



Transition to secondary 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
- arrange to meet a key member of staff e.g. Head of Year 7, Head of Pastoral Care or Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo), if appropriate
- read the prospectus for the school
- prepare a list of questions that you might want to ask
- if your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) try to visit secondary schools before the Year 5 Annual Review.

First impressions

- does the school 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 already at the school?

The classrooms

- is the name of the class in word and picture/logo on each door?
- is there a visual timetable/planner for each child and a map of the school?
- are storage areas clearly labelled e.g. in science/technology/art rooms?
- do the children have set places in class? (a seating plan for lessons)
- what modifications are made if a child has difficulties following the routines or accessing some activities e.g. moving between classes?
- how is additional support delivered in the classroom?

- how many adults are there in the class team? Do the adults change during the week, e.g. job-sharing arrangements?
- are classroom assistants assigned to a specific subject area or does one classroom assistant move classes with a child or group of children?

Organisation of the school day

- are special arrangements made to support children with ASD at free times e.g. breaks and lunchtimes?
- 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?
- are there areas for 'time out' if your child becomes anxious?

Knowledge and experience

- are the staff familiar with the Primary and Secondary Inclusion Development Programme (IDP): supporting children on the autism spectrum?
- have any of the staff had additional training in ASD?
- do any of the staff have experience of working with children who have ASD?
- are any of the classroom assistants trained to deliver therapy programmes e.g. for speech and language?

General

- what arrangements does the school have to ensure that there is effective communication with parents and 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?

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 3)
- Autistic Spectrum Disorders – School-Aged Children: A guide for parents and carers, Hampshire County Council. (see SEN publications on page 3)
- 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

- 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
- Results of national curriculum assessments and GCSE results are available from the Department for Education (DfE) website at www.education.gov.uk/performanceables/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
Elizabeth II Court East
The Castle
Winchester
SO23 8UG

Telephone 01962 845870
Email: enquiries.pps@hants.gov.uk
Website: 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.

For a hard copy of the SEN publications listed in this leaflet please contact 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 or Minicom: 0845 603 5625

