



OAK HOUSE VOCATIONAL ACADEMY FOR SPECIAL NEEDS LEARNERS

Glenoaks is a private remedial and special needs school in Johannesburg that unleashes potential! We nurture academic, functional, social and emotional growth for learners and personalise support according to the needs and strengths of each learner. We create a nurturing and inclusive environment for our learners which is supported by our dedicated, passionate and professional team. We achieve this through innovative adaptation, accommodation, differentiation and individualisation for each learner.

Oak House Vocational Academy, part of Glenoaks School is aimed at learners between the ages of 12 and 18 who have special needs and the potential to eventually be more independent and enter the open labour market.

What the future holds for learners with special needs

Learners in South Africa with special needs experience significant barriers in terms of their education and future prospects as adults. Many of these learners will not achieve a Grade equivalent education, which in turn prevents them from entering tertiary institutions or the workplace. This can be a difficult fact for parents to accept considering that society still perceives academic excellence as the ultimate achievement and determinant of success.

At Glenoaks we believe that some learners are academically inclined, and others are functionally or practically inclined, which is simply an indication that a different way of learning is needed, and that more practical outcomes can result in the kind of success that is required for life and for many jobs. We believe in unleashing a learner's potential, encouraging them to persevere through the challenges and focus on the possibilities! Many parents comment that our curriculum should be taught in all schools to all children because life and work skills are critical for survival, and seriously lacking in learners who are leaving the traditional school system.

Oak House Vocational Academy

Oak House Vocational Academy was conceived from the need to provide an appropriate setting for specific learners with special needs from our school, and from the broader community, whose abilities and

needs are not met in an academic setting. After intense research and planning both locally and abroad, a blueprint was formulated for our vocational academy – highly particular, uniquely crafted and finely tuned to Glenoaks' vision.



Our Curriculum

Life Skills

Our students are taught a creatively crafted curriculum which includes functional English and Maths, social skills; business skills; entrepreneurship; IT and admin skills; world knowledge; home management; hospitality; gardening; crafts and enterprise. Learning across subject areas is practical and integrated, so that learners understand the purpose of the skill, can transfer that skill to other tasks, and experience an end goal which is tangible. When learners can see and participate in a process from start to finish, they tend to retain skills far better, they get excited about learning and start demonstrating more independence and maturity at home.

An example of this approach is that learners will create a shopping list for a recipe; they will learn to purchase those items from a shop and understand the costs; they will plant and harvest some ingredients; make the recipe, sell the food to customers, and explore concepts such as profit and loss. This holistic style has exposed learners to relevant skills in English; budgeting and money management; shopping; growing produce; food preparation; packaging; admin (stock take, order forms); teamwork; customer service; understanding deadlines and appropriate social skills for different environments.

Work experience

Oak House Academy learners are exposed to the concept of work from the beginning of their journey with us. Younger learners participate in internal contract or project based work, and older learners benefit from external work experience placements aligned to their strengths, abilities, and areas of interest, culminating in years of work experience by the time they graduate. All learners gain the skills required for entry level jobs, and focus on critical social skills, appropriate behaviours and attitudes required in the workplace.

Learners in the external work experience program are gaining exposure to a variety of industries and businesses including retail; IT; and many more. If further training or employment opportunities exist for a graduate, those are facilitated and supported by Oak House Vocational Academy. In 2019 the first group of learners graduated from the Academy and successfully commenced with further training, part time or permanent employment.

Here are just a few of our very capable learners at work experience. These young men and ladies, who would inevitably have very limited opportunities to gain meaningful employment, are using their strengths to add value to their work experience sites, learn important workplace skills, explore their strengths and change perceptions about people with special needs in the workplace.



Keila is gaining experience with the merchandising team at Moishes unpacking stock, restocking and organising shelves, packing orders for customers and pricing stock.



Qhawe is doing work experience at Lesco on the production line, assembling various electrical products for large retailers.



James is hosted by Tumbling Tigerz where he assists the coaches to set up and pack away equipment for obstacle courses, demonstrates activities to the children, and encourages them during sessions.



On her work experience days, **Sabrina** assists the operators at Blue Door Hair Salon to clean, straighten and dry foils. She folds towels and cleans basins, brushes and the hairdresser's work stations.



Jack is a tech wizard and is gaining experience at Stem Dynamics, a robotics company. He is learning programming and coding and using resistors and transformers to build working circuits. He also assists younger students in their weekly coding lessons.



Khotso has an artistic flair and loves his work experience at Greens Vintage Lane where he uses special paint techniques to assist with refurbishing small pieces of furniture and décor items which are sold in their shop.

Aligning with local and international standards / programs

From 2022 the Academy will integrate the ASDAN programs and courses into the curriculum. ASDAN is a UK based organisation offering a variety of accessible and practical courses for learners with special needs focusing on personal, independent living and employability skills, culminating in certification from the UK. Oak House Vocational Academy will also launch its first SAQA accredited NQF1 Business Practice learnership from 2022 for learners in their final year.

Placement at Oak House Vocational Academy

Placement decisions are based on various formal and informal assessment processes and are made by a collaborative team. If your child is currently struggling to achieve academically, experiences barriers to learning, is not coping in their current school or has a low self-esteem, you should consider Glenoaks. Please visit our website to learn more or email us to arrange for a tour of our amazing school.