



# The Island Project School

Independent School for  
Children and Young Adults with Autism

## School Prospectus



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## **1. Introduction**

The Island Project School was established as a specialist independent school designed to provide an appropriate education for children and young adults diagnosed with autism and associated communication deficits. It is founded on the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) with the pupils' needs at the centre of all planning. The School can provide education for pupils from age 5 to 19 years of age.

The School is currently based at Diddington Hall, Meriden, and has access to 4 acres of outside space. It is due to move to new premises at Jerrings Hall Farm, Solihull at some point in 2024..

## **2. School Aims**

The School aims to:

- teach pupils the knowledge and skills to build confidence and enable them to reach their full potential leading to as independent life as possible;
- provide a safe learning environment together with a learning experience that is communication focused and offers stimulation and challenge. We have a strong focus on life and living skills, and teaching pupils' independence.
- provide a breadth of curriculum opportunities to develop the individual pupil's capabilities to the full.
- foster the ability of the individual to make relationships, to better communicate with a wide a range of people and to encourage the ability to make personal choices.
- maintain and improve each pupil's physical abilities and to develop their understanding and awareness of the world around them.

## **3. School Ethos**

The Island Project School believes that:

- All pupils should be treated with dignity and respect.
- Pupils diagnosed with autism can learn effectively if they are given appropriate structured programs, which address their deficits and build upon their strengths.
- All pupils have the right to aspire to the highest standards attainable and that their achievements should be recognised and praised.
- All pupils should be helped to take responsibility for their own lives and be enabled to live as independently as possible.
- All pupils should be encouraged to make decisions and speak for themselves through any means of communication available to them.
- All pupils, irrespective of their disabilities, have the right to participate in the community in which they live.

School should be a rewarding place of fun and learning where building good relationships and a sense of community is fostered. School should be a place where everyone is valued and has equal worth and where everyone is treated with respect and dignity. The team at The Island Project School do not discriminate on the basis of sex, age, race, ethnic origin or religion.

#### **4. Admissions Policy**

To be eligible for admission to The Island Project School pupils must have:

- A primary diagnosis of Autism
- An Education Health & Care Plan (or “EHCP”)
- An agreement from their Local Authority. All places are Local Authority placements, The Island Project cannot offer places except in consultation with the Local Authority.
- Be of the appropriate age with the appropriate skills and behaviour profile to fill the available place.

Prospective parents may send a copy of their child’s EHC Plan to the School if they need advice on the likelihood of admission.

If a child meets all the criteria parents will be advised. They should then contact their relevant local authority to request placement.

Any approach for placement has to be made by the relevant local authority. Upon formal consultation, the School will review the current pupil cohort to look at whether:

- a space is available with the relevant cohort
- the impact on existing pupils

If it is felt that placement may be suitable, the School would respond to the local authority confirming that a space may be available, but any such placement would be subject to assessment. If the local authority agree to assessment, the Education team will carry out an assessment prior to agreement for a formal offer of placement with the local authority.

If the local authority agree placement, pupils can be admitted at any point during the academic year.

Following confirmation of placement, a transition plan will be drawn up. This is based entirely on the needs of the pupil to ensure that access is successful. Transition is usually planned on a phased introduction to school over a number of weeks or months, dependent upon the individual pupil.

#### **5. Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

The Island Project School does not have any religious affiliations and will welcome pupils of all faiths and all ethnic groups. The entry criteria reflect the School’s focus and area of expertise and therefore only refer to a prospective pupil’s special education needs in relation to Autism.

The School creates an environment where pupils understand right and wrong and differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The School promotes an understanding of responsibilities to others and to society.

Careful preparation, communication focus and constant appropriate reinforcement to convey these concepts are fundamental as it can be difficult for some pupils to comprehend these areas of development. The Education Team make use of a variety of media and means of communication to develop awareness of social and cultural practices; this includes visits to libraries, cinemas, concerts, places of worship and historical sites.

Access to the local community is a key part of preparing for adulthood.

Education must form part of the planned curriculum. Whilst most community visits are funded by the School, ; a small charge may be made for larger trips. Visits to any venue will be arranged with careful preparation and detailed consultation to ensure that the pupils can access the visit in a safe and appropriate manner.

It is hoped these excursions will engender a sense of pleasure for the pupils and their families in accessing community activities safely and happily. There will be an on-going effort to bring other appropriate groups and organisations into the School and to arrange joint activities wherever possible.

## **6. Discipline and Exclusion Policy**

The Island Project School is a small school based on the principles of ABA. The School curriculum is designed to address any challenging behaviours, which, often is a key element of Autism.

The emphasis is to achieve good behaviour amongst all the pupils and develop their own ability to focus on learning. Encouraging and assisting pupils to communicate with tutors and their peers is a key element in the Schools program of education. The high ratio of staff to pupils and consistent approach to behaviour is designed to ensure all members of the School are safe. A comprehensive behaviour plan for each pupil will form a working document for staff and be updated daily as appropriate, with information available to parents.

In the event of a pupil exhibiting behaviour which falls outside any behaviour plan or where there is an escalation of unusual challenging behaviour, the parents will be contacted to discuss any issues. This would be where the actions of the pupil disrupts the School, affects their education or that of the other pupils, or where the staff and pupils are placed at risk of harm. The objective will be to identify any cause for challenging behaviour to establish unidentified problem areas. As part of this review process, only if all the strategies for addressing the difficulties have been exhausted and have not led to any positive change, the School may consider suspension of the pupil to put in place relevant safety measures or controls.

If actions persist which mean that staff or pupils continue to be at risk, the School may consider permanent exclusion if no other options are available.

Further information can be found in the [Suspension & Exclusion Policy](#)

## **7. Educational and Welfare Provision**

All staff members are trained on a wide range of areas and issues which may arise from a diagnosis of Autism. There will be continual staff development and on-going training. The School intends to be at the forefront of knowledge in all topics, which have a bearing on improving the education and well-being of pupils with autism. This involves extensive in house and external training, attendance at conferences, holding seminars, using the internet to access worldwide information and sharing our knowledge and expertise with other organisations.

Supervision and assessment in the School, together with the high pupil/staff ratio, ensures that the development and progress of pupils is under constant review. Consistent daily monitoring will allow any areas of concern or problems are picked up quickly and addressed.

Parents have access to appropriate staff members and to information about their child. Parents are asked to contribute to regular discussions concerning their child. It is essential that parents are closely involved in their child's programme and they contribute information from home to assist in target setting.

Staff members are appropriately first aid trained and there is a designated medical/sick room. Parents must provide contact details for emergencies and will be alerted immediately if a member of staff has any concerns about a pupil's health.

Parents will be asked to provide the School with medical history for each child and keep the School informed of any concerns they have about their child's health or well-being.

## **8. Language and Communication**

The School's pupil group are those children with a diagnosis of autism and significant language and communication difficulties. All staff will be required to undertake Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) training and attend regular monitoring sessions, alongside a range of Speech and Language led strategies and training.

Improving language and communication will be a major focus of the School. It is recognised that the pupils within the School will have a range of language and communication ability. In accordance with the individual education plans there will be careful assessment and the development of communication strategies for each individual pupil.

High staff ratios mean that in 1:1 sessions new communication strategies can be implemented and new vocabulary can be introduced. In group work the differentiation of topics will include the pupils' communication on an individual basis.

Post 16 provision has an emphasis on functional life and living skills, but also offers opportunities for pupils to attain accreditation or qualifications on an individualised basis.

The School aims to support all pupils for whom English is not their primary language. We will, where appropriate, support any pupil with their needs around the use of a second language.

## **9. Education Policy**

The School aims to address the key areas of the National Curriculum incorporating the Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (AFFLS where appropriate). Each pupil has an individualised curriculum which includes

- English and Literacy
- Mathematics and Numeracy
- Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) including Relationship and Sex Education (RSE)

The School employs a range of teaching strategies, ABA, PECS and as appropriate speech and language therapy, sensory diets, occupational therapy etc. Full use is made of any appropriate interventions or techniques, to help individual pupils to communicate effectively, acquire knowledge, develop skills and access the curriculum. The stages the pupils can encompass may not necessarily correlate with the pupils' age and they may have differing levels of ability within their profile across different subjects. Their individual curriculum planning will reflect this. Each curriculum plan and IEP will be defined by the school education & therapy teams, with opportunities for input from the parents.

All pupils also have the opportunity to partake in educational courses (including TUTE, Asdan and topic specific external qualifications as appropriate) to achieve accreditations and qualifications.

The staffing ratio of 1:1 and the space provided by the School building allows for the construction of highly specific programs of work to be tailored to the needs of each pupil. The aim is to build on the strengths of each individual pupil and address their deficits in the most effective manner. This continual monitoring enables parents to receive regular feedback on the pupil's progress and receive advice on maintaining consistency between school and home.

The core teaching method on a 1:1 ratio is designed to ensure that the pupils are working effectively and retaining the knowledge they acquire, in addition increasing the opportunities for working in pairs and small groups. There are ranges of activities appropriately differentiated and specifically aimed at developing social interaction and the ability to cooperate with peers. There is an emphasis in activities which develop each pupil's ability to acquire information in a group situation and respond accordingly. These opportunities are used to deliver aspects of the curriculum such as spiritual, moral, social and cultural development alongside general topic work in a way that is meaningful to children with social and communication disorders.

Every effort is made to extend the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world in a way that is comprehensible to them. This is to be achieved by modifying the subject matter embodied in the National Curriculum and applying the various teaching strategies, which are proven to motivate and stimulate pupils with autism. All strategies are

supported by a full range of visual aids and prompts specifically designed to enable the pupil to structure their learning and perceive their own progress.

Use is to be made of IT to assist teaching and learning. The majority of teaching materials are to be made 'in house' discriminated to the specific needs of individual pupils. A full range of creative subjects are available across topic sessions.

The School building has been chosen to provide good space and facilities for physical activities both indoors and outside. The location in the Heart of England is central to the geographical area, with excellent communication links. The convenient access to the local facilities and countryside, offers scope for outdoor work as well as access to a local and supportive community.

## **10. Pupil Premium**

For individual pupils who should attract pupil premium payments, the nature of the small provision allows for individual planning across pupils' specific needs. A statement and further information can be found on the website.

## **11. Access to Information**

Copies of all the Schools policy documents and supporting information will be available on the website or to parents on request.

Parents will be invited to view all information held on their child at any time. Arrangements should be made with the School Principal to access this information.

Access to documents can also be obtained from the school website [www.theislandproject.co.uk](http://www.theislandproject.co.uk)

## **12. Operation Encompass**

The School participates in Operation Encompass which is a project run jointly between schools in the West Midlands, and West Midlands Police

Under the terms of Operation Encompass, West Midlands Police will report to schools, prior to 10am on the next school day, when a child or young person has been exposed to, or involved in, any domestic incident

Operation Encompass will ensure that a member of the School staff, known as a Key Adult, is trained to allow them to receive the information and liaise with the police. The information is supplied in confidence and enables the School to make provision for possible difficulties experienced by children or their families, who have been involved in, or exposed to, a domestic incident.

We are keen to offer the best support possible to all our pupils and we believe this will be extremely beneficial for those involved. The Key Adult for the purposes of Operation Encompass, is the School Principal.

### 13. Contact Us

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