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The Royal Free Hospital Children's School has officially opened a new site at the historic Konstam building to support more young people who are struggling to attend mainstream school.

On Friday (20 October), the new site in Highgate was officially opened by the school's former higher level teaching assistant turned actor Melissa Johns, alongside staff, students, parents and carers, teachers, governors and local councillors.

The Royal Free Hospital Children's School (RFHCS) is a community special school for pupils aged five to sixteen and provides education to patients on the paediatric wards at the Royal Free Hospital.

Alongside this, the RFHCS also runs alternative provision programmes for young people experiencing medical or mental health challenges, including those under the care of the Royal Free Eating Disorders Intensive Service, which means that they are not able to attend a mainstream school.

Having previously run the outreach programmes from two separate sites, these services are now under one roof at the Konstam Centre - making them easier to access, while increasing the number of local children and young people who can benefit.

The RFHCS's new Konstam building is home to a range of specialist support from educational psychology to speech and language and drama therapy, with about 40 young people aged 5 to 16 currently accessing full or part-time support in the new building.

Young people taking part in programmes with the RFHCS also have access to therapy dog sessions, weekly visits to an equine therapy centre as well as sports activities at the Royal Free Recreation Club and Pirate Castle in Camden Lock.

Former RFHCS student Jack, 25, speaking at the launch event, said: "I don't know where I would be without this place. I didn't engage with mainstream school but I wanted to come to school when I was here [on the Royal Free Hospital site]. The work being done here is just so important - it's amazing to see how far it has come and how much it has grown."



"This relocation provides our school with greater stability, as our alternative programmes and outreach services will operate under one roof for the first time. This, in addition to the improved space offered at Konstam, will enable the school to focus on meeting need as well as increase the number of young people we can support. We are also very excited to be developing a partnership with Brookfield Primary School this year, which continues to offer nursery provision in a separate space at the rear of the ground floor of the building".

Alex Yates, Headteacher at Royal Free Hospital Children's School



"Moving this provision to the Konstam Centre is not only making a huge difference to local children, but also provides long-term stability for the school. The RFHCS is an outstanding school offering vital provision for vulnerable children who are not able to attend a mainstream school, so it's fantastic that they are now able to run their outreach provision on one site and increase their services to benefit even more children and young people in the borough".

Councillor Marcus Boyland, Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families

Education will continue to be provided by the school within the Royal Free Hospital, with all other programmes now based at the newly-refurbished space at the Konstam Centre, which caters for up to 50 children and young people. Funding for the refurbishment has come from Camden Council.

For further information on programmes and admissions, which are by professional referral only, and the latest news please visit royalfree.camden.sch.uk.

More information:

Brookfield Primary School also opened its nursery for 2-year-old children in September 2021 using the ground floor and generous outdoor areas of the Konstam Centre.

This is important provision for the local community, particularly for those families eligible for 15 hours a week of free early education.

Laure Robin, Headteacher at Brookfield Primary School, said: "Our new partnership with the Royal Free Hospital Children's School is a very exciting opportunity. Sharing the site will enable us to continue our successful nursery for 2-year-olds, where the children make excellent transitions to our primary school. As an inclusive school, we are inspired to be working alongside the RFHCS and to collaborate on future projects together."

Brookfield Primary School also has a 39-place nursery for 3 and 4-year-olds at their main school site. For more information head to brookfield.camden.sch.uk.