



BRENTFORD SCHOOL FOR GIRLS
BRENTFORD 6th FORM

A mainstream school with an
OUTSTANDING ASD centre
educating pupils aged 11-16

ASD Prospectus





A personal **WELCOME** *from the Head*

BRENTFORD

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to our fantastic school and to the very special and unique privilege we have, in that we are lucky to be able to offer our very own onsite centre for girls, specialising in autism. The centre, which is now over 10 years old, was 'born' from a need to ensure that girls with autism have access to an environment that they can thrive and succeed in. The vision for all of our girls is that they grow up to become the girl of our school vision, confident and ambitious young women who are ready to embrace the modern and changing world. This is the vision that we have for 'your' daughter, and whilst we recognise that her autism may have provided challenges in her learning journey, it is our mission to ensure that 'every' girl, regardless of the challenges that they may face, are supported to achieve their very own personal best.

We know from research that girls with autism can present very differently from boys. Our team of specialist teachers, support staff and facilities are all well placed to be able to meet the needs that girls may have, particularly as they hit the challenges of puberty. It is very important to us that all girls experience mainstream schooling, with the support of the additional and specialist facilities that we provide. Brentford is a small, nurturing community where all of the students thrive as individuals, where every 'girl counts'. Our girls are happy, they feel safe and they achieve! We hope that you will come and visit us and see this for yourself.

With best wishes

Marais Leenders
Headteacher

OUR VISION

IMAGINE THE FUTURE BRENTFORD GIRL...

*She thrives on challenge and has a desire to fulfil her **LEARNING POTENTIAL**.*

*She is able to think **INDEPENDENTLY** and is **CONFIDENT** in her social and academic capability.*

*She is emotionally aware and emotionally **INTELLIGENT**.*

*She is **CAPABLE** and dependable.*

*She is **RESOURCEFUL** and inquisitive.*

*She embraces the technological world as a global village and is **READY TO INTERACT** with others in the local and worldwide **COMMUNITY**.*

*She accepts the welfare of others as **HER RESPONSIBILITY**.*

*She understands the need for **SUSTAINABLE LIVING** both locally and globally.*

*She is ready for life in the **FUTURE**, whatever that may be.*

*She is the **CENTRE OF OUR VISION** and will remain the very **CORE** of our being and **PURPOSE**.*





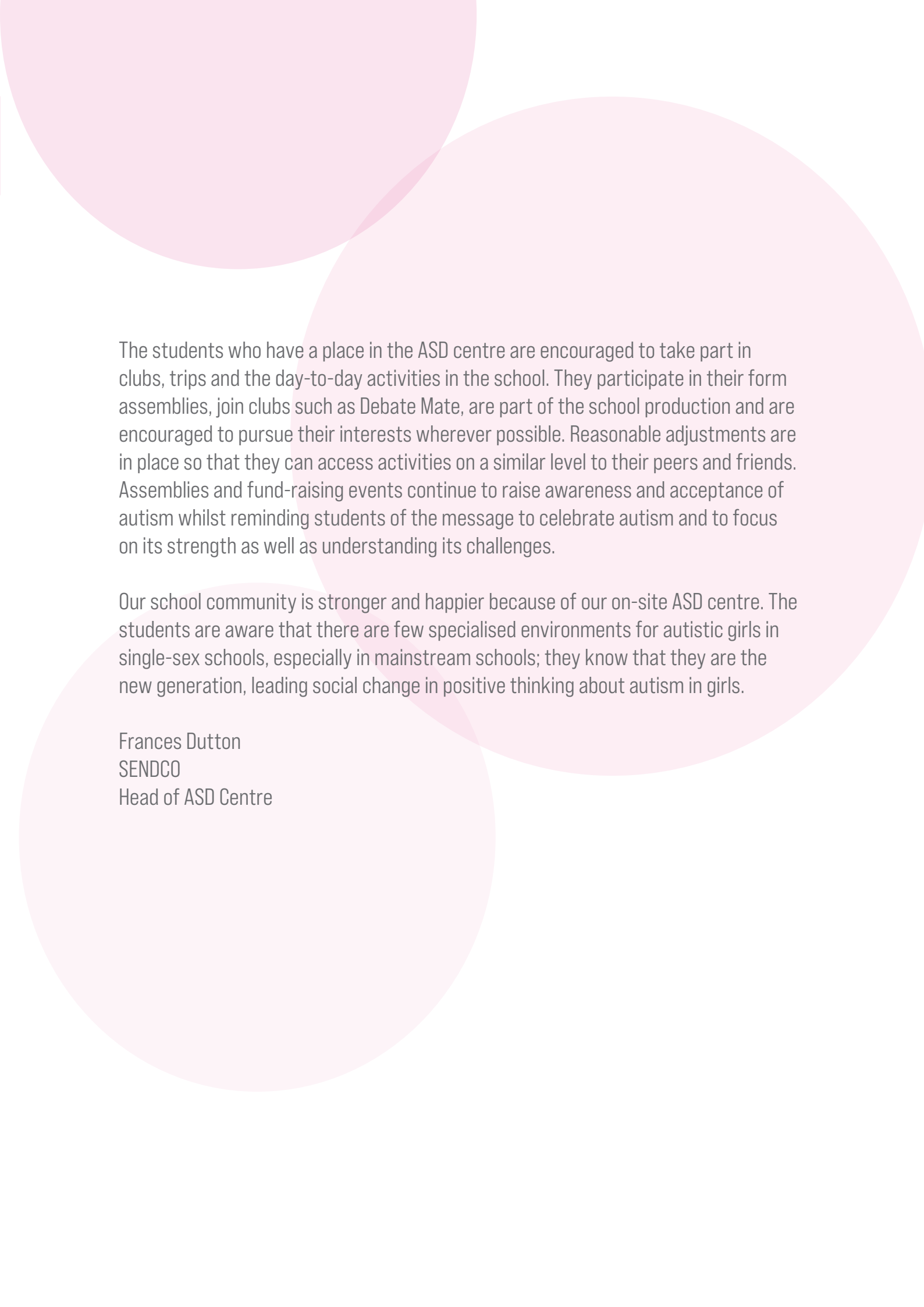
WELCOME *from SENDCO*

I warmly welcome you to Brentford School for Girls and to our ASD centre. Often described as 'inviting', 'calm' and 'wonderful' by parents and professionals alike, the centre has provided a space and opportunity for the ASD students with EHCPs to have support from experienced staff, a 'safe space' with appropriate resources and a physical area that meets their needs. To have an ASD centre in mainstream girls' schools is very rare, yet as Sarah Wild [*Headteacher at Limpsfield Grange School, a residential school for autistic girls*] notes, a single-sex environment for autism 'really works'!

Our centre has been running for over a decade, supporting students across the wide spectrum of ASD needs in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. As the students that are linked to the centre are included with their peer groups as much as possible, there are low levels of bullying; the ASD students feel secure in coming to school and enjoy being here.

The close links between support staff and the pastoral teams (e.g. Head of Year, form tutors and attendance teams) mean that any instances of anxiety or medical needs can be identified, managed and resolved quickly and efficiently. As noted in the Autistic Girls Network booklet 'Autism, Girls and Keeping It All Inside', autistic girls 'who present in an internal way may tend to internalise problems too'. Our SEND team regularly share strategies with all staff to support internalised anxieties that may explicitly present as 'shutdowns' or 'situational mutism', enabling our teachers to feel confident that they are providing the most appropriate or effective support available for the individual and the situation.

BRENTFORD



The students who have a place in the ASD centre are encouraged to take part in clubs, trips and the day-to-day activities in the school. They participate in their form assemblies, join clubs such as Debate Mate, are part of the school production and are encouraged to pursue their interests wherever possible. Reasonable adjustments are in place so that they can access activities on a similar level to their peers and friends. Assemblies and fund-raising events continue to raise awareness and acceptance of autism whilst reminding students of the message to celebrate autism and to focus on its strength as well as understanding its challenges.

Our school community is stronger and happier because of our on-site ASD centre. The students are aware that there are few specialised environments for autistic girls in single-sex schools, especially in mainstream schools; they know that they are the new generation, leading social change in positive thinking about autism in girls.

Frances Dutton
SENDCO
Head of ASD Centre

Why **CHOOSE** our ASD provision?

As noted in the SEND Code of Practice, SEN needs to be a whole-school provision. As noted in the document 'Girls and Autism - Flying Under the Radar', approximately 55% of cases of ASD co-occurs with learning disability (Charman et al. 2011). Indeed, although autism is not an educational need, many of the students in the centre have a dual diagnosis with ADHD, Dyslexia and Dyspraxia, all of which can significantly impact accessibility of the school curriculum for a student.

Hounslow has other girls' schools and has other ASD centres, yet the Brentford School for Girls provision stands out due to the established infrastructure and specialist expertise of the support and teaching staff. Therefore, by default, autistic girls that are part of the Brentford School for Girls community are at an advantage compared to elsewhere.

Parental communication is strong and we continue to build on our student voice so that the students themselves are part of our reasonable adjustments.

Why choose us?

The SEND team collectively have several years of experience working closely with autistic students. They have built up a large 'toolbox' of strategies to support autistic girls in the many ways that their needs can present; these strategies are shared with staff across the school. Teaching Assistants' time is mostly spent supporting the students in lessons so that the students in the centre are part of an inclusive environment. They have timetabled lessons to access the centre for provision that meets their needs.

The centre has an allocated Educational Psychologist, Occupational Therapist and a Speech and Language Therapist so that the students can access such services as their EHCP recommends. These external professionals are allocated to the centre for long periods of time, so students build up a familiarity and professional relationship with the therapists. Furthermore, the therapists provide training and resources for staff with suggested strategies to enable students to have consistent support across the curriculum.

Expertise in **STAFFING**

The SEND team are experienced in supporting ASD students in 1:1 and small group sessions as well as in class. Teaching Assistants support in class for theory-based or practical subjects as per the level of need. Our allocated Occupational Therapist (OT) reminds us, autism is often linked to missing milestones for gross motor or fine motor skills. As the OT will often speak to the support staff directly, they take measures to disseminate exercises, tips or strategies to support needs around motor skills so that the students can access mainstream practical lessons with reasonable adjustments in place.





“

I like going to the chill out room if I get worried or anxious. My favourite lesson in the ASD classroom is Pet Therapy where I can take Rudi for a walk. He likes me to throw the ball for him!

”

Student

Outstanding **FACILITIES**

The spacious centre provides a quiet, safe space that is part of the main building, but 'tucked away' so there is little outside distraction or disturbance. There is a large, classroom-based area, an office, a small classroom for small group work (and where the assigned Occupational Therapist and Speech and Language Therapist see students) and a newly-decorated 'Chill Out' Room with midnight-blue walls and controllable LED lights. The centre has large windows, looking out onto the field, allowing the students to watch nature, or indeed pull the blinds down if they need a little privacy and focus whilst they work.

The area is large enough for more than one session to run at a time, meaning that staff can address the wide spectrum of needs in ASD, but also allows for a comfortable space for students to work in groups.

ASD students also have access to an accessible toilet next to the centre which can be accessed and used discreetly. Next to the centre is the Hub - the school's SEN area, which has been newly decorated with wall vinyls and colourful prints to make the area inviting rather than simply functional.



Student ***SUPPORT*** and ***WELL BEING***

The SEND team are a fabulous, hard-working and approachable group, ensuring that the students receive high quality support both pastorally and academically across all curricular areas. On school trips, SEND support staff play a key part in sharing effective strategies with staff and ensuring that appropriate adjustments are made to meet the needs of the students.

There is a drive to continue our regular SEND training for all staff and ensuring that they have up-to-date knowledge and understanding of research and interventions to support Brentford School for Girls' students.

In each year group and key stage, there is a strong communication and support link with the pastoral teams, as well as the safeguarding lead. As mentioned above, the SEND team are experienced in supporting high anxiety levels in autism and share strategies so that behavioural cues can be identified by a range of staff, rather than a select few. Autistic students can be vulnerable so staff at all levels are provided with information about student needs and strategies to support them.

In Autumn 2022, the SENDCo started an ongoing project to promote fiction books in the library by neurodivergent authors or with neurodivergent characters. Students have been notified of this in assemblies and a select group of autistic students have been asked to read and review the books, alongside open recommendations for books that appeal to them. By keeping autism as part of the day-to-day part of the school experience we hope to reduce any stigma and minimise the exhausting masking that can be part of autism's inclusion in mainstream society.

*Transition into secondary school and the **ASD CENTRE***

The SEND team work together to see year 6 students in primary school and to speak to SENDCos about the best way to continue necessary support. There is a SEND transition booklet (informed by CAMHS support) and the first week of school is fully supported by Teaching Assistants, continuing for a second week if appropriate. Furthermore, students with needs in social or organisational skills are supported with a transition programme that explicitly teaches and supports these areas in small groups. These needs are reviewed and re-addressed in later years where need be, allowing for students who are part of a mid-year transition to still have access to the support they need if they were not part of the year 7 transition.



“

The ASD centre has helped me because it has understood my difficulties in learning. ”

Student - (recently moved from a mainstream school without an ASD centre.)



Providing **OUTSTANDING** academic support

The students in the ASD centre attend mainstream lessons which, across Key Stages 3 and 4, can be set according to ability or mixed ability depending on the subject area. The SEND team avoids the 'velcro approach' (as it is sometimes referred to) as it encourages a high level of dependency in the students. In terms of Access Arrangements, students are assessed towards the end of year 9 where deemed appropriate, but if needs are presented before then, support staff and teaching staff are guided on how to provide support for assessments to judge what the student's 'normal way of working' may be. For example, the Physical Disability advisor allocated to the centre may work with a student who has physical disability to assess whether the use of a laptop is more appropriate for their motor skills than handwriting. A trial will then gauge whether a laptop is appropriate for the student's needs in the classroom and as they approach assessments. The school has also invested in exam board-approved Reading Pens which support those with a dual diagnosis of Dyslexia.

In-class support often involves supporting students by their level of need and circulating around the classroom. However, teachers are encouraged to use their discretion in supporting needs and support staff take out students to pre-teach, re-teach and differentiate where appropriate in both Key Stage 3 and 4.





INTEGRATION *within the main school*

We celebrate an inclusive environment as the students access the mainstream lessons and reasonable adjustments are in place for extra-curricular activities e.g. school trips, including overnight trips. Regular parent contact ensures that our adjustments are recognised and parents are a supporting voice when adjustments are put into place, particularly in terms of overnight trips.

All staff are provided with student 'passports' for students with EHCPs. These documents are used as part of their lesson planning and observation process; they include the EHCP targets and strategies to support within the classroom or subject area for those particular targets. These are reviewed regularly and teaching staff are encouraged to share good practice so that strategies that are successful in the classroom can be shared with all staff.

As we further build and design our Chill Out room for 'calming' activities, we are also re-designing our small classroom in the centre to allow students to 'actively' self-regulate using a range of activities (a sensory circuit). This has been informed with our allocated Occupational Therapist to allow students to independently access activities that are appropriate to their need. Our work with the allocated Speech and Language therapist for the centre ensures that professional recommendations of communication strategies are shared with all staff. Communication has close links with social skills and lifeskills. Therefore, students are given as much support from a holistic approach as possible: social, communication and academic.

Students are encouraged to aspire to their personal best and are supported as individuals with differing skills, interests and abilities whether those are inside of the classroom or extra-curricular.



Working in **PARTNERSHIP** with all services

The Occupational therapist and an allocated Speech and Language therapist meet with the students in accordance with the hours stated on the EHCP at regular intervals in the term. They are allocated whilst they are working for the SEN Hounslow team, so they are able to build up familiarity with the students to ensure the strategies and recommendations they suggest are the most appropriate for the individual student. An Educational Psychologist is also allocated to the centre and has provided support with updating cognitive assessments and providing parents and students with strategies to manage anxiety with autism.

There are also close and regular connections with CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) and the Physical Disability advisor who have a strong link with the school and provide regular support for staff and parents where need be. For year 11, the Connexions service meets the students in school to establish aspirations and post-16 opportunities.

For each Annual Review, the SEND administrator invites professionals who have worked with the student to ensure that all support elements are part of the review process, not just the academic side of the plan. Annual Reviews are constructed to be positive and student-centred.





WHO is it open to?

The ASD centre is for students who have an EHCP and ASD as their primary need. The SEND team support students linked to the centre in mainstream lessons and withdrawal sessions, which can either be 1:1 or in small groups. The main focus is on social, communication and life skills with support with academic work where necessary. This comes in the form of supporting organisational skills, working towards instilling confidence and independence in the students as they move towards post-16.

The students will need to meet the centre criteria which notes that the students must be able to make progress in curriculum-based mainstream lessons, be in the broad average range of ability and have age-appropriate self-care skills.





BRENTFORD SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

BRENTFORD 6th FORM

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How to find us

By Rail

South West Trains to Brentford Station is a 5 minute walk from the station to the school.

By Bus

H91, E2, E8, 65, 235, 237, 267, 195 all stop within a 5 minute walk to the school.