



# RNIB Pears Centre

Where children and young people  
live, learn and grow



**RNIB** Pears Centre

Specialist Learning



SEN SPECIALIST  
SCHOOLS



# Welcome

**RNIB Pears Centre for Specialist Learning** (formerly RNIB Rushton School and Children's Home) in Coventry offers individually-tailored education, care, healthcare and therapies to children and young people with multiple disabilities and complex health needs who are blind or partially sighted, from pre-school up to the age of 19.

Building on over 50 years' experience, we offer a stimulating, creative, supportive and purpose-built environment for young people, enabling them to reach their full potential for learning, independence and fulfilment. Our education and care are both graded "Outstanding" by Ofsted. Our nursing care for children with additional medical needs is also fully compliant with Care Quality Commission (CQC) standards.

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
- high health and medical needs, including long-term ventilation or life-threatening or life-limiting conditions
- 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)



# Education at RNIB Pears Centre

Our **specialist school** offers a highly personalised and multi-sensory approach to learning. We also offer a newly established **early years education** provision in our well-staffed specialist nursery known as The Orchard. 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 considering not just age but developmental and sensory need. 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.

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

Our specialist **outreach service** called "Periscope" offers practical support to individual pupils and educational advice and guidance to professionals and parents. Our team can also carry out a range of assessments, reviews and reports to facilitate and improve learning, such as functional vision assessments.



**“Staff possess a detailed knowledge of every student and this supports them in achieving the best possible outcomes.” Ofsted, 2013**



**“If RNIB Pears Centre didn’t exist who knows what life would be like for Anna, but I am very confident that it would not have been anywhere near as joyful as it is now.” John, Anna’s father**

# Haillo's story

Haillo, 16, has multiple disabilities after being born prematurely. He has severe learning disability, visual impairment, other sensory difficulties and behavioural problems such as self-injury.

When he came to RNIB Pears Centre six years ago, Haillo required support from two members of staff. He had no sense of danger and needed to wear a helmet to protect his head. Haillo also preferred to keep his arms inside his t-shirt to gain sensory feedback.

Our multi-disciplinary team worked consistently with Haillo to significantly reduce his self-injurious behaviour and to reduce the level of staff support he requires. We also encourage him to promote his independence and develop his communication skills. Haillo now chooses to wear a hat instead of a helmet, and he wears long-sleeved shirts extending his arms through his sleeves. Haillo washes, dresses and eats independently. He is encouraged to use his residual vision and he communicates using pictures and signs. Haillo is confident with ICT, using an iPad in class with support, and in his spare time he often plays bowling or tennis on the Wii.

Haillo is very caring and sociable. He enjoys music and dancing and is also a talented artist, recently making a paper mache planet for a project on the solar system and painting it independently.



**“RNIB Pears Centre’s creative solutions have led to Haillo’s increased confidence and his much needed development and independence. I have trust and confidence in the support system offered to my son here.” Zanolbia, Haillo’s mum**



# Curriculum at RNIB Pears Centre

Our School provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, which is differentiated to meet needs of individual students. Literacy, Numeracy, Music and PE are taught as stand-alone subjects. Lessons are varied, with students taking part in one-to-one work, small group sessions and whole class activities.

As young people grow older their curriculum adapts to prepare them for adulthood. 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. Students also participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and social enterprise projects.

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 are the only non-maintained special school in England to be awarded specialist status for special educational needs (SEN) cognition and learning. This is helping us to improve the learning experience for children and young people with complex needs who are blind or partially sighted.



**“Themes and topics are taught in highly individual ways to meet the particular needs of all students. They also provide many positive opportunities for enrichment through a range of clubs, visits and activities.” Ofsted, 2013**

# Ashleigh's story

Ashleigh, 16, is registered blind and has specific learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder and severe anxiety disorder. Before she arrived at RNIB Pears Centre in March 2012, she wasn't attending school because of her challenging behaviours. She refused to socialise, preferring to stay in her bedroom. Ashleigh struggled with completing personal care routines and was reluctant to go on trips because she wouldn't communicate her wishes and needs.

Our speech and language therapist and social care team worked consistently with Ashleigh to improve her understanding of events and expectations. Our teaching staff and habilitation officer supported Ashleigh to become familiar with her surroundings, for example using tactile location markers to enable her to walk more independently around school and in the community.

Ashleigh now attends school, accessing the curriculum using assistive technology. She has developed her skills to independently carry out personal care routines. She has become much more sociable and enjoys going on trips. She recently went to see "Dancing on Ice Live" with friends. Every Wednesday, she serves customers in the student-run Tasty Treats Café as part of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. Ashleigh loves music and recently sang in front of a very large audience, including The Princess Royal and Sir George Martin!



**“When Ashleigh first came to RNIB Pears Centre, we were concerned that we'd lose connection with her, but actually our relationship with her has improved. This is partly due to Ashleigh's willingness to share her day with us on the phone. We feel that she now has a better understanding of what she is doing in her day and is less anxious. Ashleigh has told us that she is happy here and we feel assured that RNIB Pears Centre is the right place for her.” Nicola, Ashleigh's mum**

# Care 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 been rated “Outstanding” by Ofsted since November 2011. It is available to children and young people from pre-school age, whether or not they attend our school. We also offer specialist care as a step-down from hospital for children and young people with high health and medical needs (such as long-term ventilation or life-threatening or life-limiting conditions).

Each child or 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 closely with parents, carers and families to ensure that they are involved at each step of their child’s journey.

Our dedicated team of social care professionals and nurses (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 personal development, independence, communication, mobility and socialisation. Our transition service ensures that all young people attending RNIB Pears Centre get the very best start to their adult life. We are able to help with transitions to other RNIB establishments, such as RNIB College Loughborough, or into supported living accommodation.



## Relaxing and having fun

A wide range of community facilities are within easy reach of RNIB Pears Centre. Children and 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. Children and 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 have fun and achieve outstanding personal outcomes.” Ofsted, 2014**

# Fearghas's story

Fearghas, 16, has both hearing and visual impairment, profound and multiple learning difficulties, Downs Syndrome and West Syndrome. Fearghas is sociable and enjoys being with people, his communication is mostly non-verbal.

Fearghas started school at RNIB Pears Centre in November 2012. When he started he found it difficult to take part in activities and to engage with staff. Often he displayed behavioural problems towards others and some self-harming behaviour. Fearghas would only walk short distances with someone standing/hugging him from behind and he often needed to use his wheelchair.

Our education and therapy teams worked with Fearghas on a one-to-one basis to build up his trust in them. The speech and language therapy team introduced Fearghas to intensive interaction as a way to engage with him and allowing him to build relationships with staff in school. He is now happy to interact and spend time in the classroom on individual work, take part in circle time and some group activities.

Fearghas was introduced to using objects of reference to communicate his wishes and positively make choices due to his limited speech. Fearghas uses an increasing number of objects to exchange for his favourite activities, for example a CD for music, a plastic shape for singing and a small book for stories. Fearghas is now consistently able to make choices using his objects of reference. Fearghas's communication skills have made good progress, staff are able to understand his body language and vocalisations to communicate how he is feeling and this is all written in his communication passport which he carries with him.

Since attending RNIB Pears Centre Fearghas has made good progress. He now walks everywhere without the need for his wheelchair, has learnt his way around school and can navigate to his next class. There has been a major reduction in his self-harming behaviour and he now rarely wears his helmet whilst in school.

Fearghas really enjoys using an iPad in the classroom to help him access the curriculum. He can activate touch screen activities using cause and effect programmes and especially enjoys those that make noises. Since attending RNIB Pears Centre, his numeracy skills have increased and he is now able to follow a sequence in counting songs. Fearghas also enjoys listening to stories.

**“Since Fearghas has been at RNIB Pears Centre, he has grown in confidence and is much more outgoing. His communication skills have developed tremendously and he is now making choices about things we never imagined possible. He is stretched and challenged in very positive ways on a daily basis. Fearghas is really enthusiastic about school and has become so much happier since being here. RNIB Pears Centre is very good at communicating with us, Fearghas’s parents, and we feel that they are part of the family that works together to support Fearghas as he grows and develops.”**

**Lilias, Fearghas’s mum**



# Therapies and healthcare

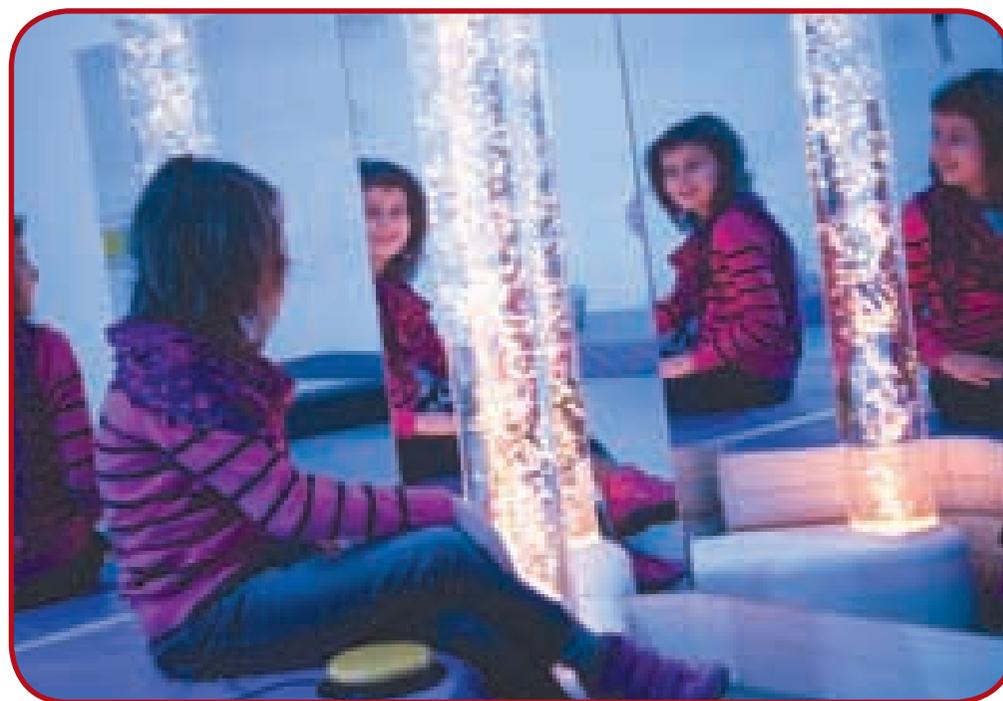
We offer an in-house team of therapists and healthcare consultants, including behaviour specialists trained in the care of people with learning disabilities, nurses, physiotherapists, and speech and language therapists.

Our range of therapies enable children and 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 children and 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. We can support young people with high health needs during transition periods from hospital to their home environment. We also work with parents and families to support them in managing health conditions. Our healthcare and therapies team receive ongoing professional training and clinical supervision as part of their personal development.

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





**“Young people’s physical and emotional health is excellently promoted and monitored under the supervision of medically trained practitioners and with an appropriately trained and skilled social care team.” Ofsted, 2014**

# Admissions

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

Detailed pre-admission assessments of children and young people are carried out with the involvement of parents, carers and families as well as education, social care and health professionals. This process aims to ensure that we can fully meet the individual child's needs.

We can provide on-site accommodation for the assessment process and for subsequent visits, so for parents and carers there is no need to be apart from your son or daughter during these times. This type of support allows you to choose how much or how little time away you can take.



**“Communication between staff, parents and other key agencies is excellent and effective... Young people’s views and opinions on their care are actively sought, valued and acted upon.” Ofsted, 2014**

A young man with dark hair, wearing a black hooded jacket and blue trousers, is walking on a paved path. He is holding a white cane in his right hand. An older woman with blonde hair, wearing a beige jacket and blue trousers, is walking alongside him, holding his left arm to guide him. They are walking past a brick building with a wooden upper section and a black metal fence. The ground is paved with grey stones, and there is a patch of green grass to the right.

**“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**

# Where we are

Located in a pleasant residential area in Coventry, North Warwickshire with excellent transport links (near M6, M1, M42 and M69 motorways, Birmingham International Airport and major rail routes), RNIB Pears Centre is easily accessible from all areas of the UK.

## Find out more

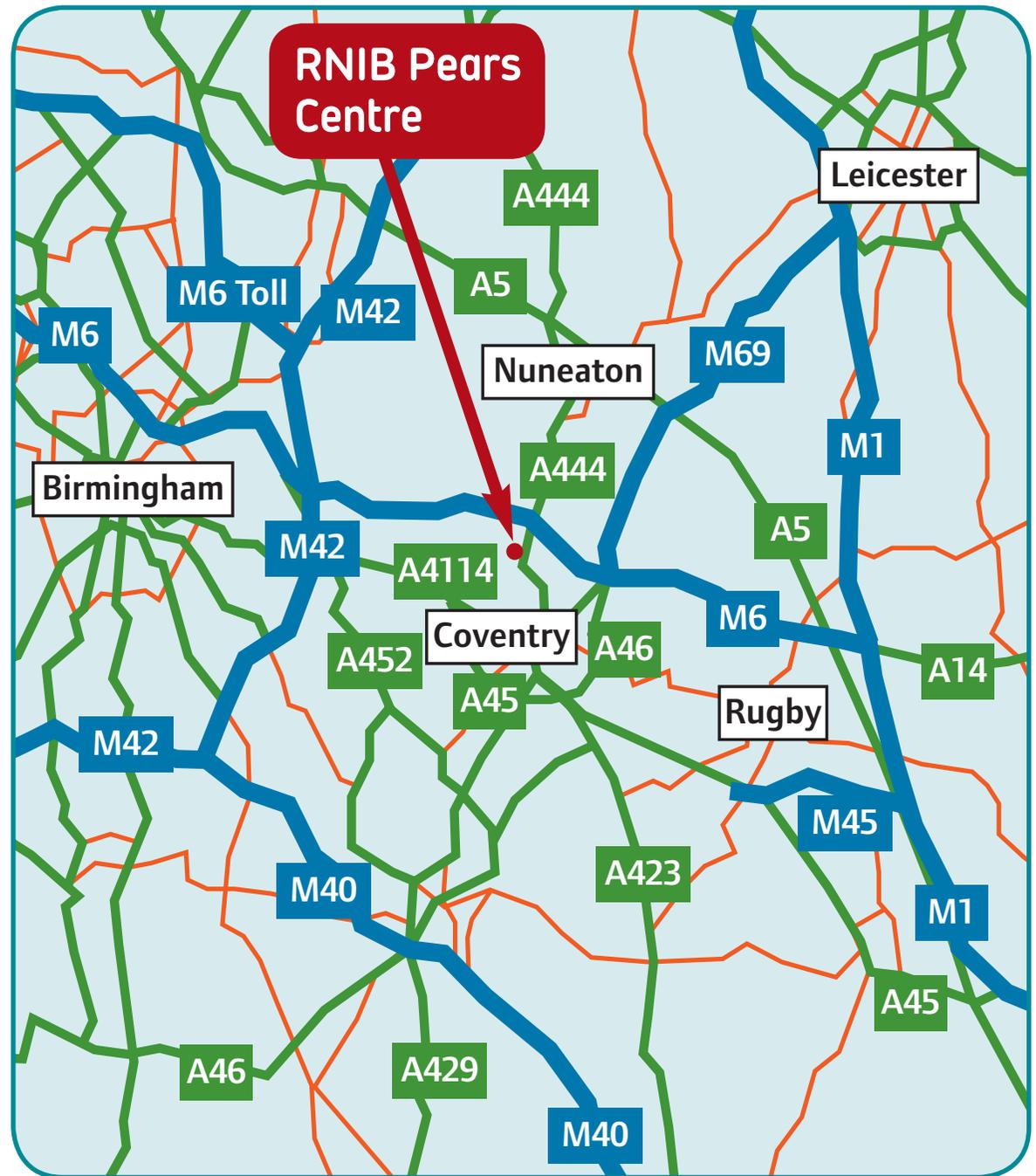
RNIB Pears Centre for Specialist Learning was previously known as RNIB Rushton School and Children's Home.

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:

- visit our website [rnib.org.uk/pearscentre](http://rnib.org.uk/pearscentre)
- 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.





### 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://rnib.org.uk/pearscentre) or scan this code:



# Contact us

RNIB Pears Centre for Specialist Learning  
Wheelwright Lane, Ash Green  
Coventry CV7 9RA

Telephone 024 7636 9500

Email [pearscentre@rnib.org.uk](mailto:pearscentre@rnib.org.uk)

Visit [rnib.org.uk/pearscentre](http://rnib.org.uk/pearscentre)

To find out more about RNIB Pears  
Centre for Specialist Learning scan this  
code or visit [rnib.org.uk/pearscentre](http://rnib.org.uk/pearscentre)

