

Autism Accreditation Assessment

NAS Radlett Lodge School



Reference No.	
Assessment dates	2 nd – 4 th July
Lead Assessor	Nikki Kennedy
External Moderator	Melanie Finlay
Status	Accredited

SECTION 1: CONTENT

About the provision

- Radlett Lodge School is a NAS residential school which provides for children aged 4 – 19 providing day placements for 43 pupils and residential accommodation for 12. Flexi-boarding is also available for day pupils.
- All pupils at the school have a diagnosis of autism alongside other co-morbid conditions and have either severe or moderate learning difficulties.
- All departments are on the same site as is The Lodge, residential provision.
- Radlett Lodge offers early years, primary secondary and post-16 provision following the principles of My Progress. All pupils will follow a personalised curriculum with an emphasis on communication and social skills.
- There are currently 9 classes across the provision and 5 pupils on individualised programmes.
- Radlett Lodge are fortunate to have an on-site multi-disciplinary team consisting of psychologists, occupational and speech and language therapy.
- My Progress ensures that pupils care and education is tailored specifically to them. It highlights how a child's autism with impact them, including their strengths and interests. Set out a plan for their education through targets and curriculum adaptation. Provides a log of their achievements in all aspects of their life, not purely the academic, and shows how they are progressing.
- The school have their own MDT which consists of SALT, OT, psychology and behaviour co-coordinators.
- Collaborative relationship has been developed with a range of outside services and agencies.
- 'The Hub' has been set up as a centre of excellence. Parents have been able to access a vast range of workshops which develop not only their understanding but also give them realistic strategies that they are able to use in the home environment. Training however hasn't been limited to the parents, all escorts have been trained as well as various bodies from the local community. It has welcomed international visitors, spending time within the school looking at practice, with further visitors planned for the future.
- The curriculum within the school has had a significant change. This is now based around the EYFS stages and is taught through a topic of the term. This has allowed communication to be a focus in teaching. There are also now three levels through this that match the needs of the children within the school.

Outcome of most recent statutory assessment

- Radlett Lodge was last inspected by Ofsted in January 2017. It was judged to be outstanding in all areas in the school provision. The residential provision was last inspected by Ofsted in October 2017. It was judged to be Good overall but is outstanding in how well they protect and help the autistic young people.

Key findings of particular relevance to provision for autistic people:

Day School Ofsted

- High expectations of pupils are the norm and staff embrace every challenge.
- The schools record of developing pupils' communication skills is outstanding. Pupils who could not speak when they started school can now express choice, convey their feelings and explain what they mean.
- The collaborative approach to learning, with input from a wide range of professionals, enables all staff to gain a deep understanding of pupils' needs.
- Teachers use a variety of resources and approaches highly effective to help pupils make rapid gains in their academic and social development.
- The care and welfare of pupils will is at the heart of the schools work. Staff help pupils to work through their problems and support them to take their next steps both socially and academically.
- The individual timetables and support programmes for Post-16 students help them to make rapid progress. They develop the skills necessary to help them to succeed in the outside world.
- The school has the trust of the parents. They feel supported so they can build on the progress their children make at school.
- An extensive range of extra-curricular activities, combined with an increased focus on forging community links, prepare pupils exceptionally well for life beyond Radlett Lodge.
- Parents receive training on how to support their children to sustain the impressive progress they have made.
- Parents said that the level of communication is 'fantastic'. The school has established 'The Hub' to help parents to access support, share effective strategies to support their children and discuss issues with professionals. The Hub, alongside the frequent phone calls home, the home-school diary and the weekly newsletter, helps the school to keep parents fully involved. Regular team meetings give parents the opportunity to ask for more support for their children if they feel it is needed. This helps each student to leave with, on average, between eight and 12 accredited qualifications.
- Staff know their pupils extremely well. Teachers use many different methods to help pupils communicate and understand, such as pictures, sign language, communication cue cards and the use of information and communication technology, all of which are highly effective to help pupils learn.
- The excellent evaluations from the occupational and speech and language therapists result in a detailed analysis of each pupil's needs. Teachers and support staff understand how to implement the clear plans provided and deliver the programmes well.

- The relationships that exist between pupils and staff are a strength of the school. The sensitive approach used by staff to help pupils improve their behaviour is highly impressive. Pupils develop their ability to work with others, learn the difference between right and wrong and stay on task
- Staff know what makes pupils feel anxious and how to minimise any worries. They successfully promote positive behaviour.
- The relationships that exist between pupils and staff are a strength of the school. The sensitive approach in which staff help pupils to improve their behaviour and stay on task is highly impressive
- On arrival, many pupils are unable to speak, and many exhibit challenging behaviour and have a history of multiple exclusions from previous schools. The school quickly helps pupils to develop at least one form of effective communication that will meet their needs. This is the cornerstone of pupils' future development across all areas, which then allows them to make excellent progress both socially and academically.

Residential provision Ofsted

- Staff in the residential unit work hand-in-glove with their education colleagues to ensure that the children and young people make meaningful social, emotional and behavioural progress.
- Creative problem solving and a focus on finding meaningful solutions help the vast majority of children and young people to progress in their ability to learn and to communicate.
- The vast majority of parents have the utmost confidence in the staff and the leadership team. They see and can describe the progress that their child makes.
- Consider expanding and creating more opportunities for the 38-weekly and 43-week termly boarders to access the local community, particularly at weekends.

About the assessment

- The assessment took place over 3 days. The school's adviser took over the role of Lead Assessor with support from a Moderator.
- The assessment team observed 21 sessions over a total period of 12 hours across both education and residential.
- Observations were carried out in each class across the key stages with some time spent within the residential unit with both morning and evening observations.
- 3 pupils across the school were not observed as part of this observation. Due to their difficulties to regulate these pupils are all on individual programmes on a 1:1 or 2:1 basis and have been seen across the school but no formal observations carried out so as not to raise their anxiety levels.
- Observed sessions included; transitions, core teaching, SALT sessions, residential activities and life skills sessions.
- The Hub Co-ordinator, Deputy Head, School development co-ordinator, MDT, Care SLT, Lead ASD Practitioner, Community engagement lead and head of FE

gave presentations to the assessment team on how provision is made for autistic people.

- Focus groups were carried out with a group of residential care workers and some LSAs.
- Policy and procedure documents relevant to the provision for autistic pupils were also reviewed in particular; communication policy, positive behaviour support in schools and use of restrictive interventions.
- Individual behaviour support plans and risk assessments were seen as part of observations. Further files were seen of a cross section of pupils within the school and residential from all ages and abilities of pupil.
- The views of families of autistic people were obtained from questionnaires which were sent out by Radlett Lodge with 17 questionnaires (39%) being returned.

SECTION 2: KEY FINDINGS

What the service does particularly well

What stood out as particular strengths:

- The way in which the Autism Lead has embraced the strengths and needs of one particular pupil is outstanding. She has thought really creatively about how best to meet his needs developing a role for him within the staff maintenance team. This has allowed him to feel valued and respected within the school as well as learning in a real life context. This is continually being reviewed with new ways to stretch his learning both academically and for life. It is a programme which has been valued by the parents who are in regular contact and can see the benefit that this has had to the young person.
- The Post-16 pupils have an allotment both on and off of the school grounds. The pupils are responsible for growing and maintaining the allotment. The produce which is grown here is then packaged and sold by the pupils at St Albans in the town market.
- SALT have been a driving force in ensuring that pupils have personalised communication tools with a wide range of tools seen across the school. Additionally communication for a range of purposes is encouraged so communication mats are modelled to the pupils to describe and give direction. This has allowed the pupils to communicate more than their wants and play an active role in some sessions describing what they are seeing or asking for something to go as part of an attention autism session.
- The work that has been done with regards to the Hub has been identified as exceptional, in not only the work that it does with the parents but also through raising awareness of autism on an international level.

What else the service does well:

- The post 16 have continued to go from strength to strength since the last review and have looked at many ways in which they can vary the curriculum and prepare the young people for adulthood.

- The collaborative work of the MDT has allowed the school to have a shared language of SCERT raising awareness within the school of communication and emotional regulation of the pupils.
- RLS has a thorough and in depth baseline assessment of the pupils which involve all professionals within the school. This allows for a very accurate picture of the young person when they start the school.
- The training and induction that staff receive that the school is very comprehensive, based not only on a rolling programme but also a thorough needs analysis of the staff.

What the service could develop further

Priorities for the service

- The assessment team observed in many observations pupil reliance on the support staff. Radlett Lodge should therefore ensure they look at how to make best use of the staff supporting in a way that will encourage pupils to be self-reliant and independent within their classroom spaces. It supports Radlett Lodge's recognition of staff training on prompt dependency and active support due to be scheduled for next academic year.
- Within the residential environment pupils are one to one with residential care workers (RCW). Although timetables are created these are often seen to be held and used by the RCW. Radlett Lodge should ensure that they look at ways in which they can reduce the pupil's dependency on their one to one support.

Other areas to consider

- RLS are in the process of finding ways to extend the range of community visits that pupils are able to access within their time in residential. Some progress has been made in this area with activities identified and staff trained to be drivers.
- The assessment team have identified that there have been many missed opportunities for peer/social interaction throughout the day. RLS could consider how they are able to provide pupils the opportunity to interact with one another during the day and within the residential setting.
- The EP and senior behaviour co-ordinator have identified that although they do a lot of good work to support both staff and pupils they would like to be able to follow a more proactive approach to the analysis of behaviour.

SECTION 3: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- The staff receive a two-week induction before they go into their roles. This includes a day on SPELL, half a day on communication and AACs as well as time shadowing in classrooms. This is done with all new starters working directly and indirectly with the pupils.
- Staff within the school spoke very positively about the induction training one person stating "it set you up well to do your job."
- Teachers are supported further through their induction period by the Autism Lead, who will carry out observations of practice and set targets mentoring new teachers through their probationary period.
- Once staff have completed a full term in post then they will complete a 6 week module course on impact of autism on behaviour. This course is done with all staff who have direct contact with the children and allows them to reflect on their practice.
- New staff will also receive TEACCH and sensory processing training.
- There is a thorough programme of on-going training delivered in house and by external speakers.
- Radlett Lodge will always try to get an autistic speaker for one of the INSET days in the academic year.
- Anybody who has been on external training is required to provide a half hour workshop to be delivered to the relevant people within the school.
- Wide use is made of the MDT who will deliver training in a formal way but also through staff meetings and class briefings.
- Each team member will have 6 supervision sessions over the period of the academic year. One a formal appraisal where training needs can be discussed but the others throughout the year are more reflective.
- The RCW will have a training opportunity every other Monday and are invited to attend all INSET days within the school.
- Various data is collected across the year from a range of sources that allows SDC to identify training needs and put together a schedule for the following year that meets the needs of the whole school as well as individual interests.

In conclusion, a programme of continuous Professional Development is in place to ensure that staff have a good working knowledge of autistic specific best practice approaches. Observation of practice confirm that in most cases pupils were well supported in both their communication and sensory regulation. Staff could overall be more effective in using visual supports and other strategies to promote independence. In this context the assessment team supports Radlett Lodge's recognition of staff training on prompt dependency and active support due to be scheduled for next academic year.

SECTION 4: PERSON CENTRED SUPPORT

Differences in Social Communication

- Radlett Lodge Communication Policy states that it aims to:
 - enable each child with autistic spectrum disorder at Radlett Lodge School to achieve their communication potential;
 - provide children with autistic spectrum disorder with acceptable and effective functional communication skills;
 - enable children with autistic spectrum disorder to understand and to respond to communication addressed at them;
 - teach children with autistic spectrum disorder to initiate communication so they become more able to effect change and less reliant on other people to have their wants and needs met;
 - develop children's listening, looking, attention and turn taking skills;
 - identify and create opportunities for children to engage in social communication and interaction across the curriculum and throughout the school day;
 - teach children with autism an awareness of self and others in order to enable them to become more competent social partners in a world where interaction is of prime importance.
- Radlett Lodge use a range of communication approaches including, communication books, AAC, social skills programmes, talking mats, and PECS.
- The multi-disciplinary team will carry out SCERTS assessments on the children as they join the school. The SALT team are responsible for assessing the communication strengths and needs as part of a team around the child in conjunction with the class team and residential workers. They will then plan and implement collaborative interventions with specific objectives and targets.
- A thorough baseline assessment is carried out by the SALT using the SCERTS model it clearly states what a pupils understanding and expressive communication is and bring in the families view not just what is seen at school.
- This assessment is shared in a range of ways. Where relevant it will be recorded as part of the pupils individual behaviour support plan (IBSP). It will be recorded as part of the pupil's passport and as part of the how my autism affects me document in residential.
- The baseline assessment and the AET Progression Framework will be used to inform the Personalised Learning Outcomes (PLO) where each pupil will have a communication target. This is reviewed half termly on a pupils recording sheet which will identify what partner stage the young person is at, includes the target and strategy for staff as well as allowing staff to record the progress that is being made against the target. This detail as well as SCERTS reviews of progress feed into the annual review documentation.
- The annual review document has been develop and includes a section on communication and interaction. This looks at a child's strengths and needs within this area, transactional supports and who they will be assisted by. This leads into an outcomes section for this area which states long term, annual and half termly outcomes, the achievement of them and what the achievement looks like as well as how it has been assessed.

- There are two full time speech and language therapists employed by the school. They spread their work over the education and residential sections of the school. The SALT carry out sessions on either a one to one, in small groups or within the class. They have been seen to model good practice to both education and residential staff as part of sessions. They are also actively involved in training of staff using both formal and informal methods.
- In some observations communication charts were seen to be used. These exposed pupils to a wide range of language and not just what would be seen in an expected PECS books.
- Where best practice was observed in most sessions staff were seen to limit the amount of verbal communication using primarily the visual keyrings which they have access to.
- Where best was observed in most session's staff were seen to give pupils the necessary time to process information which was presented to them.
- Where best practice was observed in most sessions pupils were seen to be encouraged to or were communication for a range of purposes.
- Where best practice was observed, modelled by the SALT symbols sheets were seen to be used to build vocabulary.
- In some observations intensive interactions was observed to be used with pupils who were in the early stages of communication.
- Attention autism was seen to be used extensively across the school often with great affect to get the children's attention as part of a teaching activity.
- Keyworkers for residential were seen to have a range of visual resources available to them to use as part of keyworker meetings.

Self-reliance and problem solving

- RLS statement of practice and principles say that an "emphasis is placed on the promotion of independence..."
- The autism and independence policy states that pupils "will be equipped to self-regulate and make choices about they want to structure their life. "
- TEACCH and SCERTS are both used as approaches across the school to support this area.
- Skills of independence are assessed through observations and conversations with parents, these are recorded on the Developmental Learning Outcomes (DLO) for life skills. Progress in this is recorded on a termly basis. This is reported on annually to parents through the annual review documentation which includes a section on community inclusion and independence.
- This information is shared through a pupil's passport, My Ability Profile Pen Picture and a section within the residential care plans.
- The pupils will each have a target on independence and community.
- Residential pupils will be working on a house independence target as well as their individual targets. Progress of these are recorded in the DLO.
- Visual support jigs and timetables have been seen to be used across education and residential.
- In one observation where best practice was observed, 2 residential pupils were seen to be making their own dinner. 1 pupil was supported to problem solve when learnt that his food hadn't been delivered by Tesco and went through the process of creating a list and doing his own shopping in order to cook his dinner.
- In all observations pupils in education and residential were seen to have timetables and could use them with limited prompting.
- In most observations practice could have been improved by staff enabling pupils to problem solve or carry out activities independently. For example in one observation an LSA was seen to support a pupil with an activity that they could do independently. In other observations pupils were given multiple verbal prompts to carry out an activity, on another observation pupils were given jigs and then heavily supported in the activity.

Sensory Experience

- RLS train all staff in the SPELL approach and this is throughout the school and residential.
- Guidance is provided by Autism Lead to set up classrooms and create a low arousal environment. This is monitored through learning walks and observations and adapted based on pupil needs.
- Baseline assessments of sensory needs are carried out within 12 weeks of the pupil starting the school using the sensory processing measure at home and school and OT observations.
- Baseline reports are written and shared with the staff as well as any strategies that the staff can use.

- Sensory diets and circuits are used as well as pupils having access to a sensory room within the school. This can also be accessed by the residential pupils in the evening.
- This assessment is shared on, sensory processing measure document, baseline review document, where appropriate IBSP and targets for sensory needs are recorded as part of the PLO documents.
- Occupational therapist can work individually with pupils, a range of activities are presented and pupils are able to choose activities from a range. Although the primary focus is the pupil's sensory needs the OT has been seen to use a range of communication tools and will encourage the pupils to communicate what they want in a method with which they are comfortable. All communication from the pupils is acted upon and their choices are respected.
- OT and SALT have worked really closely with GOSH on a feeding programme for one particular pupil who was losing weight as a result of only eating pureed food and nothing at school. This has been carefully managed and monitored with classroom staff introduced at key points of the programme.
- Where best practice was observed pupils were well supported in sensory regulation by having access to a range of sensory support tools across education and residential.
- Safe spaces across the school are available for pupils who become disregulated as breakout spaces.
- In some observations staff were observed using a range of sensory strategies to support pupils. For example stroking, blowing and head rubbing to calm them.
- Where practice could be improved pupils could be supported to recognise their own sensory needs and be supported to self-regulate.
- In some observations staff were seen to use a multi-sensory approach in their teaching. One example was pupils were encouraged to feel and taste an item without looking at it first.

Emotional well-being

- The National Autistic Society follows an ethos of Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) which seeks to discover the function and/or communicative intent behind the behaviour.
- All pupils will have an individual behaviour support plan to assist in the management of their anxiety, distress and behaviour. This document is used alongside a pupils risk assessment.
- The strengths and interests of pupils are identified during the baseline assessment using a range of methods including the parental view.
- This is shared in a range of documents across the school including IBSP, pupil passport and care plan. These documents include a range of proactive strategies that can be used at specific times.
- The pupil's emotional regulation is assessed through the SCERTS and targets are created for PLO in this area.
- Behaviour incidents are fully recorded and this is monitored and entered into Caresys on a weekly basis by the behaviour co-ordinators.

- There are 5 behaviour co-ordinators that work closely with the Educational psychologist across the school.
- The behaviour co-ordinators will monitor behaviour, debrief staff, support in incidents and monitor the quality of incident reporting as well as working with individual pupils. Due to the way in which the behaviour co-ordinators are currently working much of their work is reactive. The EP would like to get ahead of this so that they can take a more proactive approach.
- The EP is training in video guidance and will use this to help staff to reflect on practice, picking out what they have done well to empower staff to use these in their practice.
- In most observations it was found that pupils presented as relaxed and happy.
- Where best practice was seen the zones of regulation were used to allow pupils to emotionally regulate with individualised emotional regulation boards.
- Where practice could be improved zones could be used across all classes.
- In all observations staff interacted with learners in a way which enhanced their confidence and self-esteem.
- Where best practice was seen staff were seen to de-escalate the learners effectively. This included the effective use of the outdoor environment.

SECTION 5: CONSULTATION AND WORKING

With autistic people

- The views of autistic people are obtained using communication method which suits them.
- These are obtained at various stages throughout the year and not just as part of a formal request.
- The SALT has done a lot of work with pupils using talking mats to gain their views. Decisions made here are all the pupils' choice even if staff don't think they match what a pupil thinks directly.
- Pupil's advocacy levels are assessed and staff are aware of these when carrying out pupil voice activities.
- A guidance on advocacy has been developed.
- The SALT team have created a pupil debrief guide to support the pupil's voice as part of an incident debrief, this is appropriate for the pupils abilities with regards to their SCERTS levels.

With the families of autistic people

- The school prospectus states, "We like to work closely with all our families, and you will always be welcome to ring us or come into school to talk to us. We can give you support and training with areas like behaviour management, toileting, communication and social understanding, and on any area your child is working on, so that you can continue our approaches at home."
- The Hub has been set up as a point of reference for parents. There are significant opportunities for parents to participate in a range of workshops and focus groups.

- The school has really close relationships with families, all staff will have contact with families using a method that has been pre-arranged. Home visits can be carried out by any staff member within the school and support provided at home for the strategies that are used within the school with the appropriate training given.

SECTION 6: SUMMARY

Radlett Lodge School provides person centred support to enable pupils to participate and achieve. The assessments of autistic pupils are thorough and informed by specialist expertise from across the school. The school is established as a centre of excellence sharing knowledge and expertise both within the community and on an international level. It is anticipated that the areas identified in this report as priorities for further development will help to further enrich the quality of practice.



APPENDIX: Additional comments from service



(This should be any further information that the service believes will provide a context for the award committee. Compliments and complaints should be referred directly to the relevant Senior Adviser)

APPENDIX 2: Family Questionnaires



Families of Autistic People

Feedback questionnaire on Radlett Lodge School to be completed by 01/07/2018



The support my relative is given is...							Response Percent	Response Total
1	poor						0.00%	0
2	ok, but could be better						0.00%	0
3	mostly good						20.00%	1
4	always good						80.00%	4
Analysis	Mean:	3.8	Std. Deviation:	0.4	Satisfaction Rate:	93.33	answered	5
	Variance:	0.16	Std. Error:	0.18			skipped	0

The understanding that staff have for my relative's autistic needs is...							Response Percent	Response Total
1	poor						0.00%	0
2	ok, but could be better						0.00%	0
3	mostly good						20.00%	1
4	always good						80.00%	4
Analysis	Mean:	3.8	Std. Deviation:	0.4	Satisfaction Rate:	93.33	answered	5
	Variance:	0.16	Std. Error:	0.18			skipped	0

The way I am kept informed and asked my views about how my relative is supported is...

						Response Percent	Response Total	
1	poor					0.00%	0	
2	ok, but could be better					0.00%	0	
3	mostly good					60.00%	3	
4	always good					40.00%	2	
Analysis	Mean:	3.4	Std. Deviation:	0.49	Satisfaction Rate:	80	answered	5
	Variance:	0.24	Std. Error:	0.22			skipped	0

The advice I get from the service on how to help my relative is...



						Response Percent	Response Total	
1	poor					0.00%	0	
2	ok, but could be better					0.00%	0	
3	mostly good					40.00%	2	
4	always good					60.00%	3	
Analysis	Mean:	3.6	Std. Deviation:	0.49	Satisfaction Rate:	86.67	answered	5
	Variance:	0.24	Std. Error:	0.22			skipped	0

Comments: (1)

1	28/06/18 6:40AM ID: 88982449	Always able to help with anything and will help find information if needed
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Families of Autistic People



Feedback questionnaire on Radlett Lodge School to be completed by 03/08/2018

The support my relative is given is...							Response Percent	Response Total
1	poor						0.00%	0
2	ok, but could be better						0.00%	0
3	mostly good						16.67%	2
4	always good						83.33%	10
Analysis	Mean:	3.83	Std. Deviation:	0.37	Satisfaction Rate:	94.44	answered	12
	Variance:	0.14	Std. Error:	0.11			skipped	0




The understanding that staff have for my relative's autistic needs is...							Response Percent	Response Total
1	poor						0.00%	0
2	ok, but could be better						0.00%	0
3	mostly good						16.67%	2
4	always good						83.33%	10
Analysis	Mean:	3.83	Std. Deviation:	0.37	Satisfaction Rate:	94.44	answered	12
	Variance:	0.14	Std. Error:	0.11			skipped	0

The way I am kept informed and asked my views about how my relative is supported is...							Response Percent	Response Total
1	poor						0.00%	0

The way I am kept informed and asked my views about how my relative is supported is...

						Response Percent	Response Total	
2	ok, but could be better					0.00%	0	
3	mostly good					50.00%	6	
4	always good					50.00%	6	
Analysis	Mean:	3.5	Std. Deviation:	0.5	Satisfaction Rate:	83.33	answered	12
	Variance:	0.25	Std. Error:	0.14			skipped	0

The advice I get from the service on how to help my relative is...

						Response Percent	Response Total	
1	poor					0.00%	0	
2	ok, but could be better					8.33%	1	
3	mostly good					25.00%	3	
4	always good					66.67%	8	
Analysis	Mean:	3.58	Std. Deviation:	0.64	Satisfaction Rate:	86.11	answered	12
	Variance:	0.41	Std. Error:	0.18			skipped	0

Comments: (4)

1	28/06/18 6:40AM ID: 88982449	Always able to help with anything and will help find information if needed
2	04/07/18 3:01PM ID: 89440505	We are delighted with Radlett Lodge School. They communicate with us clearly and regularly and understand our son's needs very well. We would highly recommend the school.
3	04/07/18 4:46PM ID: 89450971	Radlett Lodge school has been very supportive of my son and his needs. The school has excellent teachers who tailor the curriculum to fully suit each Individual Child. They try and provide a solution to every problem.
4	04/07/18 6:04PM ID: 89458203	The school know my son well & are excellent in understanding his needs. Very supportive & friendly staff.

