



The Helen Allison School for Autistic Children

11 The Overcliffe, Gravesend, Kent.

Telephone: Gravesend 63300

Principal: Mrs W. Landman

In response to the urgent need for specialised education for autistic children, The Helen Allison School was founded by The National Society for Autistic Children, and opened in September 1968. It will be able to take sixteen pupils in the present building, and will expand further if funds can be raised.

Fees are paid by Local Education Authorities but, as an independent school, it depends for its capital costs upon donation and fund-raising efforts by its friends and well wishers.

ADMISSIONS

Only children of school age who have been diagnosed as autistic are eligible.

Application, supported by a specialist who has examined the child, is generally made through the Local Education Authority. Periodic selection sessions are held by the Selection Board, and are notified to Local Authorities and members of The National Society for Autistic Children well in advance.

Both day and residential pupils are admitted, the latter as weekly boarders, and the school has normal terms and holidays.

CURRICULUM

This includes all the usual school subjects. These are carefully programmed to suit each child and individual tuition is given to each child for a good part of the day. At other times children are encouraged to co-operate with each other in small groups.

Since all autistic children lack the ability to communicate normally, a handicap closely linked with their lack of physical co-ordination, teaching concentrates particularly on language and physical education. A speech therapist is available to children who can benefit from working with her. Teaching methods have to be experimental and vary greatly, since each child may have to be approached in a different way.

LINK BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

Co-operation between home and school is of the utmost importance, and every possible link is maintained between the two. The school cannot interrupt teaching nor disturb the children with too many visitors, but the Principal is always pleased to see parents of children attending the school, on Fridays at 3.30 p.m. Reports are sent to parents regularly.

OUR AIM

Although autistic children differ both as to the severity and the manifestation of their handicap, the aim for all the children at the school is the same: to achieve their maximum potential, both socially and intellectually.