

Progressive Strides @ Thurleigh Equestrian Centre

2026 – 2027 Prospectus



Providing Exceptional & Inclusive
Alternative Provision with Horses

Progressive Strides

A Warm Welcome

At Progressive Strides, we believe that horses and the outdoor environment offer not just ways to learn, but ways to thrive.

We can offer truly unique learning experiences, supporting students struggling with their mainstream education through our resilience and wellbeing programmes, and those better suited to our alternative education provision for SEND students, all set within the peaceful North Bedfordshire countryside.

Learning real-world skills outside the classroom helps each young person reach their potential — socially, emotionally, and academically. They also discover the therapeutic power of working with horses.

We are proud to offer an inclusive and nurturing environment where creativity, communication, and self-belief can grow.

“The majority of the young people who come to us have Special Educational Needs or Social Emotional and Mental Health needs. The right Alternative Provision is essential to meet their individual needs. There are so many young people who need help who just aren’t suited to mainstream education. They’re crying out for a setting that suits them and that will meet their needs because they can’t learn unless they are in a setting that suits their individual needs. And that’s what we can offer at Progressive Strides. We provide a place where they can truly be themselves, build confidence and learn”.

Elisabeth Cooper (Progressive Strides
Education Manager)



At Progressive Strides, we use established, inclusive, and alternative educational approaches, placing horses at the heart of meaningful learning experiences.

Effective Safeguarding procedures and a focus on positive, measurable outcomes are at the centre of everything we do.

All sessions are led by our specialist team of highly experienced teachers and SEND and SEMH-trained educators, who are passionate about creating positive, hands-on learning opportunities that meet each and every student’s individual needs.

We have a clear and supportive referral process in place that underpin our programmes.

Our Education Specialist staff work closely with schools, local authorities, parents, and carers to ensure every programme is the right fit.

Progressive Strides

Our Vision

To be a **centre of excellence** and a **welcoming community** where horses and people learn, grow, and thrive together.

We envision an environment where every interaction, whether in the arena, on the yard, or in our Progressive Strides dedicated learning spaces, is guided by empathy, professionalism, and a deep respect for the horse.

We focus on the **individual**, meeting every learner **where they are**, helping them to **grow in confidence**, **build new skills**, and **thrive in a supportive environment**.

What Makes Us Different

Our Director brings a wealth of experience from her time as an Assistant Principal at a leading Land-Based College, giving her a deep understanding of how education and horses can work together to transform learning.

All our programmes are led by a **dedicated team of qualified teachers and trainers** who are **specialists in SEND and SEMH education**.

With years of experience, we understand that a purely classroom-based approach to education doesn't suit everyone and we're passionate about creating meaningful hands-on learning experiences that truly engage every student.

Thurleigh Equestrian Centre is also a **5 star rated Council licenced riding school** and a registered **Alternative Provider with ABRS, BHS and HEIR**.





Our Core Provision



Alternative Education Provision

Bespoke 1-2-1 Programme

City and Guilds Work-based Horse Care Programme (Level 1)

City and Guilds Work-based Horse Care Programme (Level 2)

British Horse Society "Changing Lives Through Horses" Programme



What is “Alternative Education Provision”?

Classroom learning is not for everyone. Alternative Education Provision is for children and young people who because of exclusion, illness or other reasons such as SEND or SEMH, would not otherwise receive suitable education.

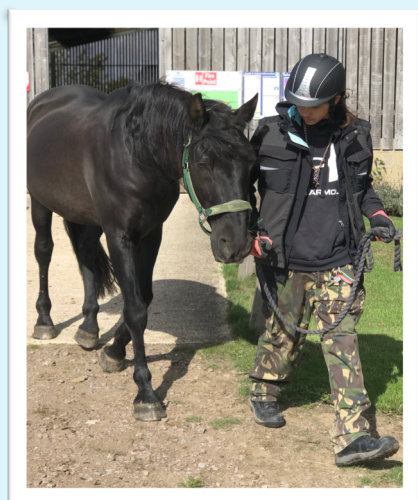
This includes;

- Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH)
- School phobia / refusal
- Trauma or Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)
- EOTAS / Home Schooled
- Persistent non-attendance
- Temporarily not having a school place
- Being a young carer
- Bullying
- Medical Needs

Participants can attend Alternative Education Provision full-time or part-time.

If the provision is part time, then the rest of their learning will take place within their usual methods of schooling.

If full time, then they must receive an equivalent full-time education to their peers in mainstream schools.



Your Local Authority may fund the provision but the participant would need an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) in place. Find out more about EHCP's on page 10.

There are various ways in which a child or young person might access Alternative Education Provision:

- **Permanent exclusion**, where the participant is removed from the school roll.
- **A managed move**, where the participant transfers to Alternative Provision voluntarily. It avoids the child having a permanent exclusion in their records.
- **A referral**, where the participant remains at their current school but receives some or all their education off-site.
- **Continuation of education**, post 16.

Programme Offer

At Progressive Strides, we offer THREE distinct programmes within our alternative education provision:

1. City & Guilds Work Based Horse Care Programme; 3 days for 5hrs a week for one to two academic years.

Providing a nationally recognised, accredited qualification in horse care

- This work-based programme is designed for SEND learners aged **14–25** with an **EHCP**.
- Learners can study a **City & Guilds Level 1 or Level 2 Certificate or Diploma in Horse Care**.
- The programme is delivered in a small group of 4-6 learners, supported by a qualified SEN teacher and a teaching assistant, ensuring a high level of individual support and engagement.
- This course is typically funded through the **school or Local Authority**.

2. Bespoke Programme; ranging from 1 to 3hrs a week over six- week blocks.

Providing an individualised form of learning

- Our Bespoke Programme provides **one-to-one** support for SEND learners aged **12–25**.
- Each programme is tailored to the young person's individual needs, abilities, and goals, ensuring a personalised and empowering learning experience.
- Each block of 6 sessions are created collaboratively with **parents/carers, schools or local authorities** to ensure meaningful progress and positive outcomes. Specific targets are agreed, monitored and reviewed at the end of each period. This programme can be funded through individuals, schools or local Authorities.

3. BHS Changing Lives Through Horses Programme; 2.5hr per week over six- week blocks.

Providing key life skills and develop the desire to continue within education and training

- Ages 7 –11 - The **Achievers** framework has been mapped to the National Curriculum for Key Stage (KS) 1 and KS2.
- Ages 11 -25 - The **Explorers** framework has been mapped to the National Curriculum for KS3 and core subjects within KS4.
- Sessions run once a week for 2.5 hours on Friday mornings with various start dates throughout the year.
- This programme can be funded through individuals, schools or local Authorities

Every programme is delivered by experienced, qualified teachers who are safeguard-trained and committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment

City & Guilds Work Based Horse Care Programme

Progressive Strides have partnered with Haddon Training to deliver a range of work-based, accredited equine qualifications.

- This programme runs over **3 days a week** They are designed for **young people aged 14–25 with an Education Health and Care Plan. (EHCP)**, who may be struggling to access mainstream education or who require additional emotional or mental health support.
- Learners benefit from specialist horse care training and hands-on experience within a practical, nurturing educational environment. The content of each programme is specifically tailored to meet the needs of the individual by our team of qualified SEND/SEMH educators.
- Learners can achieve a City & Guilds Work-Based Award, Certificate, or Diploma in Horse Care at Level 1 or Level 2.
- This programme, delivered **three days a week for five hours per day**, over one or two academic years.
- Learning takes place in **small groups of 4–6 students**, supported by a qualified SEN teacher and a teaching assistant, ensuring a high level of individual support and engagement.
- **The Haddon Training programmes are usually funded through school or LEA funding.**



Level 1 in Work-Based Horse Care

This course has been designed for individuals looking to gain knowledge and practical skills in horse care within a supportive environment. It covers essential topics such as grooming, feeding, and basic health care. The qualification also teaches proper handling techniques and safety protocols, providing learners with the confidence to care for horses in a safe and effective manner.



Level 2 in Work-Based Horse Care

This qualification provides essential hands-on skills and knowledge in areas including equine grooming, feeding, health care and professional development. The course enhances employability in the equine industry, and builds confidence and competence in handling horses safely. Additionally, it aids transition from a supervised role to a more independent position.

The programme covers a wide variety of practical horse care skills including grooming, rugging, health care, feeding, horse behaviour, mucking out, handling and groundwork.

It does not include any horse riding.

These qualifications have no exams. The programmes are evidenced through on-going practical activities and a portfolio submission.

Functional Skills in Maths and English can also be included if required.

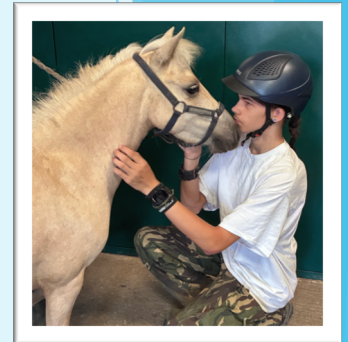
Progressive Strides Bespoke Programme

Providing an individualised form of learning

Our one-to-one bespoke programme provides flexibility to meet specific need. We tailor the programme to suit the participant

Bespoke sessions are based around targeted practical learning activities with our team of ponies and horses.

- Sessions can include a combination of practical and theory using outdoor learning.
- We pride ourselves on delivering an inclusive, holistic approach to education, based on the individual participants needs.
- The sessions are based around 3 targets that are discussed and agreed with the coach. These may include educational, SEMH or personal targets.



Targets are selected by:

- 1) The parent / guardian / referring organisation;
- 2) The EHCP or equivalent paperwork
- 3) The Progressive Strides coach

- These sessions can be used as an **introduction** to our group programmes or Haddon Training Work-Based qualifications
- They can also be used to **build confidence**, assist with **reintegration into education** or to help with **moving into employment**.
- **Our Bespoke programme can also be delivered in small groups, if requested by a referring organisation.**
- The programme can be delivered across three levels: **Entry, Level 1 or 2**, giving participants a progression or a transition route, onto our Haddon Training full time programme.
- **Fees vary** depending on hours and level of provision.

“The staff have been so encouraging and supportive of my child which has made it so much easier for them to access education. Their development over the last year has been mind blowing. Having a provision where there is a bespoke learning pathways to suit them, providing gentle challenges to stretch them without overwhelming them has been such a blessing for us. It really is a unique and incredible opportunity and we’re so grateful to have find the right environment for them. Not only do they get support with navigating social skills and challenges, they’re receiving core subject curriculum at a pace that works for them, and they get to be around therapeutic animals as well as learning a vocation. I couldn’t have dreamed that somewhere this perfect was out there for them. We’re so grateful to have found it.”

K Gracie (Parent of Level 1 Haddon Training student)

Progressive Strides have partnered with the British Horse Society to deliver a programme of study that supports life skills and reintegration into learning.

- This programme runs **once a week**, in six-week (half termly) blocks.
- Students can attend for the full year or select certain blocks

The Programme has two levels:

- **Ages 7-11 years: The Achievers framework** has been mapped to the National Curriculum for Key Stage (KS) 1 and KS2.
- **Ages 11-25 years: The Explorers framework** has been mapped to the National Curriculum for KS3 and core subjects within KS4.
- Each framework has a suggested age range for delivery. Before we begin the programme, discussions with the school and/or parent or carer are vital. These must be continuous and collaborative to ensure learning and activities within the framework are appropriate for the ability of each participant.
- Each framework also involves numerous awards which the participant can work towards and achieve in manageable timeframes. The awards ensure there is simple progression as well as a chance for personal achievement and recognition at regular intervals. They allow for regular and clear feedback between Progressive Strides, the school and the parents or carers, in addition to the ability to monitor and celebrate the participant's progress and achievements in a structured way.



Six Life Skills at the Heart of CLTH:

- Perseverance / resilience
- Confidence
- Communication
- Responsibility
- Teamwork
- Building Relationships

Please contact us for course start dates or to arrange a site visit...

Funding Options

Local Education Authority (LEA)

This is where the EHCP becomes relevant. When Provision is named in Section F of the EHCP the LEA must:

Issue top-up funding to the provider to meet the specified provision in Section F.

This top-up is individualized and agreed through:

- Placement funding agreements
- contract arrangements
- service level agreements



The Local Authorities that cover the Haddon Training programme are:

- Central Bedfordshire
- Bedfordshire Borough
- North Northamptonshire
- Cambridgeshire
- Hertfordshire

However other Local Authorities can be approached.

Privately

Our Bespoke and Care and Connect Programmes can also be **self-funded**, by a **parent or guardian**, or funded by a **school or an employer**.

Fees are usually **paid termly**.

Current prices are available on application and include all training, assessment and daily placement fees.

“As a trainer and coach with Haddon Training, I have had the privilege of working alongside the Progressive Strides team at Thurleigh Equestrian Centre. The staff are not only highly skilled and knowledgeable about horses, but also deeply compassionate and dedicated to the learners in their care.

Thurleigh provides an outstanding alternative provision for young people, including those with SEND. Their SEND specialist and highly trained team ensure that every learner’s needs are met in a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment. Safeguarding is taken extremely seriously, and it is clear that learner wellbeing is always their top priority.

The facilities are excellent, the horses are cared for to the highest standards, and the respect shown to both learners and animals is truly inspiring. Thurleigh Equestrian Centre is a shining example of how education, care, and equestrian training can come together to create life-changing opportunities.”

C Yates Yates (Haddon Trainer & Coach)

How to apply for funding from your Local Authority

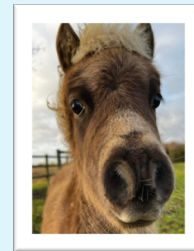
EHCP

- EHCP stands for **E**ducation **H**ealth and **C**are **P**lan.
- It is a plan for children and young people who need more support than the initial internal school provision.
- An EHCP lasts until the individual is 25 years old.
- Young people can apply for an assessment themselves if they are between the ages of 16 and 25 years.
- An EHCP is a legally binding document that outlines the child or young person's educational, health and social care needs.
- The document must provide the provision that meets each of the young person's needs.

The provision must be detailed, specific and achievable. The plan will name the school/setting that will provide the provision, and this is legally enforceable. The Local Authority (LA) will look at the needs of your family and they do not necessarily need a diagnosis to agree to an EHCP.

EOTAS

- EOTAS stands for Education Other Than At School.
- EOTAS is the legal mechanism whereby a child or young person with an EHCP can receive Alternative Educational Provision despite being unable to attend an educational setting.
- EOTAS is a formal special education package made under an EHC Plan, for which the Local Authority remains legally responsible.
- To access EOTAS, provision must be in Section F of the individual's EHCP. It is this section that is legally binding.



For more information on EHCP and EOTAS visit our website
www.thurleighquestriancentre.co.uk/progressivestrides

"Before my daughter started at the setting, she hadn't left my side for nearly two half years. She had started at secondary school, but it quickly became apparent that the environment wasn't the right place for her. I can honestly say the journey we as a family have gone through from then, to now being at Thurleigh, is not one I would wish on anyone. Devastating and life changing for all the family. Thurleigh has been a saviour, and anyone living through these challenges with young people will understand. Thurleigh has allowed my daughter to be herself with no expectations of having to regulate herself and conform to others' expectations. She is nurtured and given the space and time she needs to thrive. Being in a surrounding that is positive, calm, great facilities, and the most wonderful people who give our children and young adults every care and attention they need. The best thing, of all is, she now knows her worth and believes she has a future, and it is just enough being herself. Thanks to the team at Thurleigh and Haddon, and of course, all the wonderful ponies and horses."

E Crosse (Parent of Level 1 Haddon Training Student)

Securing a Place at Progressive Strides



How do I apply?

You can register your interest by phoning or emailing the office, or using the link on our website.

We will follow this up by providing any information requested and invite the participant and the referring person, and/or the parent/guardian, on-site for an initial meeting and tour.

If the participant and / or guardian feels our setting is suitable, they will need to contact the appropriate funding body to confirm Progressive Strides at Thurleigh Equestrian Centre as your preferred setting for Alternative Provision.

We will then be able to liaise with the school or LEA regarding funding and enrolment.



Open Days & Initial Meetings

We run Open Days throughout the year where you can come along and visit our equestrian centre, meet the staff and horses and find out more about our courses.

We also recommend you come and visit us if you are interested in attending any of our programmes.

Contact us now to arrange an initial meeting with one of our Education Specialists, or come to our next Open Day (no booking required).

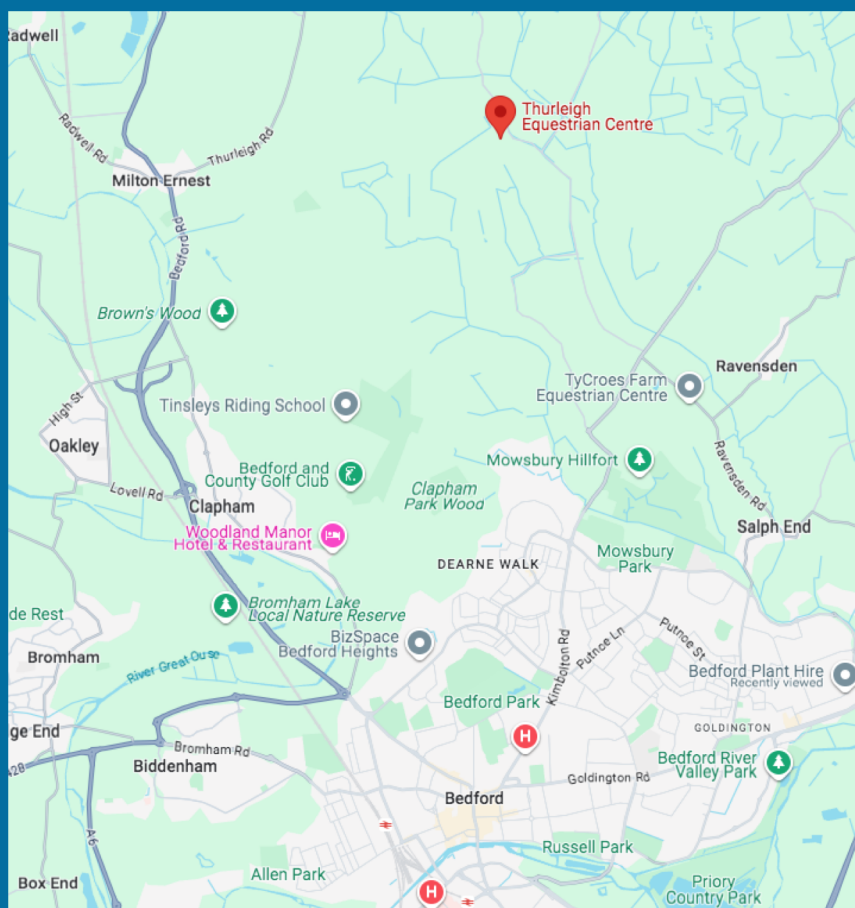
Before an EHCP is provided to a child or young person, you need to apply to your Local Authority to request a needs assessment. You can apply directly to your LEA, or your child's doctor/health visitor or a school SENCO can apply on your behalf.

According to gov.uk, "your local authority should tell you within 16 weeks" whether an EHCP is going to be made for your child, and the Local Authority has "20 weeks from the date they receive the request for the assessment" to send you the final EHC plan. However, we are aware that LEA's are struggling to meet these time frames so please be aware the process could be longer.

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