



PROSPECTUS

THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF
EXCELLENCE IN AUTISM EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT





Welcome

Dear Students, Families and Colleagues

It is a great pleasure and privilege to introduce myself as the Headteacher of Abbot's Lea School – an international centre of excellence in Autism education, research and professional development.

Abbot's Lea is a large and highly successful school offering education and therapy to some 300 students age 3 to 19, who, due to their diagnosis of Autism and associated complex learning needs, require specialist support to succeed academically and achieve their full personal potential.

Situated in the Woolton area of Liverpool – the home of The Beatles - our amazing campus is an amalgamation of history and modern architecture and we continuously develop our facilities to meet the needs of our students. Abbot's Lea combines tradition and innovation to deliver the best specialist education in the country and beyond. We strive to ensure lessons include focus on academic progress, specialist support as well as the inclusion of life skills which help enrich students' lives and prepare them for adulthood.

Every staff member is seen as a leader, modelling school's core values and showing positive attitude towards own personal and professional development and ongoing reflection.

It is part of our mission to support all of our students on their journey towards becoming confident, happy and successful individuals, with well-planned and meaningful future destinations. In order to achieve that, we get to know every student really well and in doing so, we take their and their families' opinions, views and priorities into account when designing the learning programmes.

Every September, we open our doors to new students, new families and new staff. This prospectus is intended to help share some basic information about Abbot's Lea School.

I have always practised an 'open door' policy and encourage you to take advantage of this. Please contact me whenever issues arise – or just come in to say 'hello'!

Our vision is to be the best specialist school in the world – we hope you will join us on our journey!

With very best wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ania Hildrey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the letter 'y'.

Mrs Ania Hildrey
Headteacher





School Vision and Mission Statement ©

To be the international Centre of Excellence in Autism education,
research and professional development

School Aims ©

- To provide outstanding education to the students
- To work in united partnership with the families
- To recruit, develop and retain the best professionals
- To lead innovation and positive change in the field of Autism
- To use the resources available for the greatest benefit of the school

School Motto ©

Abbot's Lea is the best specialist school in the world!

Our Code of Conduct ©

- Be here. Every day...
- Work hard and be nice
- Never give upon yourself or others
- Stay positive and be happy!

Philosophy of Education – The ASD Model ©

- Academic Progress
- Specialist Support
- Development of Life Skills



Curriculum

The school promotes academic progress, specialist support and life skills development, with particular expertise in promoting communication and interactions for students living with Autism.

The needs of the individual students are our greatest consideration and in order to offer a needs-led curriculum, we are well equipped with material and human resources.

The class sizes are considerably smaller than in the mainstream sector, with a high staff to student ratio. The class sizes vary and are based on the accommodation available and the compatible learning groups.

Together, we offer a curriculum that is broad, balanced and relevant to all students, with highly personalised integrated therapeutic interventions.

All subjects of the national curriculum, including religious education, form the basis of the curriculum on offer at Abbot's Lea School. These subjects are taught using our unique thematic curriculum method, making learning flexible, fun and engaging.

We always ensure that we create ways of learning which are appropriate to the students' age and stage of development, with learning taking place on campus, off site as well as increasingly, online.

We are a learning organisation and so we are proud of the outstanding progress our students make, but we remain open to changing the ways we approach teaching and learning. We communicate openly with the students, their families and other schools to make sure that our curriculum and methods of delivery adapt to the ever-changing reality of the wonderful world of education.



Student Leadership

Student Council

Our students are encouraged to have their opinions, views and beliefs. They are also seen as integral to our vision of shared ownership of the school and with it, its distributed leadership model. Student Councillors are key to the life of the school and their contributions help shape our school's future direction and our school development plans.

Head Boy and Head Girl

Every year, during the first term of the academic cycle, one senior boy and one senior girl are appointed to act as Head Boy and Head Girl.

The Head Boy and Head Girl team work closely with the Headteacher to shape the future of the school, to welcome any prospective families to the school and to take part in showing any prospective staff around the school.





Primary Department

This area of the school includes Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Each student belongs to a class. Each class has a class teacher, who has a prime responsibility for the child's wellbeing and progress.

Each student has a My Plan© that forms the basis of their academic learning (A), their specialist care and therapeutic learning support (S), as well as enrichment and life skills development priorities (D).

The My Plan© is reviewed regularly every term, detailing very specific targets for the three areas of our educational philosophy.

Families are required to participate in the setting and review of the My Plan© targets and any feedback regarding the family's experiences of home life is taken into account when designing school-based learning.

We aim to create ongoing age-appropriate links with mainstream nursery and primary schools in the locality and if it is agreed that a student in the Primary Department may benefit from split placements or other integrated learning, this, too forms part of the holistic plan.

Early Years Foundation Stage

We offer full-time placements for children aged 3 to 5 years old.

Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is used to underpin our teaching and students are supported by qualified staff, including a teacher.

At the end of their time in the nursery, students usually progress to our Key Stage 1. EYFS covers nursery and reception years.



Key Stage 1

Students start Key Stage 1 at the age of 5 and stay within that area until they reach the age of 7.

During these two years, students continue to benefit from outstanding teaching and support, whilst adjusting to more formal schooling routines. Students are grouped into small and compatible classes. KSI covers: Year 1 and 2

Key Stage 2

Key Stage 2 lasts for four years and is the final period of primary education. Students join Key Stage 2 at the age of 7 and leave at the age of 11.

All the benefits of specialist EYFS and Key Stage 1 pay off at this stage with students confidently engaging in their own learning journey.

It is at this period that most links with mainstream schools begin to develop for those students whose academic abilities and readiness for social integration prove higher than initially anticipated. This can lead to a permanent transfer to a mainstream school.

All students benefit from a rich and broad curriculum aimed at stimulating their academic progress and personal and social development.



“The thing that I love about Abbot’s Lea is that my son loves coming to school. This is quite a change to the negative experience in his previous school settings. I have recommended Abbot’s Lea School to other parents for their children.”

Parent



Secondary Department

Our Secondary Department caters for Key Stage 3 (11-14 years), Key Stage 4 (14-16 years) and Key Stage 5 (16+ years) students.

Our senior students continue to benefit from highly personal teaching model, with the stable team of staff working with a small group of students throughout the week.

The curriculum remains broad and balanced, preparing our young people for the advancement of their academic studies and planning for the future.

Those is Years 7-11 follow National Curriculum, including accredited learning options, where appropriate. Students opting to stay with us at, and after the age of 16, prepare for personal, social and economic independence.



Key Stage 3

Students in KS3 are grouped according to their needs to maximise learning opportunities in every lesson.

Classes remain small with staff support levels always reflecting individual student needs, yet promoting increasingly independent learning.

Learning in KS3 is highly personalised, with self-organisation and team-working reinforced through the curriculum.

Students learn through a range of school-based and community activities and they share their reflections and achievements in weekly departmental, Key Stage and class assemblies.

“I love it here. It is the first time in my life that I feel like I actually belong”

Student



Key Stage 4

Students continue to study in compatible learning groups with a focus on transition into adulthood taking priority.

They have access to accredited learning and there are opportunities for them to participate in selected specialist subject examinations and for some, increased links with mainstream secondary schools.

Students, for whom employment is a future aspiration, experience the life of work through a wide range of employment preparation and professional career, advice and guidance.

Varying amounts of support and supervision are provided to the students accessing work related learning according to the needs of the students.

Where appropriate, we promote extended work experience, independent travel and, in many cases, paid work.

Leaving school

At the end of Year 11, students leave the school to attend post-16 programmes.

Abbot's Lea School students and their families choose a number of options at the end of their time here, these include:

- Further Education – this can be at Abbot's Lea School or with another adult training provider
- Open or supported employment
- Other training schemes, including work based learning apprenticeships
- Supported living

Advice is available to students and parents throughout their time at Abbot's Lea School, with formal transition planning during the latter stages of the secondary phase



Key Stage 5

Students who choose to carry out further education at Abbot's Lea School join our Key Stage 5 provision.

The learning for our adult students is strictly focused on increasing independence and preparation for working life after school. The curriculum is highly individualised to meet students' needs.

The provision also creates the opportunity to build on accreditation achieved at Key Stage 4 and is aimed at helping the young adults with their future career aspirations.

Our adult students benefit from the tailored career guidance advisers, who work closely with the students and local employers with a view to helping our school leavers secure paid employment. Students leave upon the completion of their course.

We are also a large employer and we play our part in practising what we preach. Some of our past students are now preparing to be an integral part of the Abbot's Lea School staff team!



Care and Safeguarding

Our Care and Safeguarding Department has three functions:

- Ensure all students at Abbot's Lea School stay safe, well and happy
- Through coordination of education, health and care plans, identify specific needs and provide bespoke specialist advice, guidance and therapeutic interventions
- Offer advice and support to families – prospective, current and past

The diverse range of students' needs determines the services on offer. In any academic year, we are likely to offer the following support:

- Positive Psychology support
- Restorative Practice support
- Behaviour support
- Educational Psychology support
- Speech and Language Therapy support (SALT)
- Occupational Therapy support (OT)
- Counselling
- Mental Health support
- Psychotherapy
- Family advice, support and training



Autism Research and Development

We are committed to leading innovation and positive change in the field of Autism.

As one of the largest single specialist schools for students age 3-19 with Autism, we are determined to lead Autism innovation from within the classroom.

We have well developed links with local, national and increasingly, international research community.

Through that, we are engaged in a range of research projects helping professionals in the field find new, better ways of teaching and supporting those living with Autism.

Each year, we help other specialist schools, as well as mainstream settings and employers develop and improve Autism-friendly practice.

Family Involvement

We believe that the most successful outcomes are based on a close relationship between the home and the school.

The school has a Family Adviser, who works with parents and carers by providing support in a practical or emotional way. The offer of support is to help enhance family and school life so that the child can relax and learn in an environment that is conducive to helping achieve good outcomes for everyone.

We have a Parents' Room and we hold regular Friday Coffee Mornings.

Some of those sessions have a particular focus designed to be of interest to families, others are less structured and are simply a peer support group. These formal and informal gatherings allow for shared parenting experiences, the gathering of useful information and the opportunity to meet with other parents and professionals who work with your child in school.

Parenting courses can be provided via the Family Adviser, so please contact the school if you would like to find out more.

There are a number of activities that take place during the year, including events and festivals where parents and friends are encouraged to join us.

Letters and invitations are sent via the Head's Weekly Newsletter and the student's Communication Book.

Our Parent-Teacher-Friend Association, also known as FAB! is responsible for a number of fundraising and social events throughout the year. All parents and staff are automatically members of FAB! and are welcome to join us at these events, with key diary dates published in the Head's Weekly Newsletter.

All proceeds from any fundraising events go to our charitable trust: Friends of Abbot's Lea School and, in turn, benefit our school and the students.

The Team

At Abbot's Lea, the greatest resource is the people. It is led by our Headteacher who is responsible for the overall effectiveness of the school.

The large team of staff is organised into two teams:

- The ASD Team
- The SBS Team

The ASD Team focuses on the core function of educating students and is divided into four departments:

- Care and Safeguarding Department
- Autism Research and Development
- Primary Department
- Secondary Department

The SBS Team provides School Business Support, including HR, Finance and Operations and general Customer Service.

We are also supported by our Governing Body, with volunteers consisting of parents, staff and members of the local community both supporting, and keeping our Headteacher to account for the overall effectiveness of the school.



“At Abbot's Lea School we form successful partnerships with parents and we find that benefits their learning because there is a continuity of learning between school and between home life”

Teacher





CONTACT US

You can contact anyone employed by the school by email, using a simple formula:
firstname.surname@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

You can also contact Mrs Hildrey, our Headteacher on:
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