

# Finding a Special Needs School/ Home Learning



## An OAASIS information Sheet

Office for Advice Assistance Support and Information on Special needs

Helpline 0800 902 0732

oaasis@cambiagroup.com

### Finding that elusive special school ...

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

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

**Non-Maintained Special School:** approved as a special school under section 342 of the Education Act 1996. Non-profit making schools run by charitable trusts. NMSS schools are funded primarily through pupil fees charged to local authorities which place children there.

**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. Wholly funded by pupil fees and can be run on a profit making basis.

**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. Wholly funded by pupil fees and can be run on a profit making basis.

**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](http://www.cambianeducation.com)

### 2. GABBITAS

**Website:** [www.gabbitas.co.uk](http://www.gabbitas.co.uk)

**Email:** [schools@gabbitas.co.uk](mailto:schools@gabbitas.co.uk)

**Telephone:** 020 7734 0161

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 £20.49 incl p&p** and can be bought on-line. You can make a free individualised search for an independent school on their website.

### 3. isbi schools

**Telephone:** 01980 620575

**Website:** [www.isbi.com](http://www.isbi.com)

A comprehensive website at through which parents and professionals can conduct a search to create a shortlist of appropriate schools, including special schools, for their child.

### 4. The NAS

**NAS Advocacy for Education Service:**  
**0845 070 4002.**

**Website:** [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)

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 £5.00 + £2.00 p&p and can be ordered via their website at [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk) or through Central Books Ltd.

### 5. The DfES

**Helpdesk:** 0870 120 2527.

**Website:** [www.edubase.gov.uk](http://www.edubase.gov.uk)

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 England and Wales).

### 6. Youthinmind

**Website:** [www.findaspecialschool.net](http://www.findaspecialschool.net)

Has a free online directory and school-finder 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. You can search for the type of school, the level of the child's learning difficulty and specify their special needs.

**7. The UK Education Directory 2008, Vol 3, Information:** 01273 906304

**Email:** [info@uk-education.info](mailto:info@uk-education.info)

Special Provision lists special schools and mainstream schools and colleges in both maintained and non-maintained sectors with provision for special learning needs; Pupil Referral Units; LEA and Social Services depts.; Educational Psychology services; Portage services and support organisations. At £80.00 this is somewhat expensive, but your library, local LEA placements or education welfare officer may also have access to a copy. Used to be published by The School Publishing Company, but following their closure now published by UK Education.

# Finding a Special Needs School/ Home Learning

## 8. Special Schools in Britain

**Sales Hotline: 01527 834451**

**Website: [www.specialneedsuk.org](http://www.specialneedsuk.org)**

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](http://www.specialneedsuk.org). Special Schools in Britain costs £10.00. .

## 9. Which School? For Special Needs

**Telephone: 01728 663666**

**Website: [www.schoolsearch.co.uk](http://www.schoolsearch.co.uk)**

**Published each year by John Catt Educational.**

**It costs £19.95 + p&p** – order on-line. You can link directly to their 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: [www.isc.co.uk](http://www.isc.co.uk)**

**Helpline: 0845 724 6657**

You can search for a school and link into the regional ISC's information and advice services to get advice on schools.

## 11. Dyslexia -

**Website: [www.crested.org.uk](http://www.crested.org.uk)**

**Telephone: 01242 604852**

If your child has dyslexia, visit for the website for a list of schools which have met agreed criteria for dyslexia-friendly education (CReSTeD or Council for the Registration of Schools Teaching Dyslexic Pupils.)

**If your child is over 16:**

### 1. COPE

**Orca Book Services: 01202 665432**

A directory of post 16 residential education and training for young people with special needs. It is published every other year. The current edition, 2008, is the twelfth and costs £35 + £7.50p&p.

### 2. NATSPEC

**Homefield College: 01509 814827**

**Queen Alexandra College: 0121 428 5050**

**Derwen College: 01691 661234**

**Website: [www.natspec.org.uk](http://www.natspec.org.uk)**

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](http://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

**Helpline: 0845 478 6345**

**Website: [www.education-otherwise.org](http://www.education-otherwise.org)**

**PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE34 3XW**

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

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

**Website: [www.he-special.org.uk](http://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

**Telephone: 01707 371854**

**Website: [www.heas.org.uk](http://www.heas.org.uk)**

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

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](http://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

**Telephone: 020 8424 8475**

### NISAI Education

**Milton Road, Harrow HA1 1XB**

**Website: [www.nisai.com](http://www.nisai.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

**Telephone: 0800 132277**

**Website: [www.student-support.co.uk](http://www.student-support.co.uk)**

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

## Jessica Kingsley Publishers

**Website: [www.jkp.com/catalogue/index.php/cat/homeschooling](http://www.jkp.com/catalogue/index.php/cat/homeschooling).**

Have a number of books on home schooling, including books specifically for children with autism and Asperger Syndrome.

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

Note: The OAASIS Information Sheets use 'he' 'his' 'him' rather than the cumbersome 'he/she' 'his/her' 'him/her'. No sexism is intended.