



OAASIS INFORMATION SHEET

Finding a Special Needs School/ Home Learning

FINDING THAT ELUSIVE SPECIAL SCHOOL ...

Trying to find the right school for your child who has special needs?

There are a number of different types of **special** schools available:

Maintained special school: schools that cater solely for special needs and are provided by the Local Authority.

Non-Maintained Special School: Registered charity which is approved by the Secretary of State to take pupils with Statements and must comply with detailed regulations, normally placements funded by LEAs.

Approved Independent Special School: Usually owned by an individual or limited company or group of companies but can be a charity. Approved by the Secretary of State to take children with Statements of SEN, majority of placements funded by LEAs.

Independent Special School: Owned by an individual or limited company or group of companies. Can take children with special needs without Statements or with Statements if individual approval is obtained from the Secretary of State.

View the lists of special needs that a school or college can meet with a certain amount of scepticism: make sure the school *addresses* the difficulties of the conditions, and doesn't just contain them - or think they can cope as "we had a student with this diagnosis a year or so back". **Check** that staff receives training in their students' particular difficulties. Go for a school or college which offers the right range of special needs; be wary of those which profess to cover many. Nothing is as important as making a **personal visit**, on a normal working day, to a short-list of several schools. Try not to take your child with you on these preliminary informal trips - they may become excited, confused and agitated, especially if they visit several in a short space of time. The OAASIS Information Sheet *Independent Special Schools – what to look for* which has a list of questions to be asking yourself while visiting schools or colleges.

OAASIS has compiled lists of independent special schools/colleges that are suitable for children/young people with ADHD, Asperger Syndrome/HFA, Autism, BESD, Dyspraxia or Tourette's Syndrome. Please contact us for copies.

There are several other websites and organisations listed below that can help you in your search:

1. **CAMBIAN EDUCATION SERVICES** - runs seven residential schools and colleges for children, young people and adults with autism; Asperger Syndrome/High Functioning Autism; autism or severe learning difficulties with associated complex needs. Contact OAASIS for advice and prospectuses or www.cambianeducation.com
2. **GABBITAS Educational Consultancy** publishes the annual *Gabbitas Guide to Schools for Special Needs*, which covers both independent special, independent with special needs provision and maintained special schools (there's a small Post 16 section too). They also offer independent professional assessment with an educational psychologist and can give independent personal guidance on all aspects of education (both services charge a fee). The *Gabbitas Guide* costs £23.99 incl p&p and can be bought on-line. You can make a free individualised search for a school on their website. www.gabbitas.co.uk, email: schools@gabbitas.co.uk or Tel: 020 7734 0161.
3. **DYSLEXIA** - if your child has dyslexia, visit www.crested.org.uk for the list of schools which have met agreed criteria for dyslexia-friendly education (CReSTeD or Council for the Registration of Schools Teaching Dyslexic Pupils – Tel: 01242 604852).
4. **isbi schools** has a comprehensive website at www.isbi.com through which parents and professionals can conduct a search to create a shortlist of appropriate schools, including special schools, for their child. Tel: 01980 620575 and email schools@isbi.com.
5. **THE NAS** produces a book *Schools, Units and Classes for children with autism and Asperger Syndrome* (revised 2004), which gives details of school provision for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders throughout the UK. It costs £8.00 + £3.95 p&p and can be ordered via their website at www.autism.org.uk or through Central Books Ltd on Tel: 0845 458 9911. For more information about the book talk to the NAS Publications Dept. on Tel: 020 7903 3595. You can also call the NAS general Helpline on 0845 070 4004 and their Advocacy for Education Service on 0845 070 4002.
6. **THE DfES EduBase helpdesk** offers parents and professionals a free search (up to 150 searches) through their own vast database (they maintain a list of *all* schools in the country).
Helpdesk Tel: 0870 120 2527. Website: www.edubase.gov.uk.

Office for
Advice
Assistance
Support
and
Information
on
Special needs

Helpline:
01590 622880
Fax:
01590 622687

www.oaasis.co.uk

FREEPOST
RLYY-TAUC-YRYS
Brock House
Grigg Lane
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7. *The Special Education Directory* lists 1500 special schools and 3000 mainstream schools and colleges in both maintained and non-maintained sectors with provision for special learning needs; LEA and Social Services depts.; Educational Psychology services; Portage services and 300 support organisations. At £72.00 this is somewhat expensive, but your library, local LEA placements or education welfare officer may also have access to a copy. ISBN 0 900 640 782, Information: 01737 642223, Web: www.schoolgovernment.co.uk, Email: info@schoolgovernment.co.uk. **SGP HAVE NOW CLOSED – WE ARE TRYING TO LOCATE THE NEW PUBLISHERS OF THIS DIRECTORY**
8. *Special Schools In Britain*, published annually, every May, by Ascent Publishing. You can now also conduct your own search through their database and join a parents' or professionals' forum at www.specialneedsuk.org. *Special Schools in Britain* costs £10.00. Sales Hotline: 01527 834473.
9. *Which School? For Special Needs* is published each year by John Catt Educational. It costs £19.95 + p&p – order on-line or call 01728 663666. You can link directly to their www.schoolsearch.co.uk site where you can search through their database - but only a limited number of special needs are listed (sensory/physical impairment, learning difficulties, EBD, autistic spectrum disorders and Asperger Syndrome). You can look for maintained and independent schools and both mainstream and special educational needs.
10. The **Independent Schools Council** website is at www.isc.co.uk. You can search for a school and link into the regional ISCis information and advice services to get advice on schools. Tel: 0845 724 6657.
11. **Youthinmind** has a free online directory and school-finder www.findaspecialschool.net. This is run and edited by Professor Robert Goodman a doctor (and parent of a child who attended a special school) who has worked for over 20 years with children with SEN. Schools are listed separately for each LEA.

If your child is over 16:

1. *COPE* is a directory of post 16 residential education and training for young people with special needs. It is published every other year. The current edition, 2006, is the eleventh and costs £35 + £7.50p&p. Available from Orca Book Services on 01202 665432
2. **NATSPEC** - The Association of National Specialist Colleges produces an annual publication of its member and associate colleges. *The NATSPEC Directory* is available **FREE** from Homefield College on 01509 814827; Queen Alexandra College on 0121 428 5050 and Derwen College on 01691 661234. Alternatively they have a college finder on their website www.natspec.org.uk where you can search for colleges that have expertise in different learning difficulties.

Home Learning if your child is out of school because of illness, or has been excluded for a long time, or a suitable special school cannot be found which will meet his or her very individual needs, some parents will consider:

Education Otherwise

PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, PE34 3XW

A UK based membership organisation, which provides support and information for families whose children are educated outside school. Enclose SAE with enquiry.

HelplineTel: 0845 478 6345

Email: eoemailhelpline@education-otherwise.org

HE Special (Home Education in the UK – Special Educational Needs)

Website: www.he-special.org.uk

This is a website for families who home educate children with Special Educational Needs. There is a new section on the website for families who have children with Asperger Syndrome and also one for Dyslexia.

Home Education Advisory Service

Tel: 01707 371854

Po Box 98, Welwyn Garden City, Herts AL8 6AN

Website: www.heas.org.uk

Set up in 1995 by a group of experienced home educators to provide good quality information on the legal and practical aspects of home education. Offers practical support for families who wish to educate children at home including SEN, educational materials, resources, exams, curriculum design, etc.

Home-School Tutoring UK

Website: www.homeschooltutoring.co.uk

An established home tuition service, operating in various parts of the UK, which recommends qualified tutors to help with subjects for all ages at all levels, including children with special needs, learning difficulties and dyslexia.

The NISAI Virtual Academy

Tel: 020 8424 8475

NISAI Education, Milton Road, Harrow HA1 1XB.

Website: www.nisaieducation.com

Offers distance learning with daily live virtual lessons following the UK National Curriculum for children aged 5-18 who are, for one reason or another, at home and not at school, including those who are ill, have been injured, have special needs, have been excluded, etc. Fees can be paid by LEAs, parents or schools.

The Student Support Centre

Tel: 0800 132277

The largest supplier of home-based learning materials specialising in home-based tuition in mathematics and English. Website has Kids' Pages, Parents' Corner, and Pass Masters.

Website: www.student-support.co.uk/

OAASIS produces a wide range of **free Information Sheets, 8 publications** entitled 'First Guide to...' and **wallet sized cards** explaining 9 learning disabilities. Please contact OAASIS (see front of sheet for contact details) for the full list, or view and download them on the website at www.oaasis.co.uk. All sheets are checked annually; please ensure you have the current version.