



Arden
College



Welcome to Arden College

Arden College is located near to Southport, a vibrant coastal town surrounded by natural beauty. We are a specialist further education college for young people aged 16 to 25 years with autism and complex barriers to learning.

The learning and support that we provide is tailored to the individual needs, strengths, interests and aspirations of each young person. Our students are supported to design their own personalised curriculum, with the help of their family and other key people in their lives.

Building the skills for a happy and fulfilling future

We use young people's interests to engage them with learning and build the skills and confidence they need for an independent and fulfilling future. Our learning programmes focus on supporting students to be happy and healthy, gaining employability skills and contributing positively to the community.

Our students are fantastic ambassadors for Arden College and their achievements are inspirational. They leave us ready to live their best lives and we are very proud of the work that we do to support them. We equip students to navigate the complex challenges of becoming adults, and the transition from school into employment, education and greater independence.



Specialist facilities and small class sizes

Our class sizes are very small, with typically no more than five students. This is key to providing the intensive specialist support our young people need to achieve their potential.

Wherever possible, students learn in real-life settings within the community. Our college has a range of exciting facilities, including a café, beauty centre, horticultural centre and we have our new site in Banks, close to our Southport college. The college is designed to meet the sensory and learning needs of students with autism and provides a low stimulus and visually structured environment.

Our students are keen to showcase what they do and we always welcome visitors to the college. Please feel free to contact us to arrange a visit.

Siobhan Partington
Principal at Arden College



Service summary

The range of services and facilities available at Arden College include:

- Person-centred learning programmes, tailored to the specific needs of each young person
- High staff to student ratios
- Access to accredited qualifications
- 2 education campuses and a range of additional facilities
- A highly experienced teaching team, who use successful approaches and interventions to support effective learning
- A wide range of therapeutic support provided by a specialist therapy team, including speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and behaviour support
- A specialist learning environment with a broad curriculum offer
- Meaningful practical work experience in association with a range of community partners
- Residential options which offer an extended curriculum

“My son is in his final year at Arden College. I just wanted to say how pleased I am with his progress and how this placement has literally transformed him over the past three years.”

Parent of a student at Arden College

“Arden College is a unique place full of character of all kinds. The lessons are interesting and are made to a high standard. Since being at Arden College, my knowledge has come along well and the kindness of the staff compliment this.”

Student at Arden College

“I had given up on any hope of finding an education setting where he could learn and thrive, but since he started at Arden College we have never looked back.”

Parent of a student at Arden College



Education services

Our aim at Arden College is to support each student to achieve their goals and reach their true potential. We develop their skills and abilities, and use their interests to make learning accessible, enjoyable and meaningful.

Education and support is tailored to each individual, with students themselves designing their learning, in collaboration with our specialist team, their families and other key people in their lives. Wherever possible, they learn in real life contexts in the community.

We empower our young people, building the confidence and skills for happy, healthy and fulfilling lives, where they live as independently as possible. Students become active citizens who contribute positively to their community.

Overcoming barriers to re-engage with learning

Overcoming their barriers to learning re-engages our young people with education and sees them achieve and progress. The students at Arden College face a range of barriers and many of our students also have mental health needs and difficulty with emotional regulation, which can result in behaviours that may challenge.

With our specialist support, young people learn to address and overcome these difficulties, developing emotionally and socially. Arden College develops a bespoke package to support each student to overcome the specific barriers that they face, which includes strategies to help them progress towards learning. They build functional literacy and numeracy skills, develop increased independence through vocational and life skills, and become more confident interacting with others, both in college and in the wider community.



Building skills for life

We know that our young people need support to develop the everyday skills that enable independence. From the very start of their time with us, students learn in the community, building confidence and social skills in a safe and supported way.

Learners get involved with a broad range of activities tailored to their individual needs and interests, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and working in our college café, beauty centre and horticulture centre.

We work with a range of business partners in the community. These placements give students opportunities to develop their understanding of roles and routines in real working environments. The college works with its community partners to tailor work experience to the needs and interests of each individual, ensuring that they gain the most from their work experience.

A specialist curriculum

The curriculum at Arden College is specially adapted to meet the needs of our learners. We have small class sizes of typically no more than five students, giving young people substantial time with staff members who can provide the more intensive support they need to progress and succeed. The college has high staff to student ratios and offers one-to-one support, or higher as needed.

Our teaching staff work closely with our therapy team to ensure that learning meets each student's specific communication and sensory needs. Many lessons are structured to include a high amount of practical activity, which increases learner engagement and promotes the retention of new skills.

The college offers both accredited and unaccredited learning pathways to suit students' needs, ranging from pre-entry to Level 2, and areas include English, Maths, independence skills, work preparation and employability skills.

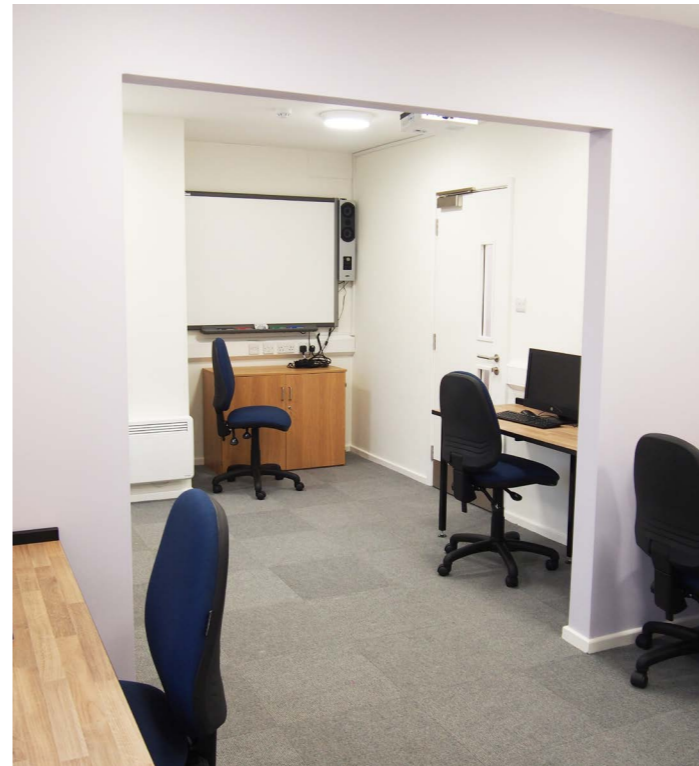
Specialist learning facilities

Our college has modern, well-equipped learning spaces, developed with our young people's needs in mind. We also opened our new site in Banks, just outside Southport. The college is designed to meet the sensory and learning needs of students with autism and provides a low stimulus and visually structured environment.

Arden Café and Arden Beauty Centre both enable our students to develop their employability and life skills by working in real world environments that are open to the public. In our café, they work under the guidance of a chef to prepare meals to order and interact with members of the public by taking orders and serving.

The students learn vocational hair and beauty skills at our hair salon and beauty therapy suite, which also has a classroom to further facilitate learning. Both facilities are also ideal for students to build their confidence and skills in community activities, such as ordering food, socialising with friends and having their hair cut.

Our Horticulture Centre has extensive grounds and the horticulture course runs all year. We grow organic fruit and vegetables and we are proud that our apples and pears are used to make Arden's Cider, in collaboration with Thatchers Cider.



Supporting and engaging families

Parents and carers play a crucial role in supporting their child's education and ensuring that they reach their potential. We seek to work alongside parents during their child's time with us.

This begins with our assessment process, when we discuss the young person's needs, strengths and preferences with parents and carers. Once a young person has started at Arden College, their tutor will maintain regular contact, updating on progress, consulting on next steps and discussing any issues that may arise.

We know how challenging life can be for families of a young person who has learning disabilities and autism, and we provide guidance, practical support and advice from day one of their journey with us.

Part of one of the leading specialist education providers

We are proud to be part of Aspris Children's Services, one of the UK's leading specialist education providers. We form part of a network of schools and colleges sharing best practice and learning from each other's successes.

We benefit from a comprehensive and continually updated range of training, expert information and advice for educating and supporting students with learning difficulties and autism.

Our college is supported by a central team including an Operations Director, Health and Safety Advisor and Quality Lead, ensuring a consistent and robust approach of the highest standards.

Leaders and managers continue to foster highly effective partnership arrangements with employers and community organisations. These relationships provide good-quality placements and activities for students to extend their learning successfully outside the classroom.

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Students benefit from a wide range of high-quality work and community-based activities. Staff plan and review activities with external partners effectively and regularly. Consequently, students increase their vocational and independence skills through challenging, practical activities.

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Students progress to sustained and positive destinations.

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Therapeutic support

Therapy plays a crucial role in enabling our learners to achieve their full potential. A key objective is to support young people to manage their needs themselves, to achieve greater independence and ensure that they have tools to draw on for life. Every young person receives a bespoke package of therapy, tailored to their specific needs and regularly monitored and reviewed by our multidisciplinary team.

Students develop effective communication skills. They have confidence in using their skills to make choices, express their opinions, work with each other and socialise.

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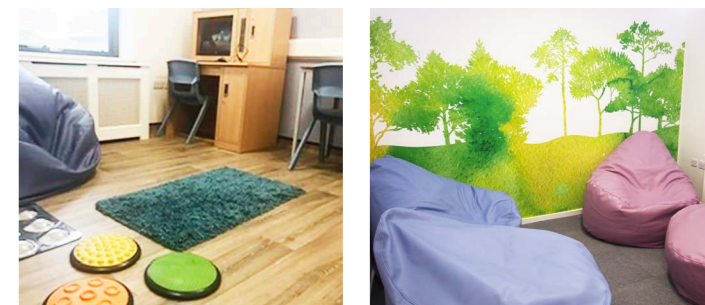


A holistic therapeutic approach

We use therapy to support our young people to develop and progress socially and emotionally. It can remove any barriers to learning and help to transform young people's lives, boosting capacity to progress and achieve. Our students are empowered to follow their interests and goals, and to engage with the wider community that they are part of.

Our therapy team works closely with teaching staff, so they know how to adapt the environment to obtain the best from each learner. Therapy is embedded in everyday learning and its impact is maximised.

At Arden College, students are supported by our highly specialist therapy team comprising of Speech and Language Therapists and Assistants, Occupational Therapists and Assistants. Our Behaviour Analyst and PROACT SCIPr-UK instructors also provide effective proactive behaviour support.



Staff support students with complex behavioural needs effectively to help them to recognise their anxieties and to develop strategies to manage their own behaviour successfully.

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Our staff team

The Arden College staff team are dedicated to supporting each young person to achieve their potential. They work collaboratively to lay the foundations for our learners' achievements and success, ensuring that they are ready for the next steps in their life when they move on from our college.



Our approach

We believe that the relationship between staff and students at Arden College is what makes us special. There is a mutual respect which goes beyond the job and shows a genuine commitment to making the world a better place for young people with a disability.

To ensure that we provide the best possible support for the learners, staff are committed to a continuous programme of training. Staff want the best for our young people and this means that they are motivated to keep an awareness of best practice, continually developing their skills and implementing innovative ways of working.



Our staff team includes:

Senior Management Team

The Senior Management Team comprises of the College Principal, the Vice-Principal and Learning Managers. They plan the strategic development of the college and oversee the college staff team. Learning Managers act as Tutors to a number of students, providing support and advice.

Teachers

Teaching staff ensure that students are taught the skills they need to achieve their goals, making use of teaching strategies that are appropriate to the needs of the individuals within a class. They record and monitor the progress of each student, and ensure that they meet the criteria necessary to achieve accreditation.

Some Teachers have additional responsibilities, such as leadership in relation to a specific area of the curriculum, co-ordinating work experience and providing guidance on behaviour support.

Classroom Assistants

Under the direction of Teachers, Classroom Assistants support students to participate in learning and to develop their skills. A Classroom Assistant will typically be assigned to an individual student or small group, and will use the strategies in each learner's care plan to ensure that they are effectively supported. Classroom Assistants support students in such a way that their independence is maximised, whilst ensuring that the young person is developing their understanding of new skills.

Teaching staff are well qualified and experienced. They use further knowledge gained from staff development activities effectively to develop their skills and understanding of the diverse and often complex needs of the students they teach.

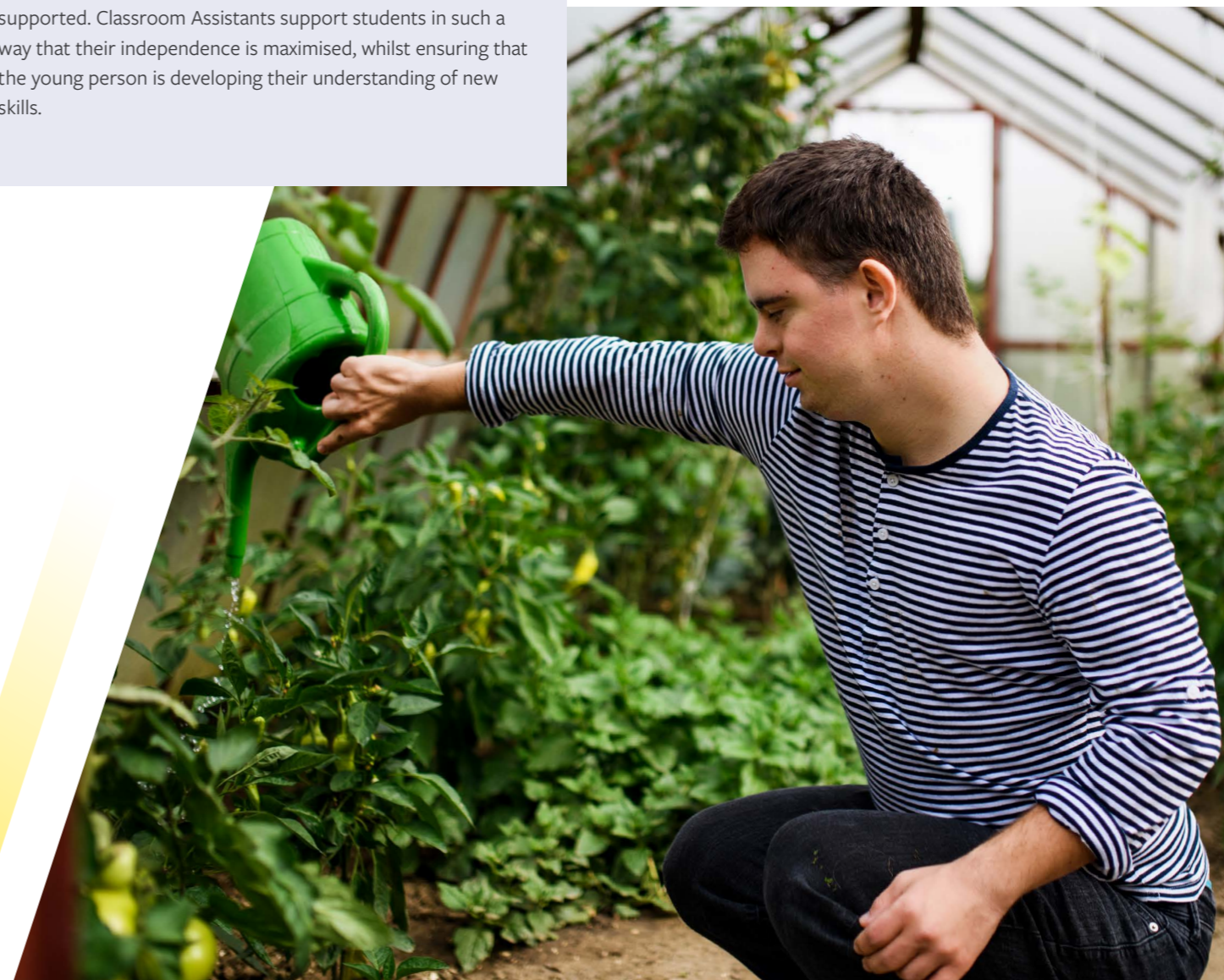
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Support for students in lessons is effective. Classroom Assistants are knowledgeable about the students they support.

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Staff use effective communication strategies across all levels of learning to ensure that students understand fully what they need to do to make good progress.

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Residential care services

We provide residential care and supported living services for students and post-college young adults aged 16 to 25 years. Our eight Care Quality Commission (CQC) registered homes support a range of needs, including autism and learning disabilities. These are all located in close proximity to the main college sites.

The college recognises that it is in the best interests of young people that an integrated approach to support is used across all our services. When young people come into our residential care, their bespoke package of learning and support is also delivered in their home.

Residential care and college staff work as a single unified team to support our young people, sharing a consistent, cohesive approach with the same goals. Staff supporting young people in the residential setting will typically also support them when in college.

Our residential provision also means that Arden College can meet the needs of young people living in more distant areas, for whom a day placement would be impractical. This can also be beneficial for those young people who may find transitions involving long daily journeys challenging.



A range of activities

The residents in each home are supported to identify activities they would like to try, both in the home and the wider community. They participate in weekly house meetings, at which they can discuss and plan activities.

The current activities across our homes include:

- Arts and crafts
- Bowling
- Cinema trips
- Football
- Games nights
- Pamper sessions
- Rugby
- Swimming
- Tennis
- Trips to the park
- Trips to local attractions in Blackpool and Liverpool
- Walks in the countryside

Communication between the residential houses and the college is very well established and is effective. Staff share information appropriately and sensitively, and this actively and successfully promotes the welfare, wellbeing and achievements of residential students.

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Key Workers from the residential houses support residential students in their lessons and college activities. This is reciprocated with college staff supporting students in their residential houses. As a result, support staff provide good levels of continuity between both settings. They identify and support individual students' needs or issues swiftly and effectively to help them to achieve.

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Supporting the young people's needs

Our residential services at Arden College offer young people an opportunity to spend time away from their family home, whilst continuing to live in a safe and structured environment. They can act as a stepping-stone towards longer-term residential care or supported living in the future.

The young people are able to further develop and apply skills of independent living in a real environment. This is achieved through the college's extended curriculum, in which students develop skills such as preparing meals, keeping the home clean and personal care. Each student is given the appropriate level of support that they require to learn new skills and to be more independent in those with which they are already familiar.

Residential students live with a peer group of the same age, enabling them to continue to develop their social interaction skills outside of the classroom.



Get in touch

For more information on our specialist services at Arden College, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Call: 01704 534 433

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"Thank you to all of the staff involved with David* this year. You all do an amazing job and we know David loves going to college. We appreciate and are very grateful to each and every staff member."

Parent of a student at
Arden College

Students enjoy attending college. Many learn skills that they had not developed previously, such as making friends and learning to interact appropriately in groups. As a result, they improve their personal and social skills.

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