



# Thomas Mills High School and Sixth Form

## SEND Information Report

September 2025

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<b>What are the admission arrangements of Thomas Mills High School?</b>	Thomas Mills High School admits pupils on the basis of the Academy Policy on Admissions. Pupils with special educational needs, of whatever kind, are admitted without prejudice, although the school gives no priority to admitting such pupils.
<b>What should I do if I think my child may have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)?</b>	<p>At Thomas Mills, if parents suspect that their child may have special educational needs, or a disability, then contact with the SENDCo can be made. An assessment programme will be put in place, involving the class teachers, which will assess and, if necessary, result in an intervention to support the child's learning in class. Sometimes more specific differentiation by the class teachers may be required. This information will be conveyed to your child's teachers through our Record of Needs. If the pupil is withdrawn from class, e.g. for literacy or numeracy skills 'catch-up', these interventions are discussed with the pupil, regularly reviewed and progress is reported.</p> <p>If pupils are placed on the school's SEND record, parents are informed, and progress is monitored. Parents/families/carers of pupils with SEND have regular (at least three times on an annual basis) opportunities to discuss the progress, and future plans, for their children in school.</p> <p>We also have Monitoring Record, within which pupils with a range of mental health and social needs are recorded.</p>
<b>How does the school know if children need additional support?</b>	<p>At Thomas Mills identification of pupils with SEND begins before transfer from primary school. There is good communication between the school and our 'feeder' primary schools, with a very effective transition programme. The Head of Year 7 and SENDCo liaise with primary schools to obtain as much information as possible about our new intake. Also valued is information given to us by parents/carers prior to the arrival of their children in Year 7. Base line testing is undertaken in the first term of Year 7: spelling, reading, speaking, writing, numeracy, dyscalculia, and dyslexia screening.</p>
<b>How will the school support my child?</b>	<p>Having identified your child's needs, in discussion with subject teachers, the SENDCO will assess the type of provision that would support the pupil's learning in class. This, at first, is delivered through quality-first teaching through the school's universal offer. Where appropriate, a teaching assistant may be used to provide support within the lesson. If appropriate, a specific 1:1 or group intervention may be put in place. With your permission, advice may be sought from specialist support workers, who can then model support sessions that can be delivered by either one of our</p>

	<p>higher-level teaching assistants (HLTA) or SENDCo. Thomas Mills is an inclusive school and believes that pupils make most progress when taught within the classroom by a subject teacher delivering high quality teaching. Interventions, therefore, are often short and their effectiveness is evaluated by the SENDCo who works closely with the pupil's subject teachers to ensure learning is transferred to the classroom.</p> <p>In Years 7 - 8, great emphasis is placed on the improvement of pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills. The 'Accelerated Reader' programme encourages progress in reading, whilst 'Hegarty Maths' reinforces the skills of mathematics. For pupils with SEND, the provision may include English basic skills work in Year 7, paired or group reading, numeracy support, ACE dictionary training for those with dyslexic traits, detailed tracking of progress via school progress reports. Homework/social skills clubs are also in place for pupils with SEND. W8 and E9 provide quiet places for the pursuit of games, crafts, use of computers, reading, handwriting support or the completion of homework.</p>
<p><b>How will the curriculum be matched to my child's needs?</b></p>	<p>All SEND pupils have access to a balanced and broadly-based curriculum, following a mainstream curriculum. In Years 7 and 8 (Key Stage 3) pupils are taught mainly in mixed ability groups and are grouped by ability in Maths, Science and Modern Languages. In Years 9 to 11 (Key Stage 4) they are again taught mainly in mixed ability groups, apart from in the same three subject areas. The high-quality teaching available at Thomas Mills is the first step to enabling pupils with SEND to achieve to the best of their ability. Teachers are trained to differentiate appropriately for individual pupils and, as the academic year progresses, teachers get to know individual strengths and weaknesses. Teachers and support staff have access to the SEND and Additional Needs records, a list of known dyslexic pupils, copies of EHCP plans, exam access arrangement information, guides regarding specific conditions, the guidance for individual pupil provision, all through the staff shared area. Teaching assistant support may be provided if appropriate. Resources and equipment can be adapted to meet the needs of learners. Where there is a history of need, pupils with SEND are assessed for exams access arrangements, e.g. extra time. These arrangements are applied to any class tests or end of year examinations to give pupils opportunities for practice.</p>
<p><b>How will I know how my child is doing and how will you help me to support my child's learning?</b></p>	<p>Parents and carers are informed of their child's progress via termly progress reports/annual reports, parents' evenings and informal meetings which can be arranged with staff. Parents will be consulted over specific intervention agreements and be involved when the intervention is evaluated.</p>
<p><b>What support will there be for my child's overall wellbeing?</b></p>	<p>The Form Tutor will monitor your child daily. The Head of Year oversees the well-being of pupils in the year group and may organise mentor support if appropriate. Sixth Formers every year volunteer to train as mentors for pupils who may prefer to talk about their school experience with someone closer in age to them.</p>

	<p>Pupils who find the social side of high school daunting can be included in pupil support groups, such as 'Talking Time', run by an experienced TA, or our lunch time 'W8 Club'. This provides your child with an opportunity to eat their lunch and chat with peers, whilst always being able to seek support and advice from the member of learning support staff on duty.</p> <p>We also have a team of Emotional Literacy Support Assistants as part of the department. An Elsa can provide wellbeing support for pupils on a 1:1 or group basis. Emotional literacy is understanding and coping with feelings about ourselves and others and developing high self-esteem and positive interactions with others. Being emotionally literate helps children focus better on their learning. Our team of TAs and HLTAs work on recognising emotions, self-esteem, social skills, friendship skills, anger management, loss and bereavement.</p> <p>The School Nursing team periodically come in and run workshops helping with anxiety. Alternatively, a counsellor referral can be made. If necessary, the school has links with various outside agencies should the needs of the pupil become of serious concern. Pupils with SEND are encouraged to join in the activities of the school community. For example, participation in the school choir/orchestra or being a member of the school council can boost the pupil's self-esteem.</p>
<p><b>What kinds of special educational needs are provided for at Thomas Mills?</b></p>	<p>In helping pupils with SEND achieve at Thomas Mills, we have experience of working with pupils who have a range of difficulties, such as physical; speech, language and communication; sensory; literacy and numeracy; autistic spectrum condition; social emotional and mental health needs; dyscalculia and dyslexia. The school is used to working closely with advisory teachers and puts in place arrangements to enable these pupils to participate as fully as possible in the education and activities offered in the school.</p>
<p><b>What specialist services and expertise are available at or accessed by the school?</b></p>	<p>Internally, for identified pupils, we can provide the following interventions and support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- programmes for phonic catch-up, reading and writing, numeracy support intervention.</li> <li>- peer mentoring, counselling, and mentoring.</li> <li>- follow- up support by appropriately trained teaching assistants for dyslexia, dyscalculia, and autistic spectrum condition.</li> <li>-programmes devised by physiotherapy or occupational therapy professionals can be followed by pupils.</li> <li>-where necessary, we seek support from external services, such as the Specialist Education Services (SES): Cognition and Learning, Communication and Interaction, SEMH and Sensory/Physical, the Educational Psychology Service, the Speech and Language Therapy Service, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Advisory Teachers for Visual Impairment and Hearing Impairment, Pupil Referral Unit Behaviour support, Social Services (including support for Looked After Children) the Early Help Team, Children &amp; Young</li> </ul>

	<p>People's Services, Paediatricians, GPs, Suffolk Wellbeing Hub and Suffolk Young Carers.</p> <p>-Early Help Assessment referrals can be made if a family needs additional support outside of school; Multi-Agency Referrals can be made for Safeguarding issues.</p>
<p><b>What training are the staff supporting pupils with SEND had or having?</b></p>	<p>The Head of Learning Support/SENDCo has achieved the National Award for Special Educational Needs Coordination. He is also an experienced manager and Head of Department, as well as a fully qualified teacher.</p> <p>Our LSAs and/or Higher-Level Teaching Assistants (HLTA) have considerable experience and have access to regular professional development and in-house training. All school staff are trained in safeguarding skills. Teaching assistants having attended training sessions run by Suffolk County Council, feedback to colleagues the information from these courses. Manual handling training is available for staff if needed. Training needs are reviewed, then addressed on staff training days. The SENDCo has good communication with the Learning Support Team which is available to give supplementary advice. There is also a weekly Learning Support Team meeting, during which training, and information sharing, takes place.</p>
<p><b>How will my child be included in activities outside the classroom including school trips?</b></p>	<p>Pupils with SEND can take part in the full range of school activities, with reasonable adjustments being made if necessary. If an individual risk assessment is required, we complete this to ensure the safety of the pupil and of others. Parents are consulted when drawing up risk assessments, as necessary. Additional support is provided to help your child prepare for any activities out of the school routine. The school has a very good track record of encouraging pupils with SEND to participate in school drama productions, both onstage and backstage. Pupils with SEND are also actively involved in school sports, teams, the library, and school clubs.</p>
<p><b>How accessible is the school environment?</b></p>	<p>Most of the building is easily accessible by wheelchair, and there are disabled facilities: ramps, disabled toilets, a lift in the Sixth Form Centre and one giving access to main school first floor classrooms. Personal pagers which, through a warning vibration, alert pupils with a severe hearing impairment to a fire alarm, are available. The school can request suitable transport to enable pupils using wheelchairs to come to school and access school trips out. The school endeavours to make sure that not only the physical environment is accessible, but to also improve accessibility to the curriculum and to school information resources. This is achieved in a variety of ways, including the use of radio aids, enlarged ICT, colour background text, dyslexia friendly font, spellcheckers, electronic reading pens, ICT and software support. Recommendations for these are received from the Advisory Service. Pupils are encouraged to communicate with their teachers, Tutors, Heads of Year or the SENDCO in developing self-</p>

	<p>help skills and learning to use assistive technology. The Accessibility Plan is available on the school website, in the governors' section.</p>
<p><b>How will Thomas Mills prepare and support my child to join the school?</b></p>	<p>The Head of Year 7 organises transition for primary school pupils, dedicating a great deal of time in the summer term every year to visiting primary schools and meeting prospective pupils. If a pupil has known SEND, communication is very good between staff in other schools. SENDCos will pass on information as soon as they are able to, either by telephone or through the child's school file, which 'follows' the pupil from school to school.</p> <p>Most importantly is getting to know individual pupils and emphasis is placed on inviting prospective pupils to the school and meeting staff, including teaching assistants. You are welcome to contact the school in advance of your child joining us. The SENDCo can arrange meetings and visits as soon as you feel it would be beneficial to do so. These usually follow the pattern of an initial meeting in school, then the SENDCo can visit your child at their Primary School. Finally, your child can come for a tour of the school, and then as many further visits as he/she feel they would like. If your child has an Education Health Care (EHC) plan, then the SENDCo is often asked to the Year 6 Annual Review to further support transition.</p>
<p><b>How will Thomas Mills prepare and support my child to transfer to a new school or college?</b></p>	<p>Transition to further education colleges is co-ordinated between Head of Year 11, Head of Careers, the SENDCo and support staff at colleges of further education. Transitional Reviews for those pupils who have an EHC Plan are held in Years 9 and 11. From year 9, a 'Moving into Adulthood' profile is compiled by the SENDCo during meetings with your child. This gathers information about future career pathways, healthy lifestyles, and diet. The Early Help Team and the Children &amp; Young People's Service may be involved to complete a Learning Support Assessment to detail the type and amount of support required at college for many of our pupils with SEND. In addition, the SENDCo passes on details of any exam access arrangements in place. College visits are arranged if appropriate, and college staff visit and speak to pupils. The SENDCo has meetings with the Work Experience and Careers Co-ordinator to discuss the careers advice needs for pupils with SEND. Individual careers advice is also given to pupils with SEND; this commences in Year 8.</p>
<p><b>How are the school's resources allocated and matched to children's special educational needs?</b></p>	<p>Funding is sourced from the school budget and also from High Needs Funding (for those children with greater needs) and Catch-Up funding for those children who achieve below a level 4 in Key Stage 2 SATs. We allocate support according to need, such as those identified in an EHC Plan. The effectiveness of provision is monitored by the SENDCo and reported to the Head Teacher annually. The Head Teacher and Governors monitor the effectiveness of SEND provision.</p>
<p><b>How is the decision made about what type and how much support my child will receive?</b></p>	<p>Decisions are based on need, whether in terms of pastoral or academic support with due regard to the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 years (May 2015). The subject teachers and SENDCo will assess a pupil's needs, plan support provision (in consultation with parents), then put the intervention in place (which could be</p>

	<p>specialised advice or in-class differentiation). The intervention will then be evaluated as to its impact with the classroom.</p> <p>Assessments: A range of baseline tests and screening assessments are used, including the Accelerated Reader Star Reading Test, writing, and speaking assessments in English, maths test, including telling the time, and the HAST-2 spelling test. Lucid Rapid Dyslexia Screening is undertaken for all Year 7 students; other pupils can be tested in the same way. More individualised assessments in both literacy and numeracy are carried out if required. Data on levels, progress and support needs is gathered. Parents are also asked to comment on additional needs via admission forms and at parents' evenings. Provision for pupils with EHC plans will support the objectives outcomes listed. Pupils who join the school at a later date are assessed on entry to the school. Data on progress and attainment from their previous school is evaluated. If children are not making expected progress, teachers will discuss this with the SENDCo. The SENDCo will contact you in order to discuss possible interventions with both you and your child, then appropriate support will be considered.</p>
<p><b>How are parents involved in the school? How can I be involved?</b></p>	<p>Experience shows that pupils usually make most progress in school when school staff and parents have good communication and work together in the best interests of the child. The Governing body of the school includes parent governors, and parents are invited to join the 'Friends of the school'. Parents enjoy attending our annual Awards Evening, parents' evenings, and school productions. Parents can communicate with teachers, tutors or Heads of Year via the pupil's logbook.</p>
<p><b>Who can I contact for further information?</b></p>	<p>In the first instance, parents/carers are encouraged to talk to their child's Form Tutor. Parents are also asked to contact the Head of Year or SENDCo regarding any further concerns/questions. Details of named contacts for different years and subjects are available under Key Staff on the school website. For wider support Suffolk Parent Partnership can be contacted at <a href="http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/parentpartnership">www.suffolk.gov.uk/parentpartnership</a>.</p> <p>On the Suffolk Local Offer website, <a href="http://suffolklocaloffer.org.uk">Home - Suffolk SEND Local Offer (suffolklocaloffer.org.uk)</a> you can find out about a range of support available for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities. Most children and young people (up to the age of 25) with SEND will have their support provided through services listed in the Local Offer. Many local organisations provide these services, which include education, health and social care. You can use the Local Offer to find:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local schools and nurseries and read about the support they offer</li> <li>• Groups and clubs</li> <li>• Therapy and psychology services</li> <li>• Social work services</li> </ul> <p>Students and parents can also contact Suffolk SENDIASS. Suffolk SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service) is a confidential and impartial</p>

	<p>information, advice and support service on issues related to Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). It is free, easy to access and confidential. We can help children, parents and young people take part in decisions that affect their lives.</p> <p>They offer information, advice and support to:</p> <p>Children and young people (up to 25 years) with SEND Parents and carers of children with SEND</p> <p><a href="#">Home - Suffolk SENDIASS</a></p>
<b>What if I have concerns about the SEND provision?</b>	<p>To raise a concern about SEND provision; in the first instance please contact the SENDCo. If the issue is unresolved the Head Teacher can be contacted. The governor with specific responsibility for SEND/Inclusion, may be involved if necessary. In the case of an unresolved complaint the issue should be taken through the general governors' complaints procedure.</p>

<b>Frequently asked questions from the point of view of a young person</b>	
<b>How does Thomas Mills High School know if I need extra help?</b>	<p>Your primary school will alert the SENDCo who will meet you in Year 6 to explain what you can expect at Thomas Mills-including the times of the school day and what equipment you will need to bring.</p> <p>In Year 7, you will take several tests to assess your abilities in various areas such as spelling or reading. The results will help us decide if you might benefit with some extra help either within your lessons, in a small group or on a 1:1 basis. We are also looking at what your strengths are-which subjects do you think you will be good at? If you arrive in school after Year 7, we will check your reading and spelling to decide whether you need additional support in these areas. Your previous school will also discuss with us what type and level of support you might need.</p> <p>At exam time, you may be assessed for exams access arrangements - that is, having extra time in exams, for example. Evidence of a history of need, and that this is your normal way of working, will be required.</p>
<b>What should I do if I think I need extra help or support?</b>	<p>If you are concerned about anything, talk to your parents and come and chat to your Form Tutor or the SENDCo. Sometimes you may feel more comfortable talking to a teaching assistant or someone your own age, a 'peer mentor' or buddy. All the Heads of Year at Thomas Mills are very approachable, and you can see them about any worries you may have. At lunchtimes we run homework/social clubs every day in Room W8 (a computer room). You can either eat your lunch whilst at the club, or have your lunch in the canteen, then come along to the club and make new friends as you get advice on any homework issues you may have. Sometimes teachers may come to the homework club and talk to you.</p>

<b>How will my work be organised so that I can cope and get it all done?</b>	Homework is gradually introduced, a few subjects at a time – you won't have any in the first week! You will have a logbook which will help you to plan your work, and you can get lots of advice on homework in the daily homework club.
<b>If I have additional needs, how can I be involved in planning my learning?</b>	You can talk about what you would like to achieve, and we can discuss how you can achieve it. We also like to celebrate your achievements!
<b>Who will tell me what I can do to help myself and be more independent?</b>	In high school, we like to encourage you to think and work more independently, so setting your own targets will help you do your best in school and recognise your strengths and weaknesses. You will be growing up and will learn a lot of skills from your friends. Teachers and teaching assistants will show you ways that you can work more independently so that you can become more confident. Your Form Tutor, Head of Year and SENDCo will all be happy to help.

## Glossary of terms

SEND: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Special Educational Needs (SEN): A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age or has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.

SEND Policy: Available on the School website in 'Governors and Members' section. This outlines the school's policy regarding equality of opportunity for pupils with SEN.

Special educational provision: Special educational provision is provision that is different from or additional to that normally available to pupils or pupils of the same age, which is designed to help children and young people with SEN or disabilities to access the school curriculum.

Education, Health and Care plan (EHC plan): An EHC plan details the education, health and social care support that is to be provided to a child or young person who has SEN or a disability. It is drawn up by the local authority after an EHC needs assessment of the child or young person has determined that an EHC plan is necessary, and after consultation with relevant partner agencies.

SENDCo: Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator: A qualified teacher in a school or maintained nursery school who has responsibility for co-ordinating SEN provision. In a small school, the Headteacher or Deputy may take on this role. In high schools there is usually a Learning Support Department, with the Head of Learning Support/SENDCo reporting to the Head Teacher and the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral).

TA: Teaching Assistant, a person employed by the school to provide support in the classroom or undertake specific intervention work with a child or group of children who have learning difficulties. They work under the direction of the SENDCo.

HLTA: Higher Level Teaching Assistant

Local Offer: From September 2014, local authorities in England are required to set out in their Local Offer information about provision they expect to be available across education, health and social care for children and young people in their area who have SEND or are disabled, including those who do not have Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans. Local authorities must consult locally on what provision the Local Offer should contain. Please refer to:

<http://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/localoffer.page>

Parent Partnership Services: Parent Partnership Services provide advice and information to children with SEN or disabilities, their parents, and young people with SEN or disabilities. They provide neutral and factual support on the special educational needs system to help the children, their parents and young people to play an active and informed role in their education and care. Although funded by local authorities, Parent Partnership Services are run either at arm's length from the local authority or by a voluntary organisation to ensure children, their parents and young people have confidence in them.

Contact: 01473 265210 or by email to [parent.partnership@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:parent.partnership@suffolk.gov.uk)

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