

Rugeley School Local Offer

Name of site	Rugeley School
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1. What does your service do? (USP)

Rugeley School is an independent specialist school, with two attached children's homes. The school was purpose built and has large classrooms and some specialist areas. It offers placements for children/young people aged 5 to 19 years with a primary 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 severe to moderate range.

Rugeley School provides a setting in which students can achieve an enhanced degree of emotional stability through an active approach to learning. This ethos is underpinned by a strong emphasis on physical and practical activity. The young people participate in a range of PE/leisure activities as well having opportunities for vocational work and work experience. The school's timetable incorporates structure and predictability in order to give the young people security to access the curriculum with increasing success.

The school's main aim is to help reduce anxiety levels and enable the pupils to engage in daily life with increased confidence, self esteem and dignity. There is a strong emphasis on supporting them to become independent in all areas. Members of staff work in partnership with parents so that the skills young people learn in school, can be easily transferred to the home environment.

The educational curriculum and care programme are adapted to meet the needs of the young people on an individual basis. Access to all national curriculum subjects is at an appropriate 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 ethos of the homes is to promote the development of social behaviours, independence and personal skills, offering opportunities to practice them in real life settings. There is an emphasis on community inclusion as well as targeting skills in personal care and home management. The young people are able to engage in a range of fun activities – craft, music, hair care, cooking etc. – that are planned around the interests of the young people in the home. Off site visits include swimming, ice-skating, eating out, shopping etc. Care also focuses on the importance of privacy, dignity, rights, choice and fulfilment in a comfortable, homely, stimulating and safe environment.

Services offered:

- To provide open ended /longer-term residential accommodation for up to 52 weeks and a 24 hour programme to meet needs that have been identified as a positive choice through an ongoing person centred assessment process.
- To offer a respite service to young people who attend the school.
- To work in partnership with young people, parents, carers, colleagues within education, social workers and health and employment/training services to achieve the implementation of plans that promote the best possible outcomes for those accommodated at Rugeley School.
- To provide a safe, structured, positive and stimulating environment, that promotes improved life chances.
- To support and guide those accommodated at Rugeley School, their parents and carers to develop risk management skills and resilience strategies to successfully deal with significant life experiences, changes and challenges.
- To give more meaning to the environment in which children and 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.



Rugeley School can be home to a maximum of 35 children and young people accommodated across the 2 individual sites. The aim is to provide a sense of community and the opportunity and option to socialise and interact with a variety of other young people, sharing an ASD diagnosis in addition to the small, individual residential units.

Rugeley employs 2 speech and language therapists who promote the development of communication skills and an Occupational Therapist to address sensory, emotional and practical needs. The school also has the services of an additional OT with specific sensory integration qualifications and a Consultant Paediatrician.

2. How are decisions made about who can use your service?

Rugeley School has the following criteria for admission:

- 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.
- Adequate or potentially adequate physical ability to be able to participate in the programme.
- No reported adverse medical conditions or factors.

The school has an assessment team of people, drawn from all disciplines. Initially this entails looking at all appropriate documentation, especially the Statement, to ensure that all needs can be met by the school. Parents may visit and a visit is then organised for the child to come into school and/or for the child to be visited in their current placement. The assessment team provides feedback to the Senior Management Team (SMT) where the decision on admittance is ultimately made. Part of the discussion centres around the stated objectives as well the identification of an appropriate peer group in terms of mix of abilities, age, behaviour, communication skills, level of supervision required, gender and group dynamic; this for both school and the home.

3. How will school staff support the child/young person?

Each young person is attached to a class that will have an allocated teacher and teaching assistant. In house, each young person has a key worker and is supported in house by the residential care team. The basic formula for support in school is 1-3 and 1-2 in house. Additional teaching and residential 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 that difficulties are consistently addressed. This plan is constructive and provides positive alternatives and natural consequences.



4. How will the curriculum be matched to the child or young person's needs?

It is the teacher's responsibility to set an appropriate education programme which will be monitored by the senior teacher and/or the Head Teacher. A base-line assessment is undertaken through teacher observation and from information gained from reports etc.

In this way, work planned for the class can then be differentiated in accordance to individual ability levels. Key Stage 2 and 3 pupils follow the National 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 pupils post 16. All the pupils work towards accredited awards with AQA, OCR and ASDAN.



5. Do you offer any therapeutic services?

Therapy services feed into the educational and care programmes at Rugeley School. We have two speech and language therapists, two occupational therapists and access to a consultant paediatrician as required.

6. How does the school celebrate the success of children with SEND?

The whole atmosphere at Rugeley School is one of assurance and confidence where pupil's efforts are privately and/or publicly acknowledged, where frequent praise is given either verbally, physically through signing and/or certification. One assembly a week is designated for the celebration of achievement. Where possible, demonstration of the achievement takes place.



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

The school has an ethos of working in partnership with parents. They are invited to reviews and full reports on progress are given. IEPs are issued termly to parents in order to keep them updated. Day children have a home book in which parents can comment as well as staff. Key workers speak to parents on a weekly basis and class teachers contact parents half termly as a minimum requirement.

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. The Newsletter goes out at the end of every term informing parents of events that have taken place in the houses/school during that term. Home visits can also be arranged.

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

The key worker is the first point of contact for the parent but they also advocate for the individual young person too. There is also the expectation that staff generally will advocate for all the young people whether they be day or residential, particularly those who cannot speak for themselves.

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

There is a school nurse who supports the residential staff in overseeing the health needs of the young people. Residential young people are usually registered with the local doctor and members of staff support them on visits when necessary. All health care issues are recorded and parents are informed of accidents or when their child is unwell.

Medication is locked securely away behind two locked doors and senior members of staff undergo internal and external training on the administration of medications. There is a tight procedure in place for safety reasons.

Residential members of staff support the young people in their personal care but remain mindful of the need to preserve their privacy and dignity.

The school has 3 Safeguarding officers with one being trained as a Safeguarding trainer. All staff undergo basic training in Safeguarding as an annual requirement.

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 operates on using de-escalation techniques with physical interventions being employed as a last resort.

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 choice are actively used both in school and home; whether it be choosing meals, activities or just to let it be known that they are unhappy with a situation.

9. What specialist services, training and expertise are available at or accessed by the school?

Two senior teachers have qualifications in Autism and can provide in-house training for staff. The speech and language therapists and occupational therapists also provide training as well as support to school and residential staff. The school is registered with NASS and NAS and staff are able to access appropriate training sessions and attend conferences. Recent training sessions include Systematic Instruction Training, Behaviour Management and PECS. Residential staff have a minimum NVQ3 qualification and the school has its own Team Teach trainers and Safeguarding trainers. All staff undertake a mandatory e-learning training programme that is organised by the company which includes Health and Safety.

Priory is developing specialist training for induction which sits alongside mandatory training. There are three modules which are going to be piloted in a new facility. There is a day module on ASD, a day module on AS and a half day module on understanding sensory perception and sensory integration. AET training at level 2 will be offered for all staff on a rolling program and level three for leads in schools. There is also investigation into accreditation of training modules. Currently all staff have an induction which is site specific and ongoing training which is also site specific. Some training is offered through central services on specific approaches such as TEACCH and PECS. All staff are trained in Team Teach. A number of staff have accessed the accredited training for the Post graduate qualifications in autism through the University of Birmingham. There is being piloted an audit of staff skills and this will be rolled out to other settings including care settings. At some sites both care and education receive the same training.'



10. How accessible is the school environment?

The main school building is two stories and there is a lift to the second floor. There are disabled toileting facilities on both floors. At our residential facilities, The Crescent and Mayfield House, access is limited to downstairs only, but disabled facilities are available.



11. How will the school prepare and support the child for transition or the next stage of education and life?

The Post 16 curriculum and residential curriculum are designed to prepare the pupils for transition into adulthood. Transition reviews are held annually, which all key professionals are invited. 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.

12. How is the decision made about what type and how much support the child will receive?

The standard level of support within the school is 1 adult – 3 pupils. In house this is 1-2. 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 Statemented 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.

13. Do you have a children's/young person's council?

The school has a School Council that consists of day and residential young people. They meet termly.

14. Does the school provide any specialist equipment (e.g. Sensory)?

The school has some sensory equipment that caters for sensory diets and has plans to increase this.

15. 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.

Get in touch

To make the process of referring a young person into Priory Education and Children's Services as seamless as possible or for further information about Rugeley School, please contact our dedicated enquiries office today on **0845 277 4679**.