

Norton College

An innovative school and vocational provision for children with complex needs

- Ian Hardicker is in his 16th year as a highly successful Head teacher. He is currently in his second headship leading a large special school in Worcestershire. Ian has chosen to build on his extensive experience with complex and challenging young people and has developed a new and innovative approach to meeting their needs.
- Ian and his extensive team of professionals, who have a proven track record of success with complex learning difficulties, have drawn on their vast combined experiences to create a 'Pathway to Success' for this group of young people.
- The provision will include a range of learning styles, including traditional classroom based activities through to a whole raft of practical and vocationally orientated opportunities for the young people, supported by a range of therapies.



Mission Statement

Norton College will open and will be accepting children on its roll from October 2010. It will be a highly innovative school for children and young people with complex needs aged 11-19, and offers a vocational provision for children and young people up to 25 years old.

Its aim is to give the most challenged and challenging children and young people the sort of educational, social and vocational skills that will enable them to integrate into society.

The Education Director, Ian Hardicker, and his team intend taking these young people 'on a journey to work', transforming young lives from hopelessness to hopefulness by extending the educational approaches and their experiences through personalised learning packages.

The college will seek to pioneer new links between vocational and academic

curricula for these students as well as a new relationship between a caring supportive environment and strong educational achievement.

The aim is to create a warm, reassuring and stimulating learning environment, supported by a multi-professional team.

The goals of the staff will be :

- Improving self esteem
- Building respect for self and others
- Enabling responsible attitudes
- Developing independence.

We will be:

- People Focused
- Challenging
- Action Orientated
- Open and Transparent
- Passionate



‘Catering and hospitality courses will be a major part of the curriculum at Norton. We will have a professional training kitchen and a real restaurant/café to help prepare students for real life work.’



Our Students

The college will provide specialist education for students who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs that details their complex learning requirements associated with their emotional, social or behavioural difficulties, including Autistic spectrum and cognitive learning difficulties. The college will receive students referred by local authorities or privately

by parents /carers for admission onto the school/college roll and will be able to offer up to 50 full time places in the first instance.

The college will also provide bespoke day packages for students referred by other Schools /Colleges/Local Authorities which will complement their learning at their own school.

‘Outdoor learning will be a key part of the education experience for Norton College students.’



Preparing the Sports Hall for opening.

The Facilities

- Norton College will have some of the best classroom and vocational training facilities in the country.
- It will have 13,000 square feet of state of the art classrooms and 45,000 square feet for vocational training in sports and fitness as well as in the built environment trades of brick-laying, painting and decorating, plastering, roofing, and landscape gardening. In the near future there will be areas for engineering and the media.
- There will be, as part of the sports area, a fitness equipment room and a dance studio, as well as a large football, basketball and badminton arena.
- State of the art kitchens will provide facilities for catering and hospitality courses and there will also be computer suites for ICT maintenance and training in network support skills. There will also be a hair and beauty salon and an area for health and social care courses.
- Outside, there will be a small area of woodland for forest education which will be supplemented by access to nearby woodland. In the future horticultural tunnels will also be added.
- All in all, these will be some of the best academic and vocational facilities in the country for this group of children and young people.

How will we achieve this?

- ➔ Multi Agency Work
- ➔ Intensive Pastoral Support
- ➔ Therapies
- ➔ Appropriate Accreditation
- ➔ Highly experienced and committed team
- ➔ Bespoke Academic and Vocational Curriculum
Personalised Curriculum



Multi Agency Work

Norton College will:

- Have an open door philosophy for visiting professionals.
- Build a 'Team around the Child' and utilise the skills of a wide range of external professionals to aid the college in meeting the complex needs of these young people.



Extensive Pastoral Support.

- Ian Hardicker and his team will introduce the highly acclaimed and effective principles of 'Assertive Discipline' that he and his team have used to outstanding effect in their current posts.
- The Pastoral Support package will have 'Kindness and Warmth' as the core values.
- The College will strengthen the students' tolerance and understanding of others by using the successful techniques associated with 'restoration' of relationships and concepts such as 'putting it right' and not 'making matters worse'. It recognises that young people all learn by their experiences and being able to respond appropriately to challenging situations is an important part of being a good citizen.

Therapies

- The college will use approaches with a Cognitive Behavioural orientation. CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) is recommended by N.I.C.E (National Institute for Clinical Excellence) and works on changing negative thought patterns with positive thought patterns. It also looks at thoughts and beliefs underpinning behaviour, and how behaviours make people feel.
- The school will also use a variety of creative approaches that draw from Solution Focused methodologies.
- Also the school will follow the 'Change Model' and create hopeful alternatives and naturalistic growth expectations.
- The college will also offer music, art, adventure, Holistic Education Therapy (HET) relaxation, aromatherapy and massage.
- As part of the therapeutic approach the college will offer life coaching and mentoring plus a range of supportive packages aimed at developing self control.
- The school will either use its own therapists or commission external professionals to support the young people in its care.



‘There will be an area for forest learning and horticulture. Students will also have the option to train in landscape gardening’

Accreditation

- All young people attending the college will be offered both academic and vocational courses that will be either internally or externally accredited.
- Students’ ‘Personalised Learning Pathways’ will be carefully negotiated and realised through careful planning with teachers and tutors and will create a foundation for confidence and success in the future.
- It is Ian Hardicker’s intention to take these young people on a journey to work and success, and accreditation is one of the ways in which this will be achieved.
- The school will be operating both the COPE and REACH programmes to supplement or be alternatives to more traditional GCSE courses.

The Leadership Team

- **Ian Hardicker**, the Education Director of Norton College, is a highly successful school leader with 16 years of headship behind him. He has a proven track record in the field and together with his Deputy Alan Wardle has considerable and extensive experience working with students who have found traditional learning difficult.
- He was until recently head of an acclaimed large special school in Worcestershire.
- His current school was described by one senior Educational Psychologist as ‘the best special school I have ever seen, dealing with some of the most difficult children in the county’.
- He has chosen to build on this experience of working with complex and challenging young people to develop a new and innovative approach to meeting their needs.
- Ian Hardicker and Alan Wardle will be supported by an extensive team of professionals who also have a proven track record of success with children with complex learning difficulties.



Bespoke Academic and Vocational Personalised Curriculum

- The Curriculum in all its forms will support the young person in achieving their goals and aspirations for the future.
- It will be highly 'personalised' and tailored to meet their needs, enabling them to take up their rightful place in society.
- This curriculum approach will ensure that 'soft skills' such as confidence, resilience and tolerance are strengthened as part of fulfilling the need to develop the 'whole person'.
- All young people attending the college will be offered both academic and vocational courses that will be either internally or externally accredited.
- Students' 'Personalised Learning Pathways' will be carefully negotiated and realised through careful planning with teachers and tutors and will create a foundation for confidence and success in the future.

- The College will employ professionals experienced in meeting the needs of this complex group of students and be fully committed to the 'values and aims' of the College.
- All the professionals employed will have as their first strength 'a child centred approach' and additionally be able to offer specialist academic, vocational or therapeutic inputs.
- The College will respond to the learning needs of the youngsters by offering a wide range of learning styles and students will be taught in one to one situations, small groups of three or four or larger groups depending on their needs.
- They will be able to experience learning in the traditional sense in classrooms or move through a raft of practically based and vocationally orientated areas that will be 'personally' designed to enable positive outcomes to be achieved.
- The traditional curriculum will ensure students experience learning in the following areas: Linguistic, Mathematical, Scientific, Technological, Human and Social, Physical and Aesthetic and Creative.
- The Alternative Learning packages will initially be around 'The Built Environment', with brickwork, plastering, painting and decorating, roofing, and landscape gardening included as options; 'Sports Science', having its own professional sized gym, weights room and dance studio; and finally, Horticulture and small animal care.
- The college will be developing Hair care and Beauty, Catering, Music, ICT and the Arts, Forest Learning, Photography, and Travel and Tourism.
- Learning may take place in classrooms, workshops or in the great outdoors. However, the core philosophy of 'Personalised Learning' will be recognised at all times.





Admission process

- Local Authorities interested in referring a young person to the college should initially contact the college on 01905 359 257
- They should either request a brochure or speak with Ian Hardicker, Education Director.
- Recent and relevant reports will be requested by the college.
- A decision will be made by the college on appropriateness of a placement.
- The Education Director or Deputy Director from Norton College will visit the young person at their current place of study/home.
- A visit to Norton College for the young person, their parents / carers and social workers / Local Authority representatives will be arranged. Providing the funding authority approve, and if it feels Norton College will be able to meet the needs of the young person, an interview for placement and subsequent admission to the college will be arranged.
- The young person will be offered a two to three week assessment place and during this period a decision will be made regarding funding levels and suitability for placement.
- The referring authority will be provided with an 'offer of placement' letter which will detail the funding requirements.
- Once this is accepted and funding agreed a start date for the young person will be agreed which will include a transition plan.
- Local Authorities and other schools may refer students to Norton College for access to the range of Alternative Learning Styles whilst they remain on their school roll. Interested parties are asked to contact the college on 01905 359 257 for further details.