



# RNIB Pears Centre

Where blind and partially sighted young people with complex needs live, learn and grow



**RNIB** Pears Centre

Specialist Learning



SEN SPECIALIST  
SCHOOLS



# Welcome

**RNIB Pears Centre for Specialist Learning** in Coventry offers individually-tailored education, care and therapies to young people who are blind or partially sighted and have complex needs.

Formerly known as RNIB Rushton School and Children's Home, RNIB Pears Centre for Specialist Learning builds on over fifty years of expert care and education.

We support children and young people who have learning difficulties and disabilities and are blind or partially sighted. Other needs we cater for include:

- Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD)
- physical disabilities
- communication difficulties
- additional sensory impairment (deafblindness)
- additional healthcare needs, such as epilepsy
- additional behavioural difficulties.

## Visit us!

**We welcome visits from parents, carers, children, other family members and professionals.**

**Call us on 024 7636 9500 or email [pearscentre@rnib.org.uk](mailto:pearscentre@rnib.org.uk)**



# Learning at RNIB Pears Centre

Our specialist school offers a stimulating and supportive environment for young people to reach their full potential for learning, independence and fulfilment. Teachers, teaching assistants, therapists and social care professionals work with parents and carers to continue a consistent approach outside of the school day.

Each young person's goals for their development and wellbeing are tailored to meet their unique set of needs, interests and abilities. Achievements are regularly celebrated and shared.

Class groups are arranged by key stage. Each class has usually no more than seven pupils, with a staff team of a teacher, senior teaching assistant and at least two additional teaching assistants.

Our teachers are all Qualified Teachers of the Visually Impaired (QTVIs), or are working towards this qualification. Teaching assistants also undertake additional studies to become specialists in supporting blind and partially sighted children with complex needs.



**“Staff provide a young person orientated environment where learning and taking part is exciting and enjoyable.” Ofsted, 2011**



**“Olivia has done some amazing things since she has been here. She has fun, she’s happy and it’s made a real difference to the whole family’s life.” Natalie – Olivia’s mum**

# Tom's story

Tom, 17, is partially sighted and has Down's syndrome, severe learning difficulties and autism. When he arrived at RNIB Pears Centre six years ago, Tom didn't want to be around other people and chose to play alone, often refusing to participate in group activities.

Our speech and language therapists introduced a visual timetable in a 'Now and Next' format to help Tom understand what's happening and when. Using a consistent approach, our education and care team gradually introduced him to new activities.

His family have been astounded by Tom's progress and they have seen major improvements in his behaviour since coming to RNIB Pears Centre. His understanding of spoken language, as well as his listening and attention skills, has come on leaps and bounds.

Tom now joins in and shares much more. In a recent PE lesson, he put balls into a basket, walked along a bench and even did star jumps! He particularly enjoys music therapy and takes turns playing his favourite tune with a member of staff.



**“Staff constantly look at ways of supporting our son and strive to ensure he reaches his goals – he constantly surprises us.” Sue – Tom's mum**



# Curriculum

Our broad, balanced and relevant curriculum is differentiated to meet individual needs and learning styles. National Curriculum core and foundation subjects are highly personalised to the needs of each student. Lessons are varied, with students taking part in one-to-one work, small group sessions and whole class activities.

From the age of 14, students follow a theme-based curriculum. This focuses on life skills, vocational studies and work experience. In turn, this encourages progression and allows a focus on age-appropriate activity and learning. Sixth form students also participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

Curriculum enrichment activities include creative arts, dancing and theme days such as Chinese New Year. Regular charity events also offer opportunities for young people to contribute to the wider community and develop their understanding of issues faced by others.

Working within a specialist curriculum, students complete AQA (Assessment and Qualification Alliance) units at pre-entry and entry level which are nationally recognised. We recently became the only non-maintained special school in England to be awarded specialist status for special educational needs (SEN) cognition and learning. This will help us to improve the learning experience for blind or partially sighted young people with complex needs.



**“Staff promote education, offering time and commitment that enables young people to make consistent progress and actively supports young people to recognize their own achievements.” Ofsted, 2011**

# Adrian's story

Adrian is 18 years old. He is partially sighted with substantial physical needs, is strongly affected by epilepsy and is a wheelchair user. At RNIB Pears Centre we are able to manage Adrian's very complex needs to allow him to learn and achieve.

Adrian receives individualised physiotherapy to manage his posture and ensure he moves and stretches. Sometimes he uses a standing frame as the upright position gives better access for using his hands. Adrian also benefits from hydrotherapy and intensive interaction.

He participates in a variety of activities such as art and craft projects, gardening and cooking various recipes. All the resources Adrian uses to carry out these activities are adapted to suit his individual needs. For instance, during a cookery activity, Adrian is able to make smoothies by pressing a switch on the blender. He also has access to a set of talking scales to assist in the weighing of ingredients.

Adrian enjoys art and craft activities, as the variety of materials are of different textures giving him a multi-sensory experience. Adrian is a big music fan and loves going to pop concerts. He likes socialising and is stimulated by busy environments, such as bowling alleys and the amusement arcades of Blackpool, where he recently went on holiday.



**“The care and education Adrian has received at RNIB Pears Centre has changed his life – and ours – for the better. We have complete trust and confidence in what RNIB Pears Centre is trying to achieve with young people like Adrian.”** Diane – Adrian's mum

# Living at RNIB Pears Centre

We offer up to 52-week specialised residential care from new purpose-built bungalows with gardens and outdoor play areas. This service has recently been graded 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. We also offer short breaks to children and young people from pre-school age, whether or not they attend our school.

Each young person staying with us has their own bedroom which is made safe and personal to them. Young people are actively encouraged to make their own everyday choices and develop independence skills. We work in partnership with parents, carers and families to ensure that they are closely involved at each step of their child's journey.

Our dedicated team of social care professionals (including waking night staff) provide 24-hour care. All RNIB Pears Centre staff and volunteers are required to undertake regular training in safeguarding children and young people.

Our team promotes achievement in the areas of communication, mobility and socialisation. We actively support the transition process to ensure that all young people attending RNIB Pears Centre get the very best start to their adult life.



## Relaxing and having fun

A wide range of community facilities are within easy reach of RNIB Pears Centre. Young people plan and choose their leisure activities. Favourites include attending football matches, cinema and theatre trips, pop concerts, swimming, bowling, shopping and using local restaurants. Young people also have the opportunity to go on holidays with friends and enjoy new challenges and experiences. This enhances their self-esteem and social skills.



**“Young people develop their confidence and practical abilities. They access a variety of in-house and community based activities that enhance self-awareness, develop identity and improve self-esteem in an age-appropriate manner.”**

Ofsted, 2011

# Nadia's story

Nadia is 17 years old. She has cortical visual impairment, autism, epilepsy and severe learning difficulties. When she arrived at RNIB Pears Centre in 2005, she struggled to cooperate with tasks such as eating, washing and personal care. Accessing the community was extremely difficult because of her challenging behaviour.

Our team worked to get to know Nadia and understand about her autism and visual difficulties. We learnt how her vision and sensory processing affects her and have developed appropriate ways to manage this.

Nadia now eats independently with a fork. She controls her personal care and has shown a key interest in sensory lessons and beauty and therapies. She uses objects of reference to communicate her wishes and needs. Nadia's social skills have improved and she frequently accesses the community with the right support. Recently she explored the Bullring shopping centre in Birmingham and visited a restaurant, going independently to find a seat.

**“RNIB Pears Centre has had an incredible impact: the teaching has brought new life into Nadia and she has developed independent living skills. She has made major strides which has had a positive impact on her parents and siblings as well. We are very grateful to RNIB Pears Centre for all their efforts and support.”** Qayyum – Nadia's dad



# Therapies and healthcare

We offer an in-house team of therapists and healthcare consultants, including behaviour specialists trained in the care of people with learning disabilities, physiotherapists, and speech and language therapists.

Our range of therapies enable young people to access the curriculum and leisure activities more effectively, and to maintain and extend their skills and capabilities. The following approaches are an integral part of our provision:

- physiotherapy
- speech and language therapy
- water therapy
- music and creative therapy
- occupational therapy
- habilitation and mobility
- proactive behaviour management
- clinical psychology
- complementary therapy.

All young people receive the highest level of healthcare. They are registered with our local GP and have access to a paediatrician and other community health services. Our healthcare and therapies team receive ongoing professional training and clinical supervision as part of their personal development.

Our brand new facilities include multi-sensory environments, movement and therapy rooms and a vision assessment suite.





# Where we are

Located in a pleasant residential area in Coventry, North Warwickshire with excellent transport links, RNIB Pears Centre is easy to get to from many areas of the UK.

New state-of-the-art facilities are now open following a major redevelopment. This includes five six-bedroom bungalows with gardens and outdoor play areas. Our fully accessible school offers specialist music, art and science classrooms, two multi-sensory rooms, hall, library and sixth form area.

Our new facilities provide opportunities for local authorities and other organisations to work in partnership with us to meet local needs. Meeting rooms and other amenities are also available for hire.

We can support young people from any area of the UK or, in exceptional circumstances, from overseas. School places are also available for pupils travelling to and from home on a daily basis.



**“This is an absolutely fabulous provision that cares for the young people exceptionally well.” Ofsted, 2011**

**“Fabian would be lost if it wasn’t for this place. The way they’ve dealt with him, through patience and kindness, has really helped. The beauty about RNIB Pears Centre is that everything is under one roof. Every single need is catered for.”  
Jacqui – Fabian’s mum**



# Find out more

RNIB Pears Centre for Specialist Learning was previously known as RNIB Rushton School and Children's Home. For more information, go to our website at [rnib.org.uk/pearscentre](http://rnib.org.uk/pearscentre)

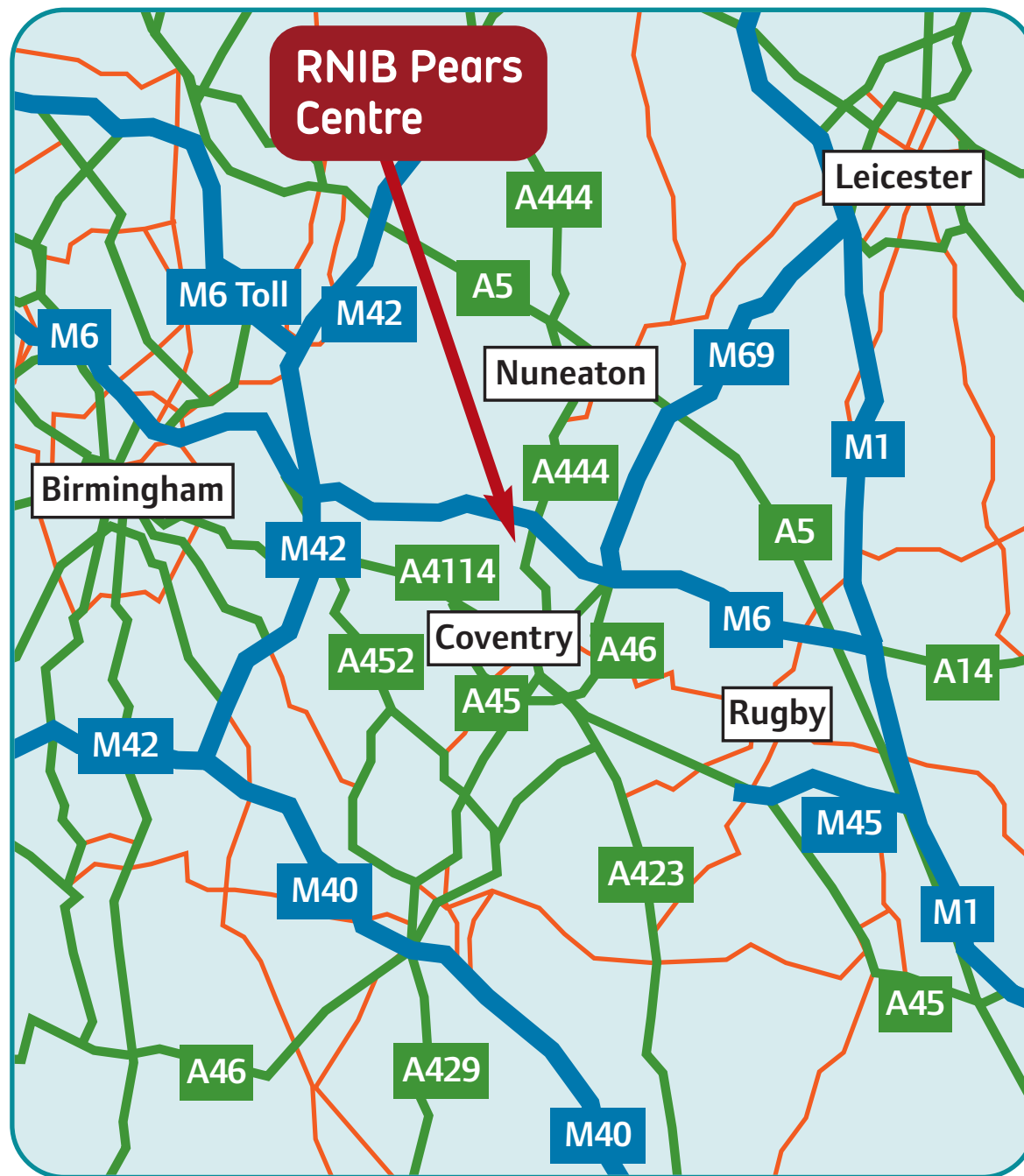
We welcome visits from parents, carers, children, other family members and professionals.

Get in touch with us to discuss places or arrange an informal visit:

- Call us on 024 7636 9500
- Email us at [pearscentre@rnib.org.uk](mailto:pearscentre@rnib.org.uk)
- Write to us at RNIB Pears Centre for Specialist Learning, Wheelwright Lane, Ash Green, Coventry CV7 9RA

**We look forward to hearing from you.**

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## Support us!

Your support can help us provide specialist services to children and young people with complex needs who are blind or partially sighted. To get involved in fundraising or make a donation visit [rnib.org.uk/pearscentre](https://www.rnib.org.uk/pearscentre).

# Contact us

RNIB Pears Centre for Specialist Learning  
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