Ambitious about Autism Schools Trust is a multi-academy trust that runs and supports the development of special schools for autistic children and young people.

In 2019, the trust received approval from the Department for Education to open Spring School.

Spring School will be governed by the Ambitious about Autism Schools Trust, and will share expertise, resources and learnings with other educational settings across the trust.

Members of our Board of Trustees come from a range of backgrounds, bringing the skills, experience and perspectives needed to govern the school.

 **Ambitious about Autism Schools Trust**



The curriculum

Academic curriculum



The Spring School model is designed to offer the best of special and mainstream education through close collaboration with local mainstream education providers. A collaborative approach will improve the quality of education offered and create a continuum of support for all pupils.

Once at capacity, our core class model will be based on having up to eight pupils with a teacher and one teaching assistant, supported by curriculum leads and a transdisciplinary team.

The primary and secondary school curricula will enable pupils to develop the social and academic skills necessary for success.

Our primary school classes will each have a teacher responsible for teaching most of the curriculum. There will also be some specialist teachers responsible for subjects such as physical education and music.

Pupils in the secondary school will work with a range of subject specialists and, where appropriate, engage in social and learning opportunities at a nearby mainstream secondary school, Chessington School.

We will enable pupils to achieve a range of academic and vocational qualifications that best suit their profiles and needs. Most pupils will follow the national curriculum, which includes core learning in English, maths, science, art and computing. As the school grows, we will offer a range of classes in history, music, physical education and food technology.

Social curriculum



Alongside the academic curriculum is the social curriculum, which is essential for the holistic development and wellbeing of pupils.

Spring School will place equal focus on academic and social progress. We know that for autistic pupils to be successful, they need a curriculum that extends beyond the traditional subjects offered in mainstream schools. Our curriculum will support pupils' personal development in areas such as social communication and emotional regulation, to ensure that can thrive in their communities.

In the primary school, pupils will have lessons in Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education. In the secondary school, pupils will have citizenship lessons. In both phases, pupils will have yoga and 'Weaving Wellbeing' lessons.

Weaving Wellbeing is a PSHE education programme designed to teach children skills and strategies for maintaining positive mental health. These skills are based on current research in the field of positive psychology.

Weaving Wellbeing helps children learn about and practise specific behaviours and activities linked to wellbeing in an interesting, pupil-centred and age-appropriate way. Pupils are encouraged to practise the skills, strategies and activities, to see how they feel about them and how useful they find them.

In this way, children learn how to become creators of their own wellbeing. Over the course of the programme, they learn how to weave all the elements of wellbeing into their everyday lives.



The chart, adapted from weavingwellbeing.com, shows the main topics included in the Weaving Wellbeing programme.



The Ambitious Approach

The Ambitious Approach is our model of education practice used in our schools and college to support autistic children and young people.

The Ambitious Approach puts quality of life at the centre of all we do. It is based upon a pupil's indisputable rights to be:

- treated with dignity and compassion
- valued
- listened to
- supported to have the best quality of life possible
- empowered to make choices and decide on how they want to live their life.

We have high aspirations for our pupils. Our goal for all pupils is that when they leave our schools or college, they will have the opportunity to access employment, further education or training and to live as part of the communities of their choice.

All children and young people at Spring School will have, or be on a pathway to having, an EHC plan that outlines their aspirations, outcomes, needs and support. We will regularly and comprehensively monitor, evaluate and report on progress for all pupils.

We will work with parents and carers in a partnership that works for the child or young person and their hopes and plans for the future.

We will offer a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. Pupils will have access to a range of qualifications and non-accredited learning, according to their interests, desired outcomes and abilities.

We also place importance on nurturing and supporting the wellbeing of all our pupils and fostering as much independence as possible.

We value the voice of pupils in decision-making about their future. As some pupils have communication differences, we will invest in the skills and resources that allow them to take part in a variety of ways.

The safety and security of our pupils is paramount. We have robust child and adult safeguarding policies and processes in place.

We are constantly developing, searching for and open to new ethical and evidence-based approaches that help our pupils. We share our experiences and knowledge with others to enhance expertise in the field of autism education.

Spring School will be subject to Ofsted inspections, which will be published online by Ofsted and on our [website](#) after our first inspection.



Our transdisciplinary team

One of the benefits of Spring School is its specialist team.

The Spring School transdisciplinary team includes:

- qualified teachers responsible for delivering the curriculum
- speech and language therapists who support pupils to develop their communication and social skills
- occupational therapists who help pupils to manage sensory issues and develop functional life skills
- behaviour specialists who work with pupils to overcome behaviours of distress that could create barriers to learning

- teaching and learning assistants who support pupils with their learning and behaviour.

We want the team of adults around your child to be the very best they can be. Therefore, we invest significantly in a wide range of training programmes and continuing professional development for all staff.

Enrichment

Every pupil should have the chance to leave the classroom and experience enriching opportunities in the world outside.

In this way, they learn the vital social skills needed to become active and responsible members of society by:

- meaningful learning through real-life, hands-on activities
- improving their capacity and motivation to learn

- developing vital social skills in the community
- improving qualities such as resilience, confidence and self-esteem.

Classes will enjoy educational visits to natural sites, galleries, museums, sporting venues and other public attractions as well as trips to local adventure parks.



Keeping our pupils safe

All staff at Spring School have a responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of our pupils.

We take seriously our responsibility to safeguard young people at risk. We will have designated safeguarding leads and robust practices in place to ensure pupil safety.

Our safeguarding policies will be available on our [website](#).

Spring School's designated safeguarding lead is the head of Spring School, Andy Nowak.

Parent and carer support

If pupils are to make good progress socially and academically, parental participation and engagement is essential. There are frequent opportunities – formal and informal – for parents and carers to feel supported and to engage with us as a school community. These include:



Annual review

This formal review of the pupil's EHC plan is an opportunity to assess progress towards the outcomes set out in the plan and establish new targets for the year ahead.



Community events

All parents and carers are invited to attend fun events throughout the year, such as summer fairs.



ParentMeets

ParentMeets focus on a variety of topics, from sharing information about our core curriculum and ways to support learning at home, to strategies for the wellbeing of parents, carers and pupils.

Admissions

Spring School opens in September 2023. The number of pupils attending the school will increase over a six-year period.

The plan is for the school to reach its capacity of 90 by 2028–29.

In the 2023–24 academic year, 36 pupils will be admitted. A further 12 pupils will be admitted to Spring School for the academic year 2024–25. These will be across the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Primary and Early-Secondary phases of the school.

Pupils attending Spring School will have, or be on the pathway to having, an EHC plan that names autism as their primary diagnosis and Spring School as their designated place of learning.

Any additional diagnoses of learning disabilities or medical conditions must be assessed on an individual basis, to determine whether the school will be able to meet the child's or young person's needs.

Local authorities will manage requests for placements at Spring School. Staff at the school will review the request and, if Spring School is considered suitable, an assessment at the young person's current setting will be arranged. As part of the

assessment, we may talk with the young person's family and other professionals before determining whether a place can be offered.

Each application to Spring School is considered on an individual basis and in line with our duties under the SEND legal framework. In every case, our admissions process evaluates the needs of the individual child or young person.

Places will usually be taken up at the start of the academic year. By arrangement with the head, school places may be accessed at any time of the year if space is available and depending upon the application of the admissions criteria and needs of the child or young person.

Spring School's Admissions Policy is available on our [website](#).

Transition support

To support any move to Spring School, we will put a transition plan in place, working with the pupil's parents or carers and, if they came from one, with their current school. We are led by the pupil in terms of what works best for them.



Contact us

☎ 020 8099 0644

✉ enquiries@springschool.org.uk

🌐 springschool.org.uk



Ambitious about Autism is the national charity standing with autistic children and young people.

We believe every autistic child and young person has the right to be themselves and realise their ambitions.

We started as one school and have become a movement for change. We champion rights, campaign for change and create opportunities.

Contact us

Spring School

Moor Lane, Chessington KT9 2AA

☎ 020 8099 0644

✉ enquiries@springschool.org.uk

🌐 springschool.org.uk

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Ambitious about Autism Schools Trust is an exempt charity in England and Wales and a registered company 08335297

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How to find us

Public transport

The school is still in the construction phase, so please do not expect to find us on site yet. Once the school is open in 2023, you can find us in the following ways:

Travelling by car

Visitors may park on our premises if there is space available. Cars should be parked in designated spaces only.

