

Commitment to excellence

Sensory Guru's innovative partnership with West Oaks School

We have had the pleasure of working with West Oaks School for over a decade. This outstanding OFSTED-rated school has been recognised five times for its excellence in education. West Oaks boasts three interactive zones and five Magic Room Classrooms across three sites, with plans to install more in the near future.



Andrew Hodkinson
Headteacher

As a long-time user of our systems, West Oaks is well-versed in leveraging technology to enable their students to achieve their full potential. Their daily use of our products is a testament to their commitment to providing the best possible learning experience for their pupils. We are proud to partner with West Oaks School in their mission to empower the next generation.

Ahead of BETT 2023, we sat down with Andrew Hodkinson, Headteacher, to discuss the importance of inclusive technology and the secret to West Oak's continued success.

➔ Can you tell us about West Oaks and your role?

It's such an honour for me to be the leader of West Oaks Special School, which has a long-standing reputation for excellence in special education. Our educational philosophy emphasises inclusion, we prioritise the needs of our children first, whilst striving for excellence for everyone in our school community.

West Oaks School teaches pupils aged 2-19 and currently has the capacity to educate 440 pupils across three sites: Boston Spa Learning site, Woodhouse Learning site and we have exciting plans for expansion, with our pupil numbers set to increase to 500 now we have launched our third site, Headingley Learning, last September.

All our pupils have an Education Health and Care Plan, and our sites cater to students of all ages. We educate children with a wide range of needs, including profound, multiple, and complex conditions, autistic spectrum conditions, and severe learning difficulties.

➔ You have worked with Sensory Guru on many projects?

Yes, it's true that we have worked closely with Sensory Guru for over a decade on the development of immersive learning spaces at West Oaks as their technology complements our exciting curriculum pathway model. Their innovative results have been consistently impressive, and I appreciate how their commitment to excellence aligns with our own ethos at West Oaks. Their ongoing development of new and improved products is something we greatly value.

It's important to us to support companies as they develop new resources, and Sensory Guru has been an outstanding partner in this regard. The interactive environments they've helped create have had a tremendous impact on our pupils, and our staff absolutely love designing engaging themed experiences like "Underwater World," "Reindeer Rave," "Into Space" or "Down on the Farm."



@WestOaksLeeds



➔ How do pupils benefit from the partnership with Sensory Guru?

The pupils at our school hugely benefit from products like the Magic Carpet and the Magic Mirror because they encourage movement and foster interaction at all levels. We use these systems across all our 5 learning pathways for different learning needs. Magic Room has opened up new possibilities in our classrooms, and we've invested in 5 systems so far. Our educators have embraced this technology and are now creating even more engaging, creative, and interactive lessons that further stimulate and engage pupils.

What impresses me most about these systems is their ability to engage pupils, allowing them to really enjoy their immersive learning experiences. They add a layer of fun and excitement that makes students eager to participate. Our immersive learning spaces are highly motivating, and we often receive positive feedback from parents and professionals about the quality of our learning environments. At West Oaks we see the environment as the third teacher, behind our high-quality teachers and 5 pathway curriculum.

This success is made possible by the innovative technology supplied by Sensory Guru, as well as the dedication of our staff team who bring learning to life for our pupils.

➔ What excites you about the future?

I'm really excited about the future because we'll be rolling out an additional 15-20 Magic Room systems in the next two years through a phased approach, supported by our dedicated educators who have already embraced the use of Magic Room. Sensory Guru is a company that's always pushing the boundaries and moving forward, and we're eager to stay on the cutting edge of their developments.



"Collaborating with Sensory Guru has been a rewarding experience"

Having had the opportunity to visit Sensory Guru and see some of the innovative solutions they have in the pipeline, I can't wait to bring those advancements to our pupils and educators. It's inspiring to get a behind-the-scenes glimpse of where things are headed and to witness the passion and drive of the Sensory Guru team. I wholeheartedly champion companies like Sensory Guru, who are dedicated to improving the learning experience for our students, and I'm thrilled about the possibilities that lie ahead for our school community.

➔ What would you say to schools considering working with Sensory Guru?

I would highly recommend it. The innovative products and solutions that Sensory Guru offers have the potential to significantly enhance the learning experiences of students, especially those with special needs. Collaborating with Sensory Guru has been a rewarding experience, and their support has been invaluable in helping our educators integrate these technologies into their teaching practices. If you're looking for a partner who is highly responsive, shares a similar commitment to educational excellence and is passionate about making a difference for your students, I believe Sensory Guru would be an excellent choice.