



School for  
Inspiring Talents

**Prospectus**

*Transforming the life chances of the most vulnerable young people and families in our communities*



**Introduction from Mark Escott, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**

I am delighted to welcome you to the School for Inspiring Talents (SfIT).

SfIT run a growing chain of independent therapeutic day schools in Devon for young people aged 5-16, supporting the most vulnerable young people in society; those children who do not find it easy to fit into existing educational provision. This can be for many reasons, including a range of behavioural, emotional and educational challenges, in some cases exacerbated by being on the autistic spectrum. Other difficulties such as sensory processing disorders, attachment disorders or those having faced trauma in their lives due to domestic violence, breakdown of foster care or adoption placements and those who are deemed school phobic.

It is our intention that every student will achieve their full potential in both academic and personal development. As a day school, we provide an alternative to residential education which supports our students to develop independence and social skills whilst living in their home environment.

We are passionate about providing the appropriate support, care, nurture and educational strategies that will allow these amazing young people to succeed in reaching for their dreams, to achieve the skills and talents that they will need to flourish in their lives, despite their challenges and difficulties, indeed sometimes because of them. Our school fosters the dreams and talents of our students, staff, parents and the wider community so that these young people can have successful life chances.

School for Inspiring Talents is an all-through school. Our innovative model directly addresses our students' unmet needs through nurture, inspiration, motivation, support and care, to enable learning through a very different educational approach. Our school has created an environment that combines both special school and alternative provision in a new and innovative way. Working in the school's holistic way will make the most positive difference to the life chances of these young people.

School for Inspiring Talents is committed to being an outstanding school that enables our students to develop and realise their ambitions, as exemplified in our school motto:

*'Being the Best We Can Be'*

## **1. What we offer:**

SfIT is a small, all-through school that nurtures the talents of students with an Education Health and Care Plan. Essentially our offer is across three key areas:

### **1. Full-time Placements**

(Referred by LAs or commissioned by families for Independent Placements)

### **2. Customised Part-time Packages**

(Commissioned by LAs, Families or Schools)

### **3. Outreach Development and Support Programme**

(Purchased by Local Authority SEN teams, Schools & Academies)

For more information on the wide range of flexible outreach support packages we offer to  
Local Authority SEN teams, Schools and Academies

please visit

[www.LCEducation.org.uk](http://www.LCEducation.org.uk)

or call 01626 244086

SfIT's focus is to offer full-time or part-time placements for children - referred by Local Authorities and schools - who do not find it easy to fit into existing educational provision. This may be for many reasons, including the full range of behavioural, emotional and educational challenges - exacerbated by being on the autistic spectrum; or other difficulties such as sensory processing disorders, attachment and personality disorders; or those having faced trauma in their lives due to domestic violence, breakdown of adoption; or who are deemed school phobic.

The school has created an environment that combines both a special school ethos and alternative provision. We offer an innovative and creative new model for learners, their families, schools and local authorities. SfIT blends a specialist, personalised approach to learning with sustainability, filling a small but significant unmet niche demand. We aim to provide a much-needed solution within a context of increasing exclusions from mainstream schools.

**All individualised plans and programmes for our students will:**

- Build on the strengths of the child or young person and be focused on outcomes (both short-term outcomes and longer term aspirations for children and young people);
- Be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMART);
- Explore how informal (family and community) support as well as formal support from statutory agencies can be used to achieve the agreed outcomes.

**We will:**

- Liaise with the LA and each student's current or previous setting to discuss and establish the unique needs of each individual student. Where we feel additional assessments would be beneficial we will use a range of assessments fit for purpose on an individual case basis.
- Meet with parents/carers and the student at a mutually agreed location (this could be a home visit, at SfIT or a neutral location) to discuss parents' and carers' perspectives of the current situation - a conversation around: *'What needs to change?' 'What's missing, that if it was put in place would make a difference to your child's education?'* This could be, for example, a small class size or a personalised individual timetable.
- Agree a transition plan, which will be unique for each student.
- Ensure that each student has an individualised programme, which is planned in detail and rigorously tracked, to meet individual needs and address barriers to learning.
- Meet with parents/carers termly to provide student progress reports.
- Where appropriate, agree a phased transition to enable the student to successfully return to a prior or new setting.

**At SfIT we provide additional and different provision in the form of an individualised programme which will be planned in detail and progress tracked. This will include:**

- Individualised and/or small group planning;
- Small group and/or individual support;
- Increased use of ICT resources;
- Staff collaboration with specialists within the school setting and outside agencies;
- Detailed planning incorporating specialist advice;
- Individualised programmes across the curriculum;
- High levels of classroom support and small group support.

**SfIT also provides additional and different provision in the form of an individualised programme in non-curriculum areas which may include, for example:**

- Behaviour,
- Communication,
- Personal Wellbeing,
- Arranging the provision specified in Part 3 of a Statement of SEN or as identified in an EHC Plan,
- Arranging the Annual Review of a Statement of SEN or EHC Plan and submitting recommendations to the LA.

## **2. Our curriculum**

School for Inspiring Talents offers a therapeutic educational environment that combines best practice in education and current theories around learning, coaching, child development and neuroscience. We recognise that we each learn differently and use a daily balance of structured play, guided activities and direct instruction to support learners to find a motivating and effective pathway to success. This includes the development of awareness and responsibility so as to impact positively on behavioural change.

Our curriculum aim is to ensure that our students reach an outstanding level of education with us, relative to their abilities and starting points. Our intention is to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum for all. Because each child is an individual, one of our guiding principles is to tailor to their individual strengths.

We promote a blend of individual study and supported socialised working to ensure that our students are hooked into the enjoyment of learning as soon as possible and want to engage with enquiry based approaches that have meaning for them. Our learners' needs require a personalised curriculum in a nurturing and aspirational environment.

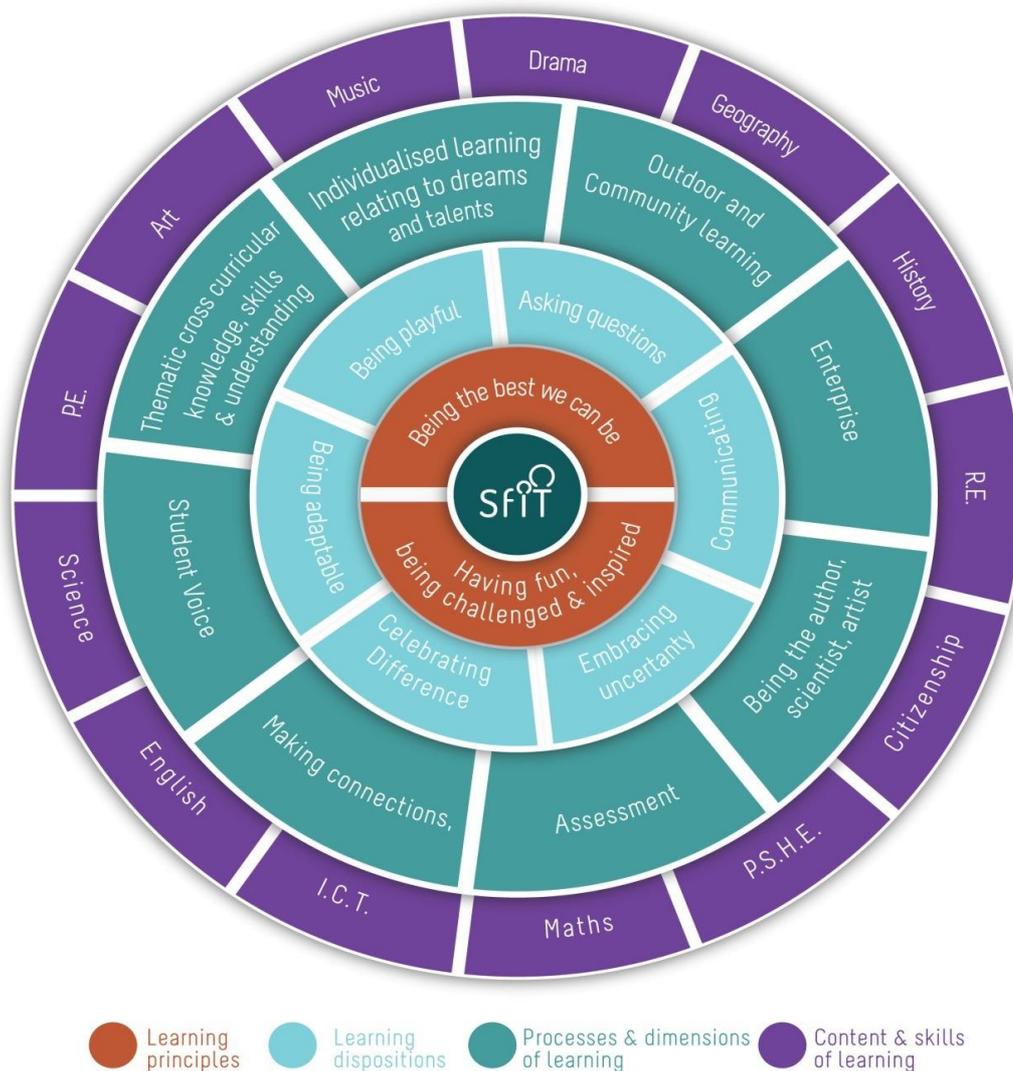
This is delivered through a place-based and thematic skills-based approach at Key Stage 1, 2 and 3. At Key Stage 4 the thematic approach moves towards a core of English, Maths and ICT with each student having a personalised timetable to obtain qualifications that support either access to further education or to the world of work.

By delivering a place-based curriculum approach, we teach concepts in languages, arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum. This hands-on, real-world learning experience and approach will increase academic achievement and help students develop stronger ties to their community. It will also enhance students' appreciation for the natural world, and create a heightened commitment to serving as active, contributing citizens.

We feel that both the very small size of our school(s) and the highly personalised nature of the learning on offer means that we will have the ability to specifically provide what is needed for those students who require something different. We will continue to develop our curriculum plan with our new students, parents/carers and staff as they join the school to maintain and support a personalised strengths-based curriculum – in this way we will grow our curriculum together.

The diagram that follows represents the relationship within our curriculum to the four essential areas that support high quality learning and the achievement of our students:

SfIT Curriculum Framework



### **Learning principles**

These principles create a constant thread linking the learning experiences that are created for and by the students. As such, they form a significant platform for learning in and outside the school.

### **Learning dispositions**

These are the attitudes and skills that link to a person's character around learning. Once developed and enhanced they bring a sense of predictability to a way an individual engages in a new environment. Through understanding these dispositions and their significance – a student (whatever their age) can begin to develop a way of being that promotes positive outcomes (whatever the challenge).

### **Processes & dimensions of learning**

Our 8 dimensions of learning provide a balance to the education with the clear intent that through this dimension a space and opportunity for a student's talents will emerge and can be nurtured.

### **Content & skills of learning**

Through our thematic/place-based approach, students will learn subject based knowledge and skills. We recognise the subjects of English, Maths, Science and ICT as an essential core. We will look to turn 'I can't' into 'I can' by providing positive purposeful experiences, scaffolding success and removing barriers to learning.

### **3. Our therapeutic approach**

As each child is an individual, one of our guiding principles is to tailor to their individual strengths. As such we look to see the ability in people through their talents and increase expectations of what is possible. We ensure students of all ages develop an understanding of what it takes to 'be the best they can be' and what makes them tick.

We support our students to develop the skills, courage and confidence to make positive choices through individual coaching, therapeutic support and group work to help them to improve their life chances.

We promote a blend of individual study and supported socialised working to ensure that the students are hooked in to the enjoyment of learning as soon as possible and want to engage with enquiry based approaches that have meaning for them. Our Multi-Disciplinary Service team consists of experts in the field of neuroscience, attachment theory, occupational therapy, speech & language therapy, psychology, child development, behaviour therapy and family work.

To support the therapeutic community at SfiT we use a variety of therapeutic techniques and assessment. These therapeutic approaches and assessments help our staff to support our students to address their specific developmental needs. This in turn supports our students to achieve and experience success, often for the first time.

All of these approaches share a common theme in that they are designed to improve and enhance the physical, mental and emotional well-being of students of all ages. They also consider and address emotional and cognitive development that allows us to meet the individual needs of our students.

We also support our students to find ways to express themselves through creative activities and play. The creative process involved in self-expression helps students to resolve conflicts and problems, develop interpersonal skills, manage behaviour, reduce stress. This helps to build self-esteem and raise awareness which helps show our students that it's safe for them to take risks when learning and that it's normal to make mistakes. This in turn will support students in finding more positive ways to communicate their emotional needs, to become more emotionally resilient and to prove to themselves that they can learn and get enjoyment from learning.

#### **Our Multi-Disciplinary Service team members:**

- SENDco,
- Education Psychologist
- Occupational Therapist
- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Specialist
- Speech and Language Therapist
- Behaviour Specialists
- Family Practitioner

#### **4. Our work with families**

We are committed to building strong relationships between home and school, ensuring parents and school communicate actively with each other. All parents and carers need extra support at some point to cope with the many stages their children go through as they grow up. Our Family Practitioner arranges regular parents' support groups and 1:2:1 sessions to help up-skill parents and carers on a number of topics affecting home life. New ways will be identified to support the removal of barriers to their child's learning as well as helping to build their self-esteem.

#### **5. The SfIT teaching team**

Our team is a mix of key core staff and an additional rich pool of part-time expert specialists across a range of areas and subjects. All our core teaching staff are trained and experienced teachers with additional therapeutic training and experience. As a team we collectively deliver an integrated educational and therapeutic experience designed to address individual learner needs and re-engage them positively with the learning process. We work with students from age 5-16 and cover core subjects and thematic modules. Our teaching team are all trained to provide personalised assessments, a range of focused interventions and support strategies as well as living and breathing the therapeutic approach as part of our learning model.

#### **6. Our school bases**

##### **School for Inspiring Talents – Newton Abbot:**

The school is based at Hannahs at Seale Hayne. Hannahs has provided SfIT with our own classrooms and therapeutic space in a self-contained building. Seale Hayne offers further advantages in terms of the learning environment and access to wider services to support our curriculum. There are also suitable spaces for SfIT to run conferences and CPD for up to 150 people, linked to our specialisms, including behaviour/emotional health and curriculum innovation.

##### **School for inspiring Talents – Torquay:**

The school space is rented from The Spires College. The college has provided SfIT with our own classrooms, therapeutic space and office in a self-contained building. It is situated underneath the main stand of Torquay Football Club. The Spires also offers further advantages in terms of other learning environments and access to wider services to support our curriculum.

## **7. Our proprietor**

School for Inspiring Talents is owned by Life Chance Education Ltd  
a limited company Registered in England: Company Number: 9768252  
[www.LCEducation.org.uk](http://www.LCEducation.org.uk)

### **Our directors**

#### **Mark Escott – CEO & Director, Life Chance Education Ltd**

Mark has been described as an enthusiastic, dynamic and skilled Practitioner, Consultant, Teacher and Leader. Mark has worked in a wide range of different settings with young people over the last 25 years in Youth Services, Social Care, Drugs and Alcohol Services and NHS CAMHS team and in both Primary and Secondary Education. Since 2002 a large part of Mark's work has been working independently with schools and colleges to build capacity in teaching and learning by meeting the needs of the most vulnerable students. He has also delivered presentations and seminars to multi-professional audiences in the public and private sectors on a number of topics including Behaviour Management, Emotional Intelligence, Neuroscience, Communication Skills, and Leadership. Mark's most recent role before joining SfiT and LCE was as an Advisory Teacher in a behaviour support team.

#### **Judith Johnson – Director, Life Chance Education Ltd**

Judith has had a successful career in local government leadership, education and teaching; specialising in services for schools, children and young people to provide a range of consultancy and training services for local authorities, service and senior leaders in schools and academies. She has extensive experience as a Local Authority senior leader working in several different Councils in addition to her leadership and teaching experience across middle, secondary and special school sectors. Judith has previously been a director of a Connexions company and an Ofsted inspector with Primary, Secondary and SEN accreditation. She is adept at assessing challenging situations, establishing relationships, problem solving and moving matters along. For further details see ([www.jj-education-services.co.uk](http://www.jj-education-services.co.uk))

#### **Rob Gasson – Director, Life Chance Education Ltd**

Rob became a Director of Life Chance Education in January 2017. He is also the CEO & Executive Principal of Acorn Academy Cornwall a MAT made up of 7 APA's that provide alternative provision in Cornwall. Rob has worked in education for over 25 years. The last 14 as a Principal, with a Master's Degree in Economics and Education Management. He has worked extensively with pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour and those who are unable to access school due to their health. He has contributed to a number of policy groups both regionally and nationally in this area and he is a passionate advocate of inclusion, and a proud father of two.

## 8. How to contact the school

If you would like more information or to arrange a visit to the school, please contact us.

School for Inspiring Talents  
The Growing Rooms  
Seale Hayne  
Howton Lane  
Newton Abbot  
TQ12 6NQ

01626 244086  
[admin@sfit.org.uk](mailto:admin@sfit.org.uk)  
[www.sfit.org.uk](http://www.sfit.org.uk)

*'Many school phobic children have sensory processing issues and given the right set of support can access and enjoy a learning environment... It is small independent providers that are used, but these are often out of county residential services, which take children away from their families, which again is not a good outcome for them. So, more local and targeted provision is required and desirable.'*

John Shaw  
Strategic Commissioning Officer  
Children with Additional Needs for Devon County Council/NHS