

# Information for patients and carers

## Vision Assessment in Special Educational Needs (SEN) Schools

What is involved?

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of three overlapping, wavy bands of blue. The top band is a light blue, the middle is a medium blue, and the bottom is a dark blue.

# Why is vision assessment needed for children in SEN schools?

Research has shown that children with special educational needs (SEN) are 28 times more likely to have a vision problem compared to other children. Vision problems can affect learning and behaviour in children. It is therefore recommended that children with SEN undergo a specialist vision assessment by an orthoptist.

The school environment is often an ideal setting to perform these assessments as it means that the children do not need to be brought to the hospital eye clinic. This can reduce any discomfort in attending an unfamiliar setting, as well as reduce travel and loss of school time.

## Which schools will the orthoptist visit?

All children who attend certain SEN schools in Preston or Chorley will be offered a specialist vision assessment with an orthoptist.

Parents/guardians may opt out of the service if they do not want their child to have this assessment. A consent letter will be provided to parents/guardians (via school) prior to the orthoptic assessment in school.

## What will the orthoptist test?

On visiting your child's school, the orthoptist will undertake various tests to assess your child's visual abilities including picture or letter test, along with other specially designed vision tools. An orthoptist can also determine if your child has a squint (misalignment of the eyes) and how they use their eyes together as a pair, including 3D vision. The outcome of this assessment will determine whether further tests are needed at the hospital or a community clinic.

## How often will my child be reviewed in school?

All children will be routinely reviewed by the orthoptist in school every 1-2 years until their final year. However, some children may need more frequent assessments if they wear glasses or have problems with their vision e.g. a squint or a lazy eye.

## What will happen after the assessment?

The outcome of the assessment will be shared with you, along with any further appointments which may be required with an optometrist (optician) and/or an ophthalmologist (eye doctor). If there are any problems found with your child's vision, these will be shared with your child's class teacher and where appropriate the linked visual impairment teacher to ensure your child's visual needs are met e.g. correct placement in the classroom or larger print.

## Optometrist (optician)

If your child needs to see an optometrist, this may be performed by a visiting optometrist to the school, visiting a high street optometrist, or if necessary, by one of our hospital-based children's optometrists (from Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust). The optometrist will carry out a glasses test and check the general health of the eyes. If glasses are required you will be given a glasses voucher to obtain these from a high street optician.

## Ophthalmologist (eye doctor)

Should your child require an appointment with an ophthalmologist, an appointment will be made for your child to be seen at Royal Preston Hospital or the Lancashire Eye Centre which is based at Chorley Hospital.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact the Orthoptic Department using the details provided on page 4.

## Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact:

Orthoptic Department:

Broughton Suite

Royal Preston Hospital,

Sharoe Green Lane,

Preston.

PR2 9HT

If you have any queries regarding your appointments contact:

**01257 245056**

If you need to speak to an Orthoptist about your child's treatment and care, please contact us and leave a message on the answerphone on, we will return your call as soon as possible:

**01772 522417** (Monday to Friday between 8.30am to 4.40pm).

SEN Email: [orthoptic.sen@lthtr.nhs.uk](mailto:orthoptic.sen@lthtr.nhs.uk)

## Sources of further information

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk)

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)

[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

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[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets)

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If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact the Quit Squad Freephone 0800 328 6297.

**Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.**

**This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.**

**Department:** Orthoptic services – SEN

**Division:** Surgical Division (Head and Neck)

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