

# Hazel Court School and FE Department

# Prospectus

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We hope that our prospectus can be a useful source of information for parents and carers. Your comments and suggestions for improving our prospectus are always very welcome.

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## **Hazel Court School**

### **Hazel Court Secondary School**

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Assistant Headteacher  
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Karen Cook

Chair of Governors:

Mike Hughesman

Vice-Chairman of Governors:

David Tutt

Clerk to the Governors

Maureen Foard

## **School Philosophy**

### **Valuing our individuals, celebrating our learning**

We are proud of our school and passionate about the work we do and the results we achieve within it. We work together to do the best for each child in superb facilities.

As the staff team, we always work to meet our Pupils' & Students' Charter (and which is written from their point of view):

### **The Aims of Hazel Court School**

- To operate a welcoming, supportive yet challenging educational environment in which the pupils can have every opportunity to achieve, be successful, and make choices for themselves, with help from the whole school team.
- In partnership with parents and carers, to monitor and meet the ever-changing individual educational needs of each pupil, in as inclusive a setting as is appropriate and can be provided.
- To deliver a curriculum that complies with legal requirements and promotes education both academically and socially to aid the development of the pupil as a whole person.
- To provide opportunities for the pupils to contribute to and benefit from the wider community and society in which they live.

### **Visiting The School**

Parents / carers of prospective pupils are very welcome to visit the school, and to bring with them any relatives or friends should they wish. It is best to allow from 1 to 1½ hours for a first visit, to allow time to see some of the school and to meet the relevant staff.

Formal admissions to the school are organised through the East Sussex CSA at County Hall, and the school staff are always pleased to offer support and advice. The Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher's are always pleased to meet with parents to discuss any issues.

## Hazel Court

### Pupil/Student Charter: Core Values

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- See me as the unique person that I am and not as my disability.
- Allow me dignity, respect and privacy; handle me with care
- Include me in conversations; don't talk about me as if I wasn't there
- Maintain a high expectation of my abilities and learning, don't make me over dependent: allow me time; praise and encourage me along the way.
- Encourage me to make choices and give me the opportunity to give my views. Involve me in decisions that affect me. I have a voice.
- Acknowledge and value my cultural, religious and spiritual needs; allow me space when I need it.
- My behaviour may present a challenge sometimes, but don't always expect this; give me the support that I need so that I can begin to manage my behaviour
- Support my right to be a valued and active member of the school and wider community.

## **General Information About Hazel Court School**

Hazel Court School is a 'Special School' operated by East Sussex County Council, for boys and girls aged from 11 to 19. The school is outstandingly equipped and staffed to offer detailed and highly structured individual educational programmes for pupils and students with "Complex Learning Difficulties, including ASD" (this covers Profound Learning Difficulties, Severe Learning Difficulties, and some Moderate Learning Difficulties. Many of our pupils and students have Autism.).

Hazel Court School is organised into two distinctly separate phases, these being:

- The **Hazel Court Secondary School** (for pupils aged 11 to 16)
- The **Hazel Court School FE Department** (for 'students' - aged 16 to 19)

The two phases (the Secondary School and the FE Department) together make up Hazel Court School, and both phases are run by the Headteacher (Sophie Gurney) along with the Assistant Headteacher's (Helen Mackay and Karen Cook), The Hazel Court School Governing Body oversees all aspects of the work of the school, on behalf of East Sussex County Council.

Currently Hazel Court School has approaching 90 places for pupils / students (the exact number of places is decided by East Sussex County Council).

Pupils at the Secondary School automatically move onto our FE Department at the end of Year 11 (at age 16, when they have completed their Secondary education phase). This means that every child can continue their education at Hazel Court School until the end of the school year in which they have their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday (and then hopefully continue their education at a special needs course at their local College).

The Hazel Court Secondary School has a purpose built building, opened in September 1998, which is 'co-located' with The Causeway School. The Hazel Court Secondary School and The Causeway School are situated in Larkspur Drive, Langney, Eastbourne and together make up the first purpose built co-located schools in the country. The facilities for our pupils here are truly outstanding.

The Hazel Court School FE Department also has a purpose built building, which opened in September 2000, and which is co-located with the Sussex Downs College. The Hazel Court School FE Department was the first purpose built co-located SLD school FE Department in the country and, again, the facilities here for our students are outstanding.

The area from which the school normally accepts pupils / students extends East to Pevensey Bay, West to the boundary with Brighton & Hove, and North towards Uckfield and Heathfield, covering over 250 square miles. In exceptional circumstances, the East Sussex County Council 'Children's Services Authority' (known as the 'CSA') may consider placing a pupil at Hazel Court School from outside of this area. The Schools' Transport section at County Hall provide transport to and from the school in taxis or mini-buses, always with an escort in addition to the driver, and we do our best to work closely with the escorts and drivers, to make sure your child has a quality provision from the moment they are collected to the moment they are returned to you.

The staff at Hazel Court are justifiably proud of the welcoming, happy, and successful ethos that the school has developed, working in very close partnership with parents and carers, and of the strong links with our mainstream partner establishments.

### **Organisation**

All pupils and students are admitted to the school by the CSA on completion of an EHCP. An EHCP Education Health and Care Plan or if they have an original statement of SEN which names Hazel Court as the appropriate school. However, initial informal contacts are very welcome and may be made directly by parents / carers, or through social services, health visitor (etc).

The Hazel Court Secondary School has seven class groups. The organisation of the classes can change from year to year, and even within a school year, as we will arrange the classes to best meet the needs of the individual pupils at that time. The Headteacher will take into account, in liaison with the parents, the child's age, development, and individual requirements

The Hazel Court School FE Department has five class registration groups. The students may then be organised into different groups throughout the school day and can expect that, throughout the school week, they will work with all of the FE Department class staff and with most (if not all) of the other students.

The classes have small groups of 6 to 10 pupils with a teacher plus a minimum of two teaching assistants. The vast majority of our teaching assistants have a professional qualification and they fully support the delivery of the education, with each class team working together in close co-operation for the benefit of their pupils.

## **The Curriculum**

The Hazel Court School curriculum is constantly reviewed, developed, and updated by the staff, to allow it to exploit the latest developments in teaching techniques and methodology, along with the expansion of specialist knowledge. Every year there are new developments and improvements being made, including through the use of new technology (such as the interactive whiteboards, laptops, iPads and eyegaze).

The Curriculum for Key Stage 3 (years 7, 8 & 9:ages 11 – 14)

All pupils follow a topic based curriculum that is organised so that 3 topics are covered over an academic year.

When the pupils move into Key Stage 4 they have an individual learning programme drawn up which relates to the relevant components of the 14 – 19 Curriculum which are:

Vocational or subject learning

Personal and Social development

Functional skills (English, Maths, ICT)

This is accredited through ASDAN Personal Progress. Both Key Stage 4 and our FE department have evolving curriculums to enable individuals to follow their own programmes and enable them to become well developed, independent young people ready to move on to the next phase of their lives.

The Curriculum at the FE Department (ages 16 to 19)

The FE curriculum is intended to allow us to teach those things we believe to be most important for our students given that they are at a stage of their life where they need to make the transition from school to post-school provision including college. Emphasis is placed on developing independence and confidence in life skills through social and work-based “real life” practical activities. In the first two years at FE these experiences are accredited through ASDAN Personal Progress and ASDAN PSD; both Foundation Learning approved qualifications. In the final year students continue to engage in independence fostering activities including home cookery, travel training and Young Enterprise. These are delivered at a level appropriate to the individual.

## **Individual Learning Outcomes**

Each pupil / student at Hazel Court has an entirely individual set of teaching outcomes.

The outcomes are set three times during the academic year . The targets are drawn up by the class teacher in close consultation with the parents / carers, plus contributions from any other associated professionals who may be involved.

The involvement of the parents / carers in this process is of paramount importance, as we would want our teaching to meet the priorities of the parents / carers wherever possible (and we will talk to you often about this!).

## **Behaviour**

There are few formal school rules, although many of the classes draw up their own rules or code of conduct. The emphasis within the school is always on each pupil / student's successes. Achievements and good behaviour are always recognised and are always praised, as we know how important these are, however insignificant they may seem to others. Most of the pupils / students clearly understand when the people who are closest to them are not happy with their behaviour, and this is often the greatest deterrent.

If a pupil / student does display some 'challenging behaviour', we know that for the vast majority of these occasions this is due to a combination of their learning difficulties and disability, and they are not deliberately choosing to misbehave. Therefore, although such behaviour may challenge us (ie; we may find it unpleasant or even difficult to deal with), we always understand that it is not the child's choice, and we have great sympathy and consideration for them. In such circumstances a behaviour management plan is drawn up in liaison with the parents / carers and other professionals involved.

Prominence is placed on the modification of any inappropriate behaviour and replacing it with appropriate behaviour. Any sanctions felt necessary are likely to take the form of expressed disapproval or the withdrawal of the pupil from participation in an activity (and the parents / carers are always informed and involved).

We use a variety of strategies within the school including reward systems 'let's make a deal' and all staff are trained in Team Teach which is a proactive approach to behaviour management with positive handling strategies.

Due to the nature of the school and its philosophy, genuine incidents of bullying are exceptionally rare, but if they do arise they are always treated extremely seriously. We should also point out that any incidences of bullying across the co-located schools is also almost unheard of, as the Causeway School pupils have a very high degree of respect for our pupils.

The ultimate aim of the school is for the pupils / students to develop self-discipline and for them to behave in an acceptable manner that conforms to the standards that are expected in the wider community. Copies of the school policy documentation for this area are available on request from the school, and can also be found on the school website.

### **Pupil / Student Achievement**

Every pupil has a 'Record of their progress' which details their many accomplishments and is maintained throughout their Secondary School years. Various other award schemes are also followed, which can lead to the award of accredited certificates for their completion (or for the completion of appropriate sections or units).

Classroom monitor is used as an assessment system to track each individual's learning. We look at progress over time for all our learners and always have in mind their EHCP Long Term outcomes and getting the best opportunities for everyone for their future beyond school.

### **Absence Rates**

We are required to report the pupil / student absence rates.

Absences occur when a pupil / student is off school because they are unwell, have a medical appointment, are on a family holiday during the term time (that the school has authorised). Due to the nature of the disabilities of some of our pupils and students, inevitably some of them spend extended periods of time in hospital or at home unwell, and a 10% absence rate is the national average for schools such as ours. Our last reported absence rate was less than 10%.

## **Special Educational Needs Policy**

All schools are required to report on the accessibility of their school, both physically and in curriculum terms, for pupils with Special Educational Needs.

As Hazel Court is a 'special school', the curriculum is specifically designed to meet the needs of pupils with profound, severe, and moderate learning difficulties. We can also report that, with the sole exception of one small part of one classroom in the FE Department, all of our buildings are fully accessible to pupils / students / staff who are wheelchair users or otherwise physically disabled.

## **School Leavers**

Hazel Court School works closely with the Transition Service to find the most suitable placement post 19.

Hazel Court has worked closely with Sussex Downs College (and Sussex Coast College in Hastings) to develop their 'post 19' provision for students when they leave Hazel Court. This means that almost every Hazel Court student can progress onto a local college course that will continue to meet their educational needs.

We hope that every pupil / student will stay with us at Hazel Court School until the end of the academic year in which they are age 19. Although parents / carers can legally remove their child from formal education from the age of 16, we would very strongly counsel against this as if social services day support is then required, this may not be provided (as they would not normally have to provide this provision until age 19). Transfer from Hazel Court School provision to a Further Education (FE) College can be considered for students from the age of 16, although again we generally strongly recommend that this should occur until age 19 (so that the maximum benefit can be gained from attending Hazel Court School first). At 16 many of our students are provided with support from the East Sussex Transition Service for post school provision and planning.

Our FE Department aims to help the students see themselves as young adults, rather than older pupils. Great care is taken to develop their individual programmes to help them to prepare for life after leaving the somewhat protective environment of our Secondary School. To do this, we consider which skills learnt in earlier years at home and school now need to be further developed and expanded, to be valuable to them and their families in the future.

## **Religious Education**

Religious Education is taught at the Secondary School in accordance with the East Sussex CSA agreed syllabus. The aims of Religious Education in this syllabus are:

- To develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the nature of religious beliefs and practices and the importance of these in the lives of believers.
- To explore those aspects of human experiences which give rise to spiritual awareness, and fundamental issues about beliefs and values.

At Hazel Court we teach Religious Education according to the ability and understanding of each individual.

Religious Education does not seek to promote a specific religious faith but to present the pupils with broad and balanced views, with opportunities to experience matters of faith which can be important to themselves and others. Although the majority of Religious Education is based on the Christian Faith, festivals, artefacts, stories and songs are used to promote understanding and appreciation of other world beliefs.

At the FE Department, Religious Education is taught through a day of special events which aims to provide opportunities to learn about the beliefs and experiences of a range of religions.

## **Acts of Collective Worship**

Each pupil and student at the School/FE department attends an 'Act of Collective Worship' during the week, in which they are encouraged to participate through music, singing, drama, story and sensory experiences. The Acts of Collective Worship include times of sharing and celebration of achievements and special events in the pupils'/students' lives.

Parents / Carers have the right to ask for their child to be withdrawn from Religious Education and Acts of Collective Worship, in which case they should contact the Headteacher.

## **Inclusion / Co-location**

Hazel Court School is passionate about co-location. We believe that our co-location provides fantastic opportunities and benefits for our pupils and students. We have helped pioneer co-location both in this country and abroad, and supported others when planning their own facilities.

Wherever possible, we get our pupils into lessons and activities in The Causeway School, and we have a programme where all year 7 Causeway pupils get the chance to spend a day in Hazel Court. We have lots of special projects and shared activities, which range from sports events / competitions to teaching signing to classes in the Causeway. However, just sharing the building with a mainstream school means that we are constantly mixing with their pupils, and by doing this we are much more involved in the 'mainstream' school experience (as opposed to a separate and segregated special school experience).

Therefore, given that our Secondary School is co-located with The Causeway School, and that our FE Department is co-located within Sussex Downs College, the opportunities for inclusion for our pupils and students are outstanding.

Hazel Court has a very active policy of encouraging inclusion wherever and whenever it is practical and appropriate, with our pupils getting involved with our co-located secondary school and college; out and about to other schools; into the local community; and with groups and individuals being invited into our school. With our excellent co-located facilities, our links with other schools, and our four mini-buses, the opportunities for good inclusion opportunities are extensive.

We recognise the benefits to our pupils of purposeful social inclusion activities that take us into the community. This is reflected in the wide range of activities undertaken, with examples ranging from going shopping in preparation for making a meal, to helping at coffee mornings at Homes for the Elderly; from cafe visits, to assisting at play groups; with work experience from a sports centre to a play group, and from an office setting to McDonald's (always a favourite!). The teaching staff are constantly developing new ways for our pupils and students to 'be included', and for new, practical and meaningful experiences for them. We also have strong links with local special and mainstream schools, where sports competitions, music festivities, theatrical and social events continue to provide purposeful inclusion opportunities, with our mini-buses to support these educational visits.

Pupils from the local secondary schools, and students from Sussex Downs College, often work at our schools as part of their social studies, community help, and vocational experience schemes. Student teachers, student nurses, and student nursery nurses may also complete part of their professional training at Hazel Court, working in our classes (many of them return later to work with us on a voluntary basis, or apply for jobs on the permanent staff of the school!).

## **Educational Visits**

An important facility on the timetable is the use of the mini-buses. These enable our pupils to take their learning in class out into a different environment.

Running our mini-buses enables the classes to travel to different places on environmental projects, to participate in inclusion projects, and to take part in social education activities. A mini-bus is always (and only) used for visits with a clearly designed educational basis.

## **Charges for School Activities**

On occasions, parents / carers may be invited to make a voluntary contribution towards any additional costs involved in a specific activity (eg; a special visit that has been arranged).

## **Speech & Language Therapy (Communication Development)**

Speech and Language Therapy provision at Hazel Court is part of the children's integrated therapy service in East Sussex.

We see Communication Development as one of the most important areas we can work on at Hazel Court School, and this is the case for almost every one of our pupils and students. We have a Communication Team which consists of key people within the school who then co-ordinate all aspects of the communication work done. The team meet formally once a term.

We have a Makaton sign of the week and a communication strategy of the month. The role of the Speech and Language Therapist is not seen as that of a person who solely withdraws individual pupils from the class, but as that of an expert on all levels of communicative development who assesses each pupil / student's needs and works with the staff in the class to help ensure that appropriate communication and language development continues throughout the whole day. This includes developing verbal and non-verbal understanding, expression, interaction skills (eg; eye contact, turn taking, etc), functional use of language, voice, fluency, speech, and even eating difficulties. Therefore, both individual and group therapy sessions are provided. Joint targets are set with the class teams.

The therapists may liaise with other members of the multi-disciplinary team (eg; Paediatrician, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist, Educational Psychologist, Dietician) as required, but only with both the knowledge and permission of the parent / carer.

The therapists can also offer staff and parents training on all aspects of communication. Links with parents / carers are very important and the therapists like to meet with the parents / carers in order to discuss their child's communication skills and the therapy appropriate for their child. The therapists attend the twice yearly Parents / Carers' Open Evenings to discuss their child's communication development, feeding difficulties, and any queries or concerns the parents / carers may have, as well as attending the multi-disciplinary meetings.

Assessment, monitoring, and the re-assessment of each child's Speech and Language needs is ongoing, and the therapists contribute to the schools' annual review system. Individual and group therapy offered is an integral part of the class based communication programme devised for the individual pupil. The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) is widely and expertly used throughout the school.

The development of communication skills is seen as an essential and integral part of the school day, in every class.

### **Physiotherapy**

Physiotherapy provision at Hazel Court is also part of the Children's Integrated Therapy Service.

The principal responsibility of the physiotherapists is the assessment and treatment of pupils with physical disabilities, of which there are a wide range within the school. Any pupil who requires physiotherapy will have their needs continuously reassessed.

Working within the school gives the physiotherapists the opportunity for close liaison with the staff in planning individual movement and therapy programmes for each pupil (as required). The physiotherapist uses their professional knowledge and training to help plan the most suitable programme for each individual.

The physiotherapists use the two school hydrotherapy pools with pupils, where water and air temperatures are maintained at a very high level. These hydrotherapy sessions are of special benefit to our more physically disabled pupils.

The physiotherapists can recommend specialised equipment for home and school, and liaise with other agencies to this end.

## **Occupational Therapy**

This is also provided as part of the Children's Integrated Therapy Service. OT's work alongside the class teams to provide individual programmes and advice and to set up / support group work.

## **Resource Base**

The school is often seen as a focus point for the multi-disciplinary team involved with the education and lives of pupils / students with Learning Difficulties (and always fully involving the parents / carers), and acts as a resource base which is available for both parents and associated professionals to draw upon. The experience of the staff and parents / carers covers a very wide range, and advice is available on educational programmes that can be continued at home, specific equipment, benefits, medical and social services support, and voluntary organisations.

## **Links with Parents and Carers**

All of the staff and governors at the school are very proud of the close positive working partnerships we have developed with the parents and carers.

We have an 'Open School' principle, which means that parents / carers are welcome to call in whenever they wish, and without appointment! We have nothing to hide and everything to gain by working as closely as possible with the parents / carers. We want to work with parents / carers, and to be open and honest about our work at the school with their child. Obviously, a telephone call in advance may help to ensure that the class staff are available to spend time talking with you (as they may not otherwise be able to break away from the planned teaching activities), but you are still very welcome to call in unannounced! When their child first attends Hazel Court School, the parents / carers are very welcome to stay in the class for as long as they wish (but you are also welcome to do this at any time!).

Having a good understanding and close co-operation with parents and carers is seen by the staff as vital if each pupil / student is to receive a fully effective education. We formally seek the parents and carers comments on their child's individual teaching targets (including at the twice yearly Parents / Carers' Evenings, plus the Annual Review Meeting for the Statement). Also, the parents / carers are free to contact the class staff (and / or senior staff) at any time (phone calls are usually put straight through to the class). Continual communication on more everyday matters is encouraged through each pupil / student having a

home / school notebook. Also, the class staff may suggest some tasks that the pupil could be encouraged to continue at home.

Parents, carers, relatives, and friends are invited and welcomed to a wide range of events held at the school, including coffee mornings just to meet up with other parents / carers in a relaxed setting. We do our best to provide a crèche for all children in the family for all 'out of school hours' meetings.

### **Parent / Carer Governors**

Parents / carers are represented on the school's governing body by six 'Parent Governors'. They are, by definition, the parents / carers of pupils / students attending the school, and are elected (by parents / carers) for a term of office of four years. The Governing Body deliberately chose to have the maximum allowed number of Parent Governors, as we feel their role within the school is so important.

The Parent Governors, as well as having the responsibilities of being a school Governor, are also responsible for passing on the views of parents (whether individual or collective) to the Governing Body and / or to the school. They may be contacted by writing to them via the school, or by telephone to their home address (details are available from the school).

As Governors, the Parent Governors assist the Headteacher in the running of the school, the appointment of staff, liaison with the CSA, and carry out the statutory duties of Governors as laid down by the Government. The minutes of the meetings of the school's Governing Body are always available from the school.

### **School Day**

The Hazel Court Secondary School and the Hazel Court School FE Department both operate from 8.50am to 3.10pm each school day.

We believe that it is the staff working directly with the pupils / students that brings the greatest benefits. The lunchtime period is additionally staffed with Mid-day Supervisory Staff, as it is such an important practical teaching time (ie; learning about queuing for and choosing your lunch; paying for it; sitting and eating with your friends (with appropriate behaviour); washing and cleaning teeth afterwards; learning and playing games appropriately in the playground or the classroom; etc). We therefore have more staff with the pupils and students at lunchtimes than at any other time of the day! We believe that every part of the school day should be of educational benefit to the pupils.

## **School Holidays**

School holidays are similar to other East Sussex maintained day schools, and there is no boarding provision. Updated holiday lists are regularly sent out to parents and are available on request from the school (and the East Sussex schools' term dates are also on the ESCC website). During the school year, in addition to the normal school holidays, there are five staff in-service training days when the school is closed to pupils, and we do our best to ensure that parents / carers are given at least six weeks notice of these days (we usually know them a year in advance).

East Sussex schools operate a 'six term year', which allows each term to be of roughly equal length, and this is a great benefit to us when we are planning the curriculum.

## **School Uniform**

The wearing of the school uniform at the Hazel Court Secondary School is compulsory, and this can be purchased via the school secretary. The school uniform we provide is good quality and at a reasonable price (we sell it at cost price).

The Hazel Court Secondary School uniform for Key Stage 3 pupils (ie; Years 7, 8 & 9; ages 11 to 14) consists of white polo shirts and purple sweatshirts, with the school crest. The PE kit is black shorts with a purple T-shirt and white soled trainers. There is no stipulation to the type of other clothing that is worn (eg; leggings, jogging trousers, trousers, skirts, etc), except to request that they should be dark in colour.

The Hazel Court Secondary School uniform for Key Stage 4 pupils (ie; Years 10 & 11; ages 15 and 16), consists of black polo shirts and burgundy sweatshirts, with the school crest. There is no stipulation to the type of other clothing that is worn (eg; leggings, jogging trousers, trousers, skirts, etc) except to request that they should be dark in colour.

There is no school uniform for our students at the FE Department.

The Governors have given the Headteacher the flexibility to allow pupils to attend the Secondary School with clothing of matching colours, as they understand that some of our pupils may require a change of clothing during the course of a day.

## **Safeguarding & Child Protection**

The school is compliant with all Safeguarding regulations under the Government and East Sussex Safeguarding Children Board. All staff have regular training and work closely with Social Care and their families. There are three designated safeguard leads across the school.

## **Use of the Internet**

All pupils and students, as is appropriate to their abilities, will have access to the internet at school. We believe that the internet, when properly used, is an invaluable tool for both learning and leisure use. We have fast internet connections to the computers and interactive whiteboards in every classroom, all with much of the latest technology. All of these are strongly 'fire-wall' protected to prevent access to unauthorised sites, and to keep unwanted contacts out!

Staff follow school policies on e-safety with regular training and awareness sessions.

We also operate a school web-site, and if parents / carers do not agree to their child's work or photograph being used on the school web-site (always sensitively), then we ask that you let us know.

## **This Prospectus**

If you feel that there is anything missing from this prospectus, or if you have any other suggestions or comments relating to it, we would be very pleased to hear from you.

As always with Hazel Court School, we like to be told if we're not doing things as you would like, so that we then have the chance to do things better!