



# **THE THOMAS GROUP Prospectus 2024/25**

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## LOCATION

The Thomas Group has been located at RFHCS Konstam Centre from Sep 2023



**75 Chester Road  
London  
N19 5DH**

### **Rail**

The nearest over ground trains are Upper Holloway and Gospel Oak (both about 10 minute walk)

### **Underground**

Archway or Tufnell Park tube stations are a 15-minute walk away.

### **Buses**

C11 bus stops very close by.

### **Parking**

There is very limited parking.

## CONTEXT

The Royal Free Hospital Children's School is a Community Special School based in The London Borough of Camden. We offer high quality education for all children who are inpatients at the Royal Free Hospital. From our Konstam site in Highgate N19 we also offer alternative programmes for children who are not inpatients but who are receiving support from medical or mental health services.

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2024/jan/01/less-daunting-inside-the-new-education-unit-in-north-london-supporting-school-refusers>  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx0vq01j3y9o>

## ABOUT OUR PROVISION



The Thomas Group (TTG) is a small, nurturing, educational setting for KS3 children presenting with social, emotional and psychological difficulties.

Personalised and effective education is provided, helping to keep children motivated, connected to their normal world and preventing them from falling behind or suffering educational failure. The majority of children recruited to the group are receiving support from medical or mental health services and the TTG, facilitates their recovery from the emotional, psychological and educational challenges they have experienced. Although the Thomas Group is aimed at KS3 students, KS4 students may also be considered where there is no other suitable provision available to them.

Mental Health and wellbeing are taken seriously and our provision is committed to trauma informed practice. Students receive individual attention while remaining in a classroom context and over time this generates trust and enables them to re-engage in learning.

The provision operates within a multidisciplinary framework; working closely with a range of professionals including consultant doctors, mental health professionals, occupational therapists, speech therapists, educational psychologists and other agencies. Direct contact with parents, carers and referrers is welcomed.

TTG offers a space where young people are encouraged to embrace change and develop independence and resilience. It has a proven track record in achieving positive outcomes for its young people and as part of the RFHCS, is inspected by Ofsted. The progress that current students in TTG make is at least good and in most cases outstanding relative to their starting points. Some children may return to mainstream education and others may go on to the RFHCS Futures or other educational provisions according to their individual needs.

TTG is viewed as a key player in Camden Council's approach to securing better outcomes for children and young people through developing resilience and in achieving greater impact and efficiency by intervening earlier and preventing escalation.



## MISSION STATEMENT AND AIMS

### **Mission statement:**

To provide safe and nurturing educational settings that enable young people to re-engage positively with academic study and develop their social skills to prepare them for a hopeful future.

To do this, young people are supported to demonstrate:

- Cooperation
- Consideration
- Contribution

which enables them to change and grow.

### **Aims:**

- To provide a safe, nurturing educational environment, built on a foundation of supportive, respectful relationships, that promotes emotional wellbeing and a sense of school belonging.
- To support students to make changes and build self-confidence and resilience to prepare them for life beyond school.
- To ensure that young people can access and make progress with learning, enabling them to achieve the best outcomes for them.
- To use a multi-disciplinary holistic approach to provide bespoke support for students.
- To consistently hold young peoples' voices in high regard and place them at the centre of education, health and care planning.

## ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

TTG is aimed at young people who live in the London Borough of Camden or attend local schools but due to medical or mental health challenges are unable to access mainstream education.

Students in TTG tend to present with complex and inter-related special educational needs that affect their ability to learn which could include any of the following:

- Significant social emotional vulnerability or mental health needs (SEMH) affecting their ability to thrive in mainstream school

- Severe and persistent attendance issues in association with significant anxiety, emotional vulnerability and/or school refusal

Although students' social communication, emotional and social development needs may impact on their presentation at times, due to its size and setting *TTG is not appropriate for any significant emotional and behavioural difficulties that either present a risk to others or impact on the ability of other members of the group to learn and make progress.*



### WHO REFERS A CHILD FOR A THOMAS GROUP PLACE?

A range of professionals make enquiries to the school including –

- Camden Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Camden School Inclusion Team
- CAMHS

- Social Care
- Educational Psychologists
- School Pastoral Leaders or SENDCOs

Referrals are discussed in partnership with the RFHCS at half-termly Camden School Inclusion Panel meeting to assess the suitability of the young person. Terms of Reference for the panel are available on the school website here: [Camden SIP TOR](#)

Following a successful referral, a student's ability to manage in TTG will be assessed over an initial 6 week induction period.

## THE SCHOOL DAY

From Monday to Friday, the Thomas Group runs from 9.30am to 2.15pm.



## CODE OF CONDUCT

RFHCS has a clear ethos for our learning community: ***Co-operation Consideration and Contribution***

Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour whenever possible. RFHCS's behaviour policy is underpinned by the principles of Trauma Informed Practice. – valuing mutual respect, participation and reward.

To help us achieve our aims, the Thomas Group has adopted its own simple code of conduct.

## **The Code of Conduct**

Students and adults are expected to:

- be polite and not hurt or bully anyone through unkind or careless words or actions.
- listen when someone else is talking.
- work hard to achieve their best.
- switch mobile phones off during lessons
- dress appropriately for the learning situation

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

***"The school provides an exceptional quality of education for students" OFSTED 2019***

The Thomas Group has a proven track record in achieving positive outcomes for its young people. The progress that current students make is, in most cases, outstanding relative to their starting points. There is an emphasis on care, safety, health and an enjoyment of learning.

The provision offers a holistic approach to teaching and learning that takes account of each child's medical, psychological, social, emotional and educational needs. Children are provided with purposeful educational opportunities using a wide range of resources and are offered individually focused one-to-one and small group teaching opportunities.

**The Thomas Group programme takes place over five days and is able to offer continued learning in the following areas:**

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Arts Award
- Music
- History
- PSHE
- Drama Therapy

- Music Therapy
- Equine Therapy

Particular emphasis is placed on learning Maths and English. Music lessons with a Music tutor take place once a week as well as Drama therapy. If students have a special interest or favourite subject not included above, this can often be accommodated.



The curriculum extends to an activity at the end of each week involving Equine Education (learning through horses) at the Edgware stables or workshops with the Camden Roundhouse (depending on what time of year). Extra-curricular trips and visits take place quite regularly.

On a day-to-day basis, TTG provides class-based group teaching, opportunities for self-supported study and one-to-one tuition where possible. A professional but very supportive and collaborative learning environment is created in the classroom, tailored to the needs of each individual young person.

A detailed profile of each learner is built up and captured in a Learning and Well Being Plan and includes short-term and long-term targets for all students, which are regularly and systematically reviewed and supported by other agencies.



### **Personal, Social and Health Education**

Students participate in lessons that challenge them to think about themselves and the world they live in. They engage in lessons to assist in development of emotional literacy, and discuss ways to maintain positive well-being and avoid the common health risks. They are given a wider understanding of social and economic issues facing people in other countries and the world in general.

### **LUNCH TIMES @ THE THOMAS GROUP**



Most students bring lunch however we are a nut free environment and ask parents not to send in food containing nuts, fizzy drinks, chocolates and sweets.

We have to be particularly aware of specific student's health needs. For example, children with allergies, gastric problems, or eating disorders.

### **MEDICINES IN SCHOOL**

During their Admission meeting, the child's needs are discussed and arrangements made for administration by the child or a member of staff. All parent(s)/carer(s) are asked to give their written permission for their child to be given non-prescription medicines during the school day e.g. for a headache. Administration of any medicines is logged with time, dosage, and reason

## **ARRANGEMENTS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

The Thomas Group aims to –

- Identify each student's needs, assess those needs and ensure that the school works in partnership with the student, parent(s)/carer(s), medical team and any other agencies supporting the child
- Ensure that all students are provided with the support they need to access the curriculum and make progress commensurate with their ability.

The Thomas Group has specialist resources to support teaching and learning for students with a wide range of needs. Staff, have extensive experience in teaching children with learning difficulties and disabilities both RFHCS and in other settings.

The Thomas Group is well supported by the RFHCS SENDCO, Speech and Language Therapist and Educational Psychologist.

Every student, including those with an EHCP who attends our provision for a period of time, will have their own Individual Learning and Well-Being Plan.

As a provision we are committed to being inclusive. During a student's admission meeting, a multi-disciplinary team will discuss the child's specific needs, any additional resources needed and who will provide them.

The Konstam Centre is wheelchair accessible with a lift; the school is on two levels, with wide doors and 3 disabled toilets. TTG is currently located on the first floor. The school has a detailed Accessibility plan; covering the curriculum, teaching and learning and student participation.

## **WORKING WITH PARENT(S)/CARER(S) AND FAMILIES**

The Director and staff welcome contact with parents/carers and families and are always happy to take time to talk over any issue. The Director has an initial discussion with parents/carers about the education and support their child will receive from the school.

Good communication with families, through personal contact and by telephone, is an essential part of our service.

Parents/carers of the Thomas Group students are kept regularly updated on their child's progress on a daily basis and throughout the week.

Progress is discussed more formally via a termly progress review meeting; attended by professionals from the child's mainstream school and other relevant agencies which ensures children experience consistency and continuity in their education and care.

## ATTENDANCE

The expectations for students regarding attendance and punctuality are individually agreed with each child and their family at the Admission meeting. The school operates a daily morning call system to support both students and parents/carers with attendance.

Parents/carers of day students must telephone at the earliest opportunity to inform us of the reason a day-student is absent. Family holidays should be planned to occur outside of term time.

Often, with significant gaps in their education we believe that consistent attendance is the key goal for all students on the programme.

## SAFEGUARDING

**"The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Safeguarding arrangements are excellent."**

**"Parents report that they have every confidence in the school's work and know that their children are safe and well cared for. Safeguarding procedures are very well organised and secure." OFSTED**

The school adheres to the London Child Protection Procedures, adopted by Camden Children, Schools and Families. Staff, have a responsibility to report concerns to a designated senior manager, who will take an appropriate course of action to ensure a student's safety and wellbeing. Although it is important to have a good relationship with families, it does not override the need to protect the child.

Parent(s)/carer(s) can obtain a copy of these procedures and the school's policy from the Senior Administration Officer or [www.royalfree.camden.sch.uk](http://www.royalfree.camden.sch.uk)

## TRANSITIONS

Regular discussions take place around student progression including termly reviews with students, parents, schools and the team of supporting professionals. This involves careful thinking and planning before reaching a decision alongside and in the best interest of each student.

Some students transition to the Royal Free Hospital Children's School FUTURES programme, where they are given the opportunity to attend an induction in advance of their start date; some reintegrate into their main stream school or another alternative provision. Former students have also gained access to various colleges of further education and all destinations are tracked.