



# School Prospectus

Cherry Tree is part of the



Building Resilience, Inspiring Growth

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# New Beginnings



**Edward Smethurst,**  
Proprietor

Ultimately, choosing the right school for a child will be a life changing decision. Ensuring it is a good decision is critical. We know that parents and carers want a high standard of education for their child to make good progress, in an environment where they can be happy and safe.

Branches Education Group is well known for supporting children and young people, with a range of needs and difficulties to be cared for and well supported in a range of different settings. We embrace our duty to support children to engage in education. Sourcing suitable schools or learning provision has been a huge challenge for us and for local authorities.

Our staff team is highly experienced, suitably qualified and trained. Ultimately, they recognise and embrace the challenges associated with supporting pupils who have experienced disrupted education, have gaps in learning and whose needs were not met previously. We make it our business to support our staff team, to ensure their own well-being, so they can work effectively and remain passionate about making the difference.

We know that good quality, relevant education is key to improving pupil progress, personal development, well-being, and overall life chances. Our curriculum is based on the National Curriculum, with some great additions, including careers for all, independence, and enterprise skills. Pupils in each Key Stage can pursue personalised, appropriate programmes of learning, including academic and vocational pathways.

Your decision to choose our school for your child will be supported by us throughout your child's time at Cherry Tree School. We will work closely with you as parents, carers, and local authorities to help ensure your decision was the right one.

We work in partnership with Prosperity Children's Services to provide therapeutic wrap-around support for children. This enhances our trauma informed and trauma responsive approach, building a safe and secure environment for our children to be able to access learning. We incorporate principles from the PACE model (Hughes 1997), further enhancing our trauma informed and attachment building environment; promoting 'connection before correction' to enable our children to engage in situations with more tolerance. Also maintaining our child-centered focus (Rogers 1957), weaving in acceptance, congruence and a belief in each of our children to achieve to their full ability.

**Please contact us at any time, we look forward to meeting you.**

# Our School

As Chief Executive Officer, I am delighted to welcome you to Maple School, a nurturing and inspiring environment where children can thrive academically, socially, and personally.

Our school does not offer a 'one size fits all' solution. Instead, we provide a bespoke package tailored to meet the individual needs of each pupil. We work alongside our pupils, parents and professionals to equip both pupils and staff with the tools, skills, and knowledge they need to be their very best. My personal aim is to create learning communities where every individual is supported to achieve their full potential, and successes are celebrated.

As CEO, I am incredibly proud to lead such an innovative, passionate, and caring family of schools. I warmly welcome everyone to visit and experience firsthand the wonderful learning opportunities that our pupils get to experience every day.

Our commitment to excellence, collaboration, and personalised support is evident in everything we do, and I am confident that you will see the positive impact of our efforts on the pupils, families, colleagues and our wider community.



**Katie Walmsley,**  
CEO

# Branches Education Group

**Strength in every branch. Growth in every child.**

Branches Education Group is a growing cohort of specialist SEND schools across Lancashire and Yorkshire, united by a shared belief: that with the right support, every child can thrive.

Established in 2024, Branches was formed to bring together high quality, child centred specialist provision under one carefully nurtured group—combining local identity with shared expertise, values and ambition.

## Our Purpose

At Branches, we exist to create safe, supportive and inspiring learning environments where children are understood, valued and empowered.

Many of our pupils have experienced barriers to education. Our role is to remove those barriers—academically, emotionally and socially, so each child can rediscover confidence, curiosity and joy in learning.

We believe progress looks different for every child, and we celebrate small steps, meaningful outcomes and long term growth.

## Our Values

### Compassion

We meet every child where they are.

### Consistency

We build trust through structure, routine, and strong relationships.

### Creativity

We think beyond traditional teaching, finding what works for each learner.

### Collaboration

We grow stronger when we work together — as colleagues, families, and communities.



# A warm message from our Headteacher

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to Cherry Tree School.

Cherry Tree is a DfE registered, independent, specialist day school in Blackburn, Lancashire. Our school provides high quality education for pupils aged 5 to 16 years. Pupils have a range of needs, including social, emotional, and mental health, autism, cognition and learning and communication difficulties. Cherry Tree School is committed to developing pupils as individuals, enabling them to achieve their full potential.

## School Vision

Our vision is to create an inclusive, supportive, and aspirational learning environment where young people are enabled to reach their full potential. The Cherry Tree, known for its renewal and new beginning, which symbolises our commitment to nurturing growth and independence in every learner.

Just as the Cherry Tree thrives in diverse environments demonstrating strong resilience in the face of adversity, we believe in empowering our students to overcome challenges, adapt to change, and flourish in their own unique ways.

Our motto “**Building Resilience, Inspiring Growth**” empowers us to equip every learner with the skills, confidence, and resilience needed to succeed in further education, employment, and adult life.



**Joe Darnell**  
Head Teacher

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to visit our truly exceptional school.

**T:** 01254 366860

**E:** [Joe.Darnell@cherrytreeschool.org](mailto:Joe.Darnell@cherrytreeschool.org)

# School Ethos and Values

At Cherry Tree School we are committed to creating a safe, supportive and inclusive environment where every pupil is valued as an individual. Our staff team works collaboratively to ensure that pupils feel understood, supported and encouraged to succeed. We recognise that our pupils may face a range of challenges and we are dedicated to helping them overcome barriers to learning so that they can achieve their full potential.

Our ethos is rooted in our core values of inclusivity, empowerment, collaboration, resilience, wellbeing and excellence in support. These values guide everything we do and shape the positive culture of our school community.

Our core principles mean that we:

- Recognise and celebrate the unique strengths and abilities of every pupil
- Provide an inclusive and supportive learning environment where all pupils feel safe and respected
- Maintain high expectations and aspirations for both pupils and staff
- Support pupils to build resilience, confidence and independence
- Work collaboratively with pupils, families and professionals to provide the best possible support
- Prioritise health, wellbeing and positive relationships across all aspects of school life
- Help pupils develop the skills and understanding needed to live happy, healthy and fulfilling lives
- Prepare pupils for their next stage of education, employment and participation in the community
- Encourage pupils to become positive and valued members of society

All school policies will be made available on our website and / or on request from the school office.

# Staff Team and Recruitment

We follow rigorous safer recruitment processes to ensure high quality staff are recruited and that pupils are kept safe. Senior leaders involved in the recruitment process are trained in safer recruitment. All staff have to undergo comprehensive checks, including references and an Enhanced DBS check.

As a new, developing school, the staff team is growing. We choose staff carefully, so the team is effective, and dynamics work well.

**All of our job vacancies can be found at:**

[www.branches-education.org.uk](http://www.branches-education.org.uk) or [www.cherrytreeschool.org](http://www.cherrytreeschool.org)



# Safeguarding and Child Protection

Our school is committed to safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety at all times. To support this, we follow national guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE). We have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) who are trained to the highest levels, and lead on safeguarding across the school, liaising with the local area designated officer (LADO) as required. All staff complete training in safeguarding and child protection, which is refreshed annually.

We work closely with partner agencies to help keep pupils safe and well. All staff are aware of how to respond to concerns. Where we suspect that a child has been abused or neglected, we have a statutory duty to make a referral to relevant agencies. Where local procedures allow, we will inform the parents/carers of the referral, depending on the nature of the concern. We will share any information relevant to the referral with those agencies and will contribute to any assessments needed.

If a pupil, parent, carer, or staff member have any concerns, however small, about a child's welfare or safety, they should share this with us, and we will follow the correct procedures in a sensitive manner. Information shared could help protect a child from harm or save a life. Please refer to our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for more information. This is available on our website and also from the school office, upon request.

Designated Safeguard Lead (DSL)

Mr Joe Darnell

T: 01254 366860

E: [Joe.Darnell@cherrytreeschool.org](mailto:Joe.Darnell@cherrytreeschool.org)

Cherry Tree School, 548 Preston Old Road, Blackburn, BB2 5NL





# First Aid, Health and Medical Needs

Our school has a medical room and provides safe storage of medication. As part of staff induction, all staff complete a Basic First Aid Training course and a three yearly refresher course. Individualised Risk Assessments will be produced, agreed with parents and carers, and implemented for pupils. Nominated staff are trained to administer prescribed medication. All medication is recorded and kept in a locked medical cabinet. For further information, please see our Safe Administration of Medication Policy.

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## Health and Safety

Health and Safety is coordinated by the Head Teacher. All staff complete Health and Safety awareness training, including safe systems of working, fire, infection control. The Site Manager and maintenance staff complete comprehensive internal and external health and safety checks across the whole school site conducts regular audits of all aspects of Health and Safety throughout the school year.

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## Risk Management

We have rigorous procedures to ensure everyone's safety, including using a range of risk assessments to help staff identify and minimise risks in all curriculum activities and the environment. Risk assessments are completed when required and reviewed, authorised and signed off by the Head Teacher. The school premises have a range of plans in place, including a full Fire Risk Assessment which is signed off annually with fire services.



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# Anti-Bullying

Everyone in our school community is entitled to feel valued, safe and protected from harm, including bullying. Our staff team work hard with pupils to ensure they are proud of contributing to the warm, caring atmosphere in school.

The pupil and staff community come from a diverse range of backgrounds and cultures. Pupils have a range of needs, difficulties, and diagnoses. All of these attributes bring opportunities for us to raise awareness about difference, promote tolerance and understanding, address misconceptions and prejudices, and challenge discrimination. Our curriculum teaches and promotes British Values of tolerance, respect, equality and diversity and bullying is responded to immediately by staff.

Our school is a 'telling school', where pupils, parents, carers, and staff are encouraged to raise any concerns. Bullying will not be tolerated in our school. We are sensitive and proactive with tackling bullying when it occurs.

Please see our Anti-Bullying Policy, which we promote through our ethos, conduct, culture, and curriculum.



# Curriculum

We believe that everyone has a personal best and that we play a vital role in making this a reality. All pupils will be given opportunities and support to reach their potential, achieve well and succeed in life beyond school.

Our curriculum is pupil-centred, ambitious, relevant and engaging. We have high aspirations and expectations of all pupils. They should leave our school with a range of experiences, skills and qualifications which will act as currency, providing them with a solid foundation for success in life.

We aim to:

- deliver a broad, balanced, and ambitious curriculum, based on the National Curriculum, differentiated as is appropriate to individual pupil's needs and interests.
- provide a framework for teaching and learning, within which there is flexibility and scope for this adaptation and creativity to take place.
- ensure high quality teaching and learning experiences for all pupils.
- support pupils' needs and requirements so they can access, enjoy and succeed in school.
- provide the experiences and skills pupils need to be well prepared for their next stage of life; for further education, employment and to play active and fulfilling roles in society.
- ensure staff are well supported to deliver our curriculum by providing continuing professional development, guidance, and support to deliver excellent education and support for pupils.

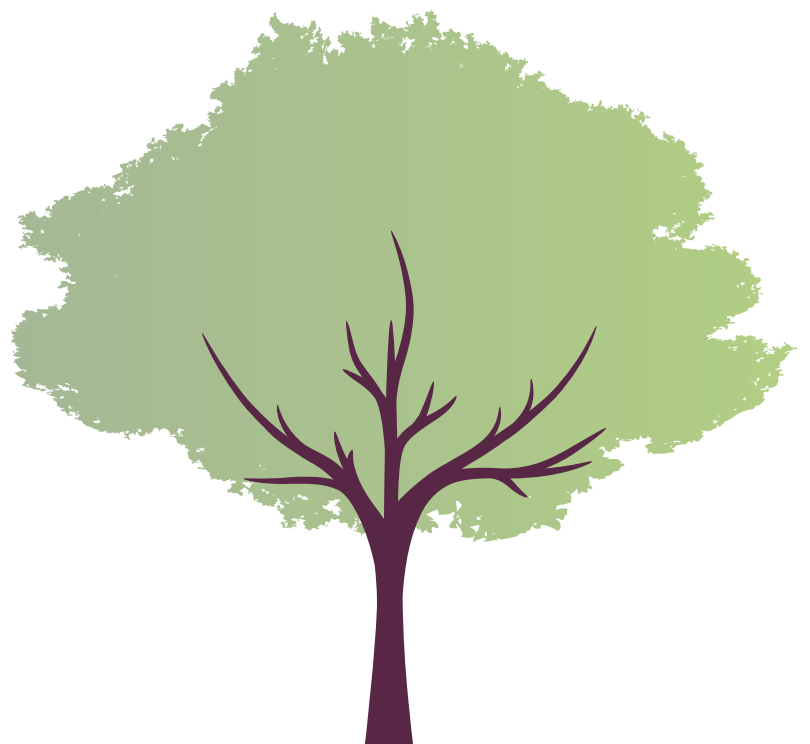
For further information, please refer to our comprehensive Curriculum Policy, available upon request.

# Promoting Healthy Lifestyles & Life Choices

We support pupils to understand the benefits of living a healthy lifestyle and making good life choices. Opportunities for promoting this starts from arrival at school, where we provide a great opportunity to have a healthy breakfast and socialise in a safe environment with peers and staff.

Throughout the school day our staff support pupils and our taught curriculum provides a wealth of opportunities to explore positive and negative lifestyle choices. Staff help pupils to make connections to these areas, including the impact of the decisions we make. This helps pupils to make healthier choices every day and in their future lives.

School lunch is provided, with a range of choices and opportunities to try something different, including foods from around the world. Staff will always build in opportunities to make connections to cultural and religious festivals and celebrations, whilst encouraging pupils to take part in activities and opportunities.



# Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

All pupils will receive age and ability appropriate relationships and sex education. This learning is vital in preparing children and young people to recognise and sustain healthy and meaningful relationships, whilst keeping safe. The arrangements for teaching RSE, including parental right to withdraw their child from sex education elements can be discussed further upon request. For an overview of what we teach in each year group, please refer to our Relationships and Sex Education Policy, which is available on our website or on request from the school office.

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## Religious Studies

At Cherry Tree, we pride ourselves on helping pupils to develop a broad understanding of the core values at the heart of all the main religions. We believe that by knowing accurate, factual knowledge, pupils will develop a broad understanding of different religions and cultures. Ultimately, we promote tolerance and encourage pupils to embrace and respect diversity, where it can be shown that beliefs are not extremist or contrary to British Values.

To support us in our offer, we refer to elements of the local offer as produced by the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE). We hope that parents and carers share with us our beliefs about the importance of educating pupils about religions, cultures, and differences, to support us all in challenging misconceptions, prejudices and discrimination. If you wish to withdraw your child from any or all of the religious education lessons, please contact the Head Teacher.



# Accreditation

Our expectations are high, and we will encourage and support all pupils to leave school having sat a range of qualifications from Functional Skills, GCSEs and equivalents.

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## Access to Examination Results

Due to the small number of pupils entering public examinations each year, the results will not be published on our web page, to avoid identifying any individuals concerned. Results will be reported to parents and carers for those taken GCSEs/equivalent external qualifications. All parents and carers will receive an annual report of progress and attainment for their child.

# Personal Development, Attitudes and Behaviour

We focus on developing the whole child.

## **Our school**



helps pupils to develop into responsible, respectful, and active citizens



promotes equality of opportunity in an inclusive environment



develops pupils' self-esteem, confidence, and resilience  
so they can keep themselves mentally healthy



develops pupils' character, nurturing the qualities they need  
to be successful in society and life beyond school.

Please refer to our Behaviour and Rewards Policy,  
which is used to promote good behaviour

# Uniform & Equipment

**Pupils are expected to wear a basic uniform, as follows:**

- Cherry Tree (or plain) white polo shirt
- Cherry Tree (or plain) black sweatshirt jumper
- black trousers
- smart, plain black footwear

## **P.E. Kit**

- plain black shorts or jogging bottoms
- plain white t-shirt
- plimsolls or training shoes

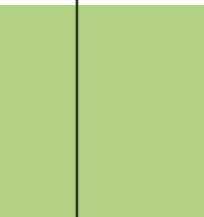
## **Equipment**

We provide all equipment, including stationery.

- pencil case
- home / school diary

**Please do not bring other items into school, including:**

- money, personal items or jewellery
- mobile phones
- food or drink



# Term Dates and the School Day

Pupils attend school for 190 days over 39 weeks.

**Please see our website for details of Term and Holiday Dates.**

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## Admissions

We specialise in supporting children between the 5 – 16 years who have social, emotional, and mental health conditions which also include autism, cognition, learning and communication difficulties. Initial enquiries are welcome, if we believe we might be able to meet a child's needs, then we will arrange a visit to Cherry Tree. All referrals must come to us directly from the pupil's local authority which can happen at any point throughout the year.

The child and their parent/carer are invited to find out more information about their specific needs and understand how Cherry Tree and our education offer will support you.

Ultimately, we must be certain that we can meet a child's needs effectively and that the placement with us is likely to be successful for all concerned. A contract, fees and transport arrangements, if appropriate, will be agreed with the local authority. A start date will be identified, which will always be the earliest date we can. All pupils have a personalised admission programme, supporting a smooth transition to the school.

Please refer to the school's Admissions Policy, which is available on our website and from the school office, upon request.

### **Referrals Manager**

E: [educationreferrals@branches-education.org.uk](mailto:educationreferrals@branches-education.org.uk)

# School and Proprietor Details

## Head Teacher Contact Details

Joe Darnell

T: 01254 366860

E: Joe.Darnell@cherrytreeschool.org

## School Administrator

T: 01254 366860

E: info@cherrytreeschool.org

Cherry Tree School, 548 Preston Old Road, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB2 5NL

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## Proprietor Details

Mr Edward Smethurst

## Governance Chair

Louise De-Hayes

Branches Education Group Limited

Vantage Point, 4 Hardman Street, Manchester, England, M3 3HF

T: 01254 366860

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# Notes

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[cherrytreeschool.org](http://cherrytreeschool.org)