



Hexham Priory School
'Never underestimate a child's ability'

INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES

INTRODUCTION

Hexham Priory School is designated for pupils with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. School currently has 90 pupils aged from 2 to 19 years on roll. In addition to a learning difficulty, many pupils have a secondary disability, which may be an Autistic Spectrum Condition, a sensory impairment or a physical disability.

School is supported by the contribution of a multidisciplinary team, with a range of professionals including: Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, School Nurse, Social Workers, Paediatricians, Dietician and Community Nurses all working collaboratively with Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Parents and Carers to meet the needs of individual pupils. The Governing Body are integral to the success of the School and their work was recognised in the Ofsted publication 'School governance: Learning from the best'.

School's motto is "*Never underestimate a child's ability*" and this pervades all aspects of our work. We are aspirational in our aims for our pupils and they regularly reward us by their achievements. All Sixth Formers leave School with externally accredited awards and qualifications.



LOCATION AND CATCHMENT AREA

The catchment area of the school covers the whole of Tynedale in West Northumberland and at over 1,000 square miles is one of the largest in the country. Transport is provided for most pupils, although a small number that live within Hexham are able to walk to school.

Hexham enjoys good transport links with Tyneside, regular train and bus services operate to Newcastle upon Tyne 20 miles to the east, which can be reached by car in half an hour. Tynedale offers a wide range of semi-urban and rural communities.

Regular residential visits take place for pupils supported by staff. Venues visited recently include The Calvert Trust, Kielder, The Bendrigg Centre, Kendal, Beadnell, London or York



SCHOOL BUILDING

Following a steady rise in pupil numbers over many years, Northumberland County Council commissioned a new school building which opened in September 2009.

The new 80 place school building includes 10 classrooms, a common room for Sixth Form pupils together with two workrooms and three quiet rooms which are used for one to one work. School also has a fully equipped Cookery Room, Library, a Sensory Room, a Movement Room for pupils to work on their Occupational Therapy programmes, a Soft Play room and an IMEX (Interactive Multi-Sensory Experience) Studio. We are also fortunate to have a large gym and a separate multi-purpose hall. Externally the school has a Sensory Garden, two large playgrounds and enclosed play area with extensive outdoor play equipment.

We are expecting Northumberland County Council to build new classrooms to be ready for use in September 2018.



SCHOOL ORGANISATION

School operates ten classes with five in each of the Primary and Secondary Departments. In addition to the Class Teacher each class has a minimum of two Teaching Assistants. In addition to the Head Teacher and Deputy, there are two Heads of Department.

The school is a two storey building with Primary Department and shared facilities on the ground floor and Secondary aged pupils based on the first floor. This allows for a sense of transition between departments with each having their own age-appropriate facilities, colour schemes and pupil uniforms.

School starts to pupils at 9.00am and their day ends at 3.15pm. Lunch is served to Primary Department pupils from 12noon to 12.30pm and to Secondary Department pupils from 12:30pm to 1:00pm. Lunch time is considered as teaching time, where social skills can be taught and practised.

An after-school Sports Club is open to all pupils on a Monday with Secondary age pupils invited to attend a ten pin bowling session also on a Monday.

There is detailed School Development Plan; this is evaluated regularly by the School Leadership Team and the Governing Body. The School Development Plan is on public display within the School. All stakeholders are valued and seen as important in the school improvement and consultation process.



CURRICULUM

By 'curriculum' we refer to all the learning opportunities provided by the school. We offer a 'personalised curriculum' which offers a wide range of activities. Flexibility in terms of balance within the curriculum is essential in ensuring relevance for individual pupils at different stages of their education. Balance in the whole curriculum reflects the needs of pupils at various age related stages of their school careers. As pupils move through the school we give them the opportunity to develop academically, socially and to increase their level of independence; preparing them for the next stage of their education and to be active members of their community.

Our choice of curriculum organisation has been developed around the starting point of pupil need and is contextualised to meet the specific needs of the pupils in our school and to support their personal development and welfare.

Our five Areas of Learning are;

1. **My Communication:** English, Speech and Language
2. **My Thinking:** Mathematics, Science, Design and Technology
3. **Myself and My Body:** Personal, Social and Health Education (Sex and Relationships Education, Social Skills, self-care, behaviour), PE, Swimming, Rebound, Horse Riding, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Programmes
4. **My World and My Community:** History, Geography, Religious Education, Modern Foreign Language, Life Skills (Work Experience, Food Preparation, Enterprise) Citizenship, Careers Education, Information and Guidance
5. **My Creativity:** Art, Music, Drama



OFSTED INSPECTION

School has received consecutive 'Outstanding' gradings in all areas from OFSTED. The most recent Inspection took place in December 2012 and comments in the report include:

"Pupils of all ages make outstanding progress."

"Managers have rigorously improved the outstanding quality of teaching to the extent that it is even better than it was at the last inspection."

"Pupils' behaviour is almost always outstanding"

"Leaders at all levels share a very clear vision of what is best for pupils. They are committed to ensuring that they receive the best possible education and care."

SAFER RECRUITMENT

Hexham Priory School actively promotes the welfare of our pupils through our safeguarding procedures and code of conduct. These apply to recruitment and employment of all staff, who will require enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks.



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT

Hexham Priory School states its policy of commitment to equal opportunities, regardless of race, sexual orientation, gender, class, religion or disability. We take seriously the responsibility to provide equality of opportunity for all our pupils. We advocate that all students, regardless of their disability, should have access to a personalised curriculum which includes the National Curriculum and is broad, balanced and relevant.

We actively promote cultural understanding amongst pupils and staff. The school has worked hard to establish an Equal Opportunities Policy and Staff Code of Conduct that is relevant to our School



LINKS WITH LOCAL MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS

We put considerable effort into developing and maintaining links with local mainstream schools. Nine pupils of our pupils currently enjoy Shared Placements that involve seven different local mainstream schools. This allows for what one parent described as '*the best of both worlds*', in that the child gets the benefit of our specialist knowledge and facilities, as well as accessing relevant learning opportunities alongside children from their local community.

Our staff are involved in supporting these placements through outreach support into mainstream schools and through receiving staff from mainstream schools into their classroom. Our pupils act as excellent ambassadors for our School during the time that they spend in their local mainstream school every week.

Please browse our website, watch our DVDs and read (and comment if you like!) on our blog. This will inform you about school and the activities that our pupils take part in

Thank you for your interest.

Michael Thompson
Head Teacher