

Specialist education services in autism and complex needs

The Forum School

Mixed gender | 7 - 19 years | Residential up to 52 weeks | Day placements





The Cambian Group is one of the largest providers of specialist services in education, health and care for children in the UK. We provide services for over 2,400 individuals across 250 services; we work with 140 public authorities and employ more than 6,000 people.

Although our work embraces many specialist disciplines, it is united by a common purpose: to actively enable each and every one of the people in our care to achieve their personal best, however it is defined by them or for them.

Everything we do is directed towards achieving this aim.

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The Forum School

Welcome

I am delighted to introduce myself as Principal of The Forum School. Over the past 12 years, I have been fortunate to have been able to teach and lead in a variety of mainstream and special schools. As a School Leader, I passionately believe that learning should be functional, meaningful and most importantly, fun!

As Principal of a school for children and young people with autism I put an understanding of autism at the very heart of all actions taken. I am driven by the belief that all pupils deserve the very best and have a proven record of ensuring the highest standards. Our school is a warm and welcoming autism-specific learning community, with passionate caring specialist staff and excellent facilities. Each day we are driven by our determination to do the very best we can for our students and their families. We work hard to make sure that the young people in our care have the best education, the best opportunities and the best start in life.

Our staff are committed to the pursuit of excellence and I see this commitment every day! I see the genuine pride our staff take in their students and our students' joy when they discover that they can do

something they thought they couldn't. Furthermore, I see their excitement, sense of achievement and personal growth.

Children on the autism spectrum have special needs and require individual care and attention to ensure that their needs are well met. We know the positive difference the right support can make and the positive impact it can have for the future. There is no template for educating and caring for children and young people on the autism spectrum, every child is different and we recognise this difference and work with it. We believe that compassion, tolerance and positive intervention can bring about positive change.

You can be confident that our relationship with you will be built on trust. We want to give you clear and transparent information about our school, our values, our philosophy and our methods of working. Where there are challenges we want to work with you to find solutions. For children and young people on the autism spectrum and their families, these challenges and transition points can sometimes seem overwhelming. We can help you through these times.

We know that considering your child's next school and in some cases home is a hugely important decision and we want to support you to feel comfortable in making that decision. Please do come and visit us to see the school and homes in action, meet our staff and students and talk to us. I am impressed with our school, the work we do and I'm confident that you will be too!

Greg Regan
Principal



Achieving their personal best

Cambian has a history of delivering 'Outstanding' education and care for children and young people with autism and other associated needs.

The Forum School is an Ofsted-registered independent special school, offering up to 52-week residential and day placements for children and young people aged 7 to 19 years old with autism, complex needs and challenging behaviour.

We offer a nurturing environment and seek to understand each child and young person's individual needs. We focus on communication and social skills with a strong emphasis on self-management and independence. All children and young people are encouraged to participate within their ability and tolerance levels, enabling them to integrate with peers and the community as effectively as possible.

We aim to celebrate success and achievement at every opportunity. Target setting is detailed and closely monitored by the whole team around the student, be that an individual target, an ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) qualification or one of our many

school achievement certificates.

We pride ourselves on the range of specialist support services within the multidisciplinary team who enhance the learning experiences of our young people.

We aim to draw out the potential in each student and work alongside them to discover their strengths.

Student profile

- ✓ Mixed gender, aged 7-19 years
- ✓ Primary diagnoses of autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
- ✓ Co-morbid conditions
- ✓ Complex needs
- ✓ Challenging behaviour
- ✓ Often multiple exclusions and placement/family breakdowns
- ✓ Learning difficulties
- ✓ Complex communication challenges
- ✓ Issued with a statement of special educational needs (SEN) or education health and care plan (EHCP)





Our approach

Dedicated to each and every student

The Forum School education department consists of class groups which are based around age and developmental stages. Teachers plan according to their students' individual needs.

The school day offers a variety of individual and group work experiences to enhance the development of academic, personal and social skills for each student.

A range of specialist teachers and therapists are involved in student programmes which also cover psychology and psychiatry needs. All students have regular communication and occupational therapy assessments. Programmes are developed by the speech and language therapist, psychologist, psychiatrist or occupational therapist in conjunction with the class teacher and other key staff. Additionally, multi-disciplinary teams work together to provide behaviour support plans.

Supervision of students is of paramount importance and a high staffing ratio ensures that students are well supervised at all times. Risk assessments have been written for all activities and each student has an individual risk assessment (IRA). There may also be student specific risk assessments related to individual circumstances.

Students' progress is supported by:

- ✓ Maximum class size of 6 students
- ✓ A very high staff-to-student ratio of at least 2 students to 1 adult
- ✓ An on-site therapy team working with care and education teams throughout the waking day curriculum

We support our students where possible with technology such as tablets. Full use is made of the resources in the local environment with educational programmes taking individuals into the community for practical activities such as shopping, swimming, horse riding, social interaction, library visits and country walks.

Every member of staff is dedicated to helping students achieve their personal best through a personalised waking day curriculum. This approach is designed to assist the students in developing life skills that will enable them to maximise their independence in adulthood.

Our specialist team:

- ✓ Well qualified teachers and teaching assistants
- ✓ Speech and language therapists
- ✓ Occupational therapists
- ✓ Clinical psychologist
- ✓ Psychiatrist
- ✓ Key workers
- ✓ Assistant psychologist
- ✓ Physiotherapist
- ✓ Nurse
- ✓ Music therapist
- ✓ Equine therapy

A varied and fulfilling education

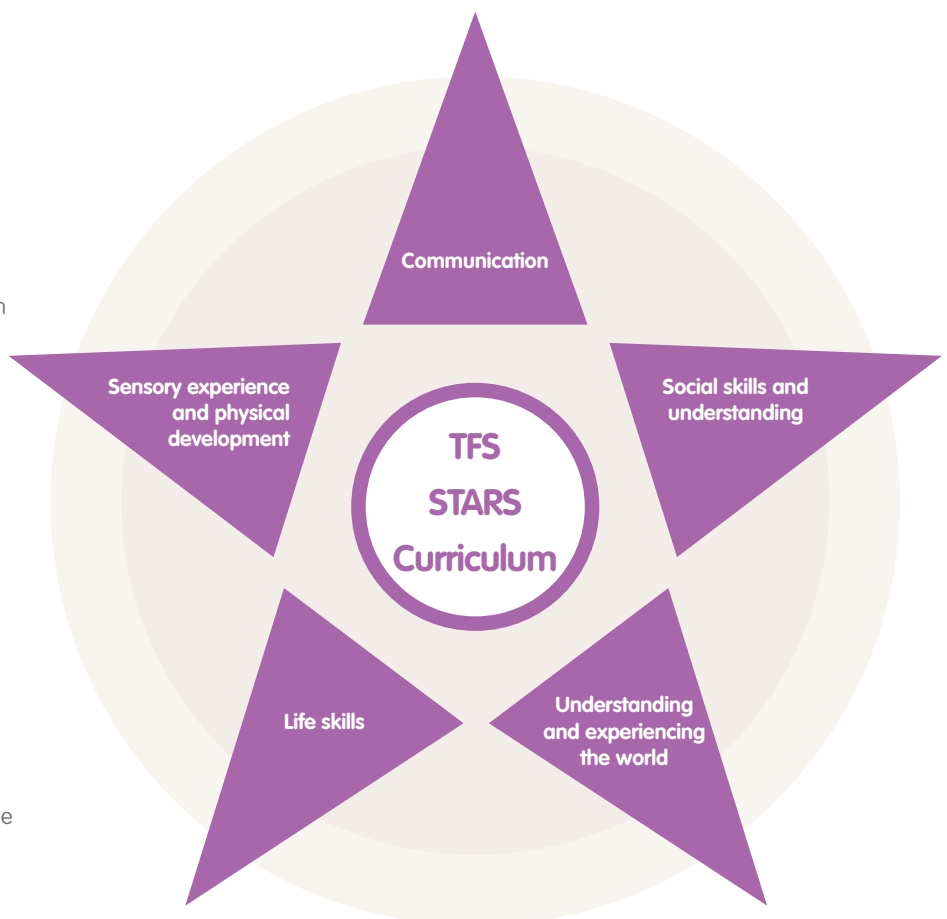
At The Forum School we offer a structured, broad, balanced 'waking-day' curriculum within a calm, consistent and purposeful environment.

We constantly review the curriculum to ensure that it fully meets the needs of all our students. We use a wide range of augmentative communication strategies throughout the waking day, including symbols, signs, photographs, objects and tailored communication systems to support both our verbally able and less verbal students.

Individualised plans are designed to meet specific needs and these plans form the basis of the three-way partnership between student, family/other relevant parties and staff.

Post-16

Most students remain at the school on a full-time basis until the end of their studies. We follow the Strategies for Teaching children with Autism Real Skills (STARS) curriculum. This is designed to break down learning barriers associated with autism and enable our students to achieve their full potential. We support our students with the transition into their adult lives with the necessary skills and abilities to be happy individuals with a role in society.



A system for teaching students with autism real skills





Achieving meaningful progress

Our children and young people make good progress in all aspects of learning, whether social, emotional, behavioural or academic.

We offer a range of qualifications, including:

- ✓ ASDAN qualifications
- ✓ AQA Unit Awards
- ✓ Entry Level
- ✓ Functional Skills

Personalised approach

Students are assessed using P-level and NC levels of attainment on a termly basis and reports are sent to parents and authorities on the progress achieved. All children and young people will have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) drawn up with staff across settings to care and education teams to work consistently on shared targets. Individual learning objectives in care and education are also recorded to enable the celebration of the smaller achievements seen over time. Personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) has a vital role in the curriculum as this prepares our students for living in the community in later life.

Education continues throughout the waking day to include structured activities in the evenings and at weekends. All facilities of the school are used at this time as well as deploying our four minibuses and two people carriers to access community facilities. Strong links are forged in the local community with schools, local colleges, the parish council, a number of local businesses and our village church.

Life skills

All children and young people are taught skills to ensure that they are prepared for life beyond school.

Children, young people and their families are given support with identifying the appropriate next steps at key stage 5 (post-16).

In addition to learning achievements, our children and young people are provided with the opportunity to develop their full personal potential in the following areas:

- ✓ Physical health and well-being.
- ✓ Independence, life skills and self-help.
- ✓ Communication skills.
- ✓ The ability to make informed choices.
- ✓ Intellectual development and problem-solving.
- ✓ Moral, social and cultural awareness.
- ✓ Positive self-esteem and confidence.

Our environment

A home away from home

Located in the glorious Dorset countryside, the school benefits from 28 acres of land for play and relaxation.



The Forum School can accommodate children and young people in either onsite or offsite homes, each with its own dedicated care team. Every effort is made to create a happy, family atmosphere in the home.. Each young person has his or her own room and all have vanity units or en-suite bathrooms. Rugs and soft furnishings make each room comfortable and individualised.

Parents and children and young people are encouraged to personalise rooms with toys, books and photographs from home. There is a safe outside play area, with different play equipment for each home.

Every child has a key worker who is responsible for the care, welfare, safety and learning programmes of their key child. The key worker is the main parental contact, but all staff in the house base work with the child or young person and therefore have a good knowledge of their requirements. Two community houses in Blandford are available for those children and young people who are ready to focus on increased community access and work toward independent living skills.

Each young person will have adequate storage space for personal belongings, the right to privacy in their own bedrooms and access to make private telephone calls.

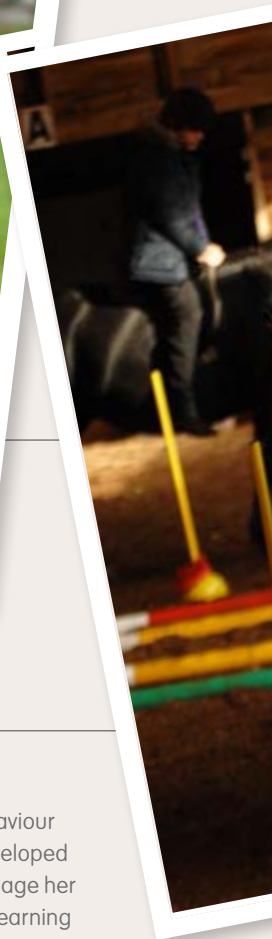




Case study

Elsa's Story

*A student's story from
The Forum School.*



My story

I visited the school twice before I started. I was a bit nervous but I did take a look around, do a little bit of trampolining and painted pots. Then I went to say hello to the horses and was able to ride on one named Erin. I started by using the lead rein, but then staff took it off when they realised I was a good rider! I was 16 when I started at The Forum School. I felt nervous, a little bit shy and homesick. It took me a while to get used to it, but I did eventually.

When I started, I struggled with my behaviour, but now I have learned to control it much better. I have learnt different coping strategies which help, including listening to music, which calms me down. I also ride horses because it makes me feel happy.

I have weekly sessions with the psychology team and talk about different calming strategies. We even have a joke in the sessions! The occupational therapy team have been working with me to use the swing, which makes me feel calm and helps with my balance. I can also use this time to talk about my feelings and what is on my mind.

Night staff help me when I am feeling a bit upset. They will come and talk to me and cheer me up. We often talk about our cats. The support workers during the day are there for me when I need them, and will give me a hug if I need it. I have been able to do lots of things like record a song, write a story and make quilts.

I have found that The Forum School has helped me with my behaviour. I have grown up well. I will be leaving soon, but I have promised staff that I will visit!

Head Teacher's summary

Throughout her time at The Forum School, Elsa's behaviour and learning has improved remarkably. Elsa has developed a number of key skills in order for her to learn to manage her own behavior. This has enabled her to focus on her learning and development of positive social communication. As a result we have seen a decrease in anxiety driven outbursts which in turn has reduced the occasions and extent to which adult support or intervention has been needed. Although Elsa can still struggle at times, her engagement with staff and the consistent approach has supported her in learning the skills to better manage her behaviour.

Elsa showed consistent progress in her communication and social skills. She has made much progress in being able to follow social expectations when having a conversation, such as waiting for her turn to speak. She has also been encouraged and supported to write an article for the school newsletter.

The Future for Elsa

Elsa has succeeded in all areas of learning and as a result of successful transition from The Forum School is now fully participating in life at Cambian Lufton College of further education. We wish her continued success.



Community links

It is important to ensure our children and young people are supported to live in the community and not just in our school environment, so every opportunity is taken to teach in real-life situations.

The Forum School have very strong links and contact with the local community. It is important to ensure our children and young people are supported to live in the community not just in our school environment, and so every opportunity is taken to teach in real-life situations.

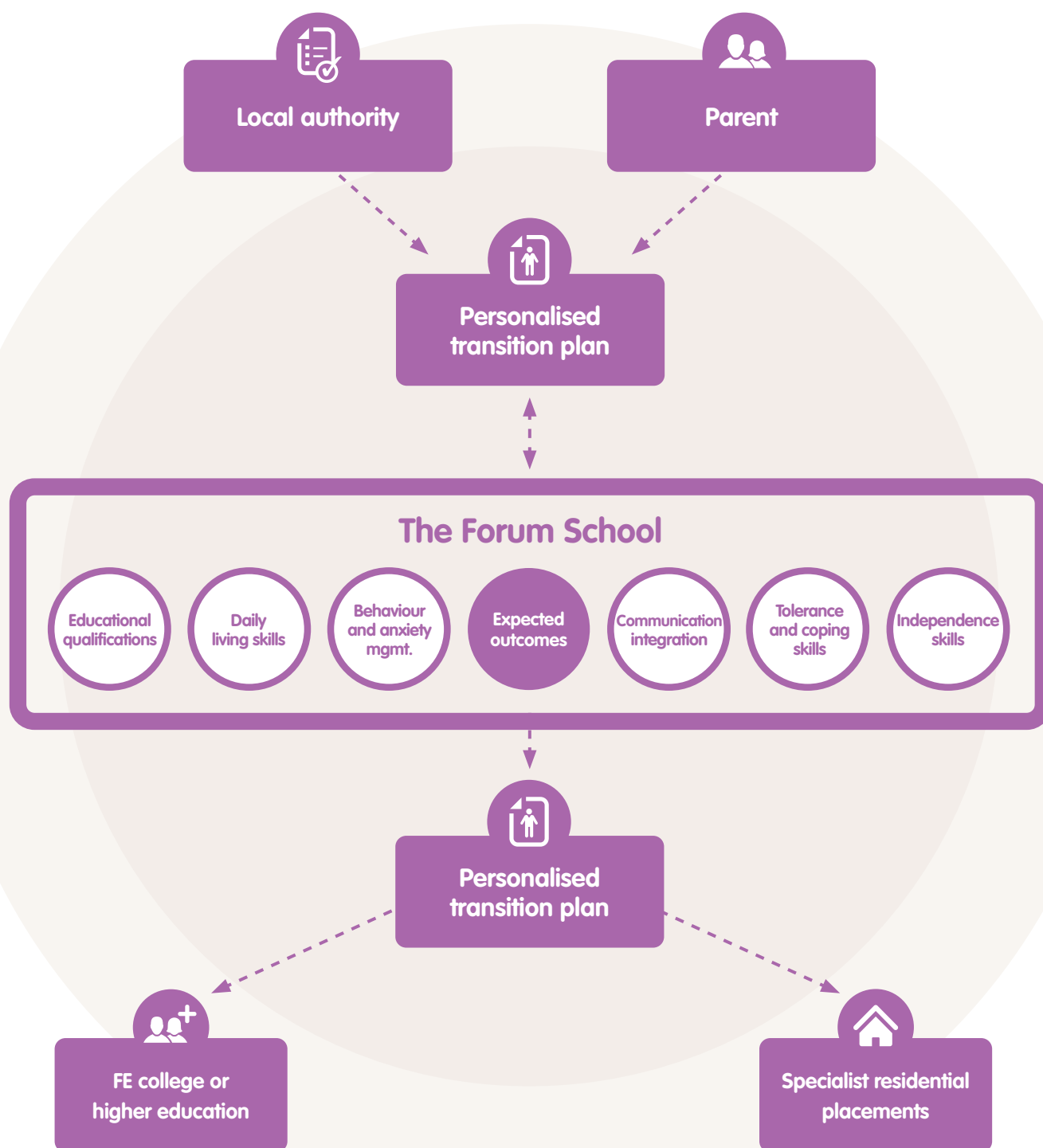
We also have independent visitors and an advocacy service which come along and spend time with the children and young people.

Social skills development for children and young people involves visiting local shops, cafés and sports centres as well as using public transport and other amenities.



Transition pathway

We focus on developing education, life and vocational skills that support a successful transition into adulthood.



Admissions

Securing your child's future

For more information on The Forum School, our staff and an in-depth look at our curriculum, services, outcomes and approach, visit www.cambiangroup.com

Referrals

The majority of individuals are referred and placed by their local authorities, often supported by children's services and sometimes health services. There are some individuals which are privately funded.

In order to determine whether The Forum School may be the right placement, the Head and senior staff carefully examine the statement of special educational needs, education, health and care plan and other relevant background information of the prospective child or young person.

Before admission, families are invited to visit the school so that everyone is familiar with the building and routines and has a chance to meet the staff. This gives parents and carers the opportunity to see the school and understand how it will meet the needs of their son or daughter.

To initiate the assessment process, local authorities make formal requests for placement. Parents and carers should involve their local authorities at an early stage to ensure that visits by local authority educational psychologists or other professionals can be arranged to ascertain the appropriateness of the school for each prospective child or young person.

To discuss a placement in confidence, call us on **0800 138 1184** or email **education@cambiangroup.com**.



Additional information

Our policies can be requested by contacting us on 0800 644 6170 or by emailing education@cambiangroup.com

Safeguarding statement

The parents of students at The Forum School should be aware that the school has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of their pupils. This responsibility necessitates a safeguarding policy and the school may need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies when there are concerns about a child's welfare. This policy on child protection is in accordance with the locally agreed inter-agency procedures and Dorset child protection procedures. The policy also complies with guidance from the DfE and Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). The school recognises it is an agent of referral and not of investigation. Anyone can make a referral to children's social care, if necessary. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) for the school is the Care Services Manager, Kerry Byron.

Complaints procedures

We know there will be times when students, carers, parents or placing authorities will want to give us feedback about our school and we will always be happy to hear from you. If you would like to make a suggestion, let us know about something you were pleased with or, indeed, if we did not meet your expectations,

please contact the school via the contact details at the back of this prospectus.

A complaints procedure allows for both formal and informal complaints. Informal complaints will be dealt with quickly, while formal complaints can be made in writing. Our full complaints policy is available from the school, upon request. This policy is designed to help you raise concerns and ensures your complaint will be listened to and dealt with fairly. Should you wish to take your complaint further or if you feel you are unable to discuss the details with the school, please contact the director of education via the contact details at the back of this prospectus, especially if your complaint relates to the school leadership.

The proprietor

The proprietor can be contacted at the following address during both term time and holidays:

The Cambian Group, The Waterfront,
4th floor, Waterfront, Chancellors Row,
Hammersmith, London, W6 9RU.

Telephone: **0800 644 6170**

Email: **education@cambiangroup.com**



The Forum School



How to find us

By rail

The Forum School is situated in the village of Shillingstone in Dorset. It is about 5 miles north-west of Blandford Forum which is the nearest large town. The school is located just 10 miles away from Gillingham rail station. A taxi ride should take less than 30 minutes from the station to the school.

By car

The Forum School is located just off the A357, which is close to the A350 and A354, within easy reach of Salisbury.

To receive an application pack or to discuss a referral in confidence, please call us on **0800 138 1184** or email **education@cambianguroup.com**

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