



espa
EDUCATION & SERVICES
FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM

espa college prospectus



maximise your potential



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Everyone at ESPA was excellent - helpful, good natured and professional. Everything you would want.

Parent 2012



I now feel comfortable around other people

ESPA Student

welcome to espa college

ESPA College, based in Sunderland and Newcastle, provides residential and day education for young people between the ages of 16 and 25 with an Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC).

We are committed to providing a high quality, autism-specific educational experience to enable learners to maximise their potential for future life, well-being and work.

We offer a range of imaginative and varied teaching strategies to meet the unique needs of students with autism. Day and residential places are available and students may study for up to

3 years across all five college sites. The programme starts in September and follows a 38 week academic year. We can be flexible with start dates depending on each individual's circumstances.

Individual support and guidance is provided for each student, including 1:1 support when required.

The college opened in 1995 and has a well qualified staff team, highly experienced in autism specific teaching, learning and support.

Although there are exceptions, current funding for each student is generally through the Local Authority.

I learned to live independently, understand people more, make friends and control my moods

ESPA Graduate

day college sites

North Rye (Newcastle), Tasker and South Hill (Sunderland)

At North Rye most students have high functioning autism or Asperger Syndrome. Many of these students experience significant difficulties as a result of their limited social understanding and awareness.

South Hill Meets the needs of learners with wide ranging levels of ability and independence. All learners have autism with moderate to profound learning difficulties.

Tasker offers places to people with Asperger Syndrome and high functioning autism. Many of the students experience a range of associated difficulties including ADHD and mental health problems.

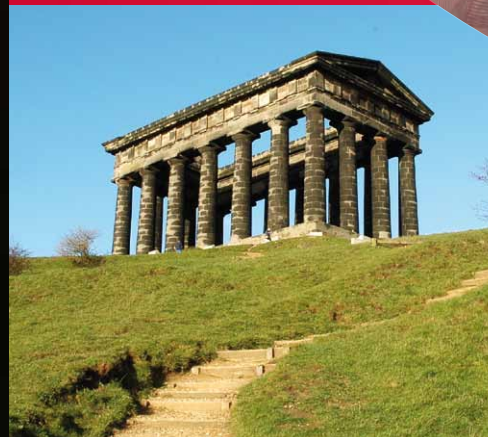
Students are usually assigned to one college site but may attend other sites to fulfil their learning programme within the College. Many students also attend General Further Education Programmes with specialist autism support provided by ESPA. The College provides excellent autism specific facilities such as relaxation rooms, photography studio, college gym and IT suites.



South Hill



Tasker



I now fully understand
what my future
requires of me

ESPA Graduate

residential college sites



Ashleigh (Newcastle) and Westfield (Sunderland) – residential halls

Staff provide very positive support to learners, ensuring they improve their levels of independence and daily living skills

Care Quality Commission 2011



Ashleigh offers places to students with high functioning autism, Asperger Syndrome and related conditions. It is registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and can provide personal care to students, if required. All students have their own bedroom and share other facilities such as the kitchen, lounges and bathrooms. Full time cooks are employed to prepare main meals.



Ashleigh

Westfield offers places to individuals with Asperger Syndrome, high functioning autism and related conditions. All students have their own bedroom and share other facilities such as kitchens, lounges and bathrooms. Students are given appropriate levels of support from highly trained, experienced residential learning support staff. They encourage maximum independence while at the same time addressing the difficulties that students may experience as a result of their condition. Typically, Westfield students attend Tasker and Ashleigh students attend North Rye.



Westfield

Learners enjoy the residential experience; making friends and taking part in many activities

OFSTED Report 2010

Westfield and Ashleigh provide an extended learning curriculum and structured environment where they can develop practical and meaningful skills, both in the residence and in the community. Students are supported and encouraged to develop independence, social and communication skills. Students learn to cook, develop home skills and manage their own money. They budget for and purchase their own personal items such as clothes and have more control over their own life.



what we offer students

All of our students have individual programmes of study based on their specific needs and interests. All students follow the College Core Curriculum which focuses on 3 key areas: Social Communication, Emotional Literacy and Behaviour Self Management. Additional internal and external awards are also offered. Teaching is autism specific, imaginative and varied to maximise student learning. All aspects of the core curriculum are embedded throughout the college day, including break and lunch times and evening and weekends (for residential students).

Some of our students have had negative experiences in their previous learning; often due to their social and behavioural difficulties, non-specialist teaching or late diagnosis. We offer a curriculum which is based on realistic individual goals and prepares each student for life after College.

All students, whether day or residential, are expected to take an active part in the planning and reviewing of their learning. Learning will take place in the College (both day and residential sites), the community, the workplace and other educational settings. Students may attend a General Further Education College programme depending on their individual learning needs.

Their increasing confidence enables learners to take greater responsibility in practical activities and the organisation of their daily lives

OFSTED 2012

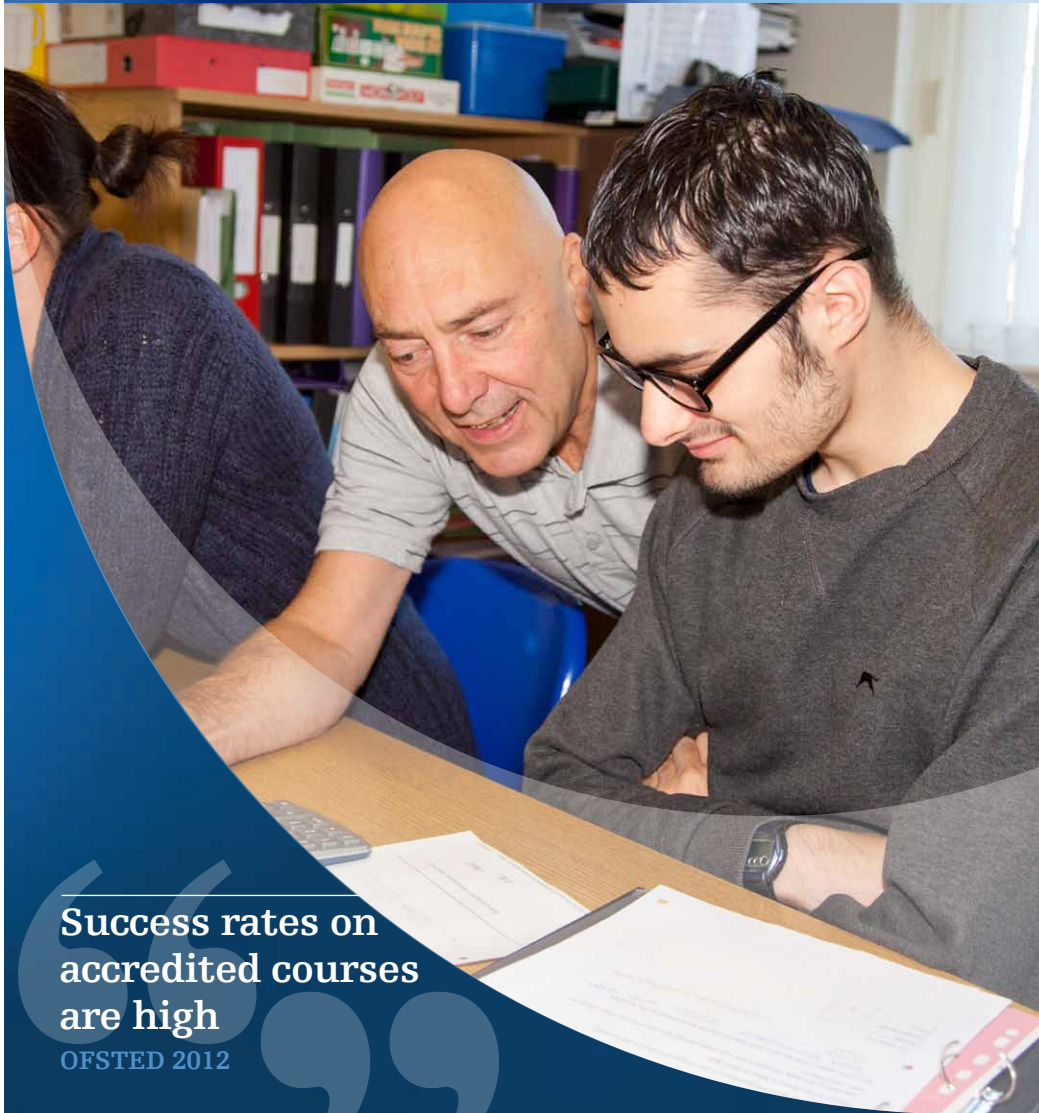


The College has Outstanding Safeguarding practices

OFSTED 2010

The Core Curriculum:

social communication



Success rates on accredited courses are high

OFSTED 2012



The college teaches social communication skills within formal classroom based sessions and includes speaking and listening themes like "Conversational skills", 'Social rules' and 'Relationships'.

These skills can be further extended and developed in a range of more informal settings such as social, leisure and community environments. We also recognise the importance of developing functional communication in order to help students effectively self manage their behaviour.



There is a relaxing buzz around the place and I do what I can at my own pace...it works

ESPA Student

The Core Curriculum: emotional literacy

This programme includes students' development and understanding of their autism; their emotions and their impact on themselves and others. This enables them to live a more rewarding and independent life. The specialist programme includes peer support, social skills groups and individual counselling.

We recognise that many students have had difficult or negative experiences in the course of their education and life. Therefore we have a strong focus within the curriculum on developing self-esteem and confidence.

I've met new people, learned to be patient and gained confidence

ESPA Student

The Emotional Literacy curriculum includes:

- Self-awareness
- Positive thinking & increasing motivation
- Self-esteem
- Decision making
- Goal setting and planning for the future
- Making relationships
- Taking personal responsibility
- Team building & supporting others
- Men's/Women's issues
- Empathy
- Exploring aspects of sexuality and relationships
- Self presentation



The Autism for Heroes project uses performing arts to enable students to develop a range of enterprise and personal skills

OFSTED 2012



The Core Curriculum:

behaviour self-management



I am so much
more confident

ESPA student



The development of behaviour self-management is an essential element in each student's programme. Students work with staff to formulate their behaviour support plan, which enables them to become more independent. Interventions are always positive, sensitive and individualised. There is clear evidence of exceptional student achievement in this area. All staff are trained in non-aversive approaches to working with students with challenging behaviour.

The college has revised its curriculum in response to the analysis of the challenging needs of learners... Particularly those with more complex conditions

OFSTED 2012



the curriculum also includes:

The curriculum is designed to meet the needs, interests and long-term goals of every student.

Foundation Learning - is for learners working at entry levels 1-3 and level 1 who are following personalised learning programmes that are tailored to their needs; leading to a range of appropriate destinations such as Level 2 Learning, Supported Employment or Independent Living

Functional Skills - literacy and numeracy courses are tailored to the individual student's needs after diagnostic assessment. Students are able to develop their skills in reading, writing and speaking and listening in everyday life. Qualifications in Functional Maths, English and ICT are offered. ICT is taught in College and in the community and is often embedded throughout the curriculum.

Creative & Expressive Arts - the practical knowledge gained through the Creative and Expressive Arts curriculum offers the student challenges, builds self-esteem and develops problem solving skills.



Performing Arts - is for students of all abilities who have an interest in the world of performance. The projects focus on enhancing self-esteem, confidence, creative thinking and communication through the medium of drama, theatre, performance and media production.

Media Studies - students explore current affairs and world issues through written media, television and film. Students are encouraged to develop their flexible thinking, discussion and communication skills whilst exploring a range of topics.

Independence - we focus on developing daily living skills such as cooking, shopping, budgeting, social skills and community skills, alongside independent travel skills for journeys relevant to the learner (e.g. home to college).

Employability Skills - all students have the opportunity to develop their range of skills through courses where they are taught about interview techniques, personal presentation and completing forms. Students put these skills into practise during their work placements which may include conservation work, retail, stage hand, hospital laboratories, radio stations and local restaurants.

Leisure Skills - we encourage students to take part in sport and fitness through a range of activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Most Friday afternoons can be spent developing core skills with group enrichment activities, often chosen and organised by students.



Duke of Edinburgh - The College offers its students the opportunity to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award at 3 levels: Bronze, Silver and Gold.

The Award allows students to gain valuable experience and develop many essential life skills through participation in a wide range of practical, physical and work based activities. The 4 main components of each Award require students to:

- Develop a new SKILL (i.e. photography, art, independence),
- Improve PHYSICAL health and fitness through involvement in sport and exercise,

- Develop work based skills and make a personal contribution to the local community through a range of VOLUNTEERING opportunities and
- Gain a wide range of social and personal skills through the planning and participation in an EXPEDITION.



Away From The Classroom

learning never stops!



Life and social skills are learned and practiced in real life environments, throughout the college day and into the evening and at weekends. Residential students will learn to develop independent living skills as part of their programme within the halls of residence.

Our students like to take advantage of the opportunities and experiences to be gained from venturing out into the wider community. Nights out at the pub, raising funds for charities, cinema or tenpin bowling with friends are a normal part of typical student life. Experiences from developing relationships, whether they are friendships, girlfriend/boyfriends or working partnerships are valued as a normal part of life. We provide support for learning the essentials in forming such relationships. Many students make lifelong friendships.

We believe in the students' right to follow a chosen religion and support the observation of a variety of religious practices.



Students make very good progress developing their independence

OFSTED 2012



multi-disciplinary support

In addition to qualified tutors, learning support assistants and key-workers, the multi-disciplinary team includes counsellors, speech and language therapist, occupational therapy, behaviour specialist, educational psychologist, clinical psychologist, consultant psychologist and consultant psychiatry.

Students have access to our multi-disciplinary support as required. Individual behaviour programmes and risk assessments are used to help students self manage their behaviour.

The MDT work closely with students, tutors, learning support assistants and managers, on a referral basis, to ensure students receive all the support they need to maximise learning.

ESPA is a friendly and welcoming college with dedicated staff. They have made a marked improvement to my daughter's life.

Parent 2012



the learner voice



We are committed to our students having a proactive role in College activities. The Student Committee is made up of a group of students who represent the interests of their peers.

Students meet regularly with members of the College Management Team to discuss any current issues and provide suggestions and comments. Student surveys and 'You said... We did' initiatives provide students with the opportunity to improve their college experience. There is also student representation at organisational meetings such as Equality and Diversity. We recognise and celebrate student ability and talent.

There are competitions, exhibitions and performances to showcase the broad range of talents in our student population. These may be within College, such as designing the ESPA College Christmas Card, or they may be open for more public appreciation such as participation in a photography exhibition at Sunderland Museum/Winter Gardens and on the BBC website.

The Training & Awareness Group - TAG

Each year some students, led by the Lead Counsellor, form a training group that works with external agencies including commissioners, health professionals and specialist organisations, alongside our internal staff training to help others understand what it is like to be on the autism spectrum.

Learners make significant gains in their ability to travel independently

OFSTED Report 2012

I have had an excellent experience at college. I like the range of subjects and I have learned about the safety of travelling into town

ESPA Graduate

ROAD (Record of Achievement & Development)

to success

During the first weeks in College, all students undergo a formal induction. Along with a tour of the college and meeting their peers and staff, students learn what we expect from them, and what they can expect from us. This includes requirements for attendance, punctuality and behaviour and it emphasises the importance of mutual respect for staff and fellow students.

Our tutorial programme enables students to discuss and receive feedback on their learning and contribute to the development of their learning programme. As part of this process our students record non-accredited achievements through their Record of Achievement and Development (ROAD) file which captures social, interpersonal and communication skills. In addition students are supported and encouraged to set personal goals in five key areas: social skills, being flexible, independence, college work, actions and behaviour. Students continually evaluate and record their personal progress. This is also monitored by a named Key Worker and/or Personal Tutor and contributes to their reviews.

An initial review is held at the end of the student's first 3 months in College. This is followed by an annual review which comes towards the end of the academic year. Students can take an active part in the review process and some present their own views on their achievements using multi-media applications. Students must attend their College sessions as part of their educational agreement. College sessions start at 9am and conclude at 4pm Monday to Friday. Any sustained failure to attend will result in suspension or termination of their programme.

Great teachers that understand me

ESPA Student



celebrating achievement - graduation

Students celebrate their success at the annual Graduation Ceremony. Previous years have seen this ceremony held at the Sunderland Empire Theatre, the Customs House, South Shields and the Tyne Theatre, Newcastle. The Graduation Ball is also a key feature of the final year.



what's next?

Each student works towards a transition goal. This may be to live more independently, to gain full or part-time employment or move on to additional further or higher education. Whatever the long term goal may be, and it may change during their time with us, we support the student by teaching the key skills needed to help to make their goals a reality. The transition process begins during the student's first year and often includes discussion and collaboration with other agencies.

Support can also be provided to students going on to study at General Further Education College or local University. After College students can benefit from a one to two year placement within ESPA's transition houses. These highly individualised services provide a stepping stone towards a more independent life. ESPA's Domiciliary Care Agency also provides support to individuals living in their own or family home to achieve greater independence and a lifestyle that enables them to enjoy their rights as citizens.

Some of our success stories include students, who can now live independently, attend university courses or work full time in shops and restaurants. Many others attend General Further Education colleges. We also have a trained counsellor and a published author among our ESPA graduates.



meet the team



Welcome from the Principal

As the Principal of ESPA College I am delighted that you are taking the time to read this prospectus. ESPA College prides itself on helping learners to discover, work towards and achieve their personal best. Our staff are amongst some of the best qualified practitioners you will find anywhere in the country backed by an organisation that has over twenty years of experience in leading the development of education for learners with Autism. Please also visit our website and come along to one of our open days and meet the team who will potentially be guiding you through this important phase of your learning. I hope to see you soon.

Paul Cook - Principal ESPA College



*Sara Everett
Deputy Principal*

Sara has worked in specialist day and residential services for children and young adults on the autism spectrum since 1987. She came to ESPA in 1989 and has worked on a wide range of projects including setting up a residential and educational service for young adults with Asperger Syndrome. Sara is committed to supporting learners with associated comorbid conditions such as ADHD and mental health issues. She is a parent of two young children with autism.



*Lesley Lane
Chief Executive*

Lesley Lane has worked for ESPA since 1995 and became Chief Executive of the Charity in 2006. Originally qualifying as an Occupational Therapist she has over 28 years' experience of working with people with disabilities within the Health, Local Authority and Charity sectors. Lesley is passionate about improving the life opportunities and quality of life of people on the autism spectrum.



*Professor
Rita Jordan*

The Board of Directors are made up of a highly skilled and experienced team of individuals who are passionate about improving outcomes for learners with autism. Led by Paul Shattock (OBE and President of The World Autism Organisation), the Board recently welcomed Professor Rita Jordan to its number. Rita is an eminent consultant and chartered psychologist with a doctorate in autism – her knowledge of ASC and education will lend an invaluable depth of insight, enhancing the governance of ESPA College.

becoming a student at espa college

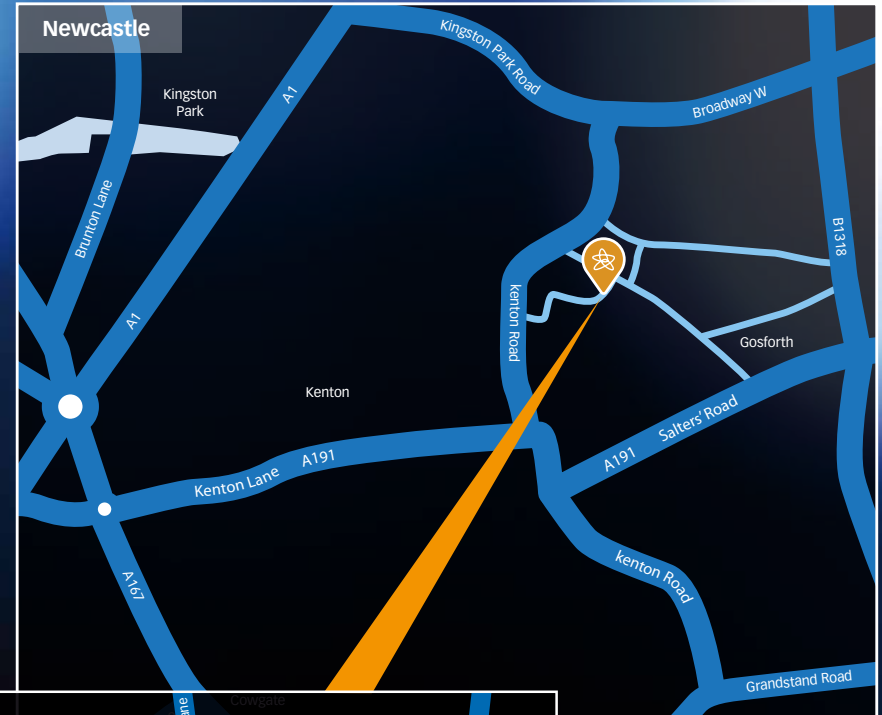
The College year starts in September and we welcome applications all year round. ESPA College considers all applications individually and we are able to offer full-time and part-time places using a range of funding sources alongside partnership placements and local GFE's etc.

We actively welcome all applications in accordance with our Equal Opportunities Policy and Equality and Diversity Schemes.

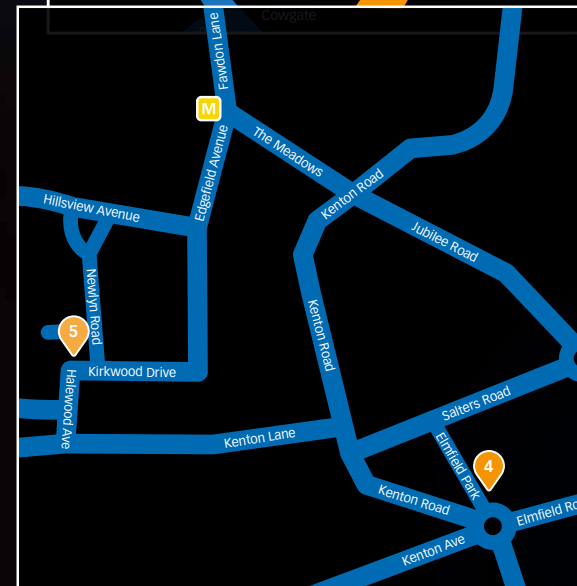
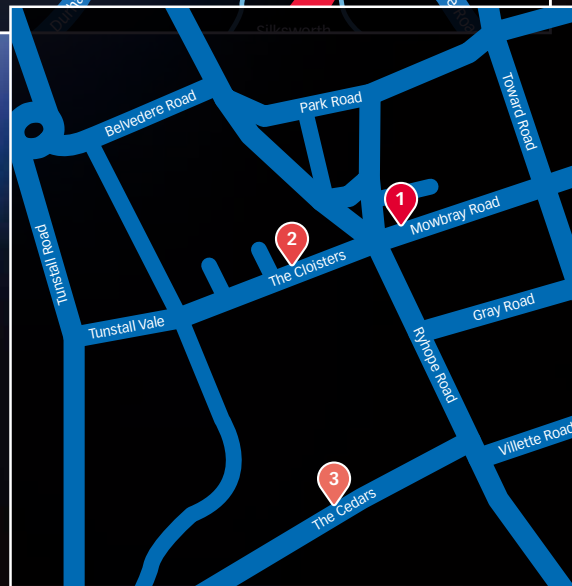
The application process:

1. The applicant and family can attend an ESPA College Open Day. Details and booking form can be found on our website.
2. Connexions generally send a written referral to ESPA's Admissions Department but referrals may be accepted from parents, Local Authorities or health professionals.
3. We gather reports and information from relevant sources such as the student, their family, school and other professionals involved. For families/primary carers this involves the mandatory completion of our Pre-Assessment Questionnaire.
4. This information is reviewed by the Admissions Team and members of the Multi Disciplinary Team to identify what they consider to be the most appropriate educational site.
5. Prospective applicants are invited to attend an assessment visit, with a residential assessment, if applicable.
6. If a suitable educational programme can be offered, all written reports and documents are sent to the individual's Connexions Adviser or Local Authority contact.
7. When written confirmation of funding is received then ESPA College will confirm the place and a start date is given.
8. The prospective student will be sent a 'Welcome Pack' from the College which will contain all essential information.

locations



- 1 Westfield
1-7 Carlton Terrace
Mowbray Road
Sunderland
SR2 8HX
- 2 Tasker
1 The Elms
Ashbrooke
Sunderland
SR2 7BZ
- 3 South Hill
9 The Cedars
Ashbrooke
Sunderland
SR2 7TW



- 4 Ashleigh
3 Elmfield Park
Gosforth
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE3 4UX
- 5 North Rye
Newlyn Road
Kenton
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE3 3JX

contact us

6-7 The Cloisters
Ashbrooke
Sunderland
SR2 7BD

Tel: 0191 510 2611

Admissions Department

Assistant Principal - Funding & Transitions
Michael Smith - email: mike.smith@espa.org.uk

Admissions Co-ordinator
debra.bartlett@espa.org.uk

Admissions Assistant
allison.hardy@espa.org.uk

Tel: 0191 510 2611

College Management Team

Principal: Paul Cook

Deputy Principal: Sara Everett

Assistant Principal - Quality Manager:
Patrick Cahill

Tel: 0191 510 2600

www.espa.org.uk

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THIS PROSPECTUS CAN BE MADE
AVAILABLE IN ALTERNATIVE FORMATS
AND LANGUAGE IF REQUIRED.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE