



Homebrook Woods

P R O S P E C T U S



A nurturing, specialist learning environment
where children feel safe, understood and able to thrive.

For children aged 5–11 years with Autism Spectrum Condition
and associated Speech, Language and Communication Needs.



Welcome to Homebrook Woods



Vonny Shelley

HEADTEACHER, DIRECTOR & PROPRIETOR



Welcome to Homebrook Woods.

Throughout my career in education, I have held a long-standing ambition to create a learning environment where children feel safe, understood and nurtured, and where education is shaped around the individual child.

Homebrook Woods is the result of that vision.

We provide a calm, specialist and highly personalised learning environment for children aged 5-11 with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) and associated Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN).

We believe children learn best when they feel secure, when relationships are strong, and when adults take time to understand how each child communicates, regulates and engages with the world around them.

Our curriculum has been designed to develop not only knowledge and understanding, but also confidence, independence, communication and emotional wellbeing. We recognise that meaningful progress looks different for every child and celebrate every achievement, however small.

Whether you are a parent, school, Local Authority or professional, I hope this prospectus gives you a clear understanding of our values, our approach and our commitment to helping every child thrive.



About Homebrook Woods

Homebrook Woods is a small specialist independent school designed for children who benefit from a calm, nurturing and highly personalised educational environment.

Every aspect of our provision has been carefully developed around the needs of children with Autism Spectrum Condition and associated Speech, Language and Communication Needs. We understand that children learn in different ways, communicate differently and experience the world differently. Our role is to recognise those differences and respond with understanding, flexibility and expertise.

Our school combines experienced educational leadership, specialist SEND knowledge and a relational approach to learning. By reducing unnecessary sensory and social demands, we create an environment where children can feel safe enough to engage, communicate, develop confidence and enjoy learning.



Small and Nurturing

A calm, welcoming environment where every child is known, valued and understood.



Individualised

Learning is carefully adapted around each child's strengths, interests, communication profile and developmental stage.



Purposeful

We develop communication, independence, emotional regulation and the practical skills children need for learning and life.





Why Homebrook Woods?

Choosing the right educational environment is one of the most important decisions a family and professional team can make.

Homebrook Woods has been designed specifically for children who benefit from a calm, specialist and highly personalised approach to education. Every aspect of the school has been created to remove barriers, build confidence and enable children to flourish both academically and personally.

Rather than expecting children to adapt to the environment, we adapt the environment, teaching and support around each child.



Small by Design

Small classes allow every child to be known well and supported consistently.



Autism-Informed Practice

Every aspect of the environment has been designed with autistic learners in mind.



Total Communication

All forms of communication are recognised, respected and encouraged.



Personalised Learning

Learning is adapted around each child's individual developmental pathway.



Calm Environment

Reduced sensory demands help children feel safe, settled and ready to learn.



Relationships First

Strong trusting relationships provide the foundation for learning and wellbeing.



Learning for Life

Children develop independence alongside academic knowledge.



Working Together

Families and professionals work alongside us to achieve the very best outcomes.



Our Vision



“Every child deserves
a place where they feel safe,
understood, valued and
able to succeed.”

Everything we do at Homebrook Woods is guided by a simple belief:
children flourish when they feel safe, accepted and genuinely understood.

Our values shape every aspect of school life—from the way we communicate
with children and families to the design of our curriculum, learning environment
and daily routines. They provide the foundation for positive relationships,
meaningful learning and lasting personal growth.



Belonging



Every child should
feel accepted,
included and
celebrated for
who they are.



Communication



Every child's
voice matters,
whatever form
that communication
takes.



Regulation



Children are
supported to
understand and
manage their
emotions and
sensory needs.



Independence



Learning develops
confidence,
resilience and
practical skills for
everyday life.



Growth



Progress is
recognised in
meaningful ways
and celebrated
every step of
the journey.



Who We Support



Homebrook Woods supports children aged 5–11 years whose primary needs relate to Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) and associated Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN).

Many of the children who join us have found previous educational experiences challenging. They may require a smaller, lower-demand learning environment where communication, relationships and emotional wellbeing are prioritised alongside academic development.

Every placement is considered individually. Our admissions process carefully considers whether Homebrook Woods can safely and appropriately meet a child's needs and provide the right environment for them to thrive.

Children may:



experience anxiety linked to previous educational experiences



require reduced sensory demands



communicate in different ways



need support with emotional regulation



have sensory processing differences



benefit from highly personalised learning



find larger educational settings overwhelming

Children are likely to benefit from:



small-group and individual teaching



predictable daily routines



visual supports



Total Communication approaches



familiar trusted adults



practical and real-life learning



gradual transitions



relational practice





Our Approach



At Homebrook Woods, our approach is rooted in the belief that children learn best when they feel safe, understood and emotionally secure.

Rather than focusing solely on academic achievement, we seek to understand how each child communicates, regulates, learns and experiences the world around them. By building trusting relationships and adapting our practice to meet individual needs, we create the conditions in which meaningful learning can take place.

Our approach combines specialist knowledge, evidence-informed practice and a commitment to seeing every child as an individual.



A Relational Approach

Positive relationships sit at the heart of everything we do. Children learn alongside adults who take time to understand their strengths, interests, communication styles and individual needs. Trust is built gradually through consistency, kindness and genuine understanding.



A Communication-Led Approach

Communication underpins every aspect of school life. We use a Total Communication approach, recognising speech, symbols, signing, gesture, AAC, behaviour and other forms of communication as equally valuable ways for children to express themselves and connect with others.



A Regulation-Informed Approach

Children cannot learn effectively when they feel overwhelmed. We consider sensory processing, emotional regulation and readiness for learning throughout the school day, adapting the environment and our practice to help every child feel safe, calm and ready to engage.



A Calm, Homely Learning Environment



Homebrook Woods has been intentionally designed to feel calm, familiar and welcoming.

Every learning space has been carefully considered to reduce unnecessary sensory and social demands while providing children with the structure, predictability and security they need to engage confidently.

Children have access to a range of learning environments, including individual workstations, shared teaching areas, spaces for emotional regulation, practical life-skills facilities and outdoor learning opportunities.

The environment remains flexible throughout the day so that learning can be adapted around each child's needs, interests and readiness to participate.

We believe the environment should never become a barrier to learning. Instead, it should help children feel safe enough to explore, communicate, develop independence and enjoy success.



A thoughtfully
designed environment
helps children feel
safe, understood
and ready to learn.



A Curriculum for Learning and Life



Our curriculum has been designed to provide every child with meaningful opportunities to learn, communicate, develop confidence and become increasingly independent.

Learning combines essential knowledge with communication, emotional regulation, practical life skills and personal development. Themes are carefully planned to make learning purposeful, engaging and relevant while remaining flexible enough to reflect each child's developmental stage and interests.

Alongside academic learning, children develop the wider skills they need to participate successfully in school, at home and within their community.



Communication & Literacy

Developing communication in all its forms and building literacy for life.



Real-Life Mathematics

Building number confidence and problem-solving skills for everyday situations.



Science Through Exploration

Encouraging curiosity and understanding of the world through hands-on learning.



Humanities & Community Learning

Learning about people, places and community to understand and belong.



Technology

Developing digital skills for learning, communication and independence.



Creative Arts

Exploring creativity through art, music, drama and imaginative play.



Physical Development

Building strength, coordination and wellbeing through movement.



Outdoor Learning

Connecting with nature and learning outdoors in all seasons.



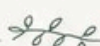
Life Skills

Developing practical skills for everyday living and greater independence.



Therapeutic Play & Creative Expression

Using play and creative approaches to support emotional wellbeing and self-expression.



How Learning is Personalised

Every child arrives at Homebrook Woods with their own strengths, experiences, interests and aspirations. Rather than expecting children to fit a fixed curriculum, we carefully adapt learning around each individual. Our teaching is responsive, flexible and informed by ongoing assessment, observation and professional understanding.

By breaking learning into achievable steps and recognising progress in many different ways, we enable children to experience success and develop confidence as learners.



Starting from the Child

Learning begins with understanding the individual child—their strengths, interests, communication profile and developmental stage.



Small Steps

Learning is broken into meaningful and achievable steps so every child can experience success.



Multiple Ways to Learn

Children learn through play, exploration, communication, practical activities, outdoor learning, sensory experiences and direct teaching.



Progress that Matters

Progress includes communication, regulation, confidence, independence, relationships and academic achievement.



Child



Assessment



Planning



Teaching



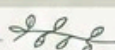
Review



Next Steps



We do not expect children to fit the curriculum.
We adapt learning around the child.



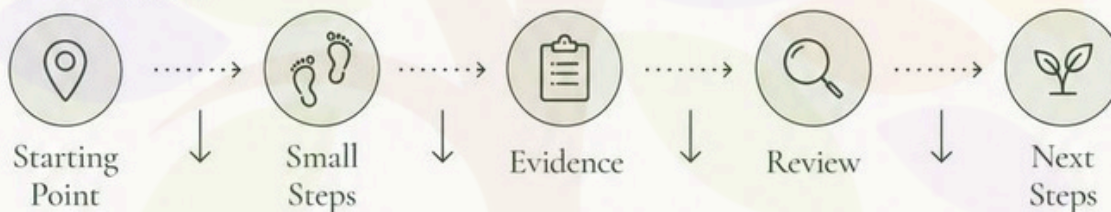
Recognising Progress

Assessment at Homebrook Woods is personalised, developmental and rooted in everyday learning.

Children make progress in many different ways and at different rates. We therefore use ongoing observation, work samples, photographs, communication records, professional judgement and curriculum evidence to build a detailed understanding of each child's development.

Assessment is not simply about measuring attainment. It helps us identify strengths, celebrate achievements and plan the next meaningful steps for every learner.

We recognise that progress includes communication, independence, confidence, emotional regulation and successful participation in learning alongside academic development.



Engagement

Children show interest, motivation and involvement in activities and experiences.



Communication

Children express themselves and understand others using a range of communication methods.



Regulation

Children develop emotional understanding and strategies to manage their feelings and sensory needs.



Independence

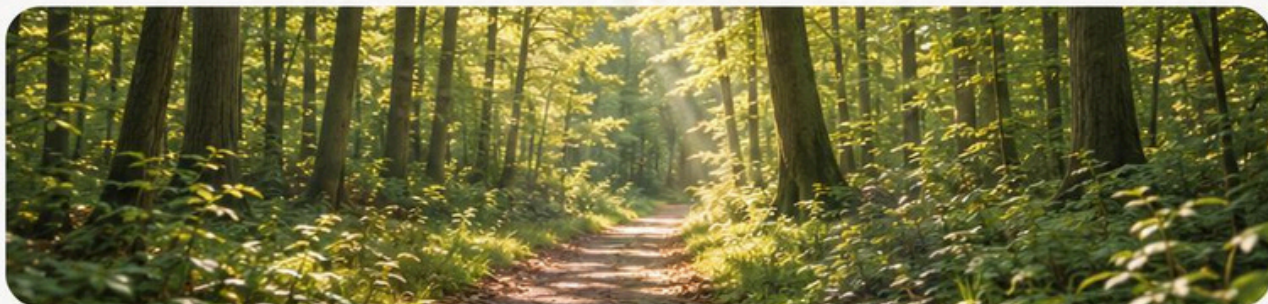
Children build confidence and practical skills to support greater independence in everyday life.



Knowledge & Skills

Children develop conceptual understanding and skills across the curriculum.





Safeguarding & Wellbeing

Safeguarding is at the heart of everything we do at Homebrook Woods.

We recognise that children with Autism Spectrum Condition and Speech, Language and Communication Needs may communicate distress, anxiety or concern in different ways. Our staff take time to understand each child's communication profile, behaviour, sensory needs and individual ways of expressing themselves.

Creating a safe school involves much more than following procedures. It is about building trusted relationships, maintaining professional curiosity and ensuring every child feels listened to, respected and protected.

Children's emotional wellbeing is equally important. Through calm routines, positive relationships and carefully planned environments, we aim to help every child feel secure enough to learn, communicate and thrive.

Safeguarding Contact



Designated Safeguarding Lead
Vonny Shelley



Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
Toni Page



Telephone
07706 473040



Email
vonny@homebrookwoods.co.uk

Working in Partnership with Families

Families know their children better than anyone else.

At Homebrook Woods, we believe the strongest outcomes are achieved when parents, carers and school work together in genuine partnership. We value open communication, shared decision-making and mutual trust, recognising that every family brings valuable knowledge and experience.

From the earliest conversations through to transition planning, reviews and everyday communication, we work closely with families to ensure every child receives consistent support both at home and at school.

Together we celebrate progress, overcome challenges and help children develop confidence, independence and a genuine sense of belonging.



Communication

Regular, honest and accessible communication helps build strong relationships and shared understanding.



Shared Strategies

Successful approaches used at school can be shared with families, creating consistency and confidence across home and school.



Collaborative Planning

Parents and carers contribute to reviews, personalised targets and future planning because their views are central to every child's journey.



Working with Professionals



Successful outcomes are achieved through effective partnership working.

Homebrook Woods works collaboratively with the professionals involved in every child's education, health and care, ensuring decisions are informed, joined-up and centred around the child's individual needs.

We recognise that every professional brings valuable expertise. By sharing information, reviewing progress and planning together, we aim to provide consistent support and meaningful long-term outcomes for every learner.



Local Authorities

Working closely with commissioning teams throughout enquiry, placement, review and transition.



Schools

Supporting successful transitions through collaborative planning with previous schools and SENDCOs.



Health Professionals

Working alongside Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Educational Psychologists and other specialists where appropriate.



Families

Parents remain central partners throughout every stage of a child's education.



Reviews

Contributing detailed reports and professional assessments to Education, Health and Care Plan reviews.



Shared Outcomes

Working together to identify realistic, meaningful and ambitious next steps for every child.



Our Leadership Team & Professional Advisory Board

The strength of Homebrook Woods lies in the experience, knowledge and commitment of the people who work within it.

Our team brings together expertise in specialist education, SEND, safeguarding, leadership and inclusive practice, supported by an experienced Professional Advisory Board that provides independent advice, challenge and specialist oversight.

Together, we are committed to creating a safe, nurturing and ambitious learning environment where every child can thrive.



Vonny

Headteacher • Director • Proprietor

Vonny has extensive experience across mainstream and specialist education, safeguarding, SEND and school leadership. She established Homebrook Woods with a clear vision of creating a calm, highly personalised learning environment where every child is understood, valued and supported to achieve meaningful success.



Leanne

SENDCO

Leanne will be joining the Homebrook Woods team, bringing extensive experience in SEND leadership and inclusive practice. Her expertise includes working closely with families, coordinating Education, Health and Care Plans, supporting staff and ensuring every child receives the provision they need to achieve positive outcomes.



Toni

Senior Teacher

Toni is an experienced senior leader with extensive knowledge of supporting children with SEND. She has particular expertise in adapting learning environments to meet individual sensory and learning needs, creating calm, inclusive spaces where children feel safe, confident and ready to learn.



Abbi

Lead Teacher

Abbi brings valuable experience supporting children with special educational needs. She has a particular strength in designing creative, engaging learning experiences that are personalised to each child, helping learning become enjoyable, meaningful and accessible for every learner.

Professional Advisory Board

Our Professional Advisory Board provides independent expertise, challenge and professional guidance, supporting continuous school improvement and ensuring Homebrook Woods maintains the highest standards of education, safeguarding and SEND practice.



Jane Belinda Francis

Chair • Independent Education & Safeguarding Adviser

Former Headteacher, SENDCO and school improvement leader with extensive expertise in safeguarding, attendance, SEND, governance and strategic leadership.



Dr Maddi Popoola

Educational Psychology Adviser

Chartered Educational Psychologist, author and co-founder of NottAlone, providing specialist advice regarding child development, neurodiversity, mental health, learning and emotional wellbeing.



Sophie O'Regan

SEND & Inclusion Adviser

Experienced SENDCO and senior leader with extensive expertise in SEND, inclusion, EHCP provision, school improvement and supporting children and young people with additional needs.



Admissions & Placement Suitability

Admissions Pathway



Every placement at Homebrook Woods is considered carefully to ensure we can meet each child's needs safely, effectively and appropriately.



Our admissions process is designed to build a detailed understanding of every child before a placement decision is made. This helps ensure children receive the right support in the right environment from the very beginning.



Admission decisions are based on the child's individual profile, current needs, available evidence and our ability to provide suitable provision—not diagnosis alone.



Our focus is always on the child—ensuring the right support, the right environment and the right start for a successful and positive school journey.



Enquiries & Next Steps

Making an Enquiry

We welcome enquiries from Local Authorities, schools, professionals, parents and carers who would like to find out more about Homebrook Woods.

Following an initial conversation, we will discuss your child's individual needs, explain our admissions process and answer any questions you may have.

Every enquiry is considered carefully, with the child's needs, wellbeing and long-term outcomes at the centre of our decision making.

Our Admissions Journey



Key Information

-  **Age Range**
5–11 years
-  **Location**
Chellaston, Derby
-  **Current Provision**
Homebrook Woods Foundation Provision
(Alternative Provision)
Opening October 2026.
-  **Future Provision**
Independent Specialist School
Registration currently progressing with
the Department for Education.
-  **Primary Needs Supported**
Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)
Speech, Language and Communication
Needs (SLCN)
-  **Referral Routes**
 - Local Authorities
 - Schools
 - Professionals
 - Parents & Carers

Contact

-  **Homebrook Woods**
Chellaston
Derby
-  **07706 473040**
-  **info@homebrookwoods.co.uk**
-  **www.homebrookwoods.co.uk**

Opening Homebrook Woods

-  Homebrook Woods Foundation Provision is due to open in September 2026, with the first pupils expected to join us from October 2026.
-  Alongside this, our application to register as an Independent Specialist School is progressing through the Department for Education registration process.
-  Subject to successful registration, we anticipate opening the Independent Specialist School during January 2027.
-  We are already welcoming enquiries and are happy to discuss future placements, referral pathways and the most appropriate provision for each child.

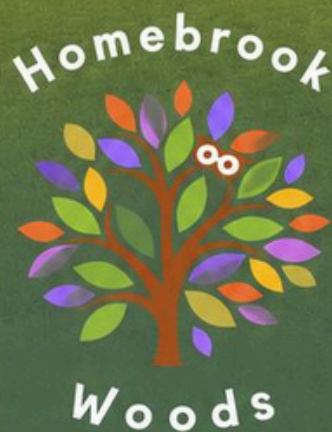


Choosing the right provision is an important decision.

Whether you are a parent, school, Local Authority or professional, we would be delighted to discuss how Homebrook Woods may be able to support your child.

We welcome early conversations and are happy to answer any questions about both our Foundation Provision and future specialist school.





Small setting. Big potential.



Homebrook Woods
Chellaston, Derby



07706 473040



info@homebrookwoods.co.uk



www.homebrookwoods.co.uk

Prospectus reviewed: July 2026