

Remember that knot in your stomach on your first day at high school?

Bright lights, new faces, unfamiliar surroundings, corridors full of teenagers and tales of strict teachers?

Now imagine you're 11 years old and have Autism, which means that new routines, noise and crowds make you feel scared and isolated. Feelings that you won't get over by lunch or the end of the first week.

Teenage years are difficult for many of us. They can be worse if you have special needs. Young people with learning difficulties face a lifetime of challenges. Many of our students did well at primary only to find secondary school a difficult, often hostile, place where they were lonely and depressed.

"It's not like other schools. You don't just get shoved to the back and forgotten about if you find things difficult. Here, they make sure you get help."

Louise, a pupil

Our aim is for every one of our students to leave us having reached their potential, prepared for life in the 21st century.

For the past 21 years, we have supported young people with a range of additional support needs who have been unable to thrive within mainstream secondary education.

A small, specialist school, we know how important it is to meet the complex needs of individuals. We achieve this through our holistic approach, working in small groups, providing specialist teaching, care and therapeutic support for 40 students each year.

Young people with special needs are often excluded in mainstream education, despite the best efforts of schools. This becomes worse during their teenage years. Here, they don't stand out.

In the UK, **1 in every 5 schoolchildren** is classified as having special needs. That means that in a class of 20 students, 4 are likely to have special needs but only 3 of them will receive specialist support. Even then, this is often limited to an hour a week. We make sure that **every** child receives the tailored support that they need.

We give our young students the best start to their adult lives, helping them to become confident, independent and enthusiastic about the possibilities of their future after school.