

The ASU – Fir Tree Primary School Autism Resource

Age Range: Years R - 6



Overview

The Autism Spectrum resource was opened at Fir Tree in September 2017. The resource base aims to enable children who have Autism and related difficulties, to access mainstream education with their peers. These pupils are supported to achieve their best, like all other pupils at Fir Tree where we recognise the worth of each individual, helping them to develop a positive self-image and a 'can-do' attitude so that they grow.

At Fir Tree Primary School we embrace wholeheartedly the belief that everyone should have the 'Freedom to Flourish' during their time at school. To flourish means to grow or develop in a healthy or vigorous way, especially as the result of a particularly congenial (qualities and interests that are similar) environment. Our values enable us to grow and they can be summed up in four keywords: **goals, resilience, outstanding and wonder**. In other words, **GROW**.

Eligibility Criteria

The resource caters for pupils who have a primary need of Autism. Pupils may have additional difficulties such as ADHD or Specific Learning Difficulties, which have a significant impact on the pupil's learning and development, and which require specialised adult support to access the curriculum, and for the pupil to make academic and developmental progress.

The Fir Tree Autism Resource can cater for pupils who meet the following criteria:

- *Meet the LA's statutory assessment criteria for Education, Health and Care Plans with a Primary Need of Autism*
- *Have a level of ability within the range expected in a mainstream school*
- *Demonstrate the ability to function within a mainstream educational setting with appropriate differentiation*
- *Need a substantial level of adaptation and support for social and communication needs, anxiety and mental health to facilitate access to the mainstream environment*
- *Require intensive, specialist teaching and*

support to achieve the outcomes identified within their EHC Plan, this includes:

- *A highly personalised programme to support social and communication needs within a flexible approach to adapt to the needs of individual pupils*
- *Access to specialist teaching and support*
- *Access to therapies to support regulation*
- *Supported inclusion in the mainstream environment*
- *A calm environment which is fully adapted for emotional and sensory needs including a Calm and a Sensory room*
- *An environment and ethos of awareness of the needs of pupils who have autism and associated needs within the wider school, and where all staff have relevant training*
- *Bespoke therapies to support children with social and communication development and emotional regulation*

How much time does a child spend in mainstream classes?

The aim is for pupils to spend as much time as possible in their mainstream class with their peers, and for recommended therapy and intervention to have minimal impact on the normal school day. Time spent in the resource base is a collaborative decision between parents/carers, school staff and where appropriate the pupil.

What support is provided specifically by the provision and how is this organised?

The role of the resource base is to coordinate the best daily provision and support to achieve the outcomes of the EHCP and the academic and social progress, and the well-being of the pupils.

What qualifications/experience do staff in the provision have?

The resource is led by a qualified teacher with many years of experience in primary education. In addition to the teacher in charge, there are teaching assistants



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who are trained and have experience in providing 1:1 support. The wealth of experience benefits the partnership of parents/carers, therapy professionals, school staff and pupils in helping pupils achieve the best outcomes and inclusion within the mainstream school.

What training and support are offered to mainstream staff?

Support and training are ongoing and dependent on the individual needs of pupils, and staff. Visiting health and education professionals also provide training as required. The AS Resource also provides a range of resources to support inclusion and achievement for our pupils such as weighted blankets, sensory toys, fidget resources and a calm and sensory room.

Are parents/carers charged for the provision?

There is no charge, the provision is funded by an EHCP plan.

How do I apply for a place?

Parents and carers of potential pupils living in West Berkshire are welcome to contact the school to arrange a convenient time to visit. If a place in the unit is requested, the request would be considered by the SEN panel and a decision would be made in line with the Code of Practice. If a placement is agreed it will be named on your child's EHCP plan.

Contact details:

Teacher in Charge: Mrs Michelle Pearse
Fir Tree Primary School and Nursery,

Fir Tree Lane,

Newbury, RG14 2RA

Tel: 01635 42129

Email: mpearse@firtree.newburyacademytrust.org

Further information can be found at:

www.firtreeschool.co.uk

<https://directory.westberks.gov.uk/kb5/westberkshire/directory/service.page?id=TaLSofceKfk>

Frequently Asked Questions

What does a resource offer that mainstream can't?

The resource offers an additional layer of support than that of a mainstream school as well as access to trained and experienced staff. This support includes a quiet, calm environment that is particularly important for pupils who have Autism as well as therapies to help these pupils with anxiety and self-regulation. Our therapies include weekly horse riding at Riding for the Disabled in Hampstead Norriss, Meditation and Art Therapy.

Will my child stay here or go back to their own school eventually?

All pupils in the ASU have a diagnosis of Autism and significant other needs that are likely to require the provision of an EHCP throughout the pupil's full-time education, but the provision may be provided by other schools. EHCPs are reviewed annually when progress and provision are formally reviewed. Changes in placement are discussed if appropriate.

Some pupils begin their education at their local mainstream school and then transfer to us, others transfer to other schools later on if it is felt there is better provision for the pupil. Every pupil and their family have different priorities and needs which are considered when deciding on the most appropriate placement for them. Pupils who are in the Fir Tree Autism Resource spend their primary education at Fir Tree. Some children transfer to Trinity Autism Resource for their secondary education or other appropriate settings if it is decided that they need a more specialist provision.

What transition process do you have?

Whether joining or leaving the resource base we work in partnership with parents and existing or new education settings to ensure the best transition of the child in terms of welfare, educational needs, travel, and liaison with Health, Medical and Social professionals who may be working with the pupils.

How do you manage behaviours that challenge and any additional needs?

All pupils are individuals and bespoke support is given in supporting them with challenging behaviours and additional needs. The aim is always to help pupils to achieve their best in terms of behaviour for learning, and social skills following the behaviour expectations and policies of the school. Fir Tree provides space and resources, and trained staff to help pupils to develop focus, concentration and understanding of social and academic expectations. Communication, partnership and training are used to enable pupils to overcome barriers to learning and support meaningful inclusion.

Won't they miss their friends or siblings?

In the Fir Tree Autism Resource, we focus on supporting children to develop their social and communication skills. The children use the Resource as a base and, with adult support, attend as many lessons with their peers in their mainstream class, as they can cope with. We build this up over time to ensure success.