

Rugeley School Parent/Carer Information Booklet



Name of School	Rugeley School
Address	Blithbury Road, Blithbury, Rugeley, Staffordshire, WS15 3JQ
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School Mission Statement

‘Through a personalised curriculum delivered in a structured learning environment underpinned by physical exercise and a multisensory approach, Rugeley School respects young people with autism and prepares them to be as happy and independent as possible.’

1. Provision at Rugeley School

Rugeley School is an independent specialist school. It offers placements for children/ young people (boys and girls) aged 5 to 19 years in receipt of an Education, Health & Care Plan, with a diagnosis of autism, or evidence of behaviours which are in accordance with such a diagnosis. Ability wise, all the young people currently have associated learning difficulties within the moderate to severe range. Our young people enjoy a safe, warm, welcoming and relaxed, yet structured environment, which encourages them to develop social, educational and practical skills and enjoy an active and fulfilling life in beautiful surroundings.

The school perceives Autism to be an individual neurodevelopmental condition which involves a varied impairment in:

- social interaction
- social communication
- social imagination and flexibility of thought
- the ability to learn and or generalise thought
- motor skills
- sensory integration



We aspire to develop each pupil's:

- Functional communication
- Ability to make social relationships
- Ability to participate in society
- Independence in Life Skills
- Self-regulation skills

Additionally, we seek to ensure that:

- All priorities, targets and activities are developmentally appropriate and work towards their outcomes.
- All domains of child development (communicative, social, cognitive, and motor) are viewed as interrelated and interdependent
- All school staff establish positive relationships with children and families showing all dignity and respect at all times.
- Family members are considered experts about their child. Assessment and educational efforts are viewed as collaborative processes.

The school can meet a very wide range of behaviours associated with Autism. As a behavioural approach we employ Team-Teach across the school and residential settings. At the core of its philosophy is the ethos of positive behaviour management. The school believes passionately that all behaviour should be seen as purposeful and serving of a variety of functions. For those children who display unconventional or challenging behaviours, the positive approach to behaviour places a strong emphasis on developing a range of supports for emotional regulation, with the ultimate goal of degree of self-regulation where possible. A key aspect of the Rugeley philosophy is participation in periods of regular physical activity. Primarily these enable the young people to disperse excess energy and attain the emotional and physical composure and increased self-awareness necessary to access the curriculum. Additional benefits we see include:

- A decrease in the frequency of negative self-stimulatory behaviours
- A decrease in aggression and self-injurious behaviours
- Increased attention span
- Improved motor-function
- Improved receptiveness to the development of desirable learning behaviours
- Improved proprioception and functioning of the vestibular system
- Improved self-awareness and well-being
- Improved tolerance of environmental complexity

The educational curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of the young people on an individual basis. The school Curriculum is built around the 7 curricular areas set out in the Independent School Standards:

- Linguistic
- Mathematical
- Scientific
- Technological
- Human and Social
- Physical
- Aesthetic and Creative.



Access to the curriculum subjects is at an appropriate developmental level and all pupils choose from an 'Enrichment' programme that offers experiences in a range of structured activities that may lead to developing better life outcomes through increasing interests, personal skills and employment. The curriculum is delivered in a highly structured learning environment that places great importance on a multisensory approach. The level of individual need pertaining to this is constantly reviewed by a multi-disciplinary therapy team. The use of visual support, the newest technology and high quality resources are deemed essential for all pupils and are used consistently across the school. The school maintains very close links with the residential children's home linked to the school and joint-working processes ensure that individual targets and provision needs cross seamlessly into the waking day curriculum. Shared routines across home, school and extended community links provide a rich context for learning and maximises the potential for individual outcomes.

2. Rugeley School offers:

- 88 place provision for young people with an ASD diagnosis.
- A safe, structured, positive and stimulating environment, that prepares students for adulthood.
- To give more meaning to the environment in which young people with ASD exist and to help them to lead fulfilling, happy, meaningful lives and prepare them for an independent adult life as possible.
- Partnership working with young people, parents, carers, colleagues within education, social workers and health and employment / training services to achieve the best possible outcomes.
- Support and guidance for parents and carers to develop risk management skills and resilience strategies to successfully deal with significant life experiences, changes and challenges of their young person.

Rugeley School uses a range of therapy services in line with our young people ECHP outcomes. We have support from a Speech and Language Therapist and employ a Speech and Language Therapy Assistant who promote the development of communication skills. We also have support from an Occupational Therapist and an Occupational Therapy Assistant, to support with sensory, emotional and practical needs. Rugeley School also employs a Positive Behaviour Support Lead and Positive Behaviour Support Assistants to support the school with positive behaviour strategies across the school.

3. Admissions

Young people are referred to the school via local authorities, social services and education departments. The school conforms to the Aspris Children's Services Admissions Policy and has the following admission criteria:



- A primary diagnosis of an autistic spectrum disorder or evidence of behaviours, which are in accordance with such a diagnosis.
- Learning difficulties within the severe to moderate range.

The school has an inter-disciplinary assessment team. Once a request for a place is received and the above criteria are met, the following will occur;

- The Education and Health Care Plan and supporting documents will form an initial decision of suitability.
- Parents/Carers will be invited to visit the school and a visit to meet the child in their current placement will be undertaken by the Headteacher or a Senior Leader.
- The assessment team meet with the Headteacher before a decision on a placement offer is made, considering EHCP outcomes also.

(including the identification of an appropriate peer group in terms of mix of abilities, age, behaviour, communication skills, level of supervision required, gender and group dynamics)

4. How school staff support the child/young person

Education is overseen and monitored by the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body. Each class has a Class Teacher supported by Teaching Assistants. The ratio is agreed on admission. Additional teaching support is given when required, or as funded in response to a specific need.

Many of the pupils may present challenging behaviour when highly anxious or frustrated. Every pupil has an individually designed Positive Behaviour Support Plan (PBSP) to ensure a consistent approach is used to support the young person.

5. How the curriculum is matched to the child's/young person's needs

Teachers and senior leaders plan teaching and learning opportunities that challenge and achieve progress.

An initial baseline assessment is undertaken by the multi-disciplinary team. Information informing the progress assessment includes:

- The Assessment Report
- Baseline Assessment to identify:
 - a. Functional Communication
 - b. Sensory Processing
 - c. Engagement
 - d. Academic Attainment
 - e. Social Skills

f. Behaviour

Following the initial assessment a set of initial priorities/targets will be set for that child/young person for their first 6 weeks in school. This and all the above information is utilised the child/young person can be aligned to a developmentally appropriate tier of the school curriculum and an appropriate class.



The latter baselines children and young people with autism in the key areas of:

- Social Communication
- Social Interaction
- Social Imagination / Flexibility
- Sensory processing
- Emotional understanding and self-awareness
- Learning
- Independence and community participation

The information gathered from these, the previous half-term's observations and the child or young person's EHCP will inform the creation of individually tailored IEP targets.

Individual Progress made against IEPs, Baseline and aspect priorities will be tracked, evaluated termly/annually as appropriate and reported back to stakeholders through Progress Reviews and other Review Meetings. Analysis of progress will inform interventions and curriculum adaptations for the next term

Key Stage 2 and 3 pupils follow a differentiated Curriculum but, from Key Stage 4 onwards, greater emphasis is placed on following individual interest. The school provides an 'Enrichment' curriculum in order to offer a wide range of experiences from which the young people can choose interests that they may wish to pursue. Vocational and work experience opportunities form an important part of the curriculum for many of the pupil's post 16.

Where appropriate, the pupils work towards accredited awards with AQA.

6. Therapeutic services

The school has access to the following therapeutic support

- A Speech and Language Therapist
- A Speech and Language Assistant
- An Occupational Therapist.
- An Occupational Therapist Assistant
- Positive Behaviour Analyst
- Positive Behaviour Support Practitioner
- Access to a range of therapeutic services required to meet individual EHCP outcomes.

Some pupils have therapeutic intervention written into their Statement or EHCP. These students will be on the caseload of the therapist in question. Every young person has a personalised sensory diet which they access throughout their day.

7. Celebrating Success

The whole atmosphere at Rugeley School aspires to being one of assurance and confidence. Young people's efforts and successes are privately and/or publicly acknowledged. Appropriate praise is given frequently either verbally, physically through signing and/or certification.



8. How will the parent/carers know how their child/young person is doing and how will you help the parent/carers to support their child's learning?

The school has a very strong ethos of working in partnership with parents. They are invited to reviews and full reports on progress are given termly (Progress Reviews). IEPs are issued termly to parents in order to keep them updated. All students have a home/school diary in which parents/the residential home can communicate information and staff can give feedback on the school day. On admission an agreement of a telephone update is made between the Class Teacher and parents. This can be daily, weekly, fortnightly or termly dependent on the needs of the parents.

The school operates an open house policy in which parents can visit, or arrange meetings with key professionals. School events are times for celebration but also times when parents can catch up with school staff. Each class provides a school booklet which informs parents of upcoming events for the term. Home visits can also be arranged.

9. What support will there be for the child's overall well being?

Within the school pastoral care is the responsibility of all staff. A constant vigilance is maintained regarding pupil well-being and therapeutic interventions form part of each child's positive behaviour support plan.

All health care issues are reported to parents/carers. Staff inform parents/carers of any accidents or incidents involving their child.

Strong professional relationships are in place between school and the pupil's home environment which ensures the well-being of the pupils is monitored and shared with the relevant people.

All the young people have a risk assessment that is regularly updated. Each residential young person has an individual placement plan which sets out the needs and routines that are specific to the individual.

Medication is locked securely away in the Medical Room and staff undergo internal and external training on the administration of medications. There is a robust procedure in place.

The school has one Designated Safeguarding Lead and three trained as a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads. All staff undergo training in Safeguarding as a requirement. The DSL's work closely with each other to maintain the highest vigilance across the three sites.

Staff are trained in Team Teach in order to be equipped primarily with the skills to identify possible triggers and so redirect to avoid stressful situations for the young person which could otherwise lead to challenging behaviour. The school uses de-escalation techniques with physical interventions being employed as a last resort. Full details of the management of behaviour are available upon request from the school.

The young people's health and medical needs are given high priority by the school and there are good links with other professionals responsible for their health.

The young people's views are sought at all times with the use of augmentative systems of communication being employed where possible. Opportunities for making choices are actively used both in school and home.



10. Specialist services, training and expertise available at or accessed by the school

All staff are trained in behaviour management strategies. Behaviour management plans are in place for all young people and detail best practice intervention which is completely individualised. The principal approach is always around de-escalation where possible. Behaviour Plans are reviewed regularly by the team around a child approach.

A member of the Senior Leadership Team has higher qualifications in Autism and provide in-house training for staff. The therapy team also provide training in addition to their in-house support for school and residential staff. The school regularly uses Entrust Training and The National College to ensure staff are up-to-date with the latest legislation relating to the curriculum. All staff undertake a mandatory e-learning training programme that includes ASD and Health and Safety.

11. Activities outside the classroom

All the young people have planned activities within and beyond school that are designed for them and are focussed upon aspirational outcomes in the 7 key areas

- Communication
- Sensory Processing
- Engagement
- Academic Attainment
- Behaviour
- Social and Emotional Development
- Life Skills

12. Accessibility of the school environment

The main school building is two storeys and there is a lift to upstairs. There are disabled toileting facilities on both floors.

13. Preparing and supporting the child for transition or the next stage of education and life

The Post 16 curriculum is designed to prepare the pupils for transition into adulthood. Transition reviews are held annually, which all key professionals are invited to attend. They are also invited into school for meetings and visits. When the next placement is identified, staff will support a young person on the agreed transition plan which may involve visits to next placement, which could also include an overnight stay. The focus would always be on what would be appropriate for the child. Students in their final year have opportunities to access impartial careers advice, college days, work experiences and participate in Duke of Edinburgh activities.

14. The level of support provided to each pupil

The level and type of support given to each child is determined through the requirements of the EHCP, close liaison with the therapeutic team and partnership working with the child's home.

The standard level of classroom support within the school is one adult to one pupil. The admission process identifies if a young person is likely to require more enhanced support than this and information for this is gained from observations on visits, past reports and EHCP requirements. Issues would also be discussed with the parent.

The level of support is reviewed termly and, where it is reduced, this may result in a reduction of the fees. This would be taken by the school as an indicator of progress being made. Indicators may be the reduction of difficult behaviours and/ or an increase in independence skills.



15. Children's/Young Persons Council

The school has a School Council that meets at least termly.

16. Specialist equipment

All students will be allocated the resources they need to support their learning. This includes equipment and resources are matched to students' needs and their suitability will be reviewed annually through the annual review process or as required. Curriculum subject resources enable all students to effectively access the curriculum. The school will ensure that all students have equal access to the curriculum and will ensure that specialist facilities, equipment and links with outside agencies are used effectively to promote learning.

17. Where do young people go when they leave your service?

Young people move on to either college (residential and day) or to residential homes/supported living. Where possible, they move back into their local authority.

18. Compliance and Quality Assurance

In addition to robust internal quality assurance processes e.g. termly Lesson Observations and Safeguarding Audits, the school has a statutory duty to comply with all aspects of the Independent School Standards. Copies of this are obtainable upon request from the school.

Further external scrutiny takes the form of a termly Governance Meeting from Aspris Children's Services:

Chief Operating Officer – Nancy O'Regan
Regional Director & Governance Lead – Tony Armstrong
Strathmore College Principal – Kate Ward

The Proprietor for the School is Aspris Children's Services, and the Chair for the Proprietor is Nancy O'Regan Chief Operating Officer.

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From September 2015 the school has been inspected by OfSTED under the new Common Inspection Framework. Our last full inspection took place in March 2023 when the school received a 'Good' judgement. Copies of our last OfSTED Inspection are available upon request from the school.



19. Safeguarding

The named Designated Safeguarding Lead at Rugeley School is Becky Blyth. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are Lisa Price (Headteacher), Emma Kimberley (Class Teacher) and Jessica Hartley (Post 16 Provision Lead). The Regional Safeguarding Lead is Katie Dorrian (Safeguarding Lead for Aspris Children's Services).

The school is completely committed to Safeguarding and the promotion of the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. All staff have a duty to conform to practices set out in our Safeguarding Policy and Local Safeguarding Procedures (both available from the school upon request). All staff must undertake an enhanced check for Children and Adults with the Disclosure and Barring Service and this must be completed before they commence working. It is essential that all the children within our care are protected from abuse and harm at all times. This means that in all our work we are aware of the possibility of abuse occurring and are proactive in ensuring that such things do not occur within our establishment. To do so the school aims to:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where pupils feel safe, secure and are listened to, and encouraged to talk.
- Actively ensure that pupils know that adults in their community can be approached if they are worried or are in difficulty.
- Include in the curriculum activities information, which will equip them with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse or harm.
- Ensure that wherever possible every effort will be made to establish and maintain effective working relationships with parents and professional agencies.