



# Transition from pre-school to primary school for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

## *A guide for parents and carers*

### What to look for in a school

#### Preparation

- book an appointment in advance, at a time that you can visit without your child, for your first visit to the school
- arrange to meet the Headteacher and the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo), if possible
- read the prospectus for the school
- talk to other parents/carers who have children at the school
- prepare a list of questions that you might want to ask. Please see page 3 for some examples of frequently asked questions.

#### First impressions

- does the school and the staff feel welcoming?
- do the children seem happy/well behaved?
- is it easy to find your way around – are there visual cues about how to find classrooms and key areas such as the hall, reception?
- are there other children who have similar needs?
- is the school a safe environment for your child?

#### The classrooms

- is the name of the class in word and picture/logo on each door? (in some schools there may be pictures of the staff team on the door or in the room)
- is there a visual timetable which is used for all the class?
- are there other visual support systems in place e.g. a choice board?
- are the areas of the classroom clearly defined?

- is there a quiet area in the classroom?
- are storage areas clearly labelled with words and/or symbols?
- do the children have set places in class?
- what modifications are made if a child has difficulties following the routines or accessing some activities e.g. extended listening on the carpet or lining up?
- how is additional support delivered in the classroom?
- are there arrangements for small group work in a quiet space e.g. for language work?
- how many adults are there in the class team? Do the adults change during the week, e.g. job-sharing arrangements?

### **Organisation of the school day**

- are special arrangements made to support children with ASD at free times e.g. playtimes?
- are there special arrangements that can be made in the canteen e.g. for lining up, alternative lunch spaces if the canteen is noisy?
- would the school be flexible about participation in activities that can be difficult for your child e.g. Assembly, PE?

**Some of the strategies needed to support your child in the school may not be in place because they are not needed by the present group of children. Do ask about the strategies to see how willing the school would be to put in place the systems that your child needs.**

### **Knowledge and experience**

- are the staff familiar with the Primary and Secondary Inclusion Development Programme (IDP): supporting pupils on the autism spectrum?
- have any of the staff had additional training in ASD?
- do any of the staff have experience of working with students who have ASD?
- are any of the classroom assistants trained to deliver therapy programmes e.g. for speech and language?
- do any of the staff use signing/Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) to support language development?
- what arrangements does the school have in place to communicate with parents/carers?
- which support services work regularly with the school?
- does the school have an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) who is able to support the development of friendships and social skills?

## Frequently asked questions

Some frequently asked questions from parents/carers:

- how do you manage children who are not toilet trained?
- what is the snack policy?
- (my child) has a very limited diet, will this be a problem at lunchtime?
- (my child) is on medication, will staff ensure that he/she gets his pills at the right time?
- what would happen if (my child) got really distressed?
- (my child) gets upset in crowded places/by loud noises, can you help with this?
- (my child) may run off if he/she gets upset, how would the school manage this?
- (my child) finds it hard to play with other children and sometimes gets aggressive, how will his/her teacher manage this?
- when (my child) gets upset he/she can't say what the problem is and he/she may get angry, how will his/her teacher manage this?

## Published information

You may find the following useful:

- Checklist for visiting schools: A guide for parents and carers, Hampshire County Council. (see SEN publications on page 4)
- Autistic Spectrum Disorders – School-Aged Children: A guide for parents and carers, Hampshire County Council. (see SEN publications on page 4)
- The school Ofsted report. This is a detailed report from the Office for Standards in Education. They also produce summaries which give a useful overall picture of a school. You can obtain copies of the summary and full report from the school. Copies of reports are also kept in the library local to the school and are published on the Ofsted website at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)
- The school website. This is an increasingly useful source of information. Links to all Hampshire school websites can be found at [www.hants.gov.uk/schools](http://www.hants.gov.uk/schools)
- Results of national curriculum assessments are available from the Department for Education (DfE) website at [www.education.gov.uk/performance/tables/index.shtml](http://www.education.gov.uk/performance/tables/index.shtml)

## Contacts

For impartial advice, information and support on special educational needs please contact:

Parent Partnership Service  
Children's Services Department, Hampshire County Council  
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Email: [enquiries.pps@hants.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries.pps@hants.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.hants.gov.uk/parentpartnership](http://www.hants.gov.uk/parentpartnership)

## SEN publications

SEN publications for parents and carers are available to view and download from Hampshire County Council's SEN website at: [www.hants.gov.uk/sen-parentpublications](http://www.hants.gov.uk/sen-parentpublications).

For a hard copy of the SEN publications listed in this leaflet please contact [childrens.services@hants.gov.uk](mailto:childrens.services@hants.gov.uk) or 0845 603 5620.

For a copy of this publication in another language or format (e.g. large print or in an audio format) please contact: **0845 603 5620**,  
**[childrens.services@hants.gov.uk](mailto:childrens.services@hants.gov.uk)**  
or **Minicom: 0845 603 5625**