



William Henry Smith  
Specialist College

# Prospectus 2025/2026



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# Welcome



I am pleased to introduce the William Henry Smith Specialist College and share our unique way of working, which enables young adults to achieve their goals and live fulfilling lives of their own choosing.

Our multidisciplinary, bespoke approach, places our young people at the centre of everything we do.

Our highly skilled and specialist teaching, support and therapeutic team, work with each young person to ensure their needs are fully met and that every achievement takes them closer to reaching their individual goals.

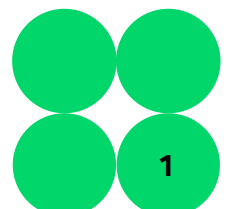
We prepare our young people for adult life, through person-centred academic and vocational study programmes, leading to them becoming more independent and improving their quality of life.

By working together, we increase resilience, confidence, self-esteem, emotional intelligence and well-being: the cornerstones on which strong and successful long-term futures are built.

We welcome visitors throughout the year and look forward to hearing from you.

**Leanne Clarke**

Deputy Principal - Further Education





# Overview

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# Our College

The William Henry Smith Specialist College is for young adults who have additional social, emotional and mental health needs and prepares them for adult life and facilitates their transition into further education, training or employment.

We provide care, education, health, and therapy through the delivery of proactive, creative, and person-first responsive practice steeped in trauma specialism.

We provide a nurturing and optimistic place of belonging and safety. The 'two hands' of caregiving help young adults to thrive, building relationships and connecting through warm, affectionate interactions that follow their interests and strengths, provide appropriate experiences and activities, and communicate the supervision, structure and boundaries that young adults need to feel safe and secure.

We work hard to help our young adults to 'Become the Best they can be', teaching our learners that anything is possible, supporting them to achieve their dreams and an enhanced quality of life, developing their interests, skills, and talents, and shaping experiences that create cherished memories.

## **Learner Provision and Pathways**

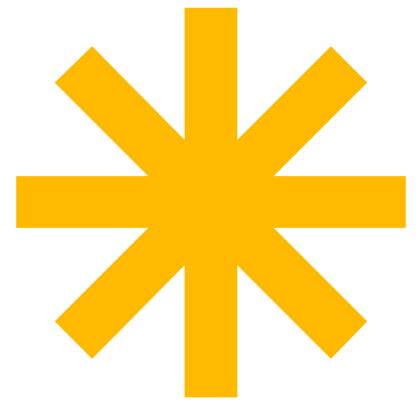
All learners have an EHCP and are funded through their Local Authority for a three year period.

The College provides day provision for 30 learners aged 16-25. Learners study on programmes that are appropriate to their personal learning needs and all learners follow a completely bespoke pathway. All pathways include the 'Preparation for Adulthood' framework.



Visit our William Henry Smith Foundation  
YouTube Channel to find out more

# Strategic Ambition



- To become an outstanding specialist college; maximise our skills, expertise, knowledge, resources and environment to guarantee impact.
- Ensure pioneering research and innovative delivery across SEN which maximises the attainment and progress of all students and ensures a social return on investment.
- To become the hub of Post 16 SEMH provision in the north of England, developing SEN services beyond our College and impacting locally, regionally, and nationally.

## College Mission

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**Our mission is to deliver exceptional education, within an inclusive environment, building a strong foundation for life.**

We believe that every young adult, no matter their starting point or previous experiences of education, therapy or care, has the potential to make significant and lasting change, lead an independent life and to achieve great things.

We aim to inspire and motivate all our young adults to be ambitious and be certain they can succeed; we help them to realise their full potential, maximise results and accomplish success.



*The biggest thing about the William Henry Smith Specialist College is that they care. They really do. They are so invested and its really amazing to see. They genuinely do care and value you as a person - not just as a student. And that commitment to you as a person and a member of this College is brilliant.*

**Current College Student**

# The Foundation

## Our Vision

To transform lives and break down barriers, empowering every individual to reach their fullest potential.

## Our Mission

To champion a holistic and tailored approach, enriching the lives of children and young adults, their families, our people, and the wider community.

## Our Values

### Unwavering integrity

We lead with honesty, purpose, and an unshakeable belief in what we do. We hold ourselves to the highest standards, always keep our word, and work hard to earn trust from the children, young adults, families, and people we serve, leaving a lasting mark that extends beyond the classroom.

### Close collaboration

It takes a village to raise a child, and that village starts with us. We're a team of listeners, collaborators, and supporters who adopt a curious and compassionate approach, building trusting relationships with local authorities, families, children and young adults, and our people.

By understanding backgrounds, behaviours and lifelong ambitions, we strive to build individualised pathways that are guided, encouraged, and nurtured by specialists.

### Compassionate curiosity

Every person's story is unique, and we take the time to understand it. We ask why and dig deeper to uncover the bigger picture. With open arms and open minds, we foster safe and nurturing spaces where children, young adults, families, and communities feel fully supported.

We listen without prejudice and respond with care, helping people rewrite difficult chapters into stories of growth, resilience, and limitless possibilities.

### Empowering community

We are a thriving village where every voice matters and everyone is valued. By embracing diversity in all its forms, we foster an enriching environment where individuals feel seen, heard, and supported around the clock. This applies to families, communities, and our people as well as children and young adults with a deep sense of belonging echoing throughout everything we do.

### Visionary thinking

We know that to inspire others, we must feel inspired ourselves. That's why we set the highest standards. We lead by example, role modelling behaviours that help shape those around us. With enthusiasm, optimism, and unwavering belief in children, young adults and our people. We nurture an environment where everyone is empowered to surpass what they thought possible. Our shared purpose, expert knowledge, and passion for progress drive us to build something even bigger than ourselves.

# Safeguarding

## Safeguarding is a core priority for us

Alongside our College Safeguarding Team, we employ a full-time Social Worker and a Family Intervention Support Worker to protect and support vulnerable children, young adults, and to work closely with families when help is needed.

All staff are fully trained in safeguarding, including how to manage concerns, respond to disclosures and support young people's mental health.

Our College staff also receive specialist training in adult safeguarding to ensure young people are supported safely as they move into adult services.

Staff receive regular specialist training in areas such as self-harm, child exploitation, county lines, online safety, harmful sexual behaviour, mental health, and child protection. We work closely with the Police and other agencies to identify concerns early and provide timely support.

Through strong partnerships with external professionals and services, we focus on early intervention, prevention and long-term support – helping every child and young person feel safe, supported and able to thrive.

## Our Safeguarding Team

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**Leanne Clarke**

**Deputy Principal  
- Further  
Education**



**Simon Cotton**

**Head of  
College**



**Clair Britton**

**SENCO**



**Razwan Amin**

**Pastoral Lead**



**Sonia Stewart**

**Business Lead**



# College Structure

Our staff are brave, curious, solution-driven and model hope at all times.

We are a community of reflective practitioners, using our experiences to challenge our existing knowledge and the status quo, to ask questions, and think critically, providing a safe place for our team to continue to learn, grow and develop in and through their practice.

Our robust and well embedded staffing structure ensures staff are deployed in a focused and effective way, always with our vision, mission and values at the forefront.

**Deputy Principal -  
Further Education**  
Leanne Clarke

**Head of College**  
Simon Cotton

**SENCO**  
Clair Britton

**Pastoral Lead**  
Razwan Amin

**Business Lead**  
Sonia Stewart

**Teaching &  
Learning Lead**  
Steven Fawthrop

**Learning &  
Wellbeing  
Advocate**

**Learning Support  
Practitioners**

**Teaching Support  
Practitioners**

**Teachers**

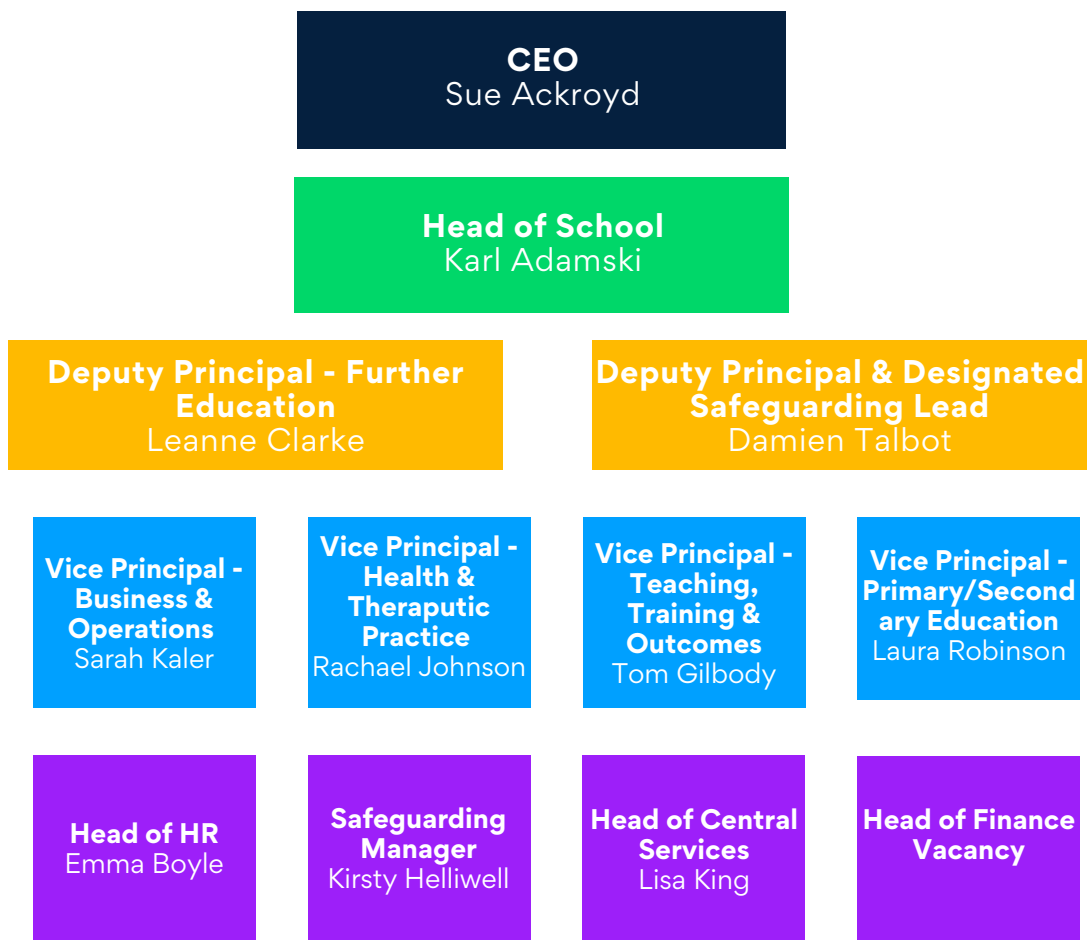


William Henry  
Smith Foundation

# Leadership Team

The College Leadership Team is supported by the leadership team for the William Henry Smith Foundation, who provide strategic guidance, resources, and expertise to help drive the College's mission forward.

This partnership ensures that the College benefits from a wealth of experience in governance, educational innovation, and community engagement, fostering an environment where both staff and students can thrive.



*Quality improvement visits affirm a richly nurturing and ambitious learning environment, where strong relationships and a deep sense of belonging empower learners to grow, find their voice, and truly thrive.*

# Curriculum

We believe that every young person, no matter their starting point or previous experiences of education, therapy or care, has the potential to make significant and lasting change, and to achieve great things.

We:

- prepare our young people for adult life, through person-centred academic and vocational study programmes, leading to them becoming more independent and improving their quality of life.
- support each of our learners to set and meet realistic goals for their future, whether that is by working towards specific qualifications, vocational experiences or focusing on developing key life skills.

Our learners needs shape our curriculum design, which falls under the following areas:

- Communication & Interaction
- Cognition
- Sensory & Physical
- Preparation for key transitions, independence, adulthood
- Health & Medical

The breadth, diversity and complexity of our learners needs dictate individual approaches and pathways to scaffold education, health and care.

- Study programmes will use alternative ways to record and report progress and achievement, linked to their EHCP outcomes.
- Work related activity is included in our study programmes and all learners can participate in work related learning.
- We have an expanding range of supported placements and connections with local businesses.



*The individual approach that the staff, and especially my son's key worker, takes has had a meaningful and lasting impact on him. He has been treated as an equal, understood and accepted exactly as he is. After crashing out of mainstream school because his needs weren't met, he is now in an environment where he can and is thriving. His interests have been noticed, nurtured and developed with a level of dedication that truly goes above and beyond.*

**Parent**



## Subjects and curriculum areas

- **Art**
  - Bronze Arts Award
  - Silver Arts Award
  - Gold Arts Award
- **GCSE Computer Science**
- **Cooking**
  - BTEC Level 1
  - BTEC Level 2
- **Duke of Edinburgh Award**
  - Bronze
  - Silver
  - Gold
- **Driving Lessons and Theory**
- **English**
  - TQUKL Functional Skills English
  - Step up to English
  - GCSE Literature
  - GCSE Language
  - A Level Language
  - A Level Literature
- **Extended Project Qualification**
- **Film Studies**
  - GCSE Film Studies
  - A level Film Studies
  - BTEC Creative Media Level 2
  - BTEC Creative Media Level 3
- **Maths**
  - Entry Level
  - TQUK Functional Skills
  - GCSE Maths
  - GCSE Statistics
- **Physical Education**
  - BTEC Sports Level 1
  - BTEC Sports Level 2
- **RSHE**
  - PFA framework
  - OCT Unit Awards Life and Living Skills
  - Road Safety
- **Science**
  - Entry Level Chemistry
  - GCSE Biology
  - GCSE Physics
  - GCSE Chemistry
  - GCSE Science - Synergy



Alongside academic qualifications, all our learners can undertake a plethora of experiences such as health and fitness, outdoor learning, college trips to name a few.



# Preparation for Adulthood

The Preparation for Adulthood Framework sits at the heart of the College offer.

Our Preparation For Adulthood Framework is included into every bespoke pathway and provides core subjects, personalised choices and a breadth of opportunities and experiences to create a 'passport to the future,' leading to a transition to further education, higher education, training, employment or independent living.

The individual learning routes have their own distinct identity that allows for personalisation whilst maintaining the quality of each study programme. Our curriculum intention is built upon four areas:

1. **Employment**
2. **Independent Living**
3. **Good Health**
4. **Friends, Relationships and Community**



The College has continued to thrive and should feel exceptionally proud of their significant part in the recognition of the National Association of Special Schools NASS Outstanding Impact Award for their work around careers.

**Stuart Jamieson**  
Foundation Improvement Partner

# Work Experience

Learners meet with our Careers Lead and an Independent Careers Advisor (C&K) to explore their future ambitions. These conversations shape a personalised career pathway, which is then built directly into their timetable. As a result, learners are now choosing subjects that align with their goals and support them on their journey toward their chosen destination.

Learners have been gaining valuable qualifications in First Aid, Manual Handling, and CSCS certification, all of which strengthen their prospects for future employment. These achievements equip them with practical, work-ready skills that employers actively look for, giving them a strong foundation as they move toward their chosen careers.



- Work related activity is included in all our study programmes and all learners participate in work related learning.
- We have an expanding range of supported placements, connections with many local businesses, alongside our own College jobs.
- We offer our learners a range of enterprise and work experiences, linked to their interests or curiosities.



*I've really enjoyed working at the food banks and charity shop. Staff support has been brilliant and it has improved my chances of getting a job by miles! I might like to be a brick layer and the construction course and art lessons have helped me. I feel welcome in College and I have made some good friends here.*

**College Student**

# Student Council

The College Student Council meets fortnightly to discuss things that are important to them.

This is an opportunity for the learners to be heard and for them to initiate change within the College and the local area.

This group is a great way for the students to develop socially, learn about democracy and it gives them autonomy.

Our commitment to community service is evident through the thousands of hours our learners contribute to volunteer work each year.



*The care for the boys and passion for giving them the best opportunities was evident. Students were friendly and welcoming and it was clear they had developed strong, positive relationships with staff. Their pride in their work and sense of contribution to the College community was clear to see.*

**Sophie Baxter, Further Education Governor**

# Health, Therapy and Families



The Psychotherapy Team provides therapeutic support to young people and families, working closely with all areas of the College to deliver a holistic, integrated approach.

Their work is underpinned by training in child and adolescent development, complex trauma, and attachment theory, which also informs staff development across the Trust.

The team includes creative psychotherapies trained in:

- Art Psychotherapy
- Dramatherapy
- Music Therapy
- Dance Movement Psychotherapy
- Systemic Family Therapy
- Developmental Dyadic Practice
- Counselling



Young people's wellbeing is central to the team's ethos and practice.

The psychotherapy assessment process offers young people and families a safe space to share their experiences, explore presenting needs, and consider how therapeutic support may help. It includes information gathering, meetings with parents/carers, dyadic sessions, and individual sessions with the young person to ensure they feel heard and understood.

Following assessment, the therapist determines whether therapy is appropriate, the most suitable type of support, and the aims and timescales of the work.

They also liaise with College staff to support good communication and practice, provide training, supervision and collaborative support, and strengthen staff understanding of developmental trauma and attachment-informed practice.

Alongside the SaLT and OT teams, psychotherapists contribute to therapeutic resources supporting emotional regulation, transitions, therapeutic relationships and emotional literacy.



All practitioners are registered with relevant professional bodies (e.g. HCPC), receive clinical supervision, adhere to professional ethical standards, and are committed to ongoing professional development. The team delivers individual, group, family and dyadic therapy.



The health and wellbeing of our staff and learners are paramount. We have a Health & Wellbeing Nurse and Occupational Health Nurse. One who focusses on staff needs and the other who concentrates on the needs of learners.

Our Health and Wellbeing Nurse supports learners' holistic health and wellbeing through comprehensive assessment and coordinated care. The service also supports staff with learner medication, reviews health-related policies and procedures, and delivers training in medicines management and other areas of care.

Recent developments include the introduction of foundation-wide nut and menopause policies. Immunisations for learners continue to be promoted and delivered at college, alongside flu vaccinations for both staff and learners.

Nurses work closely with families to provide guidance, support and signposting, and liaise with a range of health professionals. They also collaborate with NHS hearing services to develop an in-college service; the pilot has now been completed and outcomes are awaited regarding equipment provision.

Health promotion and quality of life work includes:

- Encouraging healthy diet and lifestyle choices
- Increasing physical activity
- Supporting better sleep patterns
- Promoting mental wellbeing
- Developing healthy work-life balance
- Delivering oral hygiene sessions in small learning groups (positively received by staff and learners).



# Quality of Life



The Quality-of-Life (QoL) Framework encapsulates the work already being done across all areas of the college, it is an inherent part in our ethos and intent, and it also quite naturally sits alongside our Positive Behaviour Support approach and values.

With a strong focus on Independence, Social participation and well-being, the framework gives us a fantastic opportunity to identify areas for improvement and focus. Our Quality-of-Life work is underpinned by the belief that our learners need to be happy, healthy, and able to make decisions, which prepare them for adult life. QoL is firmly embedded into our curriculum. The learner timetables include a range of individualised 'QoL Development Sessions', linked to The Preparation For Adulthood Framework.

Family QoL is of the utmost importance to us as a college and as with our learners, questionnaires are sent out to all parents/carers twice a year. The feedback enables us to form Family Engagement Days, where we can share knowledge and practice which ultimately improves the QoL as a family.

Under the QoL umbrella, we offer individual and group HIIT sessions to students, families and members of the college community.

# Admissions Process

01



## Enquiry

All learners at WHSC must have an EHCP and be aged 19 or under on admission. To read more about or admissions criteria [click here](#)

02



## Visit

Visits can be arranged by contacting [admissions@whsfoundation.org.uk](mailto:admissions@whsfoundation.org.uk)

We recommend you come for a visit, however we understand this can be a little daunting, so have a look at our [360 tour first!](#)

03



## Offer

If we feel we can meet the learners needs, the family and Local Authority agree a placement.

04



## Transition

We understand that for some young people arriving at our College can be challenging. We offer a bespoke transition package, tailored to each young adult to help re-engage, remove barriers, build confidence and nurture a trusting relationship.

05



## 15 week review

During the initial 15 weeks with us, the learner will have their needs identified in all areas including academic, therapeutic and social. Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy will also assess the learner needs. At 15 weeks there is a collaborative multidisciplinary meeting to review and plan for the learners journey at the College.



# William Henry Smith Specialist College

‘Becoming the best  
you can be’



## Contact Us

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