



Longdon Park
School



2022

WELCOME TO LONGDON PARK



Based in stunning grounds in Derbyshire, Longdon Park provides education for children between the ages of 7 and 16 who have been diagnosed with autism or demonstrate behaviours associated with autism.

To achieve this, we take a holistic approach to learning that wraps therapeutic care and educational support around the individual needs of each child. Within small classes in specially designed rooms, children have the space and support they need to progress at their own pace.

With a variety of therapists on hand, children are well supported in all aspects of their social, emotional and academic development. That support is extended to our children's families too. We work closely in partnership to support families, so together we can help our children achieve their potential and progress them onto their next phase of education or vocation through a carefully tailored program of personal development.

OUR FACILITIES



A BEAUTIFUL AND SAFE LOCATION

The first thing that strikes many people about Longdon Park is just how beautiful it is here.

Set within acres of lush gardens and surrounded by fields, the school has the dual advantage of being in a peaceful, rural location and having great transport links to urban centres throughout Derbyshire.

It's a safe space where our children can explore, play, enjoy sports and take part in a wide variety of outdoor learning opportunities – which are an important element of the curriculum here at Longdon Park. We also love to take our children off site to experience a wide range of activities and get involved in community life.

PURPOSE BUILT CLASSROOMS

The first step to engage children in learning is creating a space in which they feel happy and safe. Our school is an ASC friendly environment with purpose built science, home technology, music and therapy spaces.

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

The link between home life and school is vital, so we're in contact with families on a daily basis. There are plenty of opportunities for parents to join us for open days, sports days and whole school celebrations. By working together, we can ensure continuity of care for children and provide the individualised support that we know makes such a difference.



OUR APPROACH



HIGHLY INDIVIDUAL

We pride ourselves on wrapping educational support around the needs of each individual child. To do that, it's important that we get to know and understand their specific needs, likes and dislikes and get a firm grasp of their experience of education so far. As we get to know a child and their family we can build up a level of trust and start to develop an education plan that is tailored for them. Any plan we put together will include support from our occupational therapist, speech therapist, educational psychologist and psychological therapists who work with children on a one-to-one or group basis when needed.

FORWARD-THINKING

Ultimately we want to prepare children to thrive in the wider world. Within our life skills classes children learn very practical skills that will help them integrate socially. The wide range of topics we cover includes using public transport, preparing food and even how to ask for help. Our children love putting their learning into practice through trips to the local shops and cafés in the community.

We also help children to manage their emotions. Many of our students suffer with stress and anxiety and find it hard to express how they feel. We use a variety of relaxation therapies and techniques to help our students recognise and manage those negative emotions. These are invaluable skills that will stay with them when they leave Longdon Park.

COLLABORATIVE

We see our relationship with families as a vital component of the support we provide. We appreciate that many children have had bad experiences at school and some may not have been in a school environment for a few years, so we settle them in very gradually over a period of weeks.

When a child joins us at Longdon Park they will be given a key worker with whom they'll develop a long-term, trusting relationship. The key worker will phone home every day to give parents an update on what's happened at school and find out if there is anything important going on in a child's life that may affect their behaviour. Having constant contact ensures a greater continuity of care at home and at school, which is really important in a child's development.

EDUCATION



There is a need for our curriculum to be flexible, adaptable and robust enough to meet the ever-changing demands of the modern world, and best prepare our students for a life within it.

As a school specifically supporting students with ASC, delivering education to a diverse group of students, our curriculum has been adapted and tailored to meet individual needs. We believe that all students deserve the right to an education that will support them to become happy and confident individuals; acquiring qualifications and achievements that will support them for their future.

At Longdon Park School we ensure access to the curriculum areas that are listed within, but not limited to, the Independent School Standards. In accordance with this, we provide a curriculum that meets the needs of each student based on the terms of their Education, Health and Care Plan.

All students receive access to a part or full-time educational / therapeutic package. Our curriculum includes a range of: linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human, social, SRE, physical, aesthetic, creative aspects appropriate to student age, aptitude and stage of development.

Longdon Park School harnesses passions, unlocks ability and realises potential through delivering individualised learning pathways to support students and their families.

Our school community strives to equip all students with a toolbox of skills, strategies, and knowledge to prepare them for their onward journey and realise the contributions they can make to the wider world.

We want our children to SHINE, that is, be:

Safe – Happy - Independent – Nurtured - Engaged.

QUALIFICATION OPTIONS

From KS4 onwards we offer a large range of qualifications to suit the different ability needs of our learners these include: entry level, functional skills, GCSEs, ASDAN and other accredited online courses.

FURTHER EDUCATION

At Longdon Park we will do whatever we can to help our children succeed. Some children stay with us to complete their GCSEs and potentially A levels in order to prepare for university and others who move to study for other qualifications at further education colleges in the area. Whichever route our children choose, we ensure they are prepared emotionally, socially and academically.

THERAPY

Many children who come to Longdon Park have low self-esteem as a result of negative experiences they've had within the education system in the past. Through the holistic and therapeutic approach we take to learning, we help children to integrate into school and make positive progress in every aspect of their development.

We truly believe that any child, with the right support, can achieve their potential, so we have dedicated occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and a team of psychology professionals. Therapy is embedded into the curriculum at Longdon Park at every phase and underpins everything we do. Our therapists work as part of multidisciplinary teams around each child and an individualised approach to each pupil's education is adopted where therapy programs, interventions and face to face sessions can be built into the daily offer.



OUR SCHOOL DOGS

Children often benefit from spending time around animals. We frequently send groups of children to the local animal sanctuary so that they can interact with and walk the dogs. The emotional and therapeutic rewards for students who can often feel anxious and nervous are enormous. We also have a sprocker spaniel onsite called Bracken.

BEHAVIOUR



INDIVIDUAL APPROACH

As with all areas of education and care at Longdon Park, we take an individualised approach to behaviour management. Our staff know our children really, really well, so they can anticipate when a child may be feeling anxious or upset. Recognising the signs early means we can help our students to find mechanisms to cope and de-escalate the tension.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

The Behaviour Management System here at Longdon Park School is based on the CPI Institute of Conflict Management. The values and philosophy underpinning CPI Safety Intervention are:

- Care:** Demonstrating respect, dignity and empathy; providing support in a non-judgemental and person-centred way.
- Welfare:** Providing emotional and physical support; acting in the person's best interests in order to promote independence, choice, and wellbeing.
- Safety:** Protecting rights, safeguarding, reducing or managing risk to minimise injury or harm.
- Security:** Maintaining safe, effective, harmonious, and therapeutic relationships that rely on collaboration.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is absolutely key in managing our children's behaviour and we understand that all behaviour is communication. If children require support to emotionally regulate we will work in an individualised way to help them understand why their behaviour was unexpected and what they could have done differently.

It is vital that we draw a line under an incident when it has been dealt with so that the child can move on and we can maintain their trust. We work on a basis of educating for change rather than punishing, with a positive ethos and a low arousal approach where all staff treat pupils with unconditional positive regard.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Often there are underlying concerns or issues that lead children to feel frustrated at school, so we work closely with parents and carers to understand what else is going on in a child's life. We also make sure parents know what's going on at school and how that might impact a child's behaviour at home too. We encourage parents to use the same techniques that we use at school to ensure there is continuity of care.

MEET CHARLIE

Charlie has a diagnosis of ASC and Speech and Language Communication Needs and joined Longdon Park School in year 5. At this time Charlie's parents were feeling unable to manage the escalation in his behaviour, they felt unoptimistic about his future and felt that his ability to remain safe, be independent and access learning was significantly diminished by his presentation and the difficulties he was facing in education. Charlie's feelings around school and his lack of trust in staff meant he was frequently physical towards staff and students as well as using damage to property as a strategy to regulate his emotional responses.

Over the time that Charlie has been at Longdon, the support he has received from speech and language therapists and specialists in Autism and communication challenges has enabled him to grow into a confident and independent young adult who has developed his own strategies to regulate his emotional responses and who has formed a close circle of friends both inside and outside of school.

Charlie has just passed GCSEs in Maths, English, History and Science and is currently studying for A Level History as well as engaging in a comprehensive curriculum designed to give him the skills and knowledge to progress onto mainstream further education.

In 2021, Charlie's mum said, "When Charlie first started at Longdon Park we were in a very tough, challenging place. It was to be Charlie's sixth school in as many years and we had lost all hope. He had no friends, no confidence, had terrible anxiety, wasn't sleeping, we struggled with his behaviour and couldn't see a way out. The work the staff have done with Charlie over the past few years has changed our lives. Even when times were incredibly difficult and his behaviour was especially challenging, the school never gave up on him."

MEET CALLUM

Callum joined Longdon Park in November 2019 having found being in mainstream settings a significant challenge. Callum's presentation was, by his own admission, difficult and it was clear this behaviour served as a communicative function of frustration, low self-esteem, and feeling a failure and let down by the education system and the professionals around him.

Callum joined Longdon's stepping stones programme, which is an individualised and holistic approach to building classroom readiness. The aim of the programme is to re-introduce pupils into the classroom through a mixture of academic, vocational, enrichment and therapeutic activities, alongside a clinically informed diet designed to support and progress towards the outcomes as outlined in his Education, Health and Care Plan.

Through carefully crafted intervention and support Callum has made fantastic progress in all areas and we are now regularly celebrating his achievements such as completion of his Entry Level 3 Maths and Entry Level History qualifications, accessing the school full time and acting as a positive role model for the younger students. This doesn't mean Callum doesn't have an off day, but there has been significant reduction in occurrences of behaviours that may be viewed as challenging.

Callum's parents commented: "We are so proud of the progress Callum has made at Longdon. Not only academically, but also with being able to build relationships with peers and staff and gaining self-esteem. We can never thank Longdon Park enough."



LONGDON PARK AT A GLANCE

How old are the children at Longdon Park?

We support children from 7-16 years of age.

How long is the school year?

The school year follows the same timetable as mainstream schools within the area.

What special needs do children at Longdon Park have?

We support children who have been diagnosed on the autism spectrum or demonstrate behaviours associated with autism.

How far do children travel to attend the school?

Children at Longdon Park come from across Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Birmingham and Stoke on Trent, most are referred to us by local authorities in the area.

How do the children get to school?

Most children arrive by taxi to school and are dropped off and picked up at the door.

What extra support is provided?

Our multi-disciplinary team consists of teachers, teaching assistants, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, educational psychologists and psycho therapists. We also have pastoral support staff working with us to support students and families.

What facilities are available onsite?

Longdon Park is a safe space where our children can explore, play, enjoy sports and take part in a wide variety of outdoor learning opportunities. We are really proud of our purpose built science, food technology, music classrooms, library and self-contained exercise room.

If you are interested in visiting Longdon Park, or finding out more about the support we provide, please e-mail referrals@acorneducationandcare.co.uk



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