



Meadowcroft  
School

# MEADOWCROFT SCHOOL





# Welcome to Meadowcroft

When you come through the doors at one of our three sites, you quickly realise that this is no ordinary school. We have a truly amazing team who pride themselves on their relentless determination to help every child, no matter what their situation or circumstances, to achieve their potential.

Our school is based on three sites, The Gallery, Bar Lane and The Works, each providing very focused care for the children we support. All our children have complex social, emotional and mental health needs and many have additional severe learning and communication difficulties. Most of the children we care for have struggled to engage in formal education, so our job involves far more than simply providing an engaging and creative setting for them to learn in. We come alongside our children, take an interest in their lives and help them to overcome barriers that prevent them from engaging in education.

We know each child well enough to be able to set ambitious, realistic targets and put in place a structure of support to ensure they achieve them. Success looks very, very different for each child, so we take time to build personal plans and celebrate the progress they make.

When they leave Meadowcroft, we want every child to have secured the skills and confidence they need to find sustainable employment; developed interests and hobbies to keep them motivated; and learnt how to make and sustain healthy relationships. With these key skills, we know our children can be healthy, happy, successful adults.

A highlight of my time as Headteacher here was seeing eight of our students achieve their Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award. It was incredible to watch the young people grow in self-confidence as they persevered to complete the programme. They are a shining example of what can be achieved with the right care, support, encouragement and determination.

I hope this brochure will give you an overview of the care and educational support offered by Meadowcroft. If you'd like to know more about the opportunities we provide and the difference we are able to make in the lives of young people, please get in touch.

**Lynette Edwards**  
Headteacher, Meadowcroft School





## Our Approach

### Secure, consistent and structured environment

All our children have complex social, emotional and mental health needs and many have additional severe learning and communication difficulties. We look beyond the issues and problems the children come to us with and see their potential within. It is our job to provide a secure, consistent, structured environment where children can work to overcome and manage those issues in order to engage in education and achieve their potential.

### Highly trained, committed and caring staff

Our dedicated team of staff provide the high levels of consistency and care our children need. They are specialists in their fields, with extensive experience of working with children who have complex needs. We work together to share knowledge and involve other experts and professionals to give our young people the start in life that so many have been denied until this point.

### Creative, engaging, appropriate education

The children we support have struggled to engage in formal education, so we look for alternative ways to help them gain the vital skills and knowledge they need for the future. We keep class sizes very small, provide additional support for all children who need it and give young people the space to develop at their own pace. Wherever possible, we involve the children in outdoor learning and give them more vocational options as they progress within the school. We go to great lengths to keep our children engaged and, if they are unable to get to school, then our teachers will take the lessons to them at home.

## Personalised Curriculum

### Induction

Every new pupil takes part in a four to six-week induction programme at the school. Many of our pupils haven't been engaged in full time education for quite a while, so getting back to school can be daunting. During the induction period, a child will probably take part in lessons both in school and at home to help them settle in and get to know the staff.

### Education, Health and Care Plan

Ideally, we like to work with children as soon as their needs have been identified, so we can put in place a clear plan to help them progress. We work closely with an educational psychologist and other professionals who have been involved in the child's life, in order to establish an Education, Health and Care Plan that will help them to progress emotionally, socially and educationally.

### National Curriculum

Each child has their own Individual Educational Plan, which is monitored through continual teacher assessment. All students follow the National Curriculum, working towards Functional Skills and/or GCSEs at a pace appropriate for them to manage and succeed. Class sizes are very small, with no more than six children supported by a teacher and at least one teaching assistant. Underpinning the academic classes is a base of personal, social and health education, to ensure the wellbeing of each child.

### Educational Options

When children reach Key Stage 4, when they are around 14 years old, they have the opportunity to take more vocational lessons. Our careers advisers help children to assess their options from a wide range of BTEC and GCSE courses on offer. The Works, our purpose build vocational training centre, provides a fantastic number of opportunities including Motor Mechanics, Construction, Catering, Hair and Beauty and Health and Social Care, alongside Music, PE and Land-Based Studies which are vocational courses offered at Bar Lane and the Allotment. All students are encouraged to try as many different courses before they decide which to pursue to qualification level.

### Beyond Meadowcroft

We care deeply about the future of our children and will do our utmost to help them progress to further education or employment when they leave Meadowcroft. We want our children to be independent and self-sufficient, and we help them to make their own decisions about the future. We have had some students who have gone on to study at university, others who pursue more vocational courses and some for whom apprenticeships are the best option. Whatever they decide to do, our children know that we are there for them.

## Individualised Support

### Working with professionals

Many of the children we support have complicated backgrounds and many have been involved with a variety of agencies and local authority services. To put a bespoke structure of support in place, we work very closely with Social Workers, the Youth Offending Service, Family Liaison Officers, teaching staff and any other significant individuals who are involved in a child's life.

### Individual timetable

Whilst children are grouped into small forms of around five or six, each child has their own personalised timetable, carefully designed around their own skills, interests and needs. Direct therapy sessions are built into the timetable for those who need them, however our whole approach from all staff is informed and shaped by a therapeutic model, maintained through staff training by our therapists and advice and guidance for specific individual groups. Our full range of therapy resources include art therapy, lego therapy, psychotherapy, speech and language therapy, rebound therapy and the support of educational psychologists. Younger students can also enjoy sensory play and visit our dedicated sensory room as part of their timetable.

### Monitoring progress

We are fiercely ambitious for our children and have seen many overcome incredible adversity. We are also realistic. The targets we set stretch the children to their full potential, but remain achievable. We have developed our own robust spiritual, moral, social and cultural development framework against which we can monitor a child's progress and assess them discreetly throughout the year. We can then adjust their care plans depending on their progress.





# Removing Barriers to Education

## Thrive

Many of our young people have extremely complex, deep-rooted issues, that have been formed over many years. Four of our team are accredited Thrive practitioners, qualified to assess the gaps in our children's social and emotional development and create action plans to help them build the resilience they need to be healthy and happy. All our staff take part in Thrive training, so we can deliver consistent care for all our children.

## Working with parents and carers

For many of our children, an unsettled home life is one of the greatest barriers that prevents them thriving in school. Every day our teachers speak with a child's parents or carers to give them an update on what's happened at school and to see if there is anything else that might impact a child's behaviour. Our Family Liaison Officers play a crucial role in building relationships with a child's parents or carers and offer that extra layer of support. Extending help outside the classroom is vital for our children, because we know that when life at home is stable, children do much better in school.

## Therapy

Many of our children are struggling with specific challenges such as depression, bullying, substance abuse and self-image. To help them cope, we have an Interventions Co-ordinator who helps to arrange appropriate support from our Educational Psychologist and a range of therapists. Our therapy dog, Floyd, is a very popular asset to the school. Children love taking Floyd for a walk if they need a little time away from the classroom or are feeling anxious. He's also a great listener and many children love reading to him. It's been wonderful to see the children actively caring for Floyd and he's inspired a number to pursue further education in animal welfare.

## Preparing for the Future

We want all our young people to leave Meadowcroft with the skills, knowledge and capabilities to secure sustainable employment. The

end goal looks very different for every child. We have students who have gone on to work as security guards and others who are now studying Computer Science at University. We are equally proud of each of them and simply want to guide our children to make their own positive choices that will put them in good stead for the future.

## Vocational Training

Vocational training is highly relevant for many of our young people, so we have developed The Works, a purpose-built site offering training courses in Construction, Motor Mechanics, Hair and Beauty, Catering, Business and Health and Social Care, alongside Music, PE and Land-Based Studies. All pupils are able to try the courses before they decide which they would like to pursue. We ensure that the teaching staff here are as experienced and involved as the teams delivering the academic curriculum. It's vital that we ensure not only the quality of courses, but that they are delivered by professionals who can inspire and engage our young people.

## Life Skills

In our Gallery site we have a fully-functioning flat where small groups of children learn how to take care of themselves and their home. We teach them practical skills relating to health and hygiene, cooking, washing, cleaning and managing a weekly budget. These are very basic, but absolutely essential, life skills that many of our students don't receive at home. Students love gaining confidence in a practical environment under the guidance of our staff.

## Developing Interests

Life isn't just about work, so we encourage our young people to take up a hobby. By pursuing a variety of interests, we help our students to build their self-esteem and engage more broadly with society. We are aware that many of our young people are vulnerable to negative influences, so we help them find local groups where they can continue their interests and stay motivated and engaged when they leave Meadowcroft.

# Celebrating Success

## Alternative Learning Fridays

Success looks very different for each child, so we set them individual goals and targets and take time to celebrate their achievements. Alternative Learning Fridays have become a popular fixture at the school, with the children who have achieved their targets choosing activities to enjoy, some opt to workout in the gym or play snooker, whilst others prefer to go for a meal or play on the Xbox.

## Monday Night Reward Club

For many of our young people simply getting into school each day is an immense challenge, so we incentivise attendance. Those who attend at least 80% of classes earn the right to take part in a reward club on a Monday night. They can choose from a range of activities including dance classes, bike and scooter building classes and beauty workshops.

## Meadowcroft STARS

Our most recent scheme is the STAR programme for children who consistently work hard and make a positive contribution to school life. Students need to fulfil the criteria and complete an application form to apply for the scheme. If successful, they will then be invited for an interview with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Students who are accepted are allowed off site for lunch, invited on additional excursions, get gym membership and even get support to complete their driving test.

# Building Relationships

## Teacher and Pupil Relationships

Our success is built on the great relationships that our staff have developed with our young people. Relationships take investment and we build plenty of activities into our broader calendar to help us build the trust and confidence of the children at Meadowcroft. Each year we plan several off site activities for the whole school to enjoy. In the past, we've done mud runs, canoeing and high ropes activities together.

## Involving parents and carers

Building great relationships extends to the child's carer or parents too. In addition to regular phone calls home, we frequently organise open days where parents and carers can come in and take part in the activities their children do every day. This helps to ensure there is greater consistency in the support provided for a child in school and at home.

## Duke of Edinburgh Award

Our Duke of Edinburgh scheme is a really valuable way of helping students to gain leadership, teamwork, self-motivation and communication skills. It's an extremely popular option at Meadowcroft and in 2016 eight students achieved their Gold Award, six of who also then achieved the Diamond Award. It's amazing to see our young people work together and grow in confidence as they push themselves out of their comfort zone.





## Our Facilities

### The Gallery

Our primary school children take part in lessons in The Gallery, which also has separate provision for children up to the age of 19 who have very complex needs. The property is a beautiful Georgian House in the centre of Wakefield, with light, airy, spacious classrooms. With no more than six children in any class, we maintain a calm, controlled atmosphere, where children have the space to work independently and in groups. The Gallery also has a peaceful sensory room and play area, where children can come whenever they need time away from the classroom. It also has a fully equipped flat, where we teach our older students valuable life skills.

### Bar Lane

Children aged 11 and above with SEMH as a primary need attend classes at our Bar Lane site. We maintain the small class sizes to help children stay calm and focused. We also have some great additional facilities at Bar Lane including a music room kitted out with a range of instruments and recording equipment, as well as a large gym where children enjoy all sorts of activities including our popular rebound therapy trampoline sessions. The older children have a large common room that they helped to decorate themselves with the help of a local artist. Our main kitchen, which serves delicious meals, including bacon sandwiches in the morning, is located in Bar Lane.

### The Works

The Works is our latest addition; a purpose built site that offers fully accredited vocational courses in Motor Mechanics, Business, Construction, Hair and Beauty, Catering and Health and Social Care. The site is just a few minutes from both Bar Lane and The Gallery, so students can make the most of the sessions they have here. The tutors will work closely with the rest of the Meadowcroft staff, to respond to the children's needs and engage them in sessions.

### The Allotment

Outdoor learning is an essential part of our curriculum and the allotment provides a great space for children to learn new skills. Our children gained a huge sense of achievement from turning what was essentially a wasteland, into a thriving vegetable garden. They love spending time here learning about science, nature and the environment and caring for our chickens and rabbits. Of course, they also love eating the produce they have worked so hard to nurture.

## The Meadowcroft Team

The staff at Meadowcroft really work as a unit, combining their skills, experience and expertise to support both the children and each other. The culture of the school is one of collaboration and inclusion, reflected in the way the staff work very closely together to set goals and develop plans and toolkits for best practice.

As a member of Engage Network the senior leadership team share experiences with schools working with similar students across the country. We are working towards Healthy School status, accredited by the UK Government and have committed to achieving The Unicef UK Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) for the way we embed children's human rights in our ethos and culture.

### Lynette Edwards – Head Teacher

Lynette joined the team at Meadowcroft three years ago with a clear vision to provide exceptional support, care and educational provision for our children. Lynette was trained within the mainstream education sector where she worked for many years, before gaining additional experience as a Juvenile Prison Education Manager. When Lynette joined, she built a solid team with complementary skills, united by a passion and drive to help children achieve their potential. Whilst her focus is on the development of the children, the wellbeing of the teaching staff remains a priority for Lynette who ensures that each member of the team receives the training, support and encouragement they need.

### Darren Singh – Deputy Head Teacher

Assistant Headteacher Darren Singh has extensive experience working with children who have severe learning difficulties, mild learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties. Darren is committed to helping children address the underlying barriers that prevent them from participating fully in education. He provides support and encouragement as he leads by example to the rest of the team.

### Noreen Cheema – Deputy Head Teacher

Noreen has helped to develop a diverse and relevant range of course options for our students. She has also worked extensively with local colleges and work placements to provide our children with really exciting opportunities when they leave Meadowcroft. Noreen was instrumental in initiating the school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development framework, and continues to nurture our students as they grow with us at Meadowcroft.

### Dianne Aspinall – Assistant Head Teacher

Dianne has experience of working with young people within both college and prison settings and understands the inherent challenges they face. As a trained Thrive practitioner, her hands on experience is also supplemented by a degree in psychology, which she puts to good use as Head of Behavioural and Pastoral Care at Meadowcroft. Like all of our teachers, Dianne is determined to do whatever she can to help our young people develop into mature, well-rounded, independent young adults.





## Meet Hayden

When Hayden arrived at Meadowcroft, he'd been turned away by almost every school in his local area because of his bad behaviour. He'd become a very isolated little boy, who was unable to interact with anyone and often had violent outbursts.

"Hayden's behaviour was beyond anything you can imagine," explains Stuart, Hayden's dad. "No matter what you asked him to do, he wouldn't do it. Every school basically said 'no, we're not taking him'"

The first thing our team at Meadowcroft did was to gain Hayden's trust – we worked really hard to get to know the little boy and build a positive relationship with him. With strong, consistent care in place, Hayden began to take part in, and even enjoy, classroom activities and our outdoor learning sessions.

To help Hayden manage his aggression, we enrolled him in Karate classes at the local martial arts centre as part of his individual curriculum. He certainly loves his sessions here and they've really helped him to channel his anger and to learn self-control and discipline.

Hayden's parents have been very involved in every decision that's been made about his future and his education and, on a daily basis, staff are in touch to let them know what sort of day he's had. The young boy is now thriving and taking a real interest in the world around him. The change in attitude has not only had a positive impact on his learning, but also on his home life.

"The fact that he can spell his own name and he can count, is amazing," continues Stuart. "Happy Hayden means we have a happy home."

## Meet Jack

Jack arrived at Meadowcroft when he was 16 years old. He was academically very bright, but struggled to build relationships with peers and teaching staff. His inability to control his emotions often led to aggressive behaviour, which other schools had been unable to address. In fact, since Year 6, Jack struggled to settle at five different schools.

His issues were compounded by the fact that he was suffering with severe anxiety, which led to insomnia. Jack would often stay up all night playing on his Xbox and was simply too tired to come into school.

The young man's potential was immediately apparent to the staff at Meadowcroft, who began by addressing the underlying issues that prevented Jack from coming to school. The team worked together to support Jack in all his classes and our therapists have helped him manage his anxiety and insomnia.

Jack has made remarkable progress. He's a real pleasure to have in school; a confident, mature young man with a clear sense of what he wants out of life and a sharp sense of humour. You'll often find Jack involved in the School Council meetings, mentoring the younger pupils and generally making the school a great place to be.

His attendance is now 94% and he has achieved GCSEs in English, Maths, Science and PE. He has also completed vocational qualifications in Uniformed Services and Body Repair. Jack is already making plans to emigrate to Australia when he has completed a Body Repair course at Wakefield College. Whatever he does, we're confident that Jack has an exciting future ahead of him.

## Meadowcroft at a Glance

### How old are the children at Meadowcroft?

We support children from 5-19 years of age.

### How long are the school terms?

We follow the regular 38-week school calendar.

### What special needs do children at Meadowcroft have?

The Bar Lane site supports children who have a wide range of complex needs, predominantly relating to social, emotional and mental health issues. Pupils with ASD and associated difficulties are supported at the Gallery site. Many of the children we support have additional learning difficulties.

### How far do children travel to attend?

Our catchment area includes: Leeds, Barnsley, Bradford, Calderdale, Doncaster, Kirklees, Sheffield and Wakefield, North Yorkshire and Rotherham.

### What extra support is provided?

The work of our highly-skilled classroom teachers is supplemented by a wider team of counsellors, mentors and family workers, who are all on site. We also have regular support from art, play, speech and language therapists along with the support of an education psychologist.

### What facilities are available onsite?

Meadowcroft is split into three unique sites offering very tailored support to meet the complex needs of our children. The Gallery has plenty of light airy classrooms, a sensory room and a fully-equipped flat to help young people learn life skills. Bar Lane has a number of classrooms, a dedicated music room, large gym – complete with trampoline – common room and kitchen. The Works provides a unique space for our young people to learn a range of vocational skills and we also have an allotment where a lot of outside learning takes place.

### How to get in touch

If you are interested in visiting Meadowcroft, or finding out more about the support we provide, please call **01924 366242** or e-mail [info@meadowcroftschoo.com](mailto:info@meadowcroftschoo.com)



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