

The Nightingale ASC Centre



The Nightingale ASC Centre for Years 7-13 is managed by Amber Williams, assisted by two Special Educational Needs Teachers and a team of 16 Learning Support Assistants.

The Centre provides support for 22 students who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which identifies that they have a disorder on the Autistic Spectrum as their primary need.

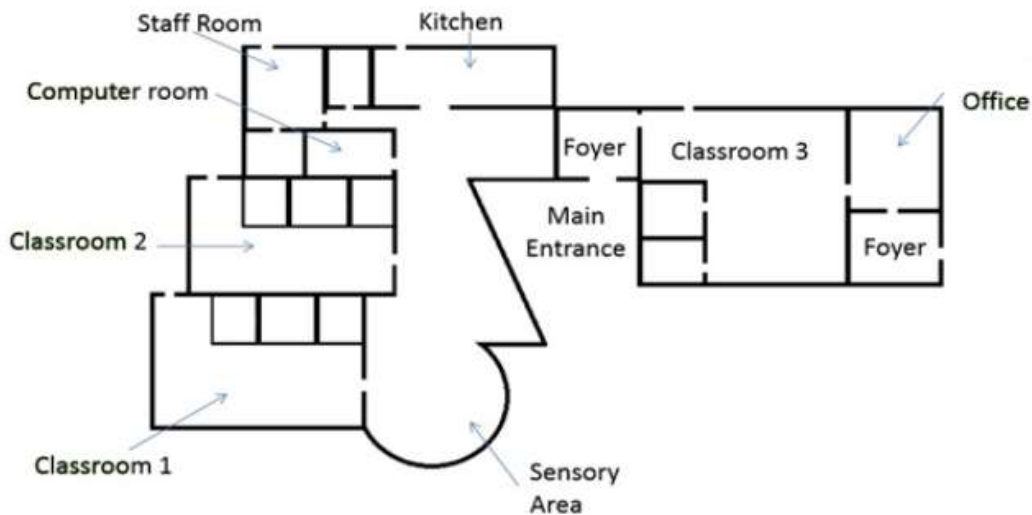
All students are assessed for their suitability against agreed criteria. A panel of professionals, which includes Bedford Borough's Autism Advisory Teachers, members of the Borough Special Educational Needs Assessment and Monitoring Team and Senior Educational Psychologists select the pupils for the Centre. It is important to note that places are not allocated by Mark Rutherford School.

Students selected are those who would have difficulty accessing a mainstream class but have the potential to do so for part of the school day if they have a secure base and enough structure is put in place to alleviate stress and its resultant behaviours. All students have their own desk and work area in one of the ASC Centre classrooms.

The Centre's classrooms are carefully planned to provide physical structure along the lines of a specialist TEACCH and SPELL classroom. Student's timetables are adapted, negotiated and developed to meet their individual needs. Students will have some lessons in the ASC Centre. Teaching methods may differ slightly to those used in the main school. We try to get the balance right between motivating and challenging our students without stimulating to a degree that it causes unnecessary stress.

Students need support during integration. This is provided in different ways depending on the students, the subject and the task set. Support is needed to differentiate tasks, give visual or verbal prompts to remain focussed, to help students behave appropriately and to monitor students to ensure they are not becoming anxious. It is sometimes necessary for support staff to sit next to the students with autism; at other times, it is better to provide 'remote' support, which aids independence.

The ASC Centre at Mark Rutherford School is well established and an embedded part of the school community. ASC Centre Students are integrated into all areas of school life, mainstream lessons, lunch and break times, extra-curricular activities and school trips.



Curriculum

As we are a mainstream provision, the majority of our students follow The National Curriculum in mainstream lessons which is then differentiated to a level which they can access. However, we believe, The National Curriculum alone cannot fully meet students' social and emotional needs and it is tailored and supplemented where necessary. Students also follow life skills and social skills programmes.

Social Skills

All students in the provision take part in social skills lessons. We follow a program of work called Talk About for Teenagers which is a social communications skills package. It is divided into five levels: me, body language, talking, friends and assertiveness. All students start the course by completing an initial assessment which can then be used to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the course. Social skills lessons are taught in small groups by a trained member of staff. Some lessons include roleplays, games and group work as well as written work and presentations. Social skills lessons are taught at our round table area.



Life Skills

As well as social skills, all students take part in life skills lessons. The aim of these lessons is to prepare students for independent living. Students learn to cook simple meals, how to shop and live on a budget, how to care for themselves – mentally and physically, how to take care of a home, wash and iron clothes and pay bills. Students also complete modules in finance, safety and employability. As a provision we are signed up to the AQA Unit Award Scheme. Whilst this isn't a qualification, it is a way of recognising student's achievements and progress in life skills lessons. We also believe that these skills can only be learnt if they are applied to real life situations. We therefore take students on regular life skills trips within the local area to put these skills into practice.

